

SHORT-TERM RENTAL POLICY ANALYSIS

TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

FEBRUARY 2026

PREPARED FOR:

THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report analyzes regulatory options for short-term rentals (STRs) in the Township of Esquimalt and provides a framework for thinking about and discussing the associated trade-offs.

In practice, this issue's key trade-offs arise from the fact that certain forms of STR activity — particularly the conversion of entire residential dwelling units to short-term use — reduce the supply of long-term housing and make it less affordable, while also generating potential concerns related to parking, noise, and waste. At the same time, STRs provide flexible accommodation for visitors and temporary workers and offer property owners supplemental income and greater operational flexibility than long-term tenancy arrangements, which in some cases may not be feasible or desirable.

Under the Province of British Columbia's *Short-Term Rental Accommodations Act*, STRs in Esquimalt are limited to a person's principal residence and one other unit on the same property. The Province characterizes this as a regulatory "floor" intended to provide a baseline level of housing protection. Local governments may then adopt additional regulations that build upon — and may exceed — this provincial floor.

Esquimalt currently permits STR activity through a small number of bed and breakfast and tourist accommodation uses on spot-zoned parcels; in addition, several float homes in West Bay occasionally operate as STRs within a regulatory grey area. All other STR activity is prohibited under zoning, although third-party data indicate that STR activity has been occurring within the Township.

Over the past 12 months:

- An average of 64 STR listings were active at any given time;
- Combined availability of all listings was equivalent to 51 full-time hotel units;
- 81% of listings were entire-home rental;
- STR room revenue was approximately \$2.8 million; and
- Using simplified Statistics Canada methodology, STR activity was associated with an estimated 22 lost potential homes.

The number of active listings has declined significantly since the Province implemented its principal residence requirement (May 2024) and registration requirement (May 2025).

Housing affordability in Esquimalt has deteriorated substantially over the past two decades, including a doubling of home prices between 2006 and 2019 and sustained rent escalation. While housing supply is increasing, affordability pressures remain significant, warranting concerted effort across all available policy levers, including STR regulations.

At the same time, STR occupancy rates point to steady demand for temporary accommodation, but with extremely limited licensed local supply.

In light of these trade-offs the report describes three basic regulatory pathways:

<p>1</p> <p>OPTION 1: IN-HOME PERMISSIONS</p> <p>STRs permitted only within an operator's principal dwelling unit. More housing-protective than the provincial baseline, but less enabling of visitor accommodation.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>OPTION 2: HOME LOT PERMISSIONS</p> <p>Aligns with the provincial floor regulation, permitting STRs within the principal residence and one other unit on the same property. Enables more visitor accommodation, but less housing protection.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>OPTION 3: CUSTOMIZED REGULATIONS</p> <p>Variations on Options 1 or 2, including potential annual night caps or licensing quotas.</p>
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Each option advances different policy objectives. Option 1 prioritizes housing protection. Option 2 prioritizes accommodation supply and homeowner flexibility. Option 3 holds space for Council to calibrate an alternative position. In addition to choosing a basic direction, there are a number of detailed policy decisions that will need to be made to fully establish a new regulatory regime.

Public engagement conducted to inform this report reflected mixed views. Survey results were closely divided between support for a more restrictive in-home model and support for aligning with the provincial "floor" home-lot permissions. Open house participants strongly favoured aligning with the provincial floor, though attendance likely included a high proportion of STR operators. Renters who responded were more likely to support stricter limits.

The most appropriate approach depends, in part, on the relative priority Council wishes to assign to housing protection, homeowner flexibility, and visitor accommodation supply. It also depends on the broader strategy the community adopts to achieve its housing and tourism objectives. For example, if attracting new purpose-built commercial accommodation is a realistic and near-term prospect, STR regulation may play a different role than if STRs are expected to serve as the primary source of licensed local visitor accommodation. Similarly, if housing goals are expected to be met primarily through new construction, Council may weigh STR impacts differently than if the preservation of existing secondary-market units — particularly those that may be comparatively affordable — is a central housing objective.

BACKGROUND

This Short-Term Rental Policy Analysis is structured to support Council’s consideration of potential regulatory approaches. It begins with an overview of the general impacts of short-term rentals – including both potential benefits and harms – and summarizes the current provincial regulatory framework and its relationship to local land use and business licensing authority.

The report then examines the Esquimalt and regional context, presents three potential regulatory pathways, summarizes public engagement findings, and identifies the detailed implementation decisions required to establish a modernized STR regulatory regime.

TERMINOLOGY

SHORT-TERM RENTALS AND BED AND BREAKFASTS

Every local government will have its own set of formal definitions that change the precise meaning of terms like “short-term rental” and “bed and breakfast.” As discussed in the **Zoning Terminology** section, Esquimalt will need to revisit its own terminology moving forward.

For the purposes of this analysis, the term **short-term rental** is used in its general sense to refer to **the transient accommodation of paying guests in a residential dwelling unit**.

- *It does not include* commercial guest accommodation units (e.g. hotel rooms, even though these are sometimes listed on platforms like Airbnb).
- It *does include* bed and breakfasts – including as currently defined in Esquimalt – because B&Bs typically involve transient accommodation in dwelling units, just of a particular sub-type (involving private rooms and an onsite host). **In other words, this analysis treats B&Bs as a subtype of short-term rental.**

PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE AND PRINCIPAL DWELLING UNIT

In this analysis, the term “**principal residence**” is used as a synonym for “**principal dwelling unit**,” with both terms meaning the primary dwelling unit used as one’s home and not including any other attached or detached dwelling units on the same lot.

While some local governments define it similarly, this is a slightly narrower meaning of principal residence than in certain other municipal bylaws, and in the provincial framework (whose interpretation can sometimes allow for the inclusion of more than one dwelling unit).

The narrower definition of principal residence is used here to help distinguish between separate, potential homes, and to clarify the effect of the two major regulatory options featured in the report.

IMPACTS OF SHORT-TERM RENTALS

The impacts of short-term rentals on local communities can be described at a general level, as summarized by Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Examples of potential community benefits from short-term rentals

POTENTIAL LOCAL COMMUNITY BENEFITS
<p>Income Generation</p> <p>Operators and support workers (e.g. cleaners, property managers) can earn income by providing and managing guest accommodation. This income can often exceed that which might be earned through long-term rentals.</p>
<p>Owner Flexibility</p> <p>Short-term rentals give property owners more flexibility and control than long-term rentals, which are subject to the protections of the <i>Residential Tenancy Act</i>.</p>
<p>Higher Housing Values</p> <p>Also considered to be a harm in communities facing housing availability and affordability challenges; however, current property owners can financially benefit from an STR-induced rise in the economic value of their property.</p>
<p>Greater Choice</p> <p>Guests can access cheaper and/or more amenity-rich and diverse accommodation options compared to hotels, motels or B&Bs.</p>
<p>Local Experiences</p> <p>Guests can benefit from operators who provide personalized and localized accommodation and experiences.</p>
<p>Quick, New Tourist Accommodation</p> <p>STRs can add additional accommodation options without requiring the development of major infrastructure (e.g. hotel construction).</p>

More Efficient Use of Space

The local economy can benefit by allowing operators to rent a private room or dwelling unit that may otherwise go unused, for example while the resident is away for work or leisure. This benefit is not associated with non-principal dwelling unit STRs because the unit could otherwise be occupied by a permanent resident.

Support for the Local Tourism Economy

To the extent that STRs can bring in more total visitors than could otherwise be attracted by or accommodated by traditional providers such as hotels, these additional visitors spend money on local activities, transportation, food and beverages. Note that this boost to the tourism economy can be counteracted by a weakening of the overall economy if it is associated with a loss of homes and permanent residents.

Greater Neighbourhood Distribution of Wealth

By attracting visitors to neighbourhoods and businesses outside of traditional tourist areas. Note that this benefit can be counteracted by a loss of neighbourhood wealth if the STRs are associated with a loss of homes and permanent residents.

Table 2: Examples of potential community harms from short-term rentals

POTENTIAL LOCAL COMMUNITY HARMS

Housing Loss

STRs divert or remove potential long-term rental rooms, rental homes and purchasable principal residences from the market. Specifically, this potential housing loss is associated with non-principal dwelling unit STRs (units that are not the STR operator's home).

Housing Unaffordability

STRs decrease the affordability of housing (both to rent or buy) by making it more scarce and by increasing its economic value.

Unfair Advantages

STR operators are often not subject to the same level of regulation or taxation as traditional accommodation providers.

Revenue Loss

Though new provincial legislation and regulations have helped, some short-term rental platforms and operators still don't collect and remit MRDT, or provincial and federal taxes, even if required by law. This leads to either foregone revenue or an actual loss of revenue (e.g. if STR activity draws guests away from traditional, tax-remitting accommodation providers).

Expectation of Low Consequences for Bylaw Contraventions

Where a local government lacks the capacity or clear direction to proactively enforce bylaws related to short-term rentals, operators may come to expect limited or inconsistent consequences for non-compliance. Over time, this can normalize repeated contraventions, undermine respect for local regulations more broadly, and contribute to a culture in which bylaw compliance is viewed as optional rather than required.

Community Disruption and Neighbourhood Character

Short-term rental operators and guests may not be invested in the community in the same way that a long-term resident is and this may lead to nuisances such as increased noise or garbage; at higher densities STRs can lead to a loss of residential character in neighbourhoods.

Reinforced Inequities

STR platforms create value from the use of residential housing and the owners/controllers of that housing are therefore privileged by the industry in a way that can reinforce systemic inequities in wealth across society.

Please refer to [Appendix A](#) for further analytical context, including:

- The structural nature of housing impacts;
- The nature of “mortgage helper” scenarios and their distributional effects;
- The challenges of assessing net economic impacts; and
- Alternative pathways to achieving sufficient visitor accommodation.

Please refer to the [Esquimalt Context](#) section for a description of Esquimalt’s current STR market, which includes rough estimates of localized impacts (a more precise analysis of local impacts was outside the scope of this report).

PROVINCIAL SHORT-TERM RENTAL REGULATIONS

OVERVIEW OF THE PROVINCIAL FRAMEWORK

British Columbia's short-term rental regulatory framework is established under the *Short-Term Rental Accommodations Act* and the associated *Short-Term Rental Accommodations Regulation*. Together, these introduce a **province-wide baseline of requirements** intended to return housing to the long-term rental market while preserving space for home-sharing and hosted accommodation.

The provincial framework focuses on four core elements:

1. PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT

Applies to communities over 10,000 (including Esquimalt), neighbouring smaller communities, and communities that have opted in. This requirement limits short-term rentals to:

- The usual place where the operator makes their home
- Plus up to one secondary suite or accessory dwelling unit on the same property

The Province describes this requirement as a "floor", and anticipates that some "local governments may prefer to have more restrictive short-term rental bylaws depending on local needs."¹

Opt-out

Esquimalt can choose to formally opt-out of the principal residence requirement if it has a rental vacancy rate of 3% or more for two consecutive years (there is a specific provincial process for this).

Though not explained by the province, the 3% threshold is likely derived from studies showing that, for select major Canadian cities, a 3% vacancy rate tends to roughly align with a "neutral" rental market: where rents are neither increasing or decreasing (inflation-adjusted). In other words, before a local government decides to opt-out of the Principal Residence requirement, it is advisable to first discuss whether it is seeking lower rents, higher rents, or stabilized rents.

¹ As described here: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/short-term-rentals/principal-residence-requirement>

Exemptions

Please refer to [Appendix B](#) for the full list of exemptions to the provincial principal residence requirement.

2. PROVINCIAL REGISTRATION SYSTEM

All short-term rental operators must register with the Province and obtain a provincial registration number. This number must be displayed in all online listings. Provincial registration requires submission of a local business license number, where required.

3. PLATFORM ACCOUNTABILITY

Short-term rental platforms are required to verify provincial registration numbers and remove non-compliant listings, shifting part of the compliance burden from local governments to platforms.

4. PROVINCIAL COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT UNIT (CEU)

The Province has established a dedicated compliance and enforcement unit with authority to:

- Monitor compliance with provincial requirements;
- Issue compliance orders; and
- Impose administrative penalties, including graduated financial penalties set out in Schedule 4 of the Regulation.

APPLICATION TO THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

In Esquimalt:

- **Provincial principal residence requirements apply to all STR activity in the Township**, unless a use is explicitly exempt under provincial legislation (see [Appendix B](#)).
- **All STR operators must register provincially.**
- **Listings must display both a provincial registration number and a municipal business license number.**

Because non-B&B STRs are not permitted in Esquimalt, and because there are only 2 licensed B&Bs currently operating, all other STRs currently found on online platforms are operating in contravention of both provincial law and local bylaws.

- **The Province may directly enforce provincial requirements in Esquimalt**, including issuing compliance orders or administrative penalties. However, provincial enforcement is still dependent on provincial capacity and discretion.

Importantly, **the provincial framework does not replace or override local authority** to regulate land use, business licensing, parking, noise, or other community impacts associated with short-term rentals. Instead, it establishes a mandatory baseline upon which local governments may layer additional regulations.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROVINCIAL AND MUNICIPAL REGULATION

For additional clarity, STR regulation now operates through a **shared enforcement and regulatory model**:

THE PROVINCE REGULATES	THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT CONTINUES TO REGULATE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provincial eligibility to operate (principal residence);• Provincial registration and platform compliance; and• Enforcement of provincial rules through administrative penalties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local eligibility to operate (zoning and use definitions);• Business licensing requirements and conditions;• Local operational standards (e.g., parking, noise); and• Enforcement of municipal bylaws through ticketing or prosecution.

In other words, short-term regulation and enforcement is a joint effort.

ESQUIMALT CONTEXT

CURRENT REGULATIONS

At present, short-term rentals are only permitted in Esquimalt in the form of “**bed and breakfasts**,” or “**tourist accommodation**”, as specifically defined and regulated in the Zoning Bylaw.

All other forms of STRs are effectively prohibited, as they are neither defined nor included as a permitted use within the Zoning Bylaw.

BED AND BREAKFASTS

Zoning bylaw definition: “Bed and Breakfast” means sleeping accommodation for transient guests provided within a Single Family Dwelling to whom no more than one (1) meal is served or provided in any day.

The Zoning Bylaw limits “bed and breakfast” uses to the **RS-4 and RS-4A zones**, of which there are only **six parcels** across the Township. These zones are subject to a range of restrictive development and operational requirements, including:

- Minimum parcel size, lot width, floor area, and setbacks;
- Maximum floor area, building height, and lot coverage; and
- Limits on the number of guest rooms (maximum of three), adult guests (maximum of six), and length of stay (maximum of two weeks).

The requirement to obtain site-specific rezoning to RS-4 or RS-4A, combined with the above zoning constraints, makes it difficult to legally establish and operate a bed and breakfast–style STR in Esquimalt. **There are currently only two licensed bed and breakfast operations in the Township.**

TOURIST ACCOMMODATION

Zoning bylaw definition: “Tourist Accommodation” means Use providing for the accommodation of the travelling public in individual Dwelling Units or sleeping units; may include within the Principal Building dining rooms, meeting rooms and retail sales.

It is the inclusion of “dwelling units” in the above definition that creates an overlap with the general concept of a short-term rental. As discussed in the “**Zoning Bylaw Terms**” section, there is an opportunity to revisit/clarify definitions and distinctions between different types of guest accommodation in Esquimalt moving forward.

At present, The Zoning Bylaw limits “tourist accommodation” use to the following zones.

- **CD-84** – Rosemead parcel
- **CD-102** – Portage West Apartments (former Econolodge Inn and Suites)
 - » Up to 45 units of tourist accommodation are permitted; however, all 96 units on site are currently operating as long-term residences.
- **M-2 / Marine Commercial** – Single parcel. No tourist accommodation units currently operating.
- **C-7A (1 parcel) / West Bay Commercial Zone** – One 4-bedroom home is currently operating as tourist accommodation (485 Head Street).

ZONE M-4 (MARINE NAVIGATION)

Esquimalt’s M-4 zone, which includes the waters of West Bay, does not include float homes as a permitted use. However, because these waters are federally regulated and because there is no federal prohibition on them in this area, a number of float homes continue to be permanently moored there. According to Esquimalt staff, several of these float homes are used, at times, as short-term rentals.

OCP DIRECTION

Esquimalt’s Official Community Plan (2018) provides the following direction related to short-term rentals:

16.4 Tourism

Objective: “Consider land use decisions that help promote tourism”

Policy: “Consider short-term vacation rentals within legal dwelling units, where the dwelling unit is an owner or tenant’s principal residence, for up to 60 days per year.”

SCALE OF THE STR MARKET IN ESQUIMALT

HISTORIC SNAPSHOT

As per a July 15, 2024 Esquimalt staff report, which was based on data from AirNDA (an online STR data service), there were at that time **83 active STR listings** in Esquimalt, broken down as follows:

- 77% of STRs were listed on Airbnb, 7% on VRBO, and 16% on both platforms.
- 16% were private rooms, 84% were entire units.
- Listings by minimum stay: 1 night (18.9%), 2 nights (28.9%), 3 nights (10%), 4-6 nights (9.5%), 7-29 nights (10%), 30+ nights (22.6%).
- The occupancy rate (how often an active property was occupied on average over the last 12 months) was 64%.

CURRENT MONTH SNAPSHOT

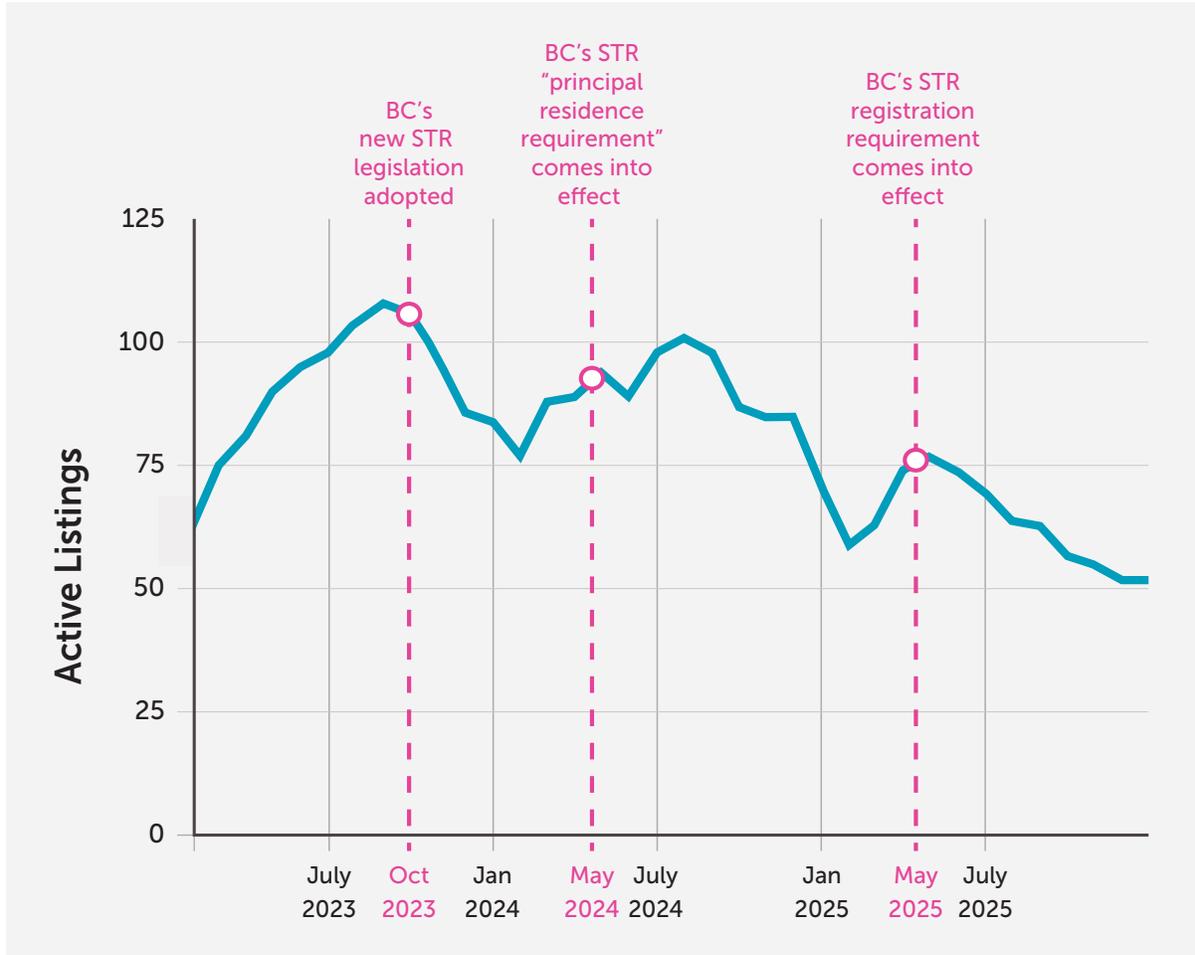
A year and half later, as of January 2026, AirDNA data shows there are **52 active STR listings** in Esquimalt, broken down as follows:

- 83% of STRs were listed on Airbnb, 3% on VRBO, and 14% on both platforms.
- 19% were private rooms, and 81% were entire homes.
- Listings by minimum stay: 1 night (8%), 2 nights (26.5%), 3 nights (8.8%), 4-6 nights (5.3%), 7-29 nights (9.7%), 30+ nights (41.6%).
- The occupancy rate (how often an active property was occupied on average over the last 12 months) was 77%.

LONG-TERM TRENDS

As shown in Figure 1 (data per AirDNA), the number of active listings has been steadily decreasing over the past three years, including after the implementation of the provincial principal residence and registration requirements.

Figure 1: Number of active STR listings in Esquimalt over the past three years



The 3-year trend of declining STR listings in Esquimalt, shown by Figure 1, appears correlated with the adoption of BC's short-term rental legislation (Oct 2023) and its stepwise implementation – via the principal residence requirement (May 2024) and registration requirement (May 2025).

LAST 12 MONTHS

While a detailed analysis of local STR market conditions – enabled by higher-tier third party data subscriptions – was outside the scope of this report, basic AirDNA data can be analyzed to *roughly estimate* the following key impacts over the past 12 months (Feb 2025 to Jan 2026).

- An average of **64 active listings** at any given time.
- Combined availability of all STR listings equivalent to an average of **51 full-time hotel units** (accommodation impact).²
- **22 lost potential homes** as a result of STR activity, calculated using a rough variation of Statistics Canada’s “Potential Long-Term Dwelling” metric (housing supply impact).³ For additional clarity, the PLTD method seeks to estimate the number of units that are unlikely to be someone’s home; it is not capable of estimating how many of these units would actually become long-term housing if STR restrictions were enforced. In other words, it provides a sense of the *general scale* of potential housing loss (not a definitive count).
- **~\$2.8 million in room revenue.**

² Calculated by dividing each month’s AirDNA-reported booking demand by its occupancy rate, and dividing that by the number of calendar days in that month; averaging the last 12 months.

³ The [Statistics Canada PLTD method](#) uses raw, processed AirDNA data to identify the number of unique listings available for more than 180 days per year. We can approximate this method using basic-subscription-level (not raw) AirDNA data as follows: (average active listings) X (% of listings that are entire homes) X (% of listings that are available more than 180 days per year).

CONSIDERATIONS PARTICULAR TO ESQUIMALT

ABSENCE OF LOCAL TOURIST ACCOMMODATION

With the exception of two licensed bed and breakfasts and the boutique Rosemead House Hotel, there is currently no licensed tourist accommodation within the Township. To the extent that Esquimalt wishes to expand its supply of local visitor accommodation, it will need to either broaden the licensing of short-term rentals (in terms of number and/or permitted forms) and/or actively encourage the development of new purpose-built hotels or similar accommodation.

PROXIMITY TO AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THE VICTORIA MARKET

One of the primary reasons Esquimalt has not developed a significant supply of tourist accommodation is its proximity to Victoria. As the region's primary tourism destination, Victoria attracts the majority of investment in purpose-built accommodation, with hotel development tending to concentrate in the downtown and Inner Harbour areas. This dynamic can make it more difficult for adjacent municipalities to attract and sustain hotels, even where demand exists.

HOME TO CFB ESQUIMALT

Royal Canadian Navy personnel assigned to seagoing (ship-based) positions frequently serve on multi-month deployments and may spend a substantial number of days per year at sea. Some of these personnel may benefit from the ability to rent their homes on a short-term basis during deployments, particularly when those homes would otherwise remain vacant.

In addition, the naval base regularly brings a significant number of non-resident contractors, consultants, and Canadian Armed Forces personnel to Esquimalt on temporary assignments. These assignments can range from several weeks to several months in duration. Such non-resident workers would benefit from a greater supply of licensed, temporary accommodation options located near the base, whether in the form of purpose-built commercial accommodation or licensed short-term rentals.

SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN NEW HOUSING

As outlined in the Township’s 2024 Interim Housing Needs Report, the number of units under development at that time substantially exceeded Esquimalt’s estimated five-year housing need and approached its projected twenty-year housing need. The scale of new housing currently in the pipeline is expected to place upward pressure on vacancy rates and, over time, help moderate overall housing pressures arising from a range of factors, including short-term rentals.

However, in considering short-term rental regulations and other housing-related policy measures, it is important to recognize the extent to which housing affordability has deteriorated over the past two decades. Home prices approximately doubled between 2006 and 2019, with the most rapid increases occurring after 2013, alongside a steady escalation in rents and absent a corresponding increase in incomes.⁴ The magnitude and duration of this affordability deterioration indicate that supply growth, while beneficial, may be viewed as one component of a broader policy response rather than a complete solution in itself.

⁴ Capital Regional District Housing Needs Assessment: Township of Esquimalt (2020).

JURISDICTIONAL SCAN (CRD)

A jurisdictional scan of the CRD was conducted to identify how Esquimalt’s regional neighbours are currently regulating short-term rentals. The scope of the jurisdictional scan was as follows.

GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

The scan was limited to municipalities within the Capital Regional District (CRD); it does not include CRD rural electoral areas or gulf islands within the Islands Trust.

TERMINOLOGY

Here, the term **short-term rental** is used to refer to the transient accommodation of paying guests in a residential dwelling unit.

- It does not include *commercial guest accommodation units* (e.g. hotel rooms) listed on STR platforms like Airbnb.
- For clarity, in this study **bed and breakfasts** are considered to be a sub-type of short-term rentals (i.e. part of, not distinct from).

INTERPRETATIONS

The following jurisdictional scan is based purely on the author’s own reading of each jurisdiction’s current bylaws and published guidance (no interviews were conducted).

It is not uncommon for there to be differences in interpretation when it comes to short-term rental regulations; as such, the information below may not perfectly reflect each jurisdiction’s own internal understanding of their bylaws, or how they implement them in practice.

TEMPORARY USE PERMITS

TUPs can be granted to provide special, time-limited, property-by-property STR permissions. Assessing the extent of TUP-granted STR permissions was outside the scope of the study.

SHIFTING NATURE OF REGULATIONS

Short-term rentals remain an active, evolving topic of regulation within and between municipalities. The present jurisdictional scan was primarily limited to a review of **current bylaws and published guidance**.

However, cursory searches of Council minutes and news articles were performed to identify municipalities who seemed to be contemplating near-term future amendments to their approach (i.e. to describe **forward-looking posture**). These searches were cursory in the sense that a brief, time-limited internet search was performed; a thorough review of all Council minutes (e.g. over the past 12 months) was outside the scope of this report.

FOCUS OF THE SCAN

The focus of this jurisdictional scan was to identify and compare each municipality's **fundamental posture** on the issue of short-term rentals. Here, fundamental posture is described by seeking to answer the following four questions for each municipality:

1. Do they explicitly regulate short-term rentals?

Explicit regulation means the term "short-term rental" (or similar) has been added to the bylaw(s). These regulations can be **comprehensive** (involving many adjustments to the regulations), or **basic** (for example, a short definition paired with a blanket prohibition).

Where local governments do not explicitly regulate short-term rentals, the use continues to be prohibited by omission, except in the form of **bed and breakfast** and/or **boarding and lodging** uses.

This first question helps identify those municipalities that have, or have begun, to "modernize" their regulations in response to the changing nature of the industry.

2. How do their current, overall permission levels compare to the provincial 'floor' regulation?

Whether short-term rentals are explicitly or implicitly regulated, each local government's overall permission/restriction level can be compared to the new provincial 'floor' regulation: does it **far exceed the floor**, **exceed the floor**, or is it **about the same**?

Here, "exceed the floor" means the regulations are more restrictive / housing protective.

3. What is the nature of additional restrictions?

In cases where a local government's regulations exceed the provincial floor regulation (are more restrictive / housing protective), what is the specific nature of these restrictions?

4. What is their forward-looking posture?

For example, is there a recorded intention to change the regulations in the near future?

SUMMARY RESULTS

The summary results of the jurisdictional scan are included in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary posture of CRD municipalities on short-term rentals (excluding Esquimalt)

# of CRD Municipalities Explicitly Regulating STRs	Comparison to Provincial STR 'Floor' Regulation	Forward-Looking Posture
<p>7 (of 12)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 via comprehensive regulations 4 via basic regulations (definition + blanket prohibition) <p>(i.e. 5 municipalities maintain implicit regulations)</p>	<p>6 "Far exceed"</p> <p>3 "Exceed"</p> <p>2 "Same/similar"</p> <p>1 "Unclear"</p> <p>("exceed" means the municipality's regulations are more housing protective / restrictive)</p>	<p>4 municipalities</p> <p>were identified as considering, drafting, or signaling forthcoming amendments to their STR regulations.</p>

- As shown in Table 3, a modest majority of CRD municipalities are now explicitly regulating short-term rentals, but only 3 via comprehensive modernized regulations.
- The provincial STR legislative framework anticipates that some local governments will choose to mirror the level of restriction/permission in the province's 'floor' principal residence regulation. The Province also anticipates some local governments may choose to exceed this 'floor', by designing a system that is more restrictive/housing protective.

As shown in Table 3, 9 of 12 municipalities have chosen to exceed the provincial floor (6 of whom are *far* exceeding the floor).

DETAILED RESULTS

Table 4: Detailed posture of CRD municipalities on short-term rentals (Esquimalt included for reference)

Municipality	Are STRs explicitly regulated? (mentioned and defined in bylaws)	Comparison to provincial 'floor' regulation	Nature of additional restrictions (beyond the provincial floor)	Forward-looking posture
Victoria	Yes (comprehensive)	Far exceeds (far more restrictive / housing protective)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must reside in the dwelling unit (cannot operate other units/suites on the lot) Can rent whole unit up to 160 nights/year (while you're away) Otherwise limited to 2 bedrooms. 	Focused on increasing compliance
Saanich	Yes (basic prohibition)	Far exceeds (far more restrictive / housing protective)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blanket prohibition of STRs that aren't B&Bs <p>For B&Bs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must reside in the dwelling unit Max of 40m² or 20% of floor area of all structures on the lot 	No new intent identified by the scan
Central Saanich	Yes (basic prohibition)	Far exceeds (far more restrictive / housing protective)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Along with B&Bs, limited to a single tourist commercial zone (prohibited in all residential zones) 	No new intent identified by the scan
View Royal	Yes (basic prohibition)	Far exceeds (far more restrictive / housing protective)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blanket prohibition of STRs that aren't B&Bs <p>For B&Bs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must reside in the dwelling unit Max of 40% of the dwelling unit Can't be on the same lot as a secondary suite or garden suite Max guest stay of 60 nights/yr. 	Granting a 1-month "amnesty" / non-enforcement period during the 2026 FIFA tournament

Municipality	Are STRs explicitly regulated? (mentioned and defined in bylaws)	Comparison to provincial 'floor' regulation	Nature of additional restrictions (beyond the provincial floor)	Forward-looking posture
Oak Bay	Yes (basic prohibition)	Far exceeds (far more restrictive / housing protective)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STRs are subject to a blanket prohibition (nor are B&Bs defined use in the LUB) Council recently voted to have the following regulations <i>drafted</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 1 STR per principal residence lot, up to a maximum of 60 days per year. 	Bylaw amendments pending
Sidney	Yes (comprehensive)	Exceeds (more restrictive / housing protective)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only 2 bedrooms per lot 	No new intent identified by the scan
Sooke	Yes (comprehensive)	Exceeds (more restrictive / housing protective)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only allowed in single-family residential zones 	No new intent identified by the scan
Colwood	Partial (defined in Business License Bylaw but not yet in Land Use Bylaw)	The same/very similar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BLB definition and regulations align with the provincial floor The LUB hasn't been updated, and STR permissions seem to flow from definitions of "boarders" and "lodgers" 	Actively considering modernization
Metchosin	Partial (defined in Business License Bylaw but not yet in Land Use Bylaw)	Unclear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metchosin proceeded with business licensing prior to LUB amendments as a strategy to collect more information. However, this approach has contributed to certain contradictions between published statements and guidance, and the actual bylaws, such that the exact permission level is unclear. 	Actively consulting and evaluating OCP and LUB changes, with STRs a stated priority

Municipality	Are STRs explicitly regulated? (mentioned and defined in bylaws)	Comparison to provincial 'floor' regulation	Nature of additional restrictions (beyond the provincial floor)	Forward-looking posture
North Saanich	No (prohibited by omission, except in the form of B&Bs)	Far exceeds (far more restrictive / housing protective)	STRs in the form of B&Bs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has to be in a single-family dwelling Secondary suite STRs in many cases prohibited by virtue of floor area restriction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Max of 46m² or 20% of principal building 2 bedroom, 4 guest limit 	OCP includes a commitment to develop an STR policy and guidelines, but timeline unclear
Esquimalt	No (prohibited by omission, except in the form of B&Bs)	Far exceeds (far more restrictive / housing protective)	STRs in the form of B&Bs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited to a handful of spot-zoned parcels. Must be in a single-family dwelling 14 other categories of requirements per Zones RS4 and RS4A. 	Actively considering modernization (per this study and associated project)
Langford	No (prohibited by omission, except in the form of B&Bs)	Exceeds (more restrictive / housing protective)	STRs in the form of B&Bs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detached ADUs cannot be used 4 guest, 2 bedroom limit Must serve breakfast 	No new intent identified by the scan
Highlands	No (prohibited by omission, except in the form of B&Bs)	The same/ very similar	STRs in the form of B&Bs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 guest limit 	No new intent identified by the scan

REGULATORY VARIETY

There is an immense degree of regulatory variety when it comes to short-term rentals.

For example, as shown in Figure 2 – which is grounded in real-world Canadian examples – STRs can be regulated by **zone, unit and lot residency, unit typology, intensity** and **density**, with multiple options for each, and ways to design each option to be more or less restrictive/permissive.

Figure 2: Major categories of short-term rental restrictions

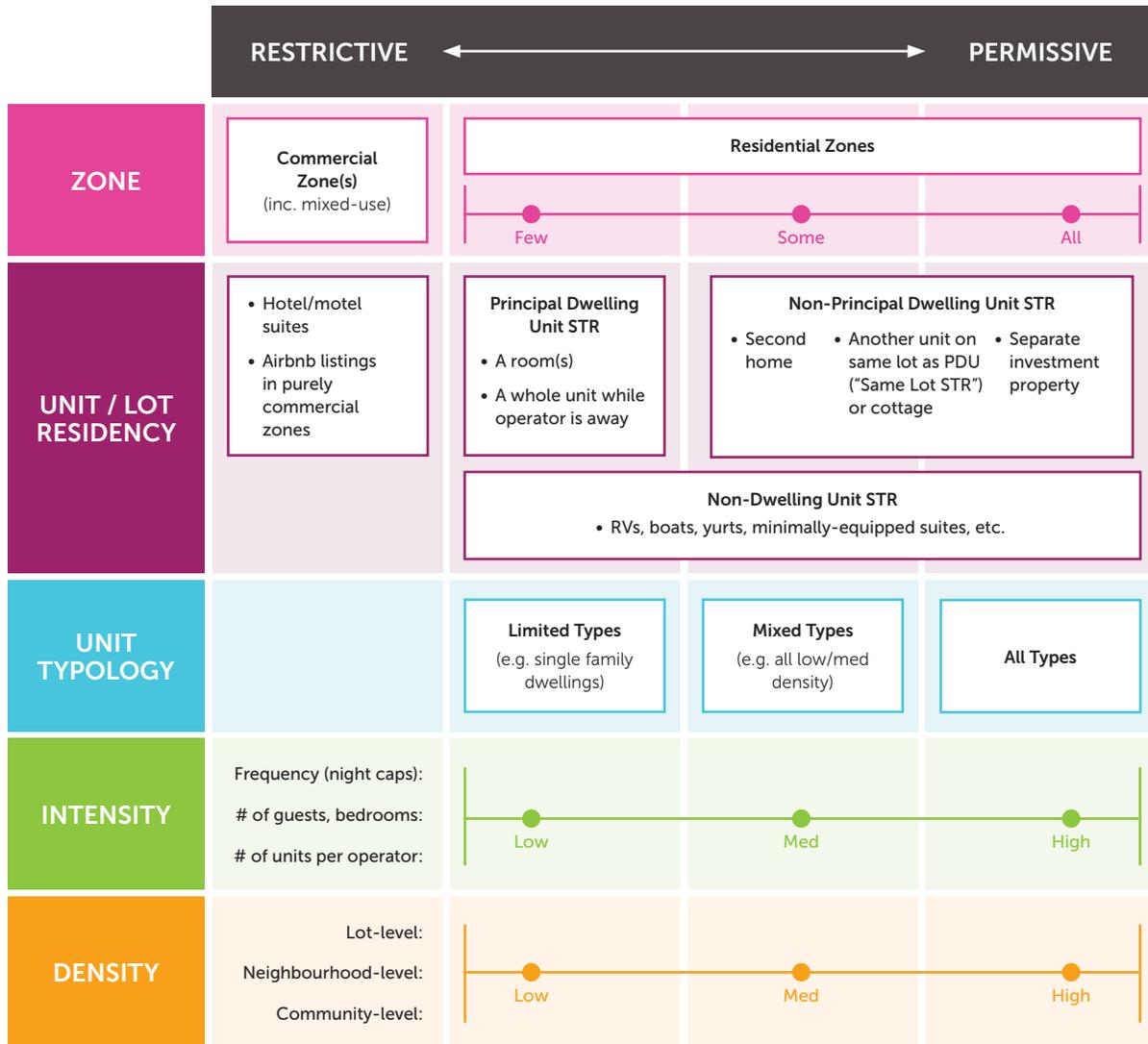


Table 5, below, shows the wide variety of approaches being taken across the CRD in terms of these major categories of regulation. The basic takeaway *is* the wide variety of approaches across the CRD (no one approach dominates across the region).

For clarity, Table 5 includes all regulations of short-term rentals, including both explicit short-term rental regulations and B&B regulations (recalling that this study treats B&Bs as a subtype of short-term rental).

Table 5: Regulatory variety across the CRD (in addition to the provincial floor regulation; Esquimalt included for reference)

Category of STR or B&B restriction	Municipality	Details
Zone	Sooke	Limited to single family residential zones
	Central Saanich	Limited to zone C-5 (a tourist commercial zone)
	Metchosin	Explicit prohibition in ALR lands/zones.
Unit and lot residency (above and beyond the provincial 'floor' principal resident requirement)	Victoria	Limited to "In-Home" / "Principal Dwelling Unit" rentals (cannot use any other attached or detached suites or ADUs)
	Saanich and View Royal	As above ("In-Home" style restriction), but via B&B regulations; non-B&B STRs are prohibited.
Unit typology	North Saanich, Esquimalt	Limited to single family dwellings
	Langford	Prohibited in detached accessory dwelling units
	View Royal	Prohibited on lots that have a secondary suite or garden suite
	Sooke	<i>By virtue of the zone restriction</i> , prohibited in apartment, condo, townhome units, or other attached multi-family/unit typologies

Category of STR or B&B restriction	Municipality	Details
Intensity	Bedroom Limits	
	Sidney, North Saanich, and Langford	Limited to 2 bedrooms
	Victoria	Limited to 2 bedrooms (when not being used as whole-unit rental)
	Metchosin, Esquimalt	Limited to 3 bedrooms
	Floor area limits	
	View Royal	Limited to 40% of the dwelling unit
	North Saanich	Limited to 46m ² or 20% of principal building (whichever is less)
	Saanich	Limited to 40m ² or 20% of floor area of all structures on the lot (whichever is less)
	Guest limits	
	North Saanich, and Langford	Limited to 4 guests
	Highlands	Limited to 8 guests
	Metchosin	Limited to 4 guests (STRs), 6 guests (B&Bs)
	Esquimalt	Limited to 6 guests
	Night caps	
	Victoria	Whole unit ("principal dwelling unit") rentals limited to 160 nights per year
	View Royal	Individual guests limited to 60 nights/year
Esquimalt	Individual guest parties limited to stays not exceeding 2 weeks	
Oak Bay	<i>[Council direction, not yet in bylaws]:</i> limited to 60 days/year (total, all guests)	
Density	Oak Bay	<i>[Council direction, not yet in bylaws]:</i> limited to 1 STR unit per lot

TIME THRESHOLDS

One of the specific decisions Esquimalt needs to make is what – if any – time threshold to use to define short-term rental use going forward. This topic is discussed in more detail in the [Detailed Decisions](#) section.

However, in service of the jurisdictional scan, Table 6 summarizes the thresholds currently being used across the CRD and at the provincial level.

Table 6: Time thresholds for defining short-term rental and/or bed and breakfast use across the municipalities of the CRD

Time threshold*	Jurisdictions
90 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Province of BC Sidney (for explicitly-regulated STRs) Colwood (for explicitly-regulated STRs) Central Saanich (for explicitly-regulated STRs)
30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victoria (for explicitly-regulated STRs) Saanich (for explicitly-regulated STRs) Sooke (for explicitly-regulated STRs) Metchosin (for explicitly-regulated STRs) Oak Bay (for explicitly-regulated STRs) North Saanich (for B&Bs) Central Saanich (for B&Bs) View Royal (for B&Bs)
None identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metchosin (for B&Bs) Langford (for B&Bs) Highlands (for B&Bs) Saanich (for B&Bs) Esquimalt (for B&Bs)

*As per the actual bylaws or identified published guidance/statements (where "none identified" there may be internal/unpublished interpretations that utilize a specific threshold).

REGULATORY OPTIONS

As evidenced by the jurisdictional scan, a wide range of regulatory approaches to short-term rentals remain available within the parameters of provincial legislation.

To facilitate meaningful public engagement, these approaches were simplified into two primary options for community feedback (Options 1 and 2, below).

Option 1 (In-Home Permissions) was presented because it is the most permissive regulatory framework available while remaining aligned with best practices for protecting long-term housing supply and affordability — a common local priority.

Option 2 (Home Lot Permissions) was presented because it reflects the minimum regulatory standard required under current BC legislation (the “floor” level of provincially-mandated housing protection).

In addition, this report introduces **Option 3 (Customized Regulations)** as a flexible category encompassing alternative approaches that Council may wish to consider. Under this heading, the report outlines two illustrative regulatory models the Township could pursue. Each represents a variation on Option 1 or Option 2.

1 OPTION 1: IN-HOME PERMISSIONS

In this option, short-term rentals would be allowed in the specific dwelling unit/suite of rooms that the operator uses as their home (not including any secondary/basement suites in the same building or detached suites on the same lot).

- “Home” can be defined in different ways, but in general terms is the usual place where one lives;
- This would allow residents to short-term rent **one or more rooms in their home unit** while they were present (similar to bed and breakfast use);
- This would also allow residents to short-term rent **their entire home** while they were away (e.g. for work or leisure).
- For clarity, short-term renting of any separate suites on the operator’s home lot (e.g. basement suites or detached suites) would not be allowed.

REGIONAL COMPARISON

With reference to the Jurisdictional Scan, Option 1 would be:

- **More permissive** than current regulations in Esquimalt, Saanich, View Royal, North Saanich, Central Saanich and Oak Bay.
- **Similar** to current regulations in Victoria.
- **Less permissive** than current regulations in Sooke (at least for single family lots), Sidney, and Colwood (per business licensing, if not the zoning bylaw).

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligns with 2018 OCP policy direction (<i>though without that policy's proposed 60 night cap</i>) • Would permit many licensed STRs, while still aligning with best practice for protecting long-term housing supply and affordability.* <p>*For clarity, this is best practice for protecting housing not because <i>every single</i> secondary suite or garden suite (for example) will stay/become long-term housing if STR use is prohibited (the preferences and circumstances of individual owners will continue to dictate their use); rather, the protective effect works at scale, marketwide, and over the long term (with <i>some proportion</i> of dwelling units protected/added to the long-term housing stock because of the economic incentive created by Option 1-style STR restrictions).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would continue to prohibit many currently-operating (though unlicensed) STRs taking place in e.g. secondary suites and detached suites, which are providing well-utilized guest accommodation. • Would prohibit the creation of new dedicated* short-term rental accommodation units, for which there may be demand. <p>*Dedicated as in: not used for residential purposes, purely an STR unit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less homeowner flexibility, control and revenue.

2 OPTION 2: HOME LOT PERMISSIONS

This Option aligns with the provincial “**principal residence requirement**”, which currently applies to Esquimalt and sets the legislated “floor” / minimum amount of housing protection.

In this option, up to two short-term rental units would be permitted on the operator’s home lot, including: (1) their home dwelling unit (the whole unit or a portion thereof), and (2) up to one separate unit like a secondary suite or detached suite.

- “Home” can be defined in different ways, but in general terms is the usual place where one lives;
- This would allow residents to short-term rent **one or more rooms** in their home dwelling unit while they were present (similar to bed and breakfast use);

- This would allow residents to short-term rent **their entire home** while they were away (e.g. for work or leisure).
- **Distinct from Option 1**, this would also allow residents to use up to **one additional dwelling unit on their home lot as a dedicated short-term rental** (e.g. a basement suite or garden suite).
- For duplexes, condominiums, etc. “lot” refers to the specific ownership parcel, not the entire building. I.e. in these typologies short-term rentals would remain limited to the operator’s home dwelling unit.

REGIONAL COMPARISON

With reference to the Jurisdictional Scan, Option 2 would be:

- **More permissive** than all other CRD municipalities except for Colwood (per their business license bylaw if not yet their zoning/land use bylaw), and potentially Highlands (by virtue of their relatively permissive B&B regulations).
- **Similar** to current regulations in Colwood and Highlands (per the above notes).
- **The maximum permission level** currently allowed in all CRD municipalities.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would enable the legal operation of many currently-operating STRs taking place in e.g. secondary suites and detached suites, which are providing well-utilized guest accommodation. • Would encourage residents to convert more e.g. secondary suites and detached suites to STR use, adding to the Township’s stock of guest accommodation. • Easy and simple for operators and everyone to understand (because it aligns with provincial regulations). • More homeowner flexibility, control, and revenue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would provide the minimum amount of protection for long-term housing (both supply and affordability) allowed by the province. <p>Such that Option 2 would likely lead to an increase in local dwelling units being converted to STR use, over time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would further worsen the business case for new purpose-built guest accommodation (to the extent this is a possibility at all).

3 OPTION 3: CUSTOMIZED REGULATIONS

This option is intended as a flexible category encompassing all other alternative approaches Council may wish to consider, with reference to the major categories of restriction summarized in Figure 2.

Below, two example alternatives are described, including the kinds of policy goals each would tend to advance, with key considerations.

OPTION 3A

The same as Option 1, but with an annual limit on the number of nights that entire dwelling units could be rented out.

In other words, residents could still rent out their entire home dwelling unit while away for work or leisure, but this would be capped at a certain number of nights per calendar year. There would be no limit on the number of nights private room(s) could be rented out (while the operator was there).

Goals

As with Option 1, this approach is highly protective of long-term housing and the residential character of neighbourhoods. The goals served by the annual limit depend on the precise limit that is set. For example:

- Setting a **180 night limit** (roughly half a year) would enable resident navy personnel, for example, to short-term rent their entire homes while deployed (if annual deployments tend to be at or below that limit). This limit simultaneously helps guard against fraudulent or questionable claims of principal residency (e.g. scenarios where someone claims a unit as their home but in reality short-term rents it for most of the year).
- Setting a lower annual limit, for example the **60 night limit** put forward in Esquimalt's 2018 OCP, wouldn't meaningfully increase the degree of housing protection; instead it would tend to serve goals related to moderating the intensity of STR activity (e.g. to mitigate against perceived nuisances related to parking, neighbourhood feel, etc.).

Considerations

- This Option reflects Victoria's current regulations (which puts a **160 night limit** on whole unit rentals).
- This Option also reflects Esquimalt's 2018 OCP policy direction (which described a **60 night limit**). Regionally, Oak Bay Council has also recently directed staff to prepare draft regulations that include a 60 night limit.
- The limit would be relatively straightforward to enforce through data shared by the province (the province tracks the number of nights booked for each registered unit).

OPTION 3B

The same as Option 2, but with a limit/quota on the number of business licenses granted for non-principal dwelling unit STRs.

In other words, the Township would cap the number of total licenses for secondary suites, garden suites and other non-principal dwelling unit STRs at a certain number. There would be no limit on licenses for principal dwelling unit STRs (short-term renting of one's home dwelling unit).

Goals

This approach reflects a middle ground between Option 1 and Option 2. It would enable a set amount of new licensed guest accommodation in recognition of the Township's current scarcity – including some proportion of Esquimalt's established unlicensed operators – while somewhat limiting the housing impacts of non-principal dwelling unit STRs.

Considerations

- The City of Nelson is the most prominent example of a community in BC that sets STR license quotas. Noting, however, that Nelson's quota system is relatively complex, with three different residential STR license types, distinct quotas for two of those types, as well as per-block limits on the total number of licenses.
- By comparison to Nelson, Option 3B is presented as a relatively simple quota of 'X' licenses for all non-principal dwelling unit STRs, regardless of location.
- As in Nelson, licenses can be granted on a first-come-first-served basis, and would be non-transferable (as per Esquimalt's current business license bylaw).
- The quota could be adjusted upward as needed, or slowly downward through gradual lapsing of licenses.
- This option can be thought of as granting permission to a "virtual hotel", with a known number of dedicated, non-principal dwelling unit STR suites distributed throughout the community.

ADDITIONAL ALTERNATIVES

As demonstrated in the Jurisdictional Scan, as well as in Esquimalt's bed and breakfast regulations, there are numerous potential permutations and combinations of regulatory restrictions that Council could consider. These may include various forms of intensity controls that can be layered onto any of the options described above, such as limits on the number of bedrooms or the maximum number of guests.

While there is substantial regional and provincial precedent for these additional restrictions, it is advisable for communities to identify clear and prioritized policy objectives before adopting them. Absent a defined and high-priority purpose, such measures risk adding complexity to the regulatory framework without delivering corresponding public benefit.

SUMMARY ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

FORMAT AND PARTICIPANTS

The Short-Term Rental Policy Analysis project included an initial round of public engagement consisting of an **open house** held on November 26, 2025, and an **online survey** open from November 19 to December 17, 2025.

A total of **179 contributors completed the online survey**, and **51 people participated at the open house**.

Of the survey contributors:

- **143 were registered** with the Township’s engagement platform (they have gone through a process to be verified as an individual with a legitimate email address).
- **36 were unverified** (not verified as a unique individual with a valid email address).
- **153 were Esquimalt homeowners** (self-identified).
- **18 were Esquimalt renters** (self-identified).
- **14 identified as Esquimalt business owners** (self-identified).

CAUTIONS REGARDING INTERPRETATION

The open house provided an in-person, discussion-based setting that may have attracted participants with a particular interest in short-term rentals (for example, STR operators and their families).

The overall survey sample size (179 responses) is modest relative to the Township’s population. In addition, it is likely that some individuals who attended the open house also completed the online survey, meaning the two datasets are not independent.

Accordingly, the results should be interpreted as illustrative of the range of perspectives expressed through this engagement process, rather than as statistically representative findings of the broader community.

The Esquimalt Chamber of Commerce also helpfully – and separately – engaged 22 member and non-member businesses, including in an online survey (their results and general commentary are included in [Appendix C](#)).

PURPOSE

The purpose of this round of public engagement was to better understand resident and business views on:

- **Regulatory preferences** – specifically, between two basic options (Options 1 and 2, described above).
- The potential impacts of short-term rentals – both positive and negative – including by way of assessing **participants' priority goals** for STR regulations.
- The **level of interest in operating different types of short-term rentals**.

REGULATORY PREFERENCES

When asked to choose between **Option 1 (In-Home Permissions)** and **Option 2 (Home Lot Permissions)**, **survey responses were relatively evenly divided**, with 46% selecting Option 1 and 54% selecting Option 2.

In contrast, **participants at the Open House expressed a near-unanimous preference for Option 2**, with approximately 94% indicating support for that approach.

The difference between the survey and Open House results likely reflects variations in participant composition. Informal discussions at the Open House suggested that a disproportionate number of attendees were current or recent short-term rental operators, or family members of operators.

While the sample size of known renters was small (18 online survey respondents), **72% of these renters preferred Option 1 (In-Home Permissions)**, contrasted with **62% of homeowners who preferred Option 2 (Home Lot Permissions)**.

PRIORITY GOALS

Participants in the online survey and open house were asked to rank the importance of a selection of common policy goals related to short-term rental regulation.

This exercise was designed to assess the degree of alignment between participants' stated regulatory preferences and the policy goals they identified as most important.

Of the six goals presented, two were most closely aligned with **Regulatory Option 1 (In-Home Permissions)**, specifically:

- Protecting long-term housing for residents
- Protecting the residential character of neighbourhoods

Two other goals were more closely aligned with **Regulatory Option 2 (Home Lot Permissions)**, which contemplates a more permissive approach, specifically:

- Creating STR accommodation for non-resident workers and visitors
- Providing property owners with greater revenue opportunities, flexibility, and control

The remaining two goals were more **neutral in their relationship to Options 1 and 2**, as they could reasonably be advanced under either framework, specifically:

- Protecting on-street parking
- Avoiding nuisances such as garbage and noise

As shown by Figures 3 and 4, there was a sharp distinction between the survey and open house results.

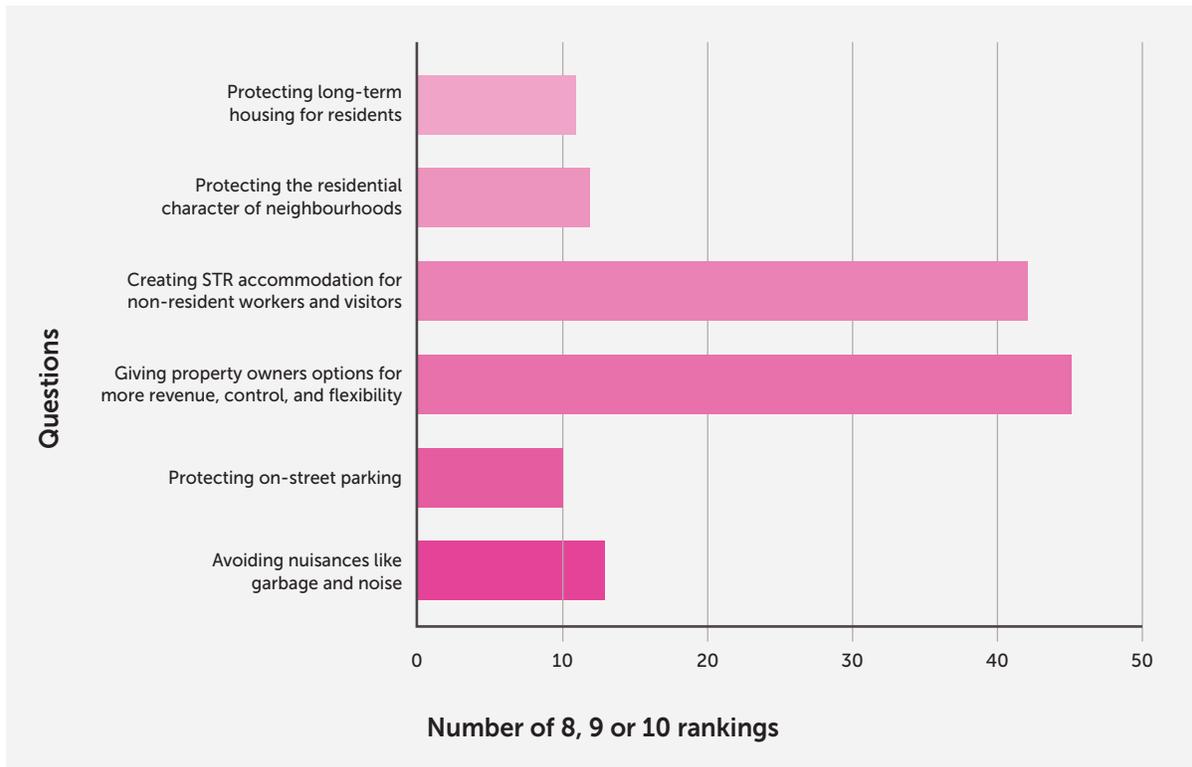
Survey participants' priority goals were relatively evenly divided between those aligned with Option 1, and those aligned with Option 2, with many prioritizing the neutral goals, as well.

By contrast, the priority goals of open house participants were clearly in alignment with a more permissive approach to short-term rentals, with relatively little emphasis on the neutral goals.

Figure 3: Number of high-priority ratings (8–10) by policy goal – online survey



Figure 4: Number of high-priority ratings (8–10) by policy goal – open house



INTEREST IN OPERATING SHORT-TERM RENTALS

When asked if they were interested in operating a short-term rental, **57% of survey participants indicated “Yes” or “Maybe”**.

When asked to elaborate on what type of short-term rentals participants were interested in operating, participants indicated a range of interest, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Types of short-term rental units respondents were interested in operating

Type of short-term rental	Survey	Open House
One or more rooms in your principal residence (while you are there)	52 (28%)	11 (20%)
Your entire principal residence (while you’re away)	50 (27%)	19 (35%)
A separate suite on your home lot	75 (40%)	21 (39%)
A unit that is not on your home lot	11 (6%)	3 (6%)

**Participants could select more than one option, therefore the percentages should be understood as percentage of total interest (not percentage of participants); percentages are rounded and don’t necessarily sum to 100.*

OPEN-ENDED COMMENTS

Open-ended comments submitted through the online survey and at the open house reflect a range of perspectives on short-term rental (STR) regulation in Esquimalt.

A significant number of respondents support permitting STRs via the Option 2 “home-lot” model. These participants generally distinguish between owner-occupied STRs and investor-operated whole-home rentals, expressing support for restrictions that prevent commercial-scale operations while allowing homeowners flexibility. Many also cite local economic benefits, noting that STRs can increase visitor spending in Esquimalt and provide accommodation options in a community with limited licensed tourist lodging.

At the same time, a clearly articulated subset of comments prioritizes the protection of long-term rental supply and housing affordability. These respondents express concern that whole-home STRs may reduce available rental stock and contribute to price pressures, and some advocate for more restrictive approaches, including limiting STRs to host-present arrangements or to purpose-built commercial accommodation only.

Across perspectives, there is general acceptance of licensing, taxation, and standards related to parking, noise, and neighbour impacts. The primary point of divergence is not whether STRs should be regulated, but rather where the appropriate regulatory boundary lies between housing protection, and homeowner flexibility and visitor accommodation.

A detailed thematic synthesis of open-ended commentary is provided in [Appendix C](#).

DETAILED DECISIONS

In addition to selecting a basic regulatory approach (for example, one of the options outlined above), the Township will need to make a number of detailed policy decisions to fully establish the regulatory regime, as described below. Additional matters may arise during the bylaw drafting process.

ZONING BYLAW TERMS

As part of modernizing their short-term rental regulations, local governments must decide **which terms to use** in their zoning bylaw going forward, and **how each term is formally defined and distinct from other uses**.

For example, Esquimalt's current Zoning Bylaw includes "bed and breakfast" and "tourist accommodation" terms/land uses.

Moving forward, the Township could:

- Retain "bed and breakfast" as a distinct land use; or
- Unify the current historic bed and breakfast use under a new and inclusive term/set of terms that more closely align with:
 - » The nature of modern short-term rentals, including **private room rentals** and **whole unit rentals**; and
 - » The chosen regulatory approach and any distinctions it makes (e.g. between **principal dwelling unit STRs**, and **non-principal dwelling unit STRs** if permitted).

Retaining existing "bed and breakfast" terminology is sometimes chosen where:

- There are many licensed B&B businesses that understand and are in compliance with existing regulations, and the local government does not wish to burden these operators with a new regulatory system; and/or
- The intent is to largely prohibit non-B&B short-term rentals (e.g. as in Saanich, View Royal), such that currently-defined bed and breakfasts remain the only type of permitted STR.

Otherwise, the advantages of unifying historic B&B use under a new term/term set include:

- Clarity and consistency in the modernized regulations.
- Recognition that both B&Bs and STRs involve the use of residential dwelling units for temporary guest accommodation, and that this is arguably the core aspect of land use to regulate (vs. the presence or absence of breakfast, for example).

- Sub-types of STRs can be created in the bylaws for local governments that wish to treat private room STRs (akin to B&Bs) differently from whole-unit rentals.

Similarly, moving forward, the Township could:

- Retain the existing “tourist accommodation” definition; or
- Amend the definition to create/ensure a sharper distinction between hotels and short-term rentals, for example.

TIME THRESHOLDS

There are three common approaches to using time thresholds (or not) in defining various forms of residential guest accommodation (including short-term rentals and subtypes like B&Bs):

90 DAYS	The new provincial threshold, and increasingly common amongst modernized local regulations.
30 DAYS	Common in the “first wave” of modern short-term rental regulations (e.g. circa 2018-2022), and also common in bed and breakfast regulations.
NONE	Somewhat common in bed and breakfast regulations, where the use is defined in general terms like “transient” or “temporary” accommodation, without a hard threshold being specified. Also used in some modernized short-term rental regulations (e.g. Town of Gibsons) where STRs (“residential guest accommodation”) refers to any instance where a dwelling unit is being used for paid accommodation that isn’t a residential tenancy.

Refer back to [Table 6](#) – in the Jurisdictional Scan section – for a summary of how other CRD municipalities are using time thresholds in their regulations.

Table 8: Advantages and disadvantages of three common approaches to time thresholds in short-term rental regulations

Threshold	Advantages	Disadvantages
90 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplifies joint enforcement and data sharing with the province. • Less confusing for operators than having distinct local and provincial thresholds. • More housing-protective (will decrease housing lost to 30-90 day rentals). • Brings a greater proportion of the market for residential guest accommodation into the business licensing and regulatory system (i.e. leads to smaller “grey” areas). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More burdensome for operators specializing in 30-90 day rentals (who could go unlicensed under a 30-day threshold). • >90 day rentals that don’t meet the provincial test for residential tenancy remain in an unregulated grey zone.
30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slightly more common (e.g. regionally) than a 90 day threshold, such that some people may be more accustomed to it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaves 30-90 day rentals locally-unregulated, even though their impacts will be similar to <30 day rentals. <i>Note: January 2026 data reveal 42% of STR units in Esquimalt had a 30+ night minimum stay (i.e. would remain unregulated under a 30-day definition).</i> • More confusing for everyone involved because it introduces two different time thresholds for the same activity (a local one and a provincial one).
None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully inclusive of all non-tenancy arrangements (regardless of their exact duration). I.e. brings all non-tenancy accommodation uses of dwelling units into the business licensing and regulatory system (eliminates any time-based regulatory grey zones). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In an attempt to avoid <i>Residential Tenancy Act</i> provisions, owners may seek to label a use as “short-term rental”, while in substance operating a tenancy. However, the actual test for provincially-deemed tenancy doesn’t change, so the disadvantage is in owners <i>perceiving</i> a loophole vs. there actually being one (i.e. the disadvantage is in needing to be mindful of another aspect of enforcement and deterrence).

DEFINITION OF HOME

The province defines a **principal residence** – in its *Short-Term Rental Accommodations Act* – as “the usual place where an individual makes the individual’s home.”

While the Act doesn’t set a rigid test for “usual place”, the following types of criteria can be used in a determination:

- Is it where the individual spends most of the year, or where they spend more time than any other place?
- Is it the billing address used on utility and tax accounts and/or on personal identification?

To help address some of the ambiguity of this definition, some local governments do one or more of the following.

- Add clarity by referring to one’s **principal dwelling unit**, to help distinguish the dwelling unit from any other dwelling units on the same lot.
- Choose to define a specific length of time an STR owner must live in a dwelling unit for it to be classified as their home or principal dwelling unit for the purposes of STR regulations (e.g. 6 months, 8 months, etc.).

Cautionary note: a firm threshold is impossible to enforce; some local governments therefore mention a certain number of months or days as illustrative of residence (vs. definitive of residence).

- Require at least one piece of government issued photo identification and one other principal residence supportive document (e.g. ICBC certificate of insurance or homeowner grant declaration confirmation, etc.).
- Set a cap on the number of nights an entire dwelling unit can be rented out per calendar year (e.g. 160 nights), to enforce a mostly-residential character on that dwelling unit.

ENFORCEMENT APPROACH

Enforcement of short-term rental regulations can either be **proactive** or **complaints-based**.

Proactive enforcement is best practice because it has a better chance of ensuring compliance – and through compliance – achieving one’s regulatory goals (e.g. protection of potential long-term housing, guest safety, etc.).

Proactive enforcement of short-term rental regulations is now also easier, thanks to provincial data-sharing and the province’s own enforcement layer.

However, proactive enforcement requires more staff time. While business license fees can be set in an attempt to recoup these costs, for smaller markets like Esquimalt these may

not amount to much. In this scenario, a feasible way to pursue proactive enforcement can be when the local government decides they could use some additional bylaw capacity anyway – for a range of reasons – with the new short-term rental tasks rolled into a broader scope of work for a new hire(s).

Even if a community maintains a complaint-based approach to enforcement of other bylaws, a proactive enforcement to STR regulations can be justified by their more serious potential impacts (e.g. on housing supply and affordability).

BUSINESS LICENSE FEES

Business license fees for short-term rentals are often set at similar levels to other kinds of home occupation/home businesses. For example, across the CRD license fees for both explicitly-defined short-term rentals and bed and breakfasts range from **\$50 to \$200**.

However, in communities that have decided to pursue a **proactive enforcement approach**, significantly higher fees are sometimes charged for **non-principal dwelling unit STRs** in light of:

- Their greater impact (e.g. on housing).
- Their greater profitability, and by association the greater lengths to which operators will sometimes go to avoid/circumvent regulations (requiring more intense enforcement).

For example:

- The District of Squamish currently charges an annual license fee of **\$400** for principal dwelling unit STRs, and **\$3,000** for non-principal dwelling unit STRs.
- Prior to the introduction of BC's new STR legislation, the City of Victoria charged an annual fee of **\$1,500** to non-principal dwelling unit STRs; these are now prohibited entirely.

OWNER AND STRATA PERMISSIONS

It is best practice to require STR operators, via their business license applications, to **submit proof of owner and/or strata permissions**, as applicable.

There are plentiful examples of STR owner/landlord and strata permission forms being used across BC, which Esquimalt could largely copy-and-paste/adapt for use in the Township.

GUEST SAFETY

Performing a site inspection as part of initial business licensing can help verify the legality of the dwelling unit, and give local inspectors a chance to flag any code-related safety issues.

Operators can also be asked, via their business license application, to verify that a number of basic safety measures are in place. For example, see Appendix D for an example **Guest Safety Attestation and Evacuation Plan** currently in use in the Town of Gibsons.

Municipalities would not have an exposure to third party liability claims for bodily injury or property damage arising out of the business licensing process. However, a local government could include a standard indemnity clause within the business licence for STRs, if concerned/advised to by legal counsel.

DESIGNATED RESPONSIBLE PERSON

Many local governments require STR operators, as part of their business license application, to identify a **designated responsible person** who is locally available to respond to complaints or property-related emergencies.

The designated responsible person may be the owner, another local individual, or a local property management company. This requirement helps ensure that, even when the STR operator is not present, there is a clear and reliable point of local contact able to address issues in a timely manner.

PARKING

Requiring some degree of dedicated off-street parking for short-term rentals can help mitigate concerns about pressure on neighbourhood on-street parking.

At the same time, parking requirements that are too prescriptive or poorly calibrated can function as an indirect and unintended prohibition on certain forms of STR use—particularly larger dwelling units—without necessarily advancing parking management objectives.

For example, if Esquimalt’s existing parking requirements for **bed and breakfasts** (one off-street parking space per rentable room) were applied to STRs, it would:

Effectively prohibit many whole-unit rentals, particularly homes with three or more bedrooms but only one or two off-street parking spaces; and

- Often fail to reflect actual parking demand, such as when a single guest party rents an entire dwelling and uses only one or two vehicles regardless of bedroom count.
- In light of these trade-offs, Table 9 provides four broad approaches communities can consider.

With any approach, STR operators can be required – as part of their business license application – to submit a parking plan showing where guests are supposed to park. This plan can then be posted in the STR unit.

Table 9: Options for STR parking requirements

Option	Description	Potential Benefits	Key Limitations / Risks	Best Fit When
Per-Bedroom Parking Requirement	Requires one or more off-street parking spaces based on the number of rentable rooms or bedrooms (e.g., 1 space per bedroom).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiar and easy to understand Signals responsiveness to neighbourhood parking concerns Simple to administer and enforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can effectively prohibit larger STR units in existing homes Often overestimates actual parking demand Functions as an indirect cap on STR size rather than parking impact 	Parking pressure is severe and Council intends to tightly limit STR scale
Modest, Capped Minimum Parking Requirement	Requires a low, fixed number of off-street spaces per STR unit (e.g., 1 space per dwelling), regardless of bedroom count.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balances neighbourhood concerns with feasibility Avoids penalizing larger homes where vehicle use may not scale with bedrooms More achievable for existing housing stock 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May not fully address parking concerns in constrained areas Still excludes properties with no off-street parking 	Council seeks a middle ground that mitigates impacts without broadly restricting STRs
No Additional Parking Requirement	No STR-specific parking requirement beyond what is already required for residential use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoids indirect prohibition through parking standards Reflects that STR parking demand is often similar to long-term residential use Simple and consistent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May heighten concern in neighbourhoods with limited curbside parking Relies on other tools (complaints, permits) to manage impacts 	Parking impacts are limited or addressed through other on-street parking controls
Context-Sensitive or Exempted Requirements	Parking requirements vary by context (e.g., hosted vs. non-hosted, proximity to transit, multi-unit buildings, downtown areas).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligns regulation with actual conditions and impacts Reduces unnecessary barriers in low-impact areas Supports broader mobility, housing, and climate goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More complex to explain and administer Requires clear criteria to avoid confusion or inequity 	Council seeks a tailored approach aligned with land use and transportation policy

PENALTIES

British Columbia's *Short-Term Rental Accommodations Act* and the associated Short-Term Rental Accommodations Regulation establish a comprehensive and graduated schedule of **provincial administrative penalties** for short-term rental (STR) contraventions, set out in Schedule 4 of the Regulation. These provincial penalties apply to key requirements such as registration, principal-residence compliance, inclusion of a valid business license number in listings, and compliance with provincial orders, and are administered by the Province's compliance and enforcement unit.

These provincial penalties operate alongside **local enforcement tools**, including penalties established under the Township's **Bylaw Notice Enforcement Bylaw**, together creating a layered financial deterrent against unlawful STR activity. At present, the Township's Bylaw Notice Enforcement Bylaw includes general penalty provisions for offenses such as:

- Unlawful use of a building, structure, or parcel
- Bed and breakfast operating unlawfully
- Conducting business without a license

While these kinds of general offenses provide a clear legal basis for enforcement, there are several advantages to introducing **STR-specific contraventions** into the Bylaw Notice Enforcement framework, including:

- **Greater clarity for operators**, by explicitly identifying STR-specific obligations and expectations, thereby strengthening deterrence;
- **More efficient enforcement**, as clearly defined contraventions reduce ambiguity and simplify the initiation of enforcement actions;
- **Improved flexibility**, allowing penalty amounts to be adjusted over time in response to the most frequent or problematic forms of non-compliance; and
- **Stronger financial deterrence**, recognizing the significant revenue potential associated with unlawful STR operation. Recent provincial changes now permit local governments to set municipal ticketing fines of up to **\$3,000 per infraction, per day**, an increase from the previous \$1,000 maximum under the *Community Charter Bylaw Enforcement Ticket Regulation*. A more detailed list of contraventions also enables the issuance of **multiple concurrent infractions** (for example, operating without a license and failing to meet principal-residence requirements), where appropriate.

Taken together, the combination of provincial administrative penalties and clearly defined, STR-specific municipal penalties can provide a **robust, proportionate, and enforceable compliance framework**. At the same time, a more detailed contravention schedule results in a longer and more complex Bylaw Notice Enforcement Bylaw and is not strictly required for enforcement, as compliance action can still proceed under a shorter list of broader zoning and business licensing offenses.

An example of a more detailed, STR-specific contravention schedule is included in Appendix E, drawn from the District of Squamish.

Ultimately, the decision to adopt a longer list of STR-specific contraventions, or to rely on a shorter set of broader offenses, is partly a matter of **local enforcement preference** and partly dependent on the Township's intended enforcement approach.

Where a more **proactive or systematic enforcement model** is contemplated, STR-specific contraventions may offer practical advantages in terms of clarity, efficiency, and deterrence.

MUNICIPAL AND REGIONAL DISTRICT TAX

The Township of Esquimalt is currently not a **Designated Accommodation Area** or **Designated Recipient** under BC's **Municipal and Regional District Tax Program** (MRDT), and as such is not set up to benefit from the 2-3% "Online Accommodation Provider" portion of MRDT that could otherwise be charged to licensed short-term rentals.

Esquimalt could choose to apply for such status, for which there is a formal process administered by the province; note, however, that this would be a significant undertaking.

Based on available AirDNA data, which shows roughly \$2.8 million in room revenue earned by Esquimalt STR hosts over the past 12 months, a 3% MRDT tax could collect somewhere in the range of **\$84,000 per year** to go towards destination marketing and affordable housing initiatives (based on *current* market activity; this would change in response to new regulations).

APPENDIX A: EXPANDED ANALYSIS OF SHORT-TERM RENTAL IMPACTS

This appendix provides further analytical context on several recurring themes in discussions about short-term rentals. It examines the structural nature of housing impacts, clarifies common “mortgage helper” scenarios and their distributional effects, considers the challenges of assessing net economic impacts, and outlines alternative strategic pathways to achieving sufficient visitor accommodation.

NATURE OF HOUSING IMPACTS

The housing impacts of short-term rentals are primarily associated with non-principal dwelling units – that is, units that are not someone’s primary residence.

The impact of these types of STRs on housing is twofold.

First, they reduce the supply of long-term housing by removing dwelling units from the ownership or rental market, resulting in fewer homes available to buy or rent.

Second, they affect housing affordability at a market level. Because short-term rentals can generate higher returns than long-term tenancies, they increase the relative economic value of dwelling units for short-term use and reinforce incentives to allocate housing to that market. When combined with reduced supply, this dynamic places upward pressure on housing prices and rents.

These impacts operate at scale, market-wide, and over time – not on a simple unit-by-unit basis. For example, some units currently used as STRs in Esquimalt may not convert back to long-term housing, even if STR regulations are modernized and enforced, due to owner preferences or financial considerations. However, other units may respond to these changes. It is the aggregate effect of these decisions across the housing system that determines overall housing supply and affordability outcomes.

MORTGAGE HELPER SCENARIOS

Some STR operators can be thought of as operating an STR as a so-called “mortgage helper.” The “mortgage helper STR” is often discussed as a way in which STRs can increase housing affordability and/or provide supplemental income, generally. However, even in a permissive regulatory environment this potential benefit will only ever be available to a small percentage of residents (there’s only so much tourism demand to go around), and when involving non-principal dwelling units – comes at the cost of worse housing availability and affordability for all renters and prospective buyers in the market. The ability to operate a STR may even worsen housing affordability for operators themselves, as laid out in the more detailed discussion that follows.

There are two basic types of mortgage helper scenarios. The first is “true homesharing” and is where the principal resident short-term rents – in whole or in part – the actual suite of rooms where they live. By definition true homesharing is not associated with the loss of potential long-term housing⁵ and as such this version can be interpreted as helping the operator afford their home without negatively impacting community-wide housing availability and affordability.

The second basic mortgage helper scenario is where the principal resident short-term rents a separate dwelling unit on the same lot as their home (e.g. a basement suite or garden suite). By contrast, this version is associated with the loss of potential⁶ long-term housing (short-term renting what may otherwise be a long-term rental suite, or purchasable home) and therefore comes at the cost of decreased community-wide housing availability and affordability.

In both cases, the “mortgage helper” effect will be offset by the fact that costs to actually purchase a home will have increased marketwide in response to STR activity; i.e. the supplemental income potential may have already been priced into the unit such that the perceived “affordability” gain has either already been opaquely wiped out, or exists largely at the level of monthly payments and not in the purchase price itself (this effect being similar to the effect of low interest rates which can make monthly payments more affordable even as they inflate purchase prices).

In any case, (a) current/long-time owners will benefit the most from the mortgage-helper effect while most future homeowners will face higher purchase prices as a result of STR activity (see above), and (b) potential mortgage-helper STR revenue will only ever be available to a slim minority of residents (because there’s only so much tourist demand to go around).

As such, if local governments are looking to give residents opportunities for STR mortgage-helper revenue without causing community-wide deterioration in housing availability and affordability, they have the option of turning to strict principal dwelling unit restrictions (only permitting STRs in the suite of rooms where the resident operator actually lives).

NET ECONOMIC IMPACTS

A dwelling unit contributes to the local economy whether it is used as a short-term rental or as a long-term residence. Visitors generate spending on accommodation, food, retail, and services, while permanent residents also contribute ongoing economic activity through household spending, local employment, and community participation.

⁵ The exception being those cases where a roommate is foregone in favour of short-term renting one or more rooms in a shared home.

⁶ “Potential” because the likelihood of any given unit being added to/returning to the long-term rental market – if not permitted as an STR – is highly dependent on the individual circumstances and choices of the property owner. Many owners (e.g. during community consultations or debate) may initially claim that – in the face of STR restrictions – they won’t add the unit to the long-term market; however, this initial claim can quickly give way to the economic costs of holding on to largely-empty dwelling units.

The economic question is therefore not whether one use generates activity and the other does not, but how the composition and distribution of economic activity differ between tourism-oriented and residential uses of housing. Short-term rentals may increase visitor spending and associated tourism-sector activity, while long-term residential use supports stable, year-round economic participation and workforce retention.

Attempting to calculate the precise “net” economic impact of allocating dwelling units to one use versus the other is inherently complex. It requires assumptions about visitor substitution (for example, whether visitors would otherwise stay elsewhere in the region), the degree to which visitor spending is incremental versus displaced, and the economic effects of housing availability on labour mobility and long-term population stability.

Rather than relying solely on complex quantitative modeling, communities may instead determine — as a matter of policy — which use of dwelling units is most aligned with their current priorities. If housing availability and affordability are paramount concerns, residential use may be prioritized. If expanding visitor accommodation is a strategic objective, a greater role for STRs may be justified.

In this context, it is important to note that principal dwelling unit short-term rentals (“true homesharing”) occupy a structurally distinct position. By allowing residents to rent rooms within their primary residence — or the entire dwelling while temporarily absent — communities can enable some tourism-related economic activity without permanently reallocating housing stock away from residential use.

DIFFERENT PATHS TO SUFFICIENT TOURIST ACCOMMODATION

Most communities seek to ensure an adequate supply of visitor accommodation. The relevant policy question is not simply “housing versus guest accommodation,” but which strategic pathway is most appropriate for achieving sufficient and sustainable accommodation capacity.

Different strategies emphasize different tools. Some approaches rely more heavily on short-term rentals to provide flexible, distributed accommodation. Others focus on attracting and maintaining purpose-built or commercial guest accommodation. The suitability of each path depends on local market conditions, land availability, investor interest, and broader housing objectives.

APPENDIX B: EXEMPT ACCOMMODATION SERVICE PROVIDERS

The following is copied from provincial guidance available here: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/short-term-rentals/principal-residence-requirement#exemptaccomodation>

It is included verbatim in this report to help identify any exempted accommodation types that may be of particular relevance to Esquimalt.

The principal residence requirement is intended to turn more units that are being used as short-term rentals into homes for people. Some types of accommodation are exempt from the principal residence requirement because they were never meant to be long-term residences, or restrictions on their ownership or use make them unsuitable as permanent housing. These include:

- Certain strata-titled hotels or motels (See the [Register as a strata hotel platform page](#) and the [Strata Hotel Policy Guidance \(PDF, 464.7KB\)](#) for more information)
- [Time share properties](#)
- [Home exchanges](#)
- [Fractional ownership](#) properties, where the property may not be used as a principal residence (See the [Register as a host page](#) and the [Fractional Ownership Policy Guidance \(PDF, 586KB\)](#) for more information)
- Accommodation that is provided by an operator of [outdoor recreational activities](#)
- [Student or employee housing](#) that is owned or operated by schools or non-profits
- [Strata corporation guest suites](#)
- Seasonal accommodation that is not equipped or suitable for year-round residence (See the [Seasonal Accommodation Policy Guidance \(PDF, 1MB\)](#) for more information)

APPENDIX C: DETAILED ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

PROMOTION

The online survey and open house were promoted as follows.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Facebook posts x 3 totaling 14,486 views. Of those, one was sponsored, targeting the Esquimalt area and yielding 12,374 views.
- Facebook event: 5,152 event views
- Instagram: 2 posts at 720 post views.

OTHER DIGITAL

- STR page on Engaging Esquimalt: 919 views
- Email to subscribers interested in community planning: 67 recipients.
- General email to newsletter list x 2: approximately 460 views each.

IN-PERSON PROMOTION

- News release sent; coverage in Black Press and CHEK.
- Digital screen promotion at recreation and sports centre.
- Posters at recreation centre and municipal hall.

EXAMPLE PROMOTIONAL GRAPHIC



QUANTITATIVE SURVEY RESULTS

The detailed results of the online survey are presented on the following pages in the form of a standard summary generated by the Township's civic engagement platform.

In addition to the online survey, nine paper versions of the survey were completed and submitted by participants at the open house. These paper responses were reviewed and were found to be generally consistent with both the quantitative trends and qualitative themes expressed on the open house boards. Given the small number of paper submissions relative to the overall response total, the survey graphs have not been manually adjusted to incorporate these nine responses. The paper survey responses are reflected in the broader open house summary and thematic synthesis.

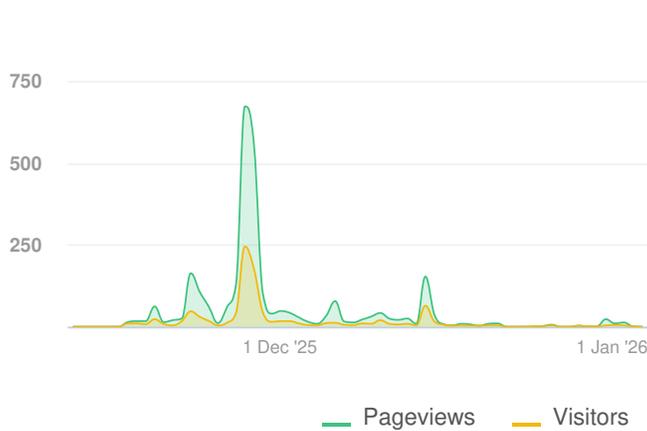
Project Report

21 March 2021 - 08 January 2026

Engaging Esquimalt Short term rentals in Esquimalt



Visitors Summary

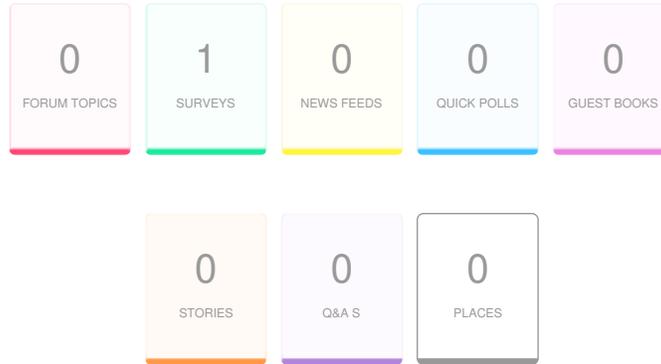


Highlights



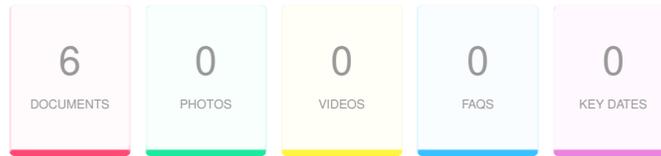
Aware Participants	874	Engaged Participants	179		
Aware Actions Performed	Participants	Engaged Actions Performed	Registered	Unverified	Anonymous
Visited a Project or Tool Page	874	Contributed on Forums	0	0	0
Informed Participants	499	Participated in Surveys	143	36	0
Informed Actions Performed	Participants	Contributed to Newsfeeds	0	0	0
Viewed a video	0	Participated in Quick Polls	0	0	0
Viewed a photo	0	Posted on Guestbooks	0	0	0
Downloaded a document	100	Contributed to Stories	0	0	0
Visited the Key Dates page	49	Asked Questions	0	0	0
Visited an FAQ list Page	0	Placed Pins on Places	0	0	0
Visited Instagram Page	0	Contributed to Ideas	0	0	0
Visited Multiple Project Pages	315				
Contributed to a tool (engaged)	179				

ENGAGEMENT TOOLS SUMMARY



Tool Type	Engagement Tool Name	Tool Status	Visitors	Contributors		
				Registered	Unverified	Anonymous
Survey Tool	Short-term rental survey	Archived	417	143	36	0

INFORMATION WIDGET SUMMARY



Widget Type	Engagement Tool Name	Visitors	Views/Downloads
Key Dates	Key Date	49	63
Document	Staff Short-term Rental presentation.pdf	45	48
Document	Short-term rental survey (PRINTABLE)	43	50
Document	July 15 2024 Committee of the Whole Staff Report.pdf	31	40
Document	Regional STR context as of June 1 2024.pdf	18	20
Document	Council priorities-202409-FINAL.pdf	14	14
Document	Open house information boards	5	7

ENGAGEMENT TOOL: SURVEY TOOL

Short-term rental survey

Visitors 417	Contributors 179	CONTRIBUTIONS 185
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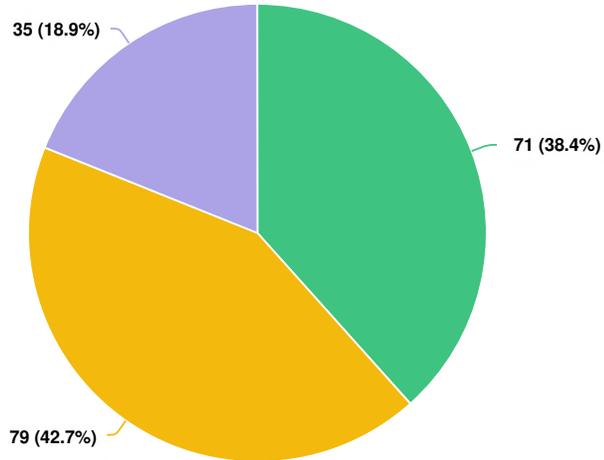
With these impacts in mind, how important are the following goals to you? (1 being not at all important, 10 being extremely...)



Optional question (185 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Likert Question

Are you interested in operating a short-term rental in Esquimalt?



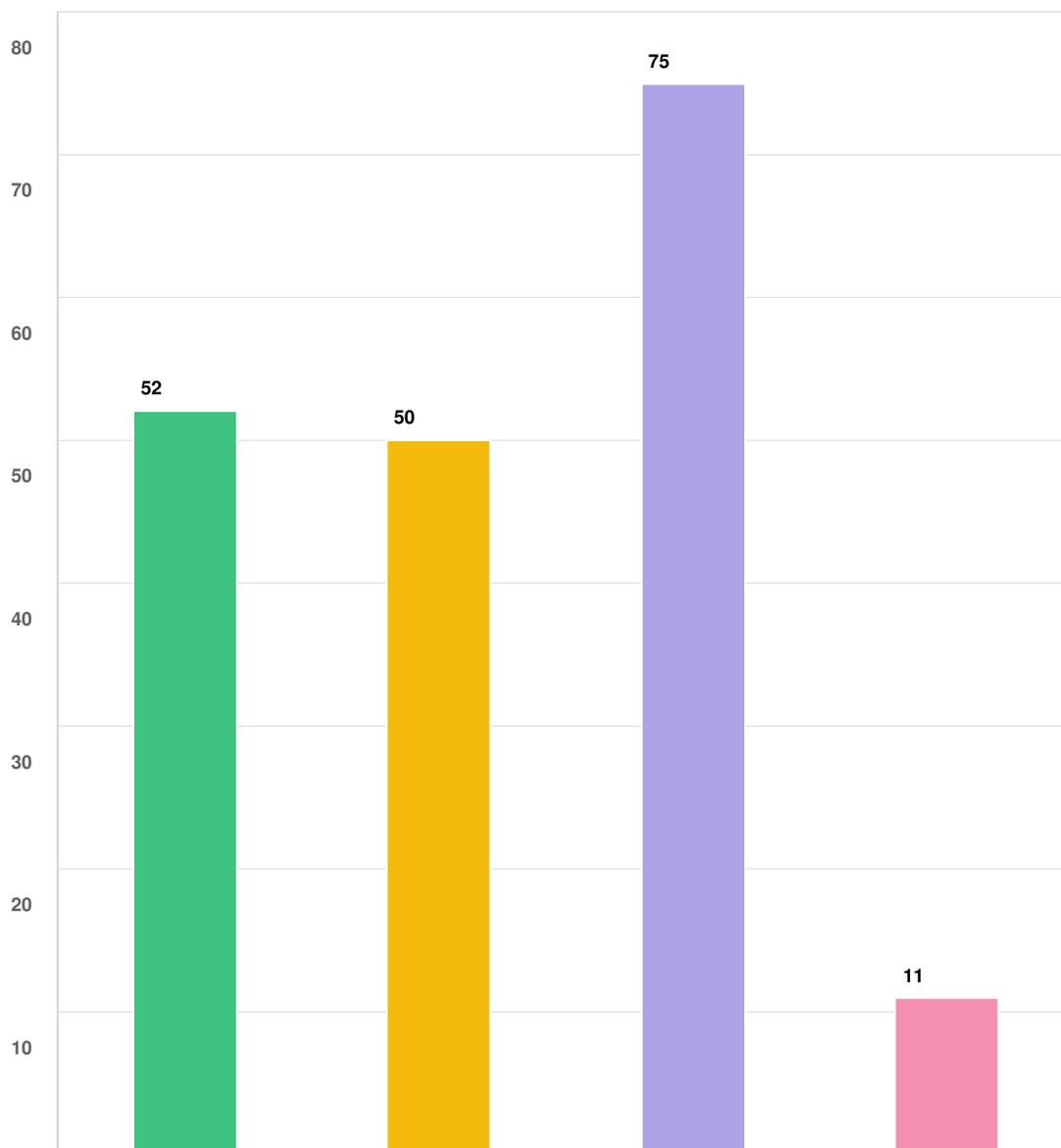
Question options

- Maybe
- No
- Yes

Optional question (185 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Dropdown Question

What type of unit(s) would you like to operate as a short-term rental? Below, "principal residence" means the specific unit/suite of rooms that you live in more than any other place during the year. It doesn't include any separate suites on your lot...



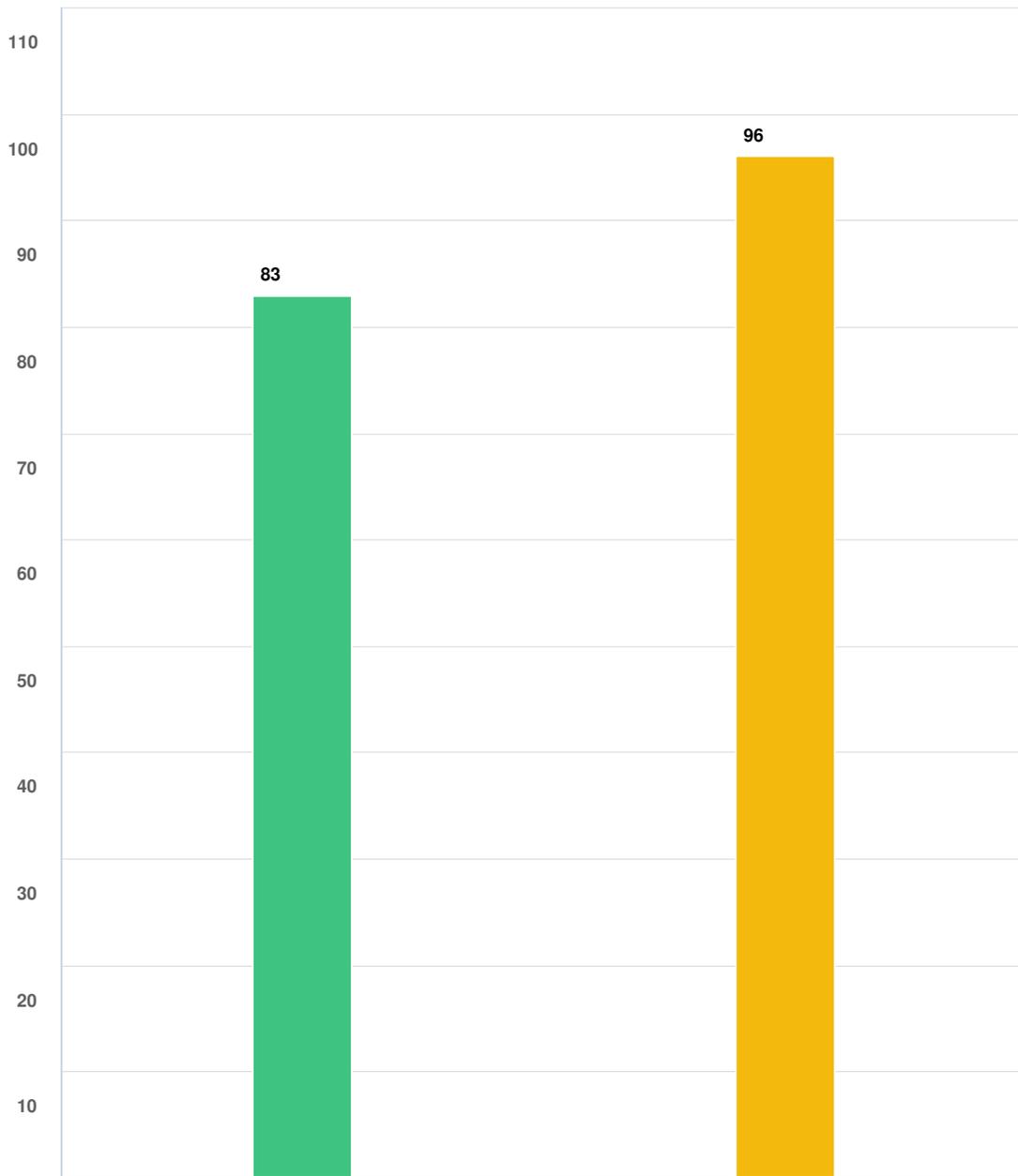
Question options

- A unit that is not on your home lot
- A separate suite on your home lot (separate from your principal residence – this could be a secondary suite, garden suite, or perhaps the main suite)
- Your entire principal residence (while you're away)
- One or more rooms in your principal residence (while you're there)

Optional question (105 response(s), 80 skipped)

Question type: Checkbox Question

Understanding that these options will be further developed at a later date, in these early days, which of the basic approaches above would you prefer?



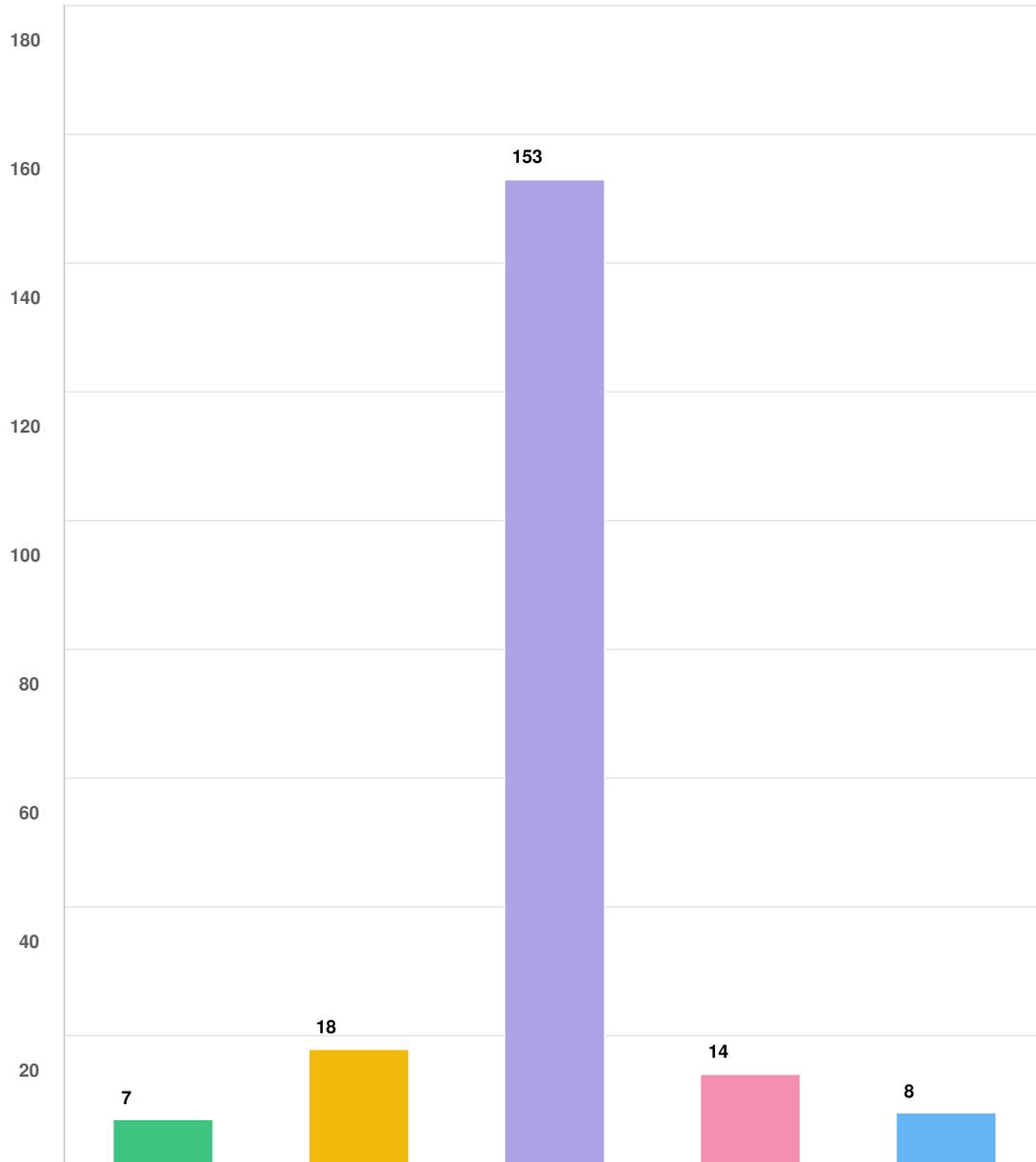
Question options

- Home Lot Permissions
- In-Home Permissions

Optional question (179 response(s), 6 skipped)

Question type: Checkbox Question

I am a....(check all that apply)



Question options

- None of the above
- Esquimalt business owner
- Esquimalt resident- home owner
- Esquimalt resident- renter
- Other (please specify)

Optional question (185 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Checkbox Question

QUANTITATIVE OPEN HOUSE RESULTS

REGULATORY PREFERENCES

Participants were invited to place a sticker dot next to their preferred regulatory approach; the results are shown in Table C-1.

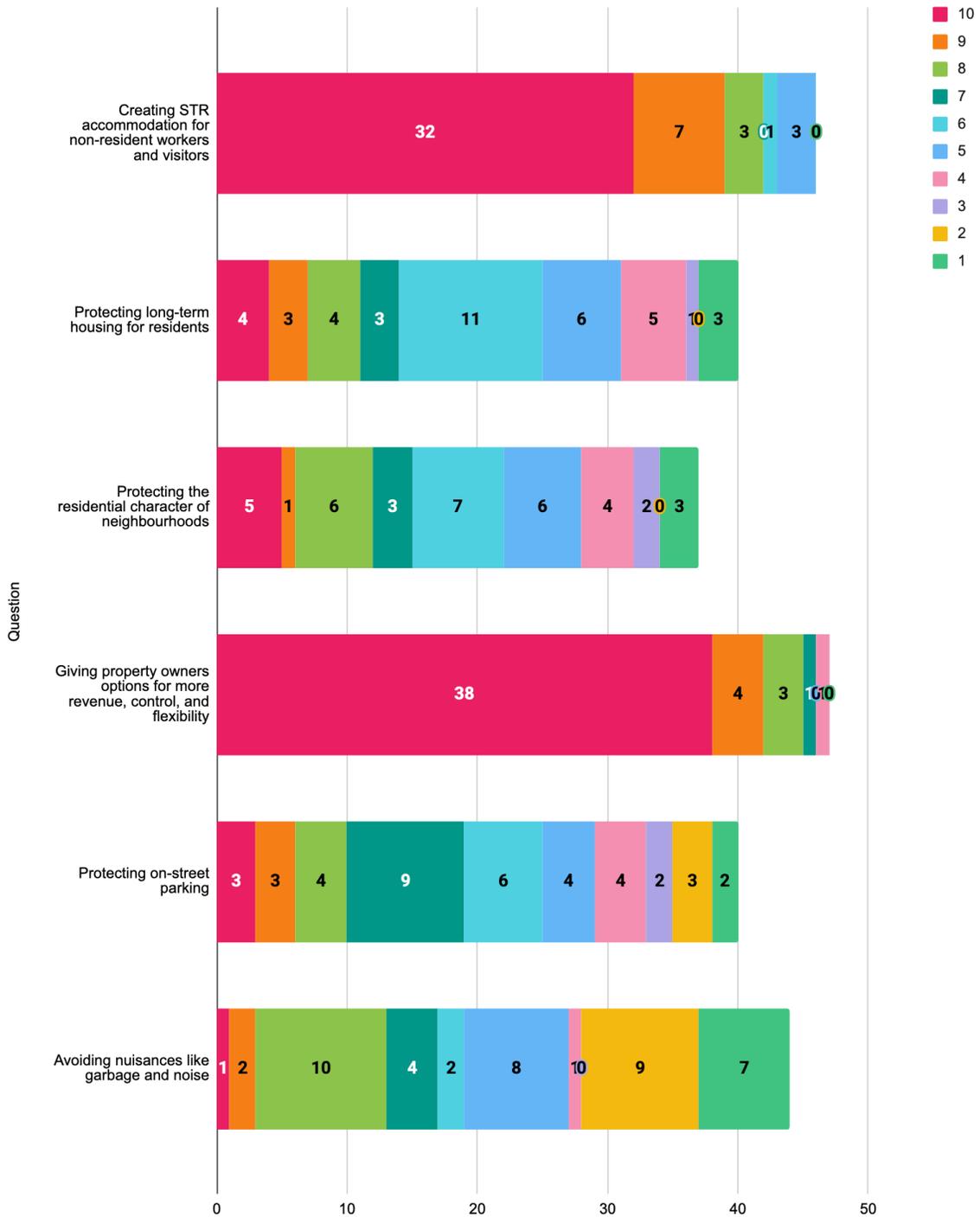
Table C-1: Regulatory preferences of open house participants

Regulatory option	Number of sticker dots placed
Option 1 ("In-Home Permissions")	3
Option 2 ("Home Lot Permissions")	48

PRIORITY GOALS

Participants were invited to use sticker dots to rank the importance of six common regulatory goals (1 being not at all important, 10 being extremely important); the results are shown in Figure C-1.

Figure C-1: Priority goals of open house participants



INTEREST IN OPERATING SHORT-TERM RENTALS

Participants were invited to indicate what type of short-term rentals they are interested in operating (participants could indicate more than one option); the results are shown in Table C-2.

Table C-2: Types of short-term rental units open house participants were interested in operating

Type of short-term rental	Open House
One or more rooms in your principal residence (while you are there)	11
Your entire principal residence (while you're away)	19
A separate suite on your home lot	21
A unit that is not on your home lot	3

QUALITATIVE COMMENTARY

Open-ended comments were collected in the survey and at the open house. The following is a synthesis of this commentary organized by major theme, with key ideas and illustrative comments for each. The themes are not presented in any particular order.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Short Description:

Many respondents cite economic benefits, particularly in light of Esquimalt's limited licensed tourist accommodation and proximity to Victoria.

Key Ideas:

- STRs keep visitor spending local.
- Supports local businesses.
- Provides accommodation options currently lacking.
- Showcases Esquimalt as a destination.

Illustrative Comments:

- "STR allows the money to stay in the community instead of being given to hotels in Victoria."
- "It's great for the Esquimalt economy! More money spent at businesses."
- "It provides housing for visitors—very few options currently."
- "Money goes back to the community for the community."

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND PROTECTION OF LONG-TERM RENTAL SUPPLY

Short Description:

A portion of respondents prioritize housing affordability and long-term rental supply, expressing concern that STRs remove units from the housing market and exacerbate price pressures. Some advocate for highly restrictive models, including hotel-only or host-present formats.

Key Ideas:

- Long-term renters should take priority over visitor accommodation.
- Whole-home STRs reduce rental supply.
- STRs may contribute to rising housing costs.
- Preference for in-home only or hotel-only models.

Illustrative Comments:

- “Please prioritize the needs of long terms renters over the needs of home owners earning extra income. STRs should not take a single unit of rental stock off the long term rental market.”
- “Short term rental cause inflationary price gauging causing permanent residents to be blocked from affordable homes.”
- “The Municipality of Esquimalt should not be considering short-term rentals... they disrupt the lives of residents and reduce the availability of long-term housing.”
- “I want a third option where STR are not allowed outside of licensed hoteliers in lots zoned for purpose.”

SUPPORT FOR PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE / PROVINCIAL “HOME-LOT” MODEL**Short Description:**

A large number of comments support permitting STRs under the “Home-Lot” model (provincial floor), while opposing commercial or multi-property operations.

Key Ideas:

- STRs should be limited to primary residences.
- Distinction between owner-occupied and investor-operated units.
- Provincial consistency preferred.
- No cap on number of days if principal residence.

Illustrative Comments:

- “Feels like people should be able to Airbnb their Primary residence but not Multiple units they don’t live in.”
- “I am in support of limitations as laid out in the provincial rules: Limited to the primary residence. No limits on number of days/year. Yes to taxation. Guidelines re parking, noise, etc.”
- “Home Lot Permissions is the best option!”
- “Please allow provincial Home Lot approach.”
- “This is completely different from whole-home investor STRs and should not be treated the same way.”

FINANCIAL FLEXIBILITY AND HOMEOWNER RESILIENCE

Short Description:

STRs are frequently framed as a tool for financial resilience, particularly in the context of rising property taxes and cost-of-living pressures.

Key Ideas:

- Helps offset property taxes.
- Supports seniors and fixed-income homeowners.
- May prevent forced sales.
- Lower perceived risk than long-term rental.

Illustrative Comments:

- “Vulnerable (aged, etc.) homeowners (taxpayers) can get income.”
- “Meeting ever increasing property taxes.”
- “Rather than selling, they can rent part of their home short-term.”
- “STR allows for income without the risk of long-term rental or bad tenants.”

REGULATORY DESIGN AND ALIGNMENT WITH PROVINCIAL FRAMEWORK

Short Description:

Respondents express differing views about the appropriate regulatory model, though many support licensing and basic standards. Some caution against perceived municipal overreach.

Key Ideas:

- Support for licensing and taxation.
- Parking and noise standards are appropriate.
- Provincial consistency preferred.
- Concern about burdensome municipal processes.

Illustrative Comments:

- “Allow STRs and require licensing at affordable rates.”
- “Airbnb... is self checking of policies and regulating.”
- “The provincial Home Lot approach is better with all jurisdictions on an equal footing.”
- “Banning STR’s has been unprincipled political scapegoating.”

NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER, RESPECT, AND COMMUNITY BALANCE

Short Description:

Across viewpoints, respondents frequently reference neighbour respect, fairness, and maintaining community character.

Key Ideas:

- STRs can maintain character if well regulated.
- Homeowners should have reasonable flexibility.
- Respect among hosts, neighbours, guests, and Council.
- Emphasis on mutual responsibility.

Illustrative Comments:

- "STR maintains character."
- "If homeowners take care of their property and respect their neighbours, there should be more flexibility..."
- "It's about respect."
- "Respect for provincial rules. Respect for homeowners."

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ENGAGEMENT RESULTS AND COMMENTARY

Dear Mayor Desjardins and Members of Council,

On behalf of the Esquimalt Chamber of Commerce, thank you for the opportunity to gather and submit feedback from our local business community regarding Short-Term Rentals (STRs). Over the past several weeks, we engaged 22 members and non-member businesses to understand their perspectives on how STR regulations impact Esquimalt's economy, housing landscape, and visitor experience.

Below is a summary of the key themes and data collected.

Overall Support Levels

- **59% of respondents expressed clear support** for allowing STRs in Esquimalt.
- **30% were unsure or supportive with limits**, primarily around housing protection.
- Only a small minority expressed complete opposition.

Many respondents emphasized the need for **balanced, thoughtful regulation** rather than a full prohibition or unrestricted permission.

Primary Themes Identified

1. Need for Affordable Visitor Accommodation

A consistent theme was the **significant lack of affordable lodging** within Esquimalt. With almost no hotels or motels available, visitors—especially family members, tourists, and travelling professionals—are often forced to stay in Victoria.

STRs were seen as:

- Filling a lodging gap that hotels currently do not meet.
- Supporting family visits for weddings, graduations, newborns, and other important milestones.
- Providing options for travelling professionals (e.g., nurses) struggling to find accommodation under provincial restrictions.

As one respondent shared:

“We have few options for when family visits. We need more affordable visitor accommodation.”

2. Support for STRs in Primary Residences

The vast majority of supportive respondents favoured **allowing STRs only in a homeowner's primary residence**, including attached suites.

Common points included:

- Primary-residence STRs do **not** meaningfully reduce long-term rental inventory.
- STRs can help homeowners with the rising cost of living, especially retirees, single-income households, or those facing financial strain.
- Opposition to long-term rental buildings or investment properties converting units into full-time STRs.

One business owner wrote:

"I strongly support allowing STRs in a homeowner's primary residence, plus suite. I would not allow long-term housing providers to convert their units into STRs."

3. Economic Benefits and Tourism

Businesses overwhelmingly noted that STRs contribute positively to local commerce and tourism:

- Visitors spend money at local restaurants, cafés, shops, and attractions.
- STRs diversify Esquimalt's accommodation options, making the Township more appealing to tourists.
- Supplemental STR income helps maintain housing stability for homeowners.
- STRs support community vibrancy without significant infrastructure demands.

A common sentiment:

"Short-term rentals are an essential part of the accommodation spectrum. Guests spend money at our local businesses and enjoy all that Esquimalt has to offer."

4. Housing Affordability and Supply Concerns

While nearly half of respondents expressed **no significant concerns**, others highlighted the importance of ensuring STRs do not:

- Reduce long-term rental housing supply.
- Inflate housing costs or put pressure on existing rental stock.

Many noted that with **approximately 800 new long-term rental units under construction**, concerns about housing impacts may be lessened, but emphasized that regulations should still protect rental inventory and prevent multi-unit STR operations.

5. Taxation, Licensing, and Fairness

Respondents widely agreed that if STRs are permitted, they should:

- **Pay taxation comparable to hotels**, ensuring fairness and municipal revenue.
- Require a **business license** and compliance with provincial regulations.
- Be limited to responsible, small-scale operators rather than commercial enterprises.

As one respondent noted:

“STRs should pay taxes similar to hotels. Esquimalt would win with increased tax base and increased tourist dollars.”

6. Impacts of Disallowing STRs

Several respondents described unintended consequences stemming from past restrictions:

- Loss of affordable tourist accommodation across the region.
- Increased hotel room rates due to reduced competition.
- Diminished accessibility for middle-class tourism.
- Reduced options for visiting families and travelling workers.

One respondent shared:

“After STRs were disallowed, hotel prices increased and affordable options disappeared. I’m not saying we should open the floodgates—just that some allowance should be considered.”

Conclusion

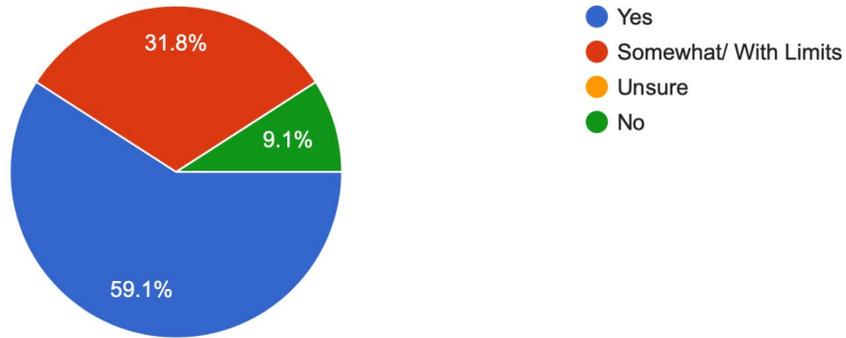
Overall, the majority of feedback supports a **balanced approach** that:

- Allows STRs in **primary residences only**,
- Protects long-term rental housing,
- Recognizes Esquimalt’s **acute shortage of visitor accommodations**,
- Ensures **fair taxation and licensing**, and
- Supports the local economy by enabling more visitors to stay and spend within the Township.

Thank you again for inviting the Chamber to represent the voices of our business community. We would welcome the opportunity to continue participating in discussions as Council considers next steps.

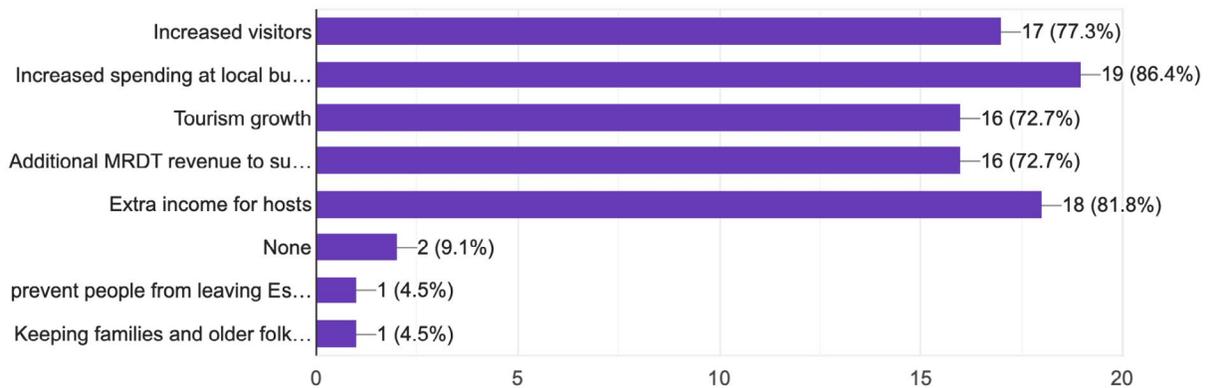
Do you support allowing some form of short-term rentals (e.g., Airbnb) in Esquimalt?

22 responses



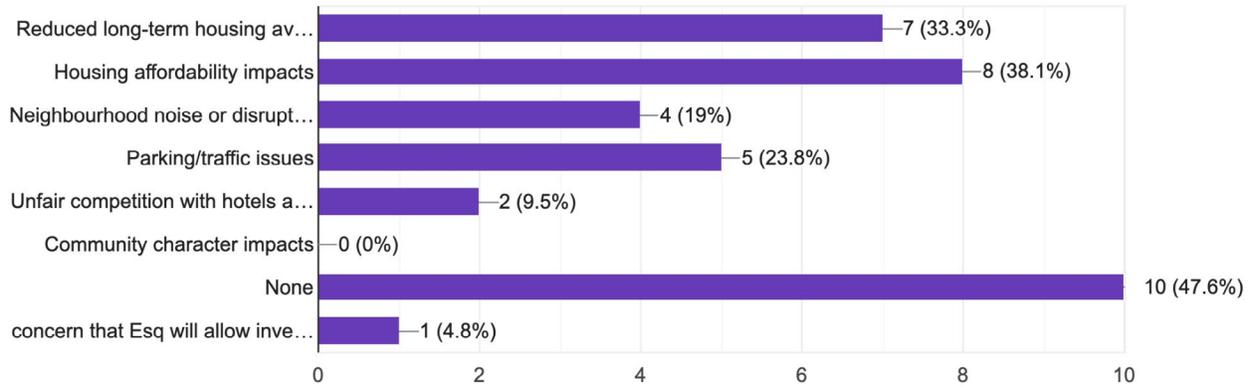
What potential benefits do you see for businesses or the community? (choose all that apply)

22 responses



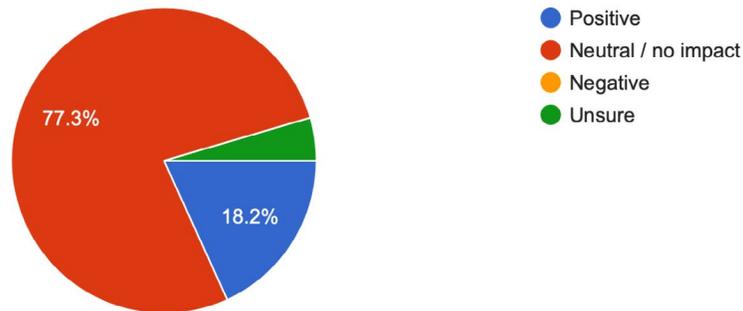
What potential concerns do you have about short-term rentals? (choose all that apply)

21 responses



How do STRs affect your business, if at all?

22 responses



APPENDIX D: EXAMPLE GUEST SAFETY ATTESTATION



TOWN OF GIBSONS

PO Box 340
474 South Fletcher Road
Gibsons BC | VON 1V0
T 604-886-2274
F 604-886-9735

Residential Guest Accommodation Guest Safety Attestation

The purpose of this form is to make sure you are aware of the basic safety requirements for operating Residential Guest Accommodation, and to record your agreement to comply with these requirements for the Residential Guest Accommodation unit at the following address:

Street Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Unit Number or Description* : _____
**e.g. "basement suite"*

Please initial beside each of the following safety measures to attest to your compliance.

- 1. Smoke Alarms tested and logged monthly (as per BC Fire Code) _____(initial)
- 2. Smoke Alarms are less than 10 years old _____
- 3. Carbon Monoxide alarms tested and logged monthly _____
- 4. Fire Extinguisher mounted and serviced annually (as per BC Fire Code) _____
- 5. Fire Safety Plan and Instructions to occupants posted at exits _____
- 6. Emergency contact information posted _____
- 7. Exits operable and unobstructed (bedroom doors & windows) _____
- 8. Chimney cleaned annually (if applicable) _____
- 9. Electrical installations maintained so as not to constitute a fire hazard _____
- 10. Barbeque clearance from combustibles minimum of 1 meter _____
- 11. First Aid Kit (level 1) _____
- 12. Internal and external passageways unobstructed _____

Note: The Town of Gibsons may conduct random inspections annually for safety compliance.

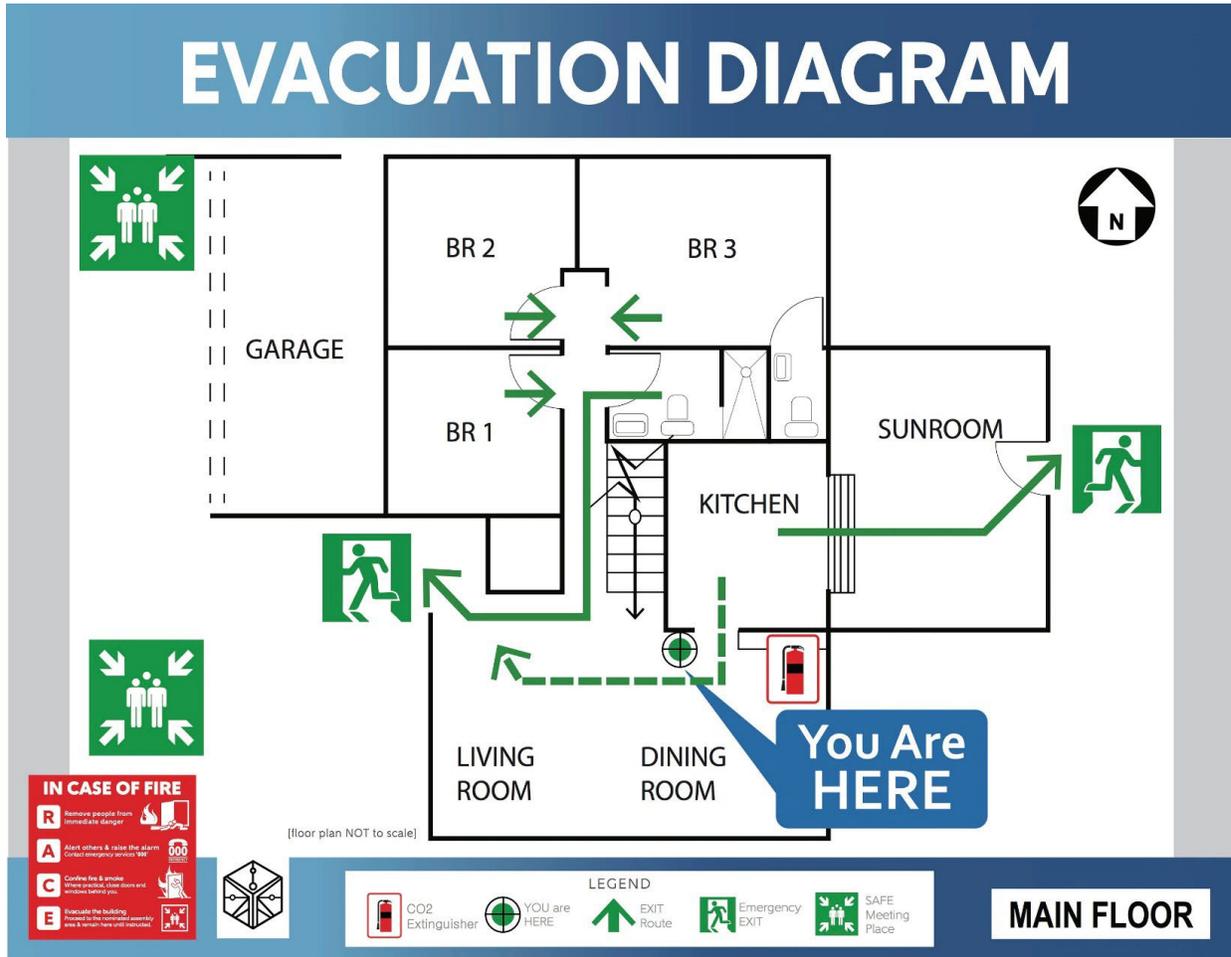
I hereby attest that the above have been tested, inspected and maintained as required by the Town of Gibsons Business Licence Bylaw No. 666, 1992 and submittal of this safety attestation form is assurance that the conditions are consistent with those set out in the aforementioned Bylaw.

Operator Name (please print)

Operator Signature

Date Signed: _____, 20____

Evacuation Diagram Example

**How to create a fire escape plan:**

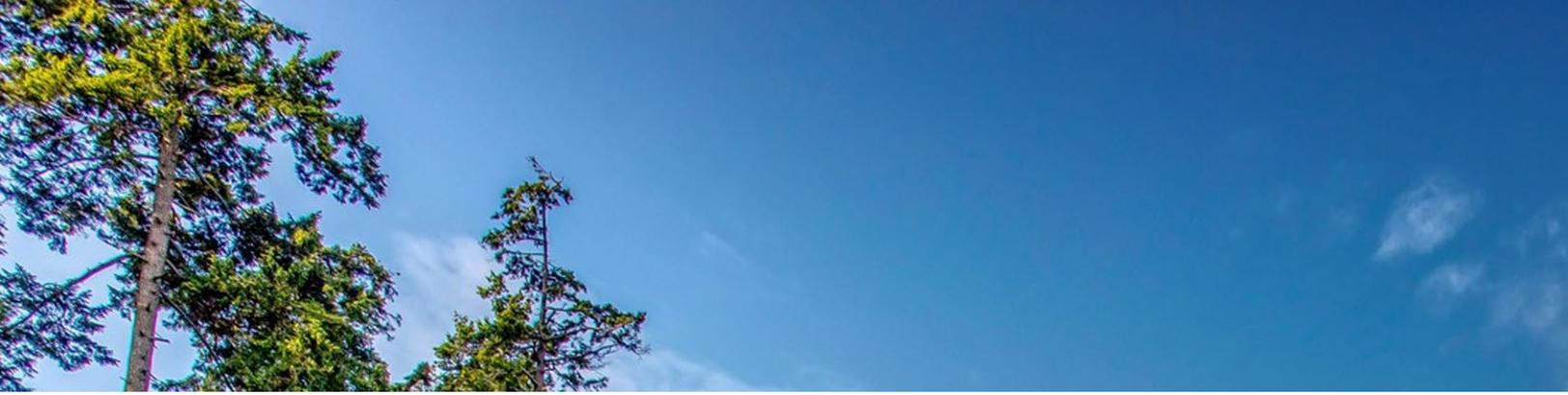
- Draw a map of your home – There are multiple helpful websites online to help.
- Include 'You Are Here' location. This indicates where the map you are viewing is located.
- Visit each room. Find two ways out.
- Label primary and secondary egress routes.
- Label all exit doors and stairwells.
- Label smoke alarms, fire extinguisher, fire pulls and first aid kit.
- Label an Assembly Area or meeting place; this is outside and away from the building.
- Include a legend that illustrates and explains your map.

Additionally:

- Post the emergency evacuation plan at all exits
- All windows & doors should open easily; you should be able to use them to get outside.
- Make sure your home has smoke alarms. Push the test button to make sure each alarm is working.
- Make sure your house or building number can be seen from the street.
- Practice your home fire drill twice a year.

APPENDIX E: EXAMPLE OF STR-SPECIFIC BYLAW CONTRAVENTIONS AND PENALTIES (DISTRICT OF SQUAMISH)

Section	Description	Penalty	Early payment penalty within 14 days	Late payment penalty after 28 days	Compliance agreement reduced penalty
		Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
6.20(a) (Amended by bylaw 2699)	Carry on Short-term Rental Accommodation business or operate without a Short-term Rental Accommodation Licence	\$500	\$450	\$550	No
6.20(c) (Amended by bylaw 2699)	Short-term Rental Accommodation Marketing without a Licence	\$500	\$450	\$550	No
6.24(a) (Amended by bylaw 2699)	Short-term Rental Accommodation Marketing without display of Licence number in listing or material	\$500	\$450	\$550	No
6.24(b) (Amended by bylaw 2699)	Fail to display emergency contact information	\$500	\$450	\$550	No
6.24(d)(ii) (Amended by bylaw 2699)	Fail to attend premises within required time period	\$500	\$450	\$550	No
6.24(d)(iv) (Amended by bylaw 2699)	Fail to designate individual with access and authority if absent from Principal Residence overnight	\$500	\$450	\$550	No
6.24(e) (Amended by bylaw 2699)	Fail to display fire safety plan	\$500	\$450	\$550	No
6.24(i) and 6.24(j)(i) (Amended by bylaw 2699)	Fail to keep, provide or produce safety or other related records	\$500	\$450	\$550	No
7.3	Interference with official	\$100	\$90	\$110	No



THANK YOU

