



**City of St. Helena
Planning Commission Regular Meeting
Tuesday, June 16, 2026 @ 6:00 PM
Vintage Hall Board Room
465 Main Street, St. Helena CA**

PLEASE NOTE: Any person who wishes to speak regarding an item on the agenda or make a comment under the "Public Forum" portion of the agenda may do so, but please observe the time limit of four minutes.

The Planning Commission meeting will be live-streamed on Comcast Channel 28 and on the City's website.

Public comment for Planning Commission meetings will be accepted via email via to publiccomment@cityofstheleena.gov. All public comments must be received three hours prior to the meeting. All other public comments received after the deadline will be attached to the item the next business day or soon thereafter. Public comments will not be read out loud but will be publicly available and attached to the online Planning Commission agenda.

To ensure interpreters are available, requests must be made at least 72 hours in advance by calling the Office of the City Clerk at (707) 968-2640 or emailing cityclerk@cityofstheleena.gov.

The schedule of upcoming meetings and published meeting agendas can be found on the City of St. Helena website at cityofstheleena.gov.

Servicios de interpretación en español durante la reunión pueden ser solicitados por el público. Para asegurar que los intérpretes estén disponibles, los servicios tienen que ser solicitados al menos 72 horas antes de la reunión llamando a la oficina de la Secretaria de la Ciudad al (707) 968-2640 o por correo electrónico a cityclerk@cityofstheleena.gov.

El horario de las reuniones publicadas y próximas puede ser localizado en el sitio de web de la Ciudad en cityofstheleena.gov

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair: Chris Warner

Vice-Chair: Sue Furdek

Commissioners: Autumn Anderson, Hector Lopez and Michelle Covell

City staff present at the meeting will be noted in the minutes.

3. PUBLIC FORUM

This is an opportunity for the public to address the Commission on items of interest to the public that are NOT listed on the agenda. Because of restrictions imposed by the Brown Act, the Commission may not engage in discussion nor take action on matters not described on the agenda. Please observe the time limit of four minutes.

3.1. Public Comment

4. CONSENT ITEMS

Members of the Commission or the public may ask that any items be considered individually for purposes of considering alternative action, for extended discussion, or for public comment. Unless that is done, one motion may be used to adopt all recommended actions. (Roll Call Vote)

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

5.1. Revised Recommendation for Zoning Ordinance Amendment (ZOA 26-002) Amending Section 17.33 (Definitions) and Related Provisions of the St. Helena Municipal Code Concerning On-Site Storage Facilities

CEQA Determination: Categorical Exemption / Common Sense Exemption
(§15061(b)(3))

Prepared By: Jackie Oneal, Senior Planner

Recommendation:

1. Find that the proposed amendments to Section 17.33 (Definitions) and related provisions of the St. Helena Municipal Code are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3); and
2. Adopt a revised resolution recommending that the City Council adopt Ordinance ZOA 26-002 amending Section 17.33 (Definitions) and Table 17.17.020(A) of the St. Helena Municipal Code to clarify the definition and regulation of On-Site Storage Facilities.

5.2. Continuance of Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance Amendment (Zoning Ordinance Amendment ZOA 26-001)

CEQA Determination: The continuance of this item is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Prepared By: Jackie Oneal, Senior Planner

Recommendation: Continue the Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance Amendment to the Planning Commission meeting of July 7, 2026.

6. SCHEDULED ITEMS

6.1. Short-Term Rental (STR) Ordinance Study Session

CEQA Determination: This study session is not a project under Section 15378 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines because it involves only the exchange of information, discussion, and direction regarding potential future actions. No commitment to a specific course of action is being made at this time.

Prepared By: Natalie Bresee, Assistant Planner

Recommendation: Receive the staff presentation, receive public and Planning Commission input regarding potential amendments to the City's Short-Term Rental Ordinance. This item is for discussion purposes only and no formal action will be taken.

7. REPORTS BY STAFF/COMMITTEE

Reports by staff and/or committee on items of general interest. Brief questions for clarification may be posed and answered, and Committee may request that items be placed on a future agenda. Except under certain circumstances, the Brown Act prohibits any other discussion or action by the Planning Commission.

8. AGENDA FORECAST AND COMMISSION REQUESTS

This is an opportunity for the Commission as a whole to request items be placed on future agendas for discussion. These items should be consistent with, and work to implement adopted Council Goals. A list of current planning projects is available on our city website in the link below: cityofsthelena.gov/230/Planning-Project

8.1. Future Agenda Items (Informational Only):

The following items are tentatively scheduled for upcoming Planning Commission meetings and are subject to change. No action will be taken.

July 7, 2026:

Zoning Ordinance Amendment (ADU/JADU)
New Short-Term Rental Permit

July 21, 2026:

Major Design Review

9. ADJOURNMENT

The next Regular Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for July 7, 2026.

This agenda was posted at City Hall, 1088 College Avenue, and at Vintage Hall, 465 Main Street, St. Helena, California on April 2, 2026.

Leza Mikhail, Director of Community Development

Appeal. A person who is dissatisfied with a decision of the Planning Commission may appeal that decision to the City Council pursuant to Municipal Code Section 17.12.020, Appeal procedure. Actions of the Planning Commission will be listed on the City Council agenda the following Tuesday to give the City Council opportunity to review the Planning Commission's decision. Absent of an appeal by the City Council or by a citizen, the appeal period will terminate two weeks after the Planning Commission hearing.

Special Assistance for the Disabled. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please call the City Clerk's Office (707) 967-2792. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting (28 CFR35.102-35.104 ADA Title II). However, City staff will attempt to assist at any time with accessibility. The City Clerk has equipment to assist those with a hearing impairment.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY PROCEDURES

Pursuant to the Government Code Section 54954.3, the public may address the Commission on each agenda item during the Commission's consideration of that item. Each speaker has the option to state his or her name for the record before testifying. Depending on the number of speakers or the interest of the item, the Planning Commission Chairman may also restrict, at his/her discretion, the speaker's time to three minutes. The Chairman may also restrict public comments if they become irrelevant to the agenda item or repetitious of prior comments. All persons interested may appear and be heard or submit written statements prior to the Planning Commission meeting. Please note that if you challenge the City's decision on any of these

matters in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the meeting or in written correspondence delivered to the City at, or prior to, the meeting.

CHALLENGING DECISIONS OF CITY ENTITIES

The time limit within which to commence any lawsuit or legal challenge to any quasi-adjudicative decision made by the City of St. Helena is governed by Section 1094.6 of the Code of Civil Procedure, unless a shorter limitation period is specified by any other provision, including without limitation Government Code section 65009 applicable to many land use and zoning decisions, Government Code section 66499.37 applicable to the Subdivision Map Act, and Public Resources Code section 21167 applicable to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Under Section 1094.6, any lawsuit or legal challenge to any quasi-adjudicative decision made by the City must be filed no later than the 90th day following the date on which such decision becomes final. Any lawsuit or legal challenge, which is not filed within that 90-day period, will be barred. Government Code section 65009 and 66499.37, and Public Resources Code section 21167, impose shorter limitations periods and requirements, including timely service in addition to filing.

If a person wishes to challenge the above actions in court, they may be limited to raising only those issues they or someone else raised at the meeting described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of St. Helena, at or prior to the meeting. In addition, judicial challenge may be limited or barred where the interested party has not sought and exhausted all available administrative remedies.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL RECEIVED AFTER THE POSTING OF THE AGENDA

Any supplemental writings or documents distributed to a majority of the Planning Commission regarding any item on this Agenda, after the posting of the Agenda, will be available for public review in the City Clerk's Office located at 1088 College Avenue, St. Helena, California, during normal business hours and by appointment. In addition, such writings or documents will be made available on the City's website at cityofsthenela.gov and will be available for public review at the respective meeting.

Public Comment

From Kelly Wheaton <a4est42@gmail.com>

Date Thu 6/11/2026 6:26 AM

To James McCann <jmccann@cityofsthelena.gov>; Leza Mikhail <lmikhail@cityofsthelena.gov>; Public Comment <publiccomment@cityofsthelena.gov>

Andrew,

Please attach to Planning Commision and City Council as a Public Comment

Mayor Dohring, City Council Members and Planning Commission Members,

I want to Congratulate Leza Mikail and her staff on her Masterclass in Community Engagement last night. If you weren't in attendance please watch the video. The presentation was short and sweet, which left time for extensive discussion and questions. No time limits, true appreciation, good questions, dialogue and engagement. And the public input was excellent.

The staff had done excellent research and seemed appreciative of the comments. They were going to incorporate what they learned from the community into what they will eventually present to the CC. I appreciated that Zoom made ir accessible to many who may not have been able to participate in person.

This should be the model for Town Halls and Study Sessions along with the Water Table going forward. Change can be exciting and productive when the staff is here to serve and collaborate rather than protect and pontificate. Little things can make a huge difference.

It made me so happy to see this. It means that the Strategic Plan and transformation are not only possible, but more likely.

Bravo! Refreshing.

Kelly Wheaton

Inglewood Ave.



Agendas Report to the Planning Commission

Agenda Section: PUBLIC HEARINGS

Department: Community Development Department - Planning Division

DATE:	June 16, 2026
FILE NUMBER:	ZOA 26-002
SUBJECT:	Revised Recommendation for Zoning Ordinance Amendment (ZOA 26-002) Related to On-Site Storage Facilities
LOCATION OF PROPERTY:	Citywide
APN:	Citywide
GENERAL PLAN/ ZONING:	Citywide
APPLICANT:	N/A
PROJECT PLANNER:	Jackie Oneal, Senior Planner
REVIEWED BY:	Leza Mikhail, Community Development Director
CEQA DETERMINATION:	Categorical Exemption / Common Sense Exemption (§15061(b)(3))
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	1. Find that the proposed amendments to Section 17.33 (Definitions) and related provisions of the St. Helena Municipal Code are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3); and 2. Adopt a revised resolution recommending that the City Council adopt Ordinance ZOA 26-002 amending Section 17.33 (Definitions) and Table 17.17.020(A) of the St. Helena Municipal Code to clarify the definition and regulation of On-Site Storage Facilities.

BACKGROUND:

On April 21, 2026, the Planning Commission considered the subject Zoning Ordinance Amendment (ZOA 26-002) and adopted a resolution recommending that the City Council

approve amendments to Section 17.33 (Definitions) and Table 17.17.020(A) of the St. Helena Municipal Code.

The Planning Commission's recommendation included:

- Revising the definition of "On-Site Storage Facilities" to distinguish between storage incidental to a permitted primary use and storage that functions as a primary or dominant activity on a site; and
- Amending Table 17.17.020(A) to require a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for On-Site Storage Facilities in the Service Commercial (SC), Central Business (CB), and Mixed Use (MU) zoning districts.

Following the Planning Commission hearing, staff continued reviewing and refining the proposed ordinance language during preparation of the City Council agenda materials. Through that process, staff identified a potential inconsistency between the proposed definition and the existing organization of the Zoning Code. Specifically, On-Site Storage Facilities are currently regulated as an accessory use and are not established elsewhere in the Zoning Code as a primary land use classification.

Staff is therefore returning to the Planning Commission with a revised recommendation.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The project includes a Zoning Ordinance Amendment (ZOA 26-002) clarifying Section 17.33 (Definitions) and Table 17.17.020(A) of the St. Helena Municipal Code to specify in the definition and regulations of On-Site Storage Facilities that storage associated with a permitted primary use is not classified as an On-Site Storage Facility when such storage is incidental and subordinate to that use.

The proposed amendment would more clearly define On-Site Storage Facilities to be a use that does not include the storage of goods, inventory, materials, or equipment that are sold, utilized, produced, or maintained as part of a permitted primary use when such storage is incidental and subordinate to that use.

The amendment would also retain a clarifying footnote in Table 17.17.020(A) regarding the intended application of the use classification.

No changes are proposed to the existing development standards, screening requirements, setback requirements, or operational standards applicable to storage activities.

ANALYSIS:

The original purpose of the amendment was to address concerns raised by local business owners regarding the ability to establish accessory storage structures and maintain routine operational storage associated with permitted commercial uses.

Section 17.33 currently defines On-Site Storage Facilities as the indoor or outdoor storage of

materials, products, or equipment on the premises. Because the definition does not distinguish between storage facilities that function as the primary business, that is ancillary to a primary business, such as a storage container of supplies for a hardware store, may currently be interpreted as an On-Site Storage Facility.

At its April 21, 2026 hearing, the Planning Commission considered a proposed definition that distinguished between storage incidental to a permitted primary use and storage that functioned as a primary or dominant activity on a site. During preparation of the City Council ordinance, staff identified a potential inconsistency between that approach and the structure of the Zoning Code. On-Site Storage Facilities are currently listed only as an 'accessory use' allowed within the Service Commercial, Business Professional, and Industrial Zoning Districts and are not established elsewhere in the Municipal Code as a primary land use classification. The Municipal Code separately defines Storage, Personal as a (paraphrased) land use classification for mini-storage, self-storage, inventory storage, and similar warehouse-type storage facilities, whereby these types of facilities are only allowed within the City's Industrial Zoning District with a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). Staff is not proposing to change Storage, Personal or the requirements for a related CUP.

Staff has also further refined the proposed definition to On-Site Storage Facilities to focus on clarifying what activities are excluded from the On-Site Storage Facilities use classification. The revised definition clarifies that the storage of goods, inventory, materials, or equipment associated with a permitted primary use, such as a restaurant, bookstore, hardware store, etc., is not classified as an On-Site Storage Facility when such storage is accessory and subordinate to primary/main use on-site.

The revised definition addresses the concerns raised by local business owners by clarifying that routine business storage, inventory storage, equipment storage, and small accessory storage structures associated with a permitted use are not regulated as On-Site Storage Facilities.

During the Planning Commission's April 21, 2026 discussion, questions were raised regarding whether existing setback requirements may limit the placement of accessory storage structures for storage within commercial zoning districts. Staff reviewed the applicable development standards and determined that the setback requirements in the commercial districts generally permit accessory structures to be located within side and rear yards, provided the site does not abut a residential zoning district. Accessory storage structures will continue to be subject to all applicable development standards, including setbacks, height limits, screening requirements, and design review requirements where applicable. Existing regulations contained in Sections 17.24.090 (Screening) and 17.24.100 (On-Site Storage) will remain in effect. No changes to these sections are proposed as part of the subject amendments.

In conclusion, the proposed amendment provides clarity to applicants, staff, and decision-makers, reduces uncertainty regarding routine business storage, and allows normal business operations to occur without unnecessary discretionary review while maintaining the City's existing development and operational standards.

ISSUES:**CORRESPONDENCE:**

No correspondence has been received regarding this item as of the date of preparation of this report.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. Find that the proposed amendments to Section 17.33 (Definitions) and related provisions of the St. Helena Municipal Code are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3); and
2. Adopt a revised resolution recommending that the City Council adopt Ordinance ZOA 26-002 amending Section 17.33 (Definitions) and Table 17.17.020(A) of the St. Helena Municipal Code to clarify the definition and regulation of On-Site Storage Facilities.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Attach 1. Draft PC Resolution
2. Attach 2. Proposed CC Ordinance
3. Attach 3. Redlines for Reference Only

CITY OF ST. HELENA PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO. PC2026-0XX

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ST. HELENA, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPT AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 17.33 (DEFINITIONS) AND TABLE 17.17.020(A) (USE REGULATIONS - COMMERCIAL AND MIXED-USE ZONING DISTRICTS) OF TITLE 17 (ZONING) OF THE ST. HELENA MUNICIPAL CODE (ZOA 26-002)

Recitals

WHEREAS, the City of St. Helena, California (“City”) is a municipal corporation, duly organized under the constitution and laws of the State of California; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to amend its Zoning Code (ZOA 26-002), codified as Title 17 of the St. Helena Municipal Code (“SHMC”); and

WHEREAS, staff prepared the proposed ordinance, including any additional information and documents deemed necessary for the Planning Commission to take action; and

WHEREAS, the City gave public notice of the public hearing for the proposed ordinance in accordance with applicable law; and

WHEREAS, on April 21, 2026, the Planning Commission held a duly-noticed public hearing and adopted Resolution No. PC2026-009 recommending approval of ZOA 26-002; and

WHEREAS, following the April 21, 2026 public hearing and during preparation of the City Council agenda materials, staff continued refining the proposed ordinance language and identified a potential inconsistency between the proposed definition of On-Site Storage Facilities and the existing accessory use framework established in the Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, on June 16, 2026, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing to reconsider its prior recommendation and consider revisions to Zoning Ordinance Amendment (ZOA 26-002); and

WHEREAS, staff therefore recommends retaining the proposed amendment to Section 17.33 (Definitions) and the clarifying footnote in Table 17.17.020(A); and

WHEREAS, all other legal prerequisites to the adoption of this resolution have occurred.

Resolution

NOW THEREFORE, THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ST. HELENA DOES RESOLVE, DETERMINE, FIND AND ORDER AS FOLLOWS:

Recitals. The above recitals are incorporated herein by reference.

Compliance with CEQA. The Planning Commission recommends that the City Council find that the proposed ordinance amendment is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3).

General Plan Consistency. Based on the entire record before the Planning Commission, and all written and oral evidence presented, the Planning Commission hereby finds that the proposed ordinance is consistent with the City's adopted General Plan. The proposed ordinance does not otherwise conflict with any of the General Plan's goals or policies.

Zoning Ordinance Amendment ZOA 26-002. The Planning Commission hereby recommends that the City Council adopt the attached proposed ordinance (**Exhibit A**) entitled:

An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of St. Helena amending Section 17.33 (Definitions) and Table 17.17.020(A) of the St. Helena Municipal Code to clarify the regulation of on-site storage facilities.

Availability of Documents. The proposed ordinance is on file and available for public review in the Community Development Department at St. Helena City Hall, 1088 College Avenue.

Severability. If any part of this Resolution is held by a court to be invalid, that part is severable from the rest and every other part remains unaffected and in effect.

(Signatures on following page)

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing recommendation to the City Council was duly and regularly approved by the Planning Commission of the City of St. Helena at a regular meeting of the Planning Commission held on June 16, 2026 by the following roll call vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Christopher Warner, Chair
Planning Commission

Leza Mikhail
Community Development Director

Attachments:

1. "Exhibit A" Proposed Ordinance of the City Council
2. Redlined Ordinance Sections 17.33 and 17.17.020, for reference only

Exhibit “A”

ORDINANCE NO. _____

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ST. HELENA
AMENDING SECTION 17.33 (DEFINITIONS) AND TABLE 17.17.020(A) (USE
REGULATIONS—COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS OF THE ST. HELENA MUNICIPAL
CODE TO CLARIFY THE REGULATION OF ON-SITE STORAGE FACILITIES (ZOA
26-002)**

WHEREAS, the City of St. Helena, California (“City”) is a municipal corporation, duly organized under the constitution and laws of the State of California; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to amend Section 17.33 (Definitions) and Table 17.17.020(A) of the St. Helena Municipal Code (“SHMC”); and

WHEREAS, staff prepared the proposed ordinance, including the proposed language, and any additional information and documents deemed necessary for the City Council to take action; and

WHEREAS, on April 21, 2026, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing and considered the staff report, recommendations by staff, and public testimony concerning the proposed ordinance and municipal code amendments, and adopted Resolution No. PC2026-009 recommending that the City Council adopt the proposed ordinance and finding that no environmental review is required under CEQA, and after further review and new additions to the Ordinance language were made, the item returned to the Planning Commission for additional review; and

WHEREAS, on June 16, 2026, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing and adopted Resolution No. PC2026-_____ revising its prior recommendation concerning ZOA 26-002; and

WHEREAS, the City gave public notice of the public hearing before the City Council for the proposed ordinance in accordance with applicable law; and

WHEREAS, on _____, 2026, the City Council held a duly-noticed public hearing and considered the staff report, recommendation by the Planning Commission, recommendation by staff, and public testimony concerning the proposed ordinance; and

WHEREAS, all other legal prerequisites to the adoption of this ordinance have occurred.

NOW, THEREFORE, The City Council of the City of St. Helena does hereby ordain as follows:

Section 1: Recitals

The Recitals set forth above are true and correct and are incorporated into this Ordinance.

Section 2: Amendment to SHMC 17.33 (Definitions)

Section 17.33 of the St. Helena Municipal Code is hereby amended to read as follows (new language is underlined, deletions are in ~~strikeout~~):

17.33 Definitions.

On-site storage facilities. The indoor or outdoor storage of materials, products, or equipment on the premises. This definition does not include the storage of goods, inventory, materials, or equipment that are sold, utilized, produced, or maintained as part of a permitted primary use when such storage is incidental and subordinate to that use.

Section 3: Amendment to Table 17.17.020(A)

Table 17.17.020(A) (Use Regulations—Commercial and Mixed-Use Zoning Districts) is hereby amended to add new footnote to the term “On-Site Storage Facilities” to read as follows:

14. This classification does not include the storage of goods, inventory, materials, or equipment associated with a permitted primary use when such storage is incidental and subordinate to that use.

Section 4: Severability.

If any section, subsection, phrase, or clause of this Ordinance is for any reason held to be unconstitutional, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance. The City Council would have passed this Ordinance and each and every section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase not declared invalid or unconstitutional without regard to whether any portion of the Ordinance would be subsequently declared invalid or unconstitutional.

Section 5: CEQA.

This Ordinance was assessed in accordance with the authority and criteria contained in the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”), the State CEQA Guidelines (the “Guidelines”), and the environmental regulations of the City. The City Council hereby finds that this ordinance is exempt from review under CEQA under Section 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines because it can be seen with certainty

that the provisions contained herein would not have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment.

Section 6: Notice and Effective Date.

This Ordinance was duly noticed to the public. This Ordinance shall take effect and be enforced within thirty (30) days from and after the date of its adoption by the City Council at a second reading and shall be posted and published in accordance with the California Government Code.

THE FOREGOING ORDINANCE was introduced at a regular meeting of the St. Helena City Council on the ____ day of ____, 2026, and was adopted at a regular meeting of the St. Helena City Council on the ____ day of ____, 2026, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

APPROVED

ATTEST

Paul Jamison Dohring, Mayor

Andrew Bradley, City Clerk

Table 17.17.020.A: Use Regulations – Commercial and Mixed-Use Zoning Districts				
Use Classification	CB	SC	MU	Additional Regulations
“P” = Permitted; “MUP” = Minor Use Permit; “CUP” = Conditional Use Permit; “—” = Use Not Allowed				
Day care facility				
Seven or more persons	—	P	MUP	
Six or fewer persons	—	P	P	
Government office	P	P	P	
Instructional services	CUP	P	P	
Low barrier navigation center	P	—	P	
Parking facilities	CUP ⁴	CUP	CUP	
Senior center	P ⁴	P	—	
Accessory Uses – See also Sec. 17.22.020, Accessory Uses				
Accessory dwelling unit	Sec. 17.22.030, Accessory Dwelling Units			
Catering	P	P	P	
Cottage food operations	P	P	P	Sec. 17.22.110, Cottage Food Operations
Family day care, large	—	—	MUP	
Family day care, small	—	—	P	
Music/entertainment, live or amplified ⁶	P/CUP ¹³	P	P/CUP ¹³	
On-site storage facilities ¹⁴	—	CUP	—	
Outdoor dining ⁶	MUP	MUP	MUP	Sec. 17.22.170, Outdoor Dining and Seating
Outdoor display and sales	Sec. 17.22.180, Outdoor Display and Sales			
Small recycling facility	—	MUP	MUP	Sec. 17.22.220, Small Recycling Facilities

Table 17.17.020.A: Use Regulations – Commercial and Mixed-Use Zoning Districts

Use Classification	CB	SC	MU	Additional Regulations
"P" = Permitted; "MUP" = Minor Use Permit; "CUP" = Conditional Use Permit; "—" = Use Not Allowed				

End Notes:

¹ Permitted on upper floors only.

² Permitted on upper floors only for properties fronting onto Main Street.

³ Must be part of a mixed-use development.

⁴ Not permitted on Main Street.

⁵ The following are not permitted:

- Establishments serving customers within their vehicles on the premises or preparing beverages or food intended for consumption within their vehicles on the premises.
- Music or entertainment which is not accessory to the approved use and/or audible beyond the confines of the building in which such music or entertainment is being performed.
- Drive-in for take-out service.

⁶ Roof top uses are only allowed in the CB and MU zoning districts.

⁷ Formula and drive-through restaurant establishments are not permitted.

⁸ Seating is not permitted.

⁹ Limited to 10,000 gross square feet.

¹⁰ A maximum of four formula retail businesses are permitted in any one zoning district.

¹¹ Rental of rooms limited to upper floors only for properties fronting onto Main Street.

¹² A CUP is required for non-public wine tasting, offered to wine distributors and wine merchants only.

¹³ A CUP is required for live or amplified music/entertainment outdoors.

¹⁴ This classification does not include the storage of goods, inventory, materials, or equipment associated with a permitted primary use when such storage is incidental and subordinate to that use.

Mining and quarrying of nonmetallic minerals. A facility engaging in the extracting, producing, handling, milling, or other processing of nonmetallic minerals.

Mobile home. As defined in § 18008 of the California Health and Safety Code or manufactured home as defined in § 18007 of the California Health and Safety Code, a movable dwelling constructed on a chassis, designed for use without a permanent foundation, and designed to be connected to utilities. Excludes manufactured modular housing designed to be placed on a permanent foundation and recreational vehicles, recreational vehicles as defined in § 799.24 of the California Civil Code and § 18010 of the California Health and Safety Code, commercial coaches, and or factory-built housing, as defined in § 19971 of the California Health and Safety Code.

Model home sales office. A dwelling temporarily used as a sales office for on-site sales for a residential development under construction.

Multi-family dwelling. Two or more attached dwelling units on a single lot. Types of multi-family dwellings include duplexes, single room occupancy units, townhouses, and apartment buildings.

Office.

Business, professional, and technology. An office of a firm, organization, or agency providing professional, executive, management, or administrative services, such as accounting, architectural, computer software design, engineering, graphic design, interior design, legal, and tax preparation.

Medical and dental. An office providing consultation, diagnosis, therapeutic, preventive, or corrective personal-treatment services by doctors or dentists; medical and dental laboratories that see patients; licensed acupuncturists; and similar practitioners of medical and healing arts for humans licensed by the State of California. Incidental medical and/or dental research within the office is considered part of the office use if it supports the on-site patient services.

Walk-in clientele. An office providing direct services to patrons or clients without prior appointments. This use classification includes employment agencies, insurance agent offices, real estate offices, travel agencies, utility company offices, and offices for elected officials. It does not include banks or check-cashing facilities, which are separately classified and regulated (see Bank or Financial Institution).

Wholesale office. An office of a wholesale firm excluding storage or on-site shipping and receiving of products.

Winery office (off-site). An office performing off-site administrative functions for a winery.

On-site storage facilities. The indoor or outdoor storage of any materials, products, or equipment on the premises. This definition does not include the storage of goods, inventory, materials, or equipment that are sold, utilized, produced, or maintained as part of a permitted primary use when such storage is incidental and subordinate to that use.

Outdoor dining. An area set up outside the confines of a commercial structure with tables, chairs, and other furnishings for the purpose of offering seating to patrons while selling, offering for sale, and serving food and beverages by an adjoining restaurant in which the same food and beverages are offered for sale, sold, and served.

Outdoor display and sales. The display or sale of any materials, products, or equipment outside of a building.



Agendas Report to the Planning Commission

Agenda Section: PUBLIC HEARINGS

Department: Community Development Department - Planning Division

DATE:	June 16, 2026
FILE NUMBER:	ZOA 26-001
SUBJECT:	Continuance of Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance Amendment, ZOA26- 001
LOCATION OF PROPERTY:	Citywide
APN:	Citywide
GENERAL PLAN/ ZONING:	City
APPLICANT:	N/A
PROJECT PLANNER:	Jackie Oneal, Senior Planner
REVIEWED BY:	Leza Mikhail, Community Development Director
CEQA DETERMINATION:	The continuance of this item is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Continue the Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance Amendment to the Planning Commission meeting of July 7, 2026.

BACKGROUND:

The Planning Commission conducted a study session regarding proposed amendments to the City's Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) regulations on April 21, 2026. The item was scheduled to return for Planning Commission consideration on June 16, 2026, and was publicly noticed in The Press Democrat newspaper.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment would amend the City's ADU regulations to ensure consistency with current State law and provide clarification regarding local development standards and implementation procedures.

ANALYSIS:

At the request of the Planning Commission Chair, staff recommends continuing the item to the

July 7, 2026, Planning Commission meeting. The continuance will allow participation by Commissioners anticipated to be absent from the June 16 meeting and facilitate broader Commission discussion of the proposed ordinance amendments.

ISSUES:

The purpose of the continuance is to allow broader Planning Commission participation in consideration of the proposed ordinance amendments.

CORRESPONDENCE:

At the time of preparation of this report, no public correspondence had been received regarding the proposed continuance.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends continuing the item to July 7, 2026 at the request of the Planning Commission Chair due to the anticipated absence of multiple Commissioners from the June 16 meeting.

ATTACHMENTS:



Agendas Report to the Planning Commission

Agenda Section: SCHEDULED ITEMS

Department: Community Development Department - Planning Division

DATE:	June 16, 2026
FILE NUMBER:	N/A
SUBJECT:	Study Session Regarding the City's Short-Term Rental Program and Potential Amendments to the Short-Term Rental Ordinance (SHMC Sections 17.05.100 and 17.22.200).
LOCATION OF PROPERTY:	City Wide
APN:	City Wide
GENERAL PLAN/ ZONING:	N/A
APPLICANT:	N/A
PROJECT PLANNER:	Natalie Bresee, Assistant Planner
REVIEWED BY:	Leza Mikhail, Community Development Director
CEQA DETERMINATION:	This study session is not a project under Section 15378 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines because it involves only the exchange of information, discussion, and direction regarding potential future actions. No commitment to a specific course of action is being made at this time.
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Receive the staff presentation, receive public and Planning Commission input regarding potential amendments to the City's Short-Term Rental Ordinance. This item is for discussion purposes only and no formal action will be taken.

BACKGROUND:

Short-term rentals (STRs) in the City of St. Helena have been regulated for several years through a permit-based program designed to balance visitor accommodations with the protection of residential neighborhoods and preservation of the City's housing stock.

Under St. Helena Municipal Code (SHMC) Sections 17.05.100 and 17.22.200, STR permits are currently limited to twenty-five (25) citywide and are subject to operational standards including occupancy limits, parking requirements, Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT)

compliance, and ongoing permit conditions. As of June 2026, the City has twenty-three (23) active Short-Term Rental permits, with two applications in process for the last two available permits.

Under the current ordinance, a new STR permit request requires Planning Commission approval through a public hearing process. Approved permits are valid for two years and may be administratively renewed on a biennial basis, provided the permit holder remains in compliance with the SHMC.

In administering the program, staff has identified several operational and policy areas that may warrant further review, consideration of more efficient processes, and stronger verification of taxation.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The City regulates STRs through SHMC Sections 17.05.100 and 17.22.200, which establish permitting requirements, operational standards, permit limits, renewal procedures, and enforcement mechanisms intended to balance visitor-serving accommodations with neighborhood compatibility and housing preservation.[LM2.1]

This study session is intended to provide a high-level overview of the City's existing STR program and to solicit feedback on potential areas for future ordinance refinement. No specific amendments are proposed at this time, and no formal action will be taken.

Based on administration of the program and public inquiries over time, staff has identified several topics for potential evaluation, including permit renewal procedures, compliance monitoring, rental activity reporting, permit availability, and geographic distribution standards.

ANALYSIS:

Current STR Program Overview

The limitations of the current STR program include:

- Maximum of twenty-five (25) permits citywide
- Planning Commission approval and public hearing of new STR permits
- Two-year permit renewal term
- Minimum 60-day rental activity requirement for non-primary residences
- Business license and TOT requirements

Permit Renewal, Compliance Monitoring, and Rental Reporting

STR permits are issued for a two-year term and may be renewed administratively on a biennial basis, provided the permit holder remains in compliance with SHMC requirements, including business licensing, TOT reporting and payment, rental activity requirements, and violation history.

The current program relies primarily on self-reported information and documentation submitted by permit holders to demonstrate compliance. While compliance is evaluated during

the permit renewal process, staff has identified opportunities to strengthen ongoing monitoring and verification of permit requirements, including rental activity standards and accuracy of TOT compliance.

Staff has also experienced challenges confirming continued compliance throughout the existing two-year permit term and has received inquiries regarding the effectiveness of the existing reporting and renewal procedures. As a result, staff is seeking feedback regarding whether modifications to permit renewal procedures, reporting requirements, and compliance monitoring mechanisms should be considered.

Potential Amendments to STR Program

Permit Renewal Procedures

- Transitioning from biennial to annual permit renewals;
- Establishing a common annual renewal date for all permits; and
- Revising renewal eligibility requirements for permits with outstanding compliance issues.

Rental Activity and Reporting Requirements

- Retaining or modifying the existing sixty-day rental activity requirement;
- Removing the primary residence exemption;
- Establishing alternative activity thresholds;
- Requiring annual or periodic reporting of rental activity; and
- Integrating rental activity reporting with TOT reporting requirements.

Compliance Monitoring and Verification

- Requiring supplemental documentation to verify rental activity;
- Utilizing information available through short-term rental platforms, where authorized by law; and
- Exploring implementation of state-authorized data sharing tools, including those contemplated under Senate Bill (SB) 346.

SB 346 Opportunities to Local Jurisdictions

SB 346, which became effective January 1, 2026, authorizes local agencies to adopt ordinances requiring short-term rental facilitators (e.g., Airbnb, Vrbo) to provide identifying information regarding short-term rental listings operating within the jurisdiction. Information that may be required includes property addresses, listing URLs, assessor parcel numbers (APNs), and unit-specific information where applicable.

The legislation also authorizes local agencies to require short-term rental facilitators to display local short-term rental permit numbers and TOT certificate numbers on listings and to submit

periodic reports to support local enforcement and compliance efforts.

Staff believes the information available through SB 346 may assist the City in verifying permit activity, identifying unpermitted short-term rentals, monitoring compliance with local regulations, and supporting TOT administration. Implementation would likely also require adoption of a separate local ordinance.

Short-Term Rental Permit Availability

The City's current STR ordinance limits the number of STR permits to twenty-five (25) citywide. An initial permit cap was adopted to balance the availability of visitor-serving accommodations while also preserving valuable housing stock, monitoring neighborhood character and ensuring public welfare across the initial twenty-five (25) STRs.

Staff have received inquiries regarding permit availability and whether the existing cap remains appropriate, or whether there are opportunities to expand the program at a reasonable rate so that the STR program fits within the broader community development goals. According to the Housing Element, the City currently contains approximately 2,897 housing units[JO3.1][NB3.2][NB3.3]. As such, the cap of 25 permits represents approximately 0.5 percent of the City's housing stock, while a cap of 50 permits would represent approximately 1 percent.[NB4.1]

Potential considerations related to permit availability include

- Retaining the current cap of twenty-five (25) permits;
- Increasing the cap incrementally to a fixed number, such as fifty (50) permits;
- Establishing a cap based on a percentage of housing stock; or
- Establishing a hybrid approach that ties permit availability to future changes in the housing inventory.

In addition to the overall permit cap, staff is looking at whether geographic distribution standards would further support neighborhood compatibility objectives. One potential approach would be to establish a spacing requirement prohibiting approval of a new STR permit for a parcel located within three hundred (300) feet of another parcel with an active STR permit. Such a requirement would be applied going forward and would not affect existing permitted STRs.

In conclusion, staff is seeking feedback from the public, business owners, STR operators and prospective STR operators on the existing and generally proposed topics under consideration. As this ordinance evolves, drafts of the ordinance will be provided on a dedicated webpage for public viewing. At this stage, the staff are introducing an initial draft that will likely be modified throughout the process.

ISSUES:

The City's General Plan and Housing Element contain policies supporting preservation of the City's existing housing stock while balancing the need for visitor-serving accommodations. Any

future amendment to the City's short-term rental regulations, including changes to the existing permit cap, should be evaluated for consistency with these adopted policies.

Should the City pursue an increase in permit availability, staff may also evaluate whether a permit cap tied to a percentage of the City's housing stock would provide greater flexibility than a fixed numerical cap as the City's housing inventory changes over time.

CORRESPONDENCE:

At the time of agenda publication, staff received no correspondence related to this item.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Receive the staff presentation, receive public and Planning Commission input regarding potential amendments to the City's Short-Term Rental Ordinance. This item is for discussion purposes only and no formal action will be taken.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. PC DRAFT Redline - St. Helena Municipal Code Section 17.05.100
2. PC DRAFT Redline - St. Helena Municipal Code Section 17.22.200
3. Public Comment - Perry Clark
4. Public Comment - Peter Scott
5. Public Comment - Peter Scott (2)
6. Public Comment - Alan Galbraith
7. Public Comment - Tom Belt
8. Public Comment - Mary Stephenson
9. Public Comment - Jordan Coonrad
10. Public Comment - Lisa Pelosi
11. Public Comment - Elaine de Man

17.05.100 Short-term rental ordinance.

A. Purpose.

1. The city council finds that unregulated transient occupancy uses (i.e., short-term rentals) in residential and agricultural districts present a threat to the public welfare.
2. The purposes of the short-term rental regulations are to:
 - a. Establish a permitting process and appropriate restrictions and standards for short-term rental of single-family dwellings;
 - b. Provide a visitor experience and accommodation as an alternative to the hotel, motel, and bed and breakfast accommodations currently existing in the city;
 - c. Ensure the collection and accurate payment of transient occupancy taxes;
 - d. Minimize the negative secondary effects of short-term rental use on surrounding residential neighborhoods; and
 - e. Retain the character of the neighborhoods in which any such use occurs.
3. The short-term rental regulations are not intended to regulate hotels and bed and breakfast inns that do not qualify as short-term rentals.
4. The short-term rental regulations are not intended to provide any owner of residential property with the right or privilege to violate any private conditions, covenants and restrictions applicable to the owner's property that may prohibit the use of such owner's residential property for short-term rental purposes as defined in this section.
5. ~~The city council also finds that the adoption of a~~ comprehensive ordinance regulating the issuance of and operating conditions attached to short-term rental permits is necessary to protect the public health, safety and welfare. The purposes of the short-term rental permit regulations are to:
 - a. Provide a permit system and to impose operational requirements in order to minimize the potential adverse impacts of transient uses in residential neighborhoods and zoning districts on traffic, noise and density;

- b. Ensure the health, safety and welfare of renters and guests patronizing short-term rentals;
- c. Impose limitations on the total number of permits issued in order to ensure the long-term availability of the affordable housing stock; and
- d. Provide for robust enforcement remedies and penalties to prevent and deter violations of this section and unjust enrichment by those who violate this section.

B. *Permit Requirement.*

1. *Permit Required.* Operation of a short-term rental shall require a short-term rental permit. It shall be unlawful to operate a short-term rental without a short-term rental permit.
2. *Application.* A property owner or responsible person may seek a short-term rental permit through an application for a new short-term rental permit or a renewal of an existing short-term rental permit through the process described in Section [17.04.020](#), Application process.
3. *Responsibility.* It is the responsibility of the property owner or responsible person submitting an application to provide information on the proposed use that support the findings described in subsection [D](#) of this section.

C. *Considerations.* In the review of a short-term rental permit application, the Community Development Director, or their designee, shall consider the location and characteristics of the subject property; input from other City departments (police, fire, public works, etc.); the requirements and development criteria of the applicable zoning district and use standards established in this title; and must affirm all Findings in section D. the following considerations:

- ~~—Occupancy limits, parking availability, noise generation, outdoor activities, and other operational characteristics of the proposed short-term rental;~~
- ~~—The proximity of the proposed short-term rental to adjacent residential uses and the potential for adverse effects on neighboring properties and the surrounding neighborhood;~~
- ~~—The property's compliance with applicable building, fire, health, safety, and zoning regulations;~~

~~The adequacy of refuse collection, property maintenance, local contact availability, and other measures intended to ensure ongoing compliance with the requirements of this chapter; and~~

- ~~1. Any history of code enforcement violations, nuisance activities, or prior permit revocations associated with the property that may affect the property's suitability for use as a short-term rental.~~

~~*Public Hearing and Procedures.*~~

~~1. The planning commission shall hold a public hearing for discretionary review for a new short-term rental application. The public hearing shall be properly noticed in compliance with Section 17.04.080, Public hearing notice.~~

- ~~2. The public hearing notice shall:~~

~~a. Contain a description of the proposed short-term rental operation, parking on the site, and number of bedrooms to be used for short-term rental use, together with a location map identifying the short-term rental dwelling lot in relationship to all other lots within a three hundred (300) foot distance, measured from property boundary to property boundary.~~

~~b. State that a written protest may be filed against the proposed short-term rental use with the community development director; provided, that the protest is postmarked or received within fourteen (14) days of the mailing of the notice of application.~~

- ~~3. The planning commission shall hold a public hearing on an application for a short-term rental permit and shall, at the conclusion of the public hearing, approve (with or without conditions), or deny the application in compliance with this code.~~

D. *Findings.* The ~~planning commission~~community development director, or their designee, shall review and either approve or deny the initial short-term rental permit application pursuant to the requirements of this section after considering the effects the proposed short-term rental use would have on surrounding uses and the cumulative impacts within the community. In approving a new short-term rental permit application, the ~~planning commission~~community development director must make the following findings:

1. The short-term rental complies with applicable standards identified in Section [17.22.200](#), Short-term rentals;
2. The establishment of a short-term rental at the subject property is consistent with the purpose of the general plan, including policies regarding the displacement of rental units in the housing stock;
3. The establishment of a short-term rental at the subject property will not be detrimental to a building, structure, or feature of significant aesthetic, cultural, architectural, or engineering interest or value of a historical nature;
4. The establishment of a short-term rental at the project site is compatible with and will not be detrimental to the character of the neighborhood and surrounding land uses;
5. The establishment of a short-term rental at the project site will provide an enhanced visitor experience and accommodation as an alternative to the hotel, motel, and bed and breakfast accommodations currently existing in the city and will help to ensure the collection and payment of transient occupancy taxes; and
6. There exists no substantial evidence of operation of an unpermitted short-term rental on the part of the applicant anywhere within the city.

~~E. *Conditions of Approval.* The community development director may recommend, and the planning commission may impose, conditions on the granting of an application for a short-term rental permit to mitigate the impacts of the proposed land use. In reviewing the short-term rental permit application, the Community Development Director, or their designee, may attach any conditions governing occupancy, parking, noise, outdoor activities, refuse disposal and trash/litter control, property maintenance, guest conduct, local contact availability, public safety, and other items as necessary to assure compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood and residential uses and minimize potential adverse effects on adjacent properties.~~

F. *Permit Availability.* If no short-term rental permits are available pursuant to the limitation on short-term rentals described in Section [17.22.200\(D\)](#), the community development director, ~~or their designee~~, shall place interested property owners on a waiting list in the order in which they were received. If a permit becomes available, applications shall be accepted and reviewed

in the order that they are listed on the waiting list subject to the local preference policy established in Section [17.22.200\(D\)\(15\)](#).

G. Notice of Action, Appeals, Term of Permit, and Conditions Subsequent to Short-Term Rental Permit Approval.

1. *Notice of Action.* Notice of action shall be provided pursuant to Section [17.04.100](#), Timing and notice of action, and shall include the following:-

a. Contain a description of the proposed short-term rental operation, parking on the site, and number of bedrooms to be used for short-term rental use, together with a location map identifying the short-term rental dwelling lot in relationship to all other lots within a three hundred (300) foot distance, measured from all property boundaryies to property boundary.

b. State that a written protest may be filed against the proposed short-term rental use with the Ccommunity dDevelopment dDirector, or their designee; provided, that the protest is postmarked or received within fourteen (14) days of the mailing of the notice of application.

2. *Appeals.* Any person whose application for a short-term rental permit has been denied—~~by the planning commission, or whose permit has been suspended or revoked—~~by the community development director, may appeal pursuant to Chapter [17.12](#), Procedures for Appeals. A third party may also file an appeal of an approval of a short-term rental permit.

3. *Term of Permit.* Short-term rental permits shall be valid for a period of ~~two~~one calendar years.

4. *Conditions Subsequent to Approval.* Short-term rental permits shall be subject to any changes to this section approved by the city council and conditions that the council may impose subsequent to the issuance of the permit, including upon annual renewal.

H. Renewals Procedure.

1. The permit holder shall submit a short-term rental permit renewal application and pay applicable fees to the city a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the expiration of a current short-term rental permit. A subsequent applications for STR renewals shall be submitted no later than December 1st of each calendar year. Failure to submit a renewal application and

pay applicable fees ~~by the prior to the permit expiration-renewal date, will~~shall result in the short-term rental permit ~~automatically expiring without any further action by the city, being placed into non-renewal status pursuant to subsection L.~~

2. Upon receipt of a renewal application, the community development director, ~~or their designee,~~ will confirm with the finance department that the applicant's business license is current and that all required transient occupancy taxes (TOT) have been reported and paid (see Chapter [5.08](#), Business Licenses Generally, for the requirements related to business licenses).

3. The community development director will refer the application to the St. Helena police department to request all police calls for services and complaints lodged against the property over the course of the ~~two~~one-year permit.

4. If the permit holder has a current business license, has rented their property on a short-term basis for an average of sixty (60) days per year (as applicable), has been properly reporting and paying TOT, and has fewer than ~~three~~two confirmed violations of the municipal code or of state or federal law over the prior ~~two~~ years, the community development director may administratively approve the renewal which shall be valid for ~~an one~~ additional ~~two~~ years. ~~If all of these provisions are not met, the renewal shall be referred to the planning commission for action at a public hearing. The community development director also has the discretion to refer the renewal application to the planning commission for a decision pursuant to the process and standards set forth in subsections C and D of this section, even if the community development director has the authority to consider renewal application pursuant to this section.~~

5. No renewal shall be approved without ~~written~~ verification of tax payments by the ~~permit holder, third party vendor through stipulated reporting requirements,~~ and no permit renewal shall be approved if the operation of the short-term rental has created adverse impacts on the neighborhood, as specified in subsection [K](#) of this section, in which it is situated or has otherwise caused the loss of the character of that neighborhood.

6. The community development director may deny the renewal if the applicant has violated any provision of ~~this section~~ 17.05.100 or Section 17.22.200. Any non-renewal shall be processed in accordance with subsection L.

~~7. Notice of Action, Appeals, Term of Permit, and Conditions Subsequent to Approval of a Short-Term Rental Permit Renewal.~~

~~a. Notice of Action. Notice of action shall be provided pursuant to Section 17.04.100.
Timing and notice of action.~~

~~b. Appeals. Any person whose application for a short-term rental permit renewal has been denied by the community development director may appeal to the planning commission pursuant to Chapter 17.12, Procedures for Appeals. A third party may also file an appeal of an approval of a short-term rental permit renewal.~~

~~c. Conditions Subsequent to Approval. Short-term rental permit renewals shall be subject to any changes to this section approved by the planning commission and conditions that the commission may impose subsequent to the issuance of the permit.~~

I. *Inspections.*

1. The community development director has the right to enter upon any property at any reasonable time to make inspections and examinations for the purpose of enforcement of this section, subject to the provisions of Code of Civil Procedure Section [1822.50](#) et seq.
2. The fire department shall annually inspect the dwelling used as a short-term rental and submit the inspection report to the community development department.
3. The community development director shall have the right to inspect any records related to the use and occupancy of the short-term rental to determine that the objectives and conditions of this section are being fulfilled.

J. *Revocation.*

1. The community development director may revoke a short-term rental permit pursuant to Chapter [17.13](#), Enforcement, if the community development director determines that:
 - a. The owner-applicant gave false or misleading information during the application process;
 - b. There has been a violation of any of the terms, conditions and restrictions on the use of the dwelling unit for short-term rental use;
 - c. The owner-applicant has violated any provision of this section; or

d. The owner-applicant has failed to timely pay all transient occupancy tax as required by this code.

2. If an owner-applicant's short-term rental permit is revoked, the owner-applicant may not reapply for another permit for two years after the date of revocation. If there is a waiting list to receive a permit, the owner-applicant ~~will be added~~ must reapply to the list. Revocation is not the same as non-renewal.

K. *Violations and Enforcement, ~~and Civil Penalties.~~*

1. ~~Any property owner or responsible person who uses, or allows the use of, or advertises or causes to be printed, published, advertised, or disseminated in any way, the availability of residential property in violation of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor for each day in which such residential property is used, or allowed to be used, in violation of this section. Such violation shall be punishable pursuant to Chapters 1.12, Enforcement Procedures, and 1.20, General Penalty. Any violation of this chapter shall be subject to the enforcement provisions of Chapter 17.13 (Enforcement), Chapter 1.12 (Enforcement Procedures), and any other applicable provisions of the St. Helena Municipal Code.~~

2. ~~Short-term rental use, and advertisement for use, of a residential property in violation of this section is a threat to public health, safety or welfare and is thus declared to be unlawful and a public nuisance. Any such nuisance may be abated or restored by the enforcement official and also may be abated by the city pursuant to Chapter 1.12, Enforcement Procedures, except that the civil penalty for a violation shall be one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00). Each day the violation occurs past the compliance date provided for by the city in notice of violation shall constitute a separate offense. In addition to any other remedies available under the Municipal Code, violations of this chapter may be subject to an administrative civil penalty of up to one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per violation per day.~~

3. ~~Any property owner or responsible person who violates this chapter shall be liable and responsible for the civil penalty described in subsection (K)(2) of this section. The city may recover such civil penalty by either civil action or administrative citation. Such penalty shall be in addition to all other costs incurred by the city, including without limitation the city's staff time, investigation expenses and attorney's fees.~~

~~a. *Civil Action.* Where the city proceeds by civil action, the court shall have discretion to reduce the civil penalty based upon evidence presented by the property owner or~~

~~responsible person that such a reduction is warranted by mitigating factors including, without limitation, lack of culpability or inability to pay. Provided, however, that in exercising its discretion the court should consider the purpose of this section to prevent and deter violations and whether the reduction of civil penalties will frustrate that purpose by resulting in the property owner's or responsible person's enrichment or profit as a result of the violation of this section. In any such civil action the city also may abate or enjoin any violation of this section.~~

~~b. *Administrative Citations.* Where the city proceeds by administrative citation, the city will first issue the property owner or responsible person notice to correct the violation in accordance with Government Code Section 53069.4(a)(2)(A). Such notice to correct shall contain the following information:~~

- ~~i. Details regarding the nature of the violation;~~
- ~~ii. Details regarding how compliance can be achieved;~~
- ~~iii. Date by which proof of correction of the violation must be provided to the city to avoid the issuance of an administrative citation that will be no less than ten (10) days from the date the notice to correct is issued; and~~
- ~~iv. Notice that the civil penalty described in this subsection K will begin to be assessed if proof of correction of the violation is not provided to the city by the stated date.~~

~~c. *Administrative Appeals.* Where the city proceeds by administrative citation, the city shall provide the property owner or responsible person notice of the right to request an administrative hearing to challenge the citation and penalty, and the time for requesting that hearing.~~

~~i. The property owner or responsible person has the right to request an administrative hearing within forty-five (45) days of the issuance of the administrative citation and imposition of the civil penalty. To request such a hearing, the property owner or responsible person shall notify the city clerk in writing within forty-five (45) days of the issuance of the citation. The appeal notification shall include all specific facts, circumstances, and arguments upon which the appeal is based.~~

~~ii. The city manager is authorized to designate a hearing officer to hear such appeal. The city hearing officer shall conduct a hearing on the appeal within ninety (90) days of the~~

~~request for the hearing unless one of the parties requests a continuance for good cause. The hearing officer shall only consider those facts, circumstances, or arguments that the property owner or responsible person has presented in the appeal notification.~~

~~iii. The hearing officer shall render a decision in writing within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of the hearing. The hearing officer shall have discretion to reduce the civil penalty based upon evidence presented by the property owner or responsible person that such a reduction is warranted by mitigating factors including, without limitation, lack of culpability or inability to pay. Provided, however, that in exercising its discretion the hearing officer should consider the purpose of this section to prevent and deter violations and whether the reduction of civil penalties will frustrate that purpose by resulting in the property owner's or responsible person's enrichment or profit as a result of the violation of this section.~~

~~iv. Any aggrieved party to the hearing officer's decision on the administrative appeal may obtain review of the decision by filing a petition for writ of mandate with the Napa County superior court in accordance with the timelines and provisions set forth in California Government Code Section 53069.4.~~

~~v. If, following an administrative hearing, appeal, or other final determination, the owner of the property is determined to be the responsible person for the civil penalty imposed by this section, such penalty, if unpaid within forty-five (45) days of the notice of the final determination, shall become a lien to be recorded against the property on which the violation occurred pursuant to Chapter 1.12, Enforcement Procedures. Such costs shall be collected in the same manner as county taxes, and thereafter the property upon which they are a lien shall be sold in the same manner as property now is sold for delinquent taxes.~~

~~4. Each day the violation of this section occurs shall constitute a separate offense.~~

~~5. Any property owner who uses, or allows the use of, residential property as a short-term rental without a permit shall be liable for the transit occupancy tax that would have been owed under Chapter 3.28, Transient Occupancy Tax, had the use been legal, including the penalty and interest provisions of Section 3.28.070, Penalties and interest.~~

~~6. The remedies under this section are cumulative and in addition to any and all other remedies available at law and equity. Any property owner who operates or allows the~~

operation of a short-term rental without a valid permit shall be liable for any transient occupancy taxes, penalties, and interest that would have been owed pursuant to Chapter 3.28. (Ord. 26-1 § 3; Ord. 23-4 § 5 (Exh. A))

L. Non-Renewal of a Short-Term Rental Permit.

1. Upon a determination of non-renewal, the permit holder shall be allowed to continue operation of the short-term rental for a period not to exceed three (3) months from the date of the non-renewal determination. Upon expiration of the three-month period, authorization to operate the short-term rental shall terminate and all short-term rental activity shall cease.

2. A determination of non-renewal shall be final and shall not be subject to appeal.

3. Applicant may submit an application request to be placed on the wait list 2 years after being placed on the non-renewal status.

The St. Helena Municipal Code is current through Ordinance 26-3, passed February 24, 2026.

Disclaimer: The city clerk's office has the official version of the St. Helena Municipal Code. Users should contact the city clerk's office for ordinances passed subsequent to the ordinance cited above.

[City Website: www.cityofsthenana.gov](http://www.cityofsthenana.gov)

[Hosted by General Code.](#)

17.22.200 Short-term rentals.

A. *Purpose.* This section establishes the permit requirements, operational standards, and enforcement provisions applicable to short-term rentals. The regulations are intended to implement the purposes and findings set forth in Section 17.05.100.

- ~~1. The city council hereby finds that unregulated transient occupancy uses in residential and agricultural districts present a threat to the public welfare.~~
- ~~2. The purposes of the short-term rental regulations are to:~~
 - ~~a. Establish a permitting process and appropriate restrictions and standards for short-term rental of single-family dwellings;~~
 - ~~b. Provide a visitor experience and accommodation as an alternative to the hotel, motel, and bed and breakfast accommodations currently existing in the city;~~
 - ~~c. Ensure the collection and payment of transient occupancy taxes;~~
 - ~~d. Minimize the negative secondary effects of short-term rental use on surrounding residential neighborhoods; and~~
 - ~~e. Retain the character of the neighborhoods in which any such use occurs.~~
- ~~3. The short-term rental regulations are not intended to regulate hotels and bed and breakfast inns that do not qualify as short-term rentals.~~
- ~~4. The short-term rental regulations are not intended to provide any owner of residential property with the right or privilege to violate any private conditions, covenants and restrictions applicable to the owner's property that may prohibit the use of such owner's residential property for short-term rental purposes as defined in this section.~~
- ~~5. The city council also finds that the adoption of a comprehensive ordinance regulating the issuance of and operating conditions attached to short-term rental permits (refer to Section 17.05.100, Short-term rental permit) is necessary to protect the public health, safety and welfare. The purposes of the short-term rental permit regulations are to:~~

- ~~a. Provide a permit system and to impose operational requirements in order to minimize the potential adverse impacts of transient uses in residential neighborhoods and zoning districts on traffic, noise and density;~~
- ~~b. Ensure the health, safety and welfare of renters and guests patronizing short-term rentals;~~
- ~~c. Impose limitations on the total number of permits issued in order to ensure the long-term availability of the affordable housing stock; and~~
- ~~d. Provide for robust enforcement remedies and penalties to prevent and deter violations of this section and unjust enrichment by those who violate this section.~~

B. *Short—Term Rental Permit Required.* No person may use or maintain, nor may any person authorize, aid, facilitate or advertise the use of, any single-family dwelling on any parcel in any zoning district for short-term rental without a short-term rental permit. See Section [17.05.100](#), Short-term rental permit.

C. *Permitted Locations.* Short-term rentals ~~must may be permitted in accordance with the provisions established in each zoning district and as provided in this section. approved only in zoning districts where the use is permitted and subject to the requirements of this section and all applicable zoning district regulations.~~

- ~~1. No parcel shall be approved for a short-term rental permit if the parcel is located within a three hundred (300) foot radius of another parcel with an active for which a short-term rental permit has been issued. Distance shall be measured from the nearest property line s of the parcel containing the existing short-term rental to the closest nearest property line of the parcel proposed for a short-term rental permit, as determined by the City of St. Helena Geographic Information System..~~

~~A short-term rental permit lawfully issued prior to in effect at the time of adoption of the effective date of this subsection may continue to be renewed notwithstanding the spacing requirement, provided the permit holder remains eligible for renewal pursuant to this chapter and that there has been no change in ownership of the parcel. this provision, or subsequently issued, shall not be denied renewal based on the spacing requirement set forth in this subsection, provided the permit remains in continuous good standing and there is no change in ownership of the parcel.~~

2.

D. *Restrictions and Standards.* Short-term rentals are subject to the following restrictions and standards:

1. The short-term rental use is permitted in no more than one single-family dwelling per lot.
2. The short-term rental permit must be in the name of the owner-applicant, who must be an owner of the real property upon which the short-term rental use is to be permitted. One person may hold no more than one short-term rental permit. ~~The permit is not transferable.~~
 - a. *Non-Transferability.* Short-term rental permits are issued to a specific property owner and shall not be transferred, assigned, or conveyed. Upon a change in ownership, the permit shall automatically expire and the permit allocation shall return to the City's available inventory. Any subsequent owner seeking to operate a short-term rental shall obtain a new permit pursuant to the provisions of this chapter.
3. Short-term rental uses are limited to single-family dwellings existing and constructed as of the date of application for the short-term rental permit.
4. The total number of permits for short-term rental dwellings in the city must not exceed ~~twenty-five (25)~~ fifty (50) at any time, subject to the City's Short Term Rental Program Guidelines.
5. The maximum number of bedrooms used for short-term rental use in the short-term rental dwelling must be no greater than five. ~~The total number of guests staying in the short-term rental dwelling at any one time must be no greater than two times the number of bedrooms.~~ The maximum number of overnight occupants allowed within an STR unit shall be two persons per bedroom, plus two additional persons, up to a maximum of twelve (12) persons.
6. Short-term rental dwellings must meet all applicable building, health, fire and related safety codes at all times and shall be inspected by the fire department before any short-term rental activity can occur.

7. A minimum of two on-site parking spaces must be provided for use by the short-term rental occupants.
8. The owner-applicant must keep on file with the city the name, address, telephone number, cell phone number, and email address of a local contact person who shall be responsible for responding to questions or concerns regarding the operation of the short-term rental. This information must be posted in a conspicuous location within the short-term rental dwelling. The local contact person shall be available twenty-four (24) hours a day to accept telephone calls and respond physically to the short-term rental within thirty (30) minutes when the short-term rental is rented and occupied. The city shall post the name and contact information of the local contact person associated with each short-term rental on the city's webpage. The city reserves the right to reject a local contact person if their location is out of the area.
9. The owner-applicant must post "house policies" ~~within each guest bedroom in a~~ conspicuous location near the primary entrance of the short-term rental. The house policies must be included in the rental agreement, which must be signed by the renter and must be enforced by the owner-applicant or the owner-applicant's designated contact person. The house policies at a minimum must include the following provisions:
 - a. Quiet hours must be maintained from ten p.m. to seven a.m., during which noise within or outside the short-term rental dwelling must not disturb anyone on a neighboring property.
 - b. Outdoor amplified sound is prohibited.
 - c. Except as permitted by the community development director, vehicles must be parked in the designated on-site parking area and must not be parked on the street overnight.
 - d. Parties or group gatherings which exceed the maximum number of allowed guests and/or which have the potential to cause traffic, parking, noise or other problems in the neighborhood are prohibited from occurring at the short-term rental property, as a component of short-term rental activities.
 - e. Guests must not leave any waste or trash outside the house.

10. Auctions, weddings, commercial functions, and any other similar events which have the potential to cause traffic, parking, noise or other problems in the neighborhood are prohibited.
11. The owner-applicant must ensure that the occupants and/or guests of the short-term rental use do not create unreasonable noise or disturbances, engage in disorderly conduct, or violate provisions of this code or any state law pertaining to noise, disorderly conduct, the consumption of alcohol, or the use of illegal drugs or be subject to fines and penalties levied by the city up to and including non-renewal or revocation of the short-term rental permit.
12. The owner-applicant, upon notification that occupants and/or guests of his or her short-term rental use have created unreasonable noise or disturbances, engaged in disorderly conduct or committed violations of this code or state law pertaining to noise, disorderly conduct, the consumption of ~~alcohol or the~~ use of illegal drugs, must prevent a recurrence of such conduct by those occupants or guests or be subject to fines and penalties levied by the city up to and including non-renewal or revocation of the short-term rental permit.
13. All advertising for any short-term rental, including electronic advertising on short-term rental websites, must include the number of the short-term rental permit granted to the owner-applicant and shall be limited to the following advertising vendors:-
- a. Permitted short-term rentals shall only be listed on Airbnb, VRBO, Booking.com, or other short-term rental platforms that the Community Development Director has deemed to meet the following criteria and are in compliance with Government Code section XYZ50990 et seq. (Short-Term Rental Facilitator Act of 2025):
 - i. Ability to provide monthly occupancy and usage reporting to the City;
 - ii. Capabilities for the collection and remittance of Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT); and
 - iii. Tools or data-sharing capabilities necessary to support short-term rental compliance, monitoring, and enforcement
14. The owner-applicant must maintain city business licenses and pay all transient occupancy taxes in accordance with Chapter 3.28, Transient Occupancy Tax, as required.

a. Such demonstration ~~may~~ must be made by ~~any~~ means acceptable to the City, which require ~~including, but not limited to~~, evidence of bookings, rental receipts, or rental agreements through an acceptable vender approved by the City for enforcement. Failure to demonstrate compliance with this requirement shall result in non-renewal of the permit pursuant to SHMC 17.05.100(L).

15. Preference for the review and issuance of new short-term rental permits must be given to current residents of St. Helena over nonresident applicants. Applicants whose primary residence is within the city ~~must~~ should be reviewed and acted on ahead of other nonresident applications to implement the local preference policy for short-term rental permits as described in the City's Short-term Rental Program Guidelines. If an applicant does not submit a complete application within 30 days of being deemed incomplete after the initial submittal, the application shall be administratively withdrawn with no refund, and the next applicant will be considered by the Community Development Director or their designee. The applicant of an administratively withdrawn application through the initial review of a new permit can reapply for the wait list at any time.

16. Applicants for short-term rental permits are required to have owned their homes for a minimum of three years prior to applying for and being issued a short-term rental permit.

17. Short-term rental permit holders are required to rent their properties on a short-term basis for a minimum (average) of sixty (60) days per year. Individual permit holders who do not meet this minimum rental activity may (at the determination of the community development director) have their renewal denied and/or reviewed by the planning commission at a noticed public hearing. ~~Short-term rental permit holders who utilize their primary residence for short-term rental activities are exempt from this requirement.~~

18. Affordable housing units shall not be eligible for a short-term rental license. (Ord. 23-4 § 5 (Exh. A))

The St. Helena Municipal Code is current through Ordinance 26-3, passed February 24, 2026.

Disclaimer: The city clerk's office has the official version of the St. Helena Municipal Code. Users should contact the city clerk's office for ordinances passed subsequent to the ordinance cited above.

[City Website: www.cityofsthenana.gov](http://www.cityofsthenana.gov)

[Hosted by General Code.](#)

DRAFT

Re: STR ordinance

From Perry Clark <perrymclark@gmail.com>

Date Thu 6/11/2026 4:31 PM

To Natalie Bresee <nbresee@cityofsthelena.gov>

Cc Jackie Oneal <joneal@cityofsthelena.gov>

Hi Natalie,

Please let me know if this works for a formal submittal.

Public Comment Regarding Transferability of Short-Term Rental Permits

To: St. Helena City Council, Planning Commission, and City Staff

Subject: Adoption of a Transferability Provision for Short-Term Rental Permits

Dear Mayor, Council Members, Commissioners, and Staff,

I respectfully submit this comment in support of adopting a policy that allows the transfer of approved Short-Term Rental ("STR") permits upon the sale of a property, similar to the approach utilized by neighboring jurisdictions, including the City of Napa.

As the City of St. Helena continues to balance neighborhood character, housing concerns, tourism, and property rights, a transferability provision offers a practical and equitable solution that benefits property owners while maintaining the City's existing regulatory controls.

A properly regulated transfer process would provide several important benefits:

1. Preservation of Existing Permit Caps

Allowing permit transfers does not increase the total number of STR permits in the City. The existing cap remains unchanged, ensuring that the City's policy objectives and neighborhood protections are maintained. A transfer merely allows an approved permit to continue under new ownership rather than being extinguished upon sale.

2. Incentivizing Compliance

A transferable permit creates a strong incentive for owners to maintain compliance with City regulations. Properties with a history of violations could be made ineligible for transfer, ensuring that

only well-managed STRs retain this benefit.

3. Administrative Efficiency

The City can retain full authority to review and approve transfers, ensuring that new owners understand and agree to all operating standards, local regulations, occupancy limits, and neighborhood protections. This approach provides continuity while avoiding unnecessary permit attrition and reapplication processes.

4. Consistency with Neighboring Jurisdictions

The City of Napa has successfully implemented a transfer mechanism for vacation rental permits. Napa's ordinance provides a useful model that allows transfers while preserving municipal oversight and regulatory authority.

Under Napa's framework, a permit holder may transfer a vacation rental permit to a purchaser of the property, subject to City approval. The seller must provide notice of intent to transfer, the purchaser must submit an application and required documentation, and the City may approve, conditionally approve, or deny the transfer based on compliance with applicable regulations. Importantly, the transfer does not create a new permit or increase the overall number of permitted vacation rentals; it simply allows an existing permit to continue under qualified new ownership.

This approach demonstrates that permit transferability can be achieved without compromising enforcement, neighborhood compatibility, or permit caps. St. Helena has an opportunity to adopt a similar framework tailored to its unique community needs.

5. Fairness and Policy Consistency

A short-term rental permit attached to a compliant property does not become any more or less impactful on the surrounding neighborhood simply because ownership changes. If a property has been approved, inspected, and operated in compliance with City regulations, requiring the permit to terminate upon transfer of ownership does not advance the City's policy objectives. Instead, it creates uncertainty while producing no corresponding reduction in neighborhood impacts.

Allowing permit transfers subject to City review preserves all existing safeguards while ensuring continuity of compliance and enforcement.

Suggested Transfer Framework

I encourage the City to consider amendments to the STR ordinance that would allow permits to be transferred upon sale of a property, provided that:

- The permit is in good standing and free of unresolved violations;
- The property remains compliant with all applicable regulations;
- The purchaser submits a transfer application within a specified timeframe;
- The City retains full approval authority over the transfer;
- The purchaser agrees to comply with all operating requirements and permit conditions; and
- The transfer does not increase the total number of permitted STRs within the City.

Conclusion

A transferability provision would not expand the number of short-term rentals in St. Helena, nor would it diminish the City's ability to regulate and enforce its STR program. Rather, it would preserve existing permit caps, promote compliance, provide administrative efficiency, and align St. Helena with successful practices already implemented in neighboring jurisdictions.

I respectfully urge the City Council and Planning Commission to evaluate and adopt a transfer framework for existing short-term rental permits as part of any future updates to the City's STR regulations.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued efforts to thoughtfully balance the needs of residents, property owners, and the local economy.

Respectfully submitted,

Perry Clark

St. Helena Resident and Property Owner

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 11, 2026, at 11:25 AM, Natalie Bresee <nbresee@cityofstheleena.gov> wrote:

Hi Perry,

You can submit a written public comment via email to me, and we will attach it to the agenda for the commission to review.

Best,
Natalie

NATALIE BRESEE
ASSISTANT PLANNER

City of St. Helena

1088 College Avenue | St. Helena, CA 94574

Direct: (707) 968-2742 | Cell: (707) 312-6066 | nbresee@cityofstheleena.gov | cityofstheleena.gov

Celebrating St. Helena's Sesquicentennial: 150 Years of Service

Learn more about celebrations throughout 2026 at celebratestheleena.com

Short-Term Rental (STR) Ordinance Study Session Tuesday, June 16, 2026

From Peter Scott <peterrscott@gmail.com>

Date Wed 6/10/2026 5:58 PM

To Natalie Bresee <nbresee@cityofsthelena.gov>

You don't often get email from peterrscott@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

I hope my comments can be distributed to Commissioners in time for this evening's meeting. Thank you!

Commissioners,

As the Commission reviews St. Helena's Short-Term Rental ordinance, I wanted to offer a few thoughts based on what other tourism-dependent communities have learned over the past decade.

First, I think it's important to recognize that St. Helena already has one of the more restrictive STR programs in California. The permit cap, non-transferability requirement, occupancy limits, and local contact provisions have helped maintain a balance between supporting tourism and protecting neighborhood character. However, I believe there may be opportunities to revise our arbitrary permit cap and improve oversight, transparency, and community benefit while preserving the protections already in place.

A few ideas worth considering:

Increase The Number Of Permits

The current cap of 25 permits is outdated and arbitrary. Consider tying total permits to a reasonable percent of housing stock (25 permits only represent 1% of housing stock). Create metrics to evaluate what is a sustainable number of STR's that do not strain resources, adversely impact neighborhoods, but still contribute meaningful revenue and vitality to the community.

Benefit: Increased revenue from STR's to benefit the community and offset tax burdens on residents.

Improve Compliance and Enforcement

- **Use third-party monitoring services to identify unpermitted rentals (Deckard Technologies, Neumo STR, STR Monitoring and others).**

Many communities now use firms that monitor Airbnb, VRBO, and similar platforms to identify properties operating without permits and to ensure taxes are being collected properly.

Benefit: Better compliance, fairer enforcement, and less reliance on neighbors to police the system.

- **Adopt a more transparent enforcement process.**

A simple escalation system for verified violations—warning, fine, suspension, revocation—would help everyone understand the consequences when problems occur. Consider a Three Strikes system of escalating fines and penalties.

Benefit: Consistent enforcement and greater public confidence that the rules are being applied fairly.

- **Explore noise-monitoring technology (Minut, NoiseAware and others).**

A number of resort communities now require devices that monitor noise levels without recording conversations. Allows issues to be addressed before they become neighborhood disturbances and provides objective data rather than relying solely on complaints.

Benefit: Potential problems can be preemptively addressed, and enforcement costs reduced.

Protect Neighborhood Character

- **Consider neighborhood concentration limits in addition to the citywide cap.**

The overall number of STRs matters, but where they are located can matter just as much. Preventing excessive clustering in any one area can help preserve neighborhood character. Consider percentage STR metric to number of homes in given neighborhoods.

Benefit: Helps avoid situations where residents feel their neighborhood is gradually becoming a commercial lodging district.

- **Continue the current non-transferability requirement.**

This has been one of the strongest features of St. Helena's ordinance and helps prevent STR permits from becoming permanent property rights.

Benefit: Gives future councils flexibility to respond to changing community needs.

Increase Community Benefit

- **Dedicate a portion of STR-generated revenue to housing-related programs or Housing Mitigation Fee.**

Many tourist communities are now directing a portion of STR fees or occupancy taxes toward workforce housing, first-time homebuyer assistance, ADU incentives, or other housing initiatives.

Benefit: Creates a direct connection between tourism-related activity and one of the community's most pressing challenges.

- **Consider whether fee structures should better reflect impacts.**

There may be value in evaluating whether owner-occupied rentals and whole-home investment properties should be treated the same. Consider tiered fee tied to owner-occupied STRs and increased assessment or Housing Mitigation Fee on non-occupied properties.

Benefit: Encourages responsible local ownership while recognizing differing impacts on housing supply.

Improve Transparency

- **Publish an annual STR report.**

A simple report showing permit counts, complaints, enforcement actions, waitlist status, and tax revenue would help inform future discussions.

Benefit: Allows policy decisions to be based on facts and trends rather than assumptions.

- **Create a public dashboard.**

Making this information easily accessible online would improve transparency and public understanding of the program.

Benefit: Builds trust and reduces speculation about the scope and impact of STR activity.

In my view, the conversation should be less about whether STRs should exist and more about how the City can ensure that the small number that are allowed operate responsibly, are effectively monitored, and provide measurable benefits to the community.

I think it would also be helpful if the Commission requested an annual report comparing St. Helena's current STR inventory, complaint rates, and tax revenues against peer communities inside and out of CA (tourism-impacted towns of similar size and demographics)

St. Helena has already taken a cautious approach. The next step may be refining the program based on lessons learned from other communities facing many of the same challenges we face: preserving neighborhood character, maintaining housing opportunities, supporting local businesses, and sustaining the visitor economy that helps fund many of the services residents rely upon.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Peter Scott

775-895-3494

Comments Short-Term Rental Ordinance

From Peter Scott <peterrscott@gmail.com>

Date Thu 6/11/2026 6:15 PM

To Public Comment <publiccomment@cityofsthelena.gov>

Please add my comments to the June 10, 2026 meeting minutes. Thank you

Planning Commissioners and City Staff,

As the Commission reviews St. Helena's Short-Term Rental ordinance, I wanted to offer a few thoughts based on what other tourism-dependent communities have learned over the past decade.

First, I think it's important to recognize that St. Helena already has one of the more restrictive STR programs in California. The permit cap, non-transferability requirement, occupancy limits, and local contact provisions have helped maintain a balance between supporting tourism and protecting neighborhood character. However, I believe there may be opportunities to revise our arbitrary permit cap and improve oversight, transparency, and community benefit while preserving the protections already in place.

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St. Helena has already taken a cautious approach. The next step may be refining the program based on lessons learned from other communities facing many of the same challenges we face: preserving neighborhood character, maintaining housing opportunities, supporting local businesses, and sustaining the visitor economy that helps fund many of the services citizens rely upon and reduces tax pressure on residents.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Peter Scott

[775-895-3494](tel:775-895-3494)

Sent from my mobile device

Public Comment, Planning Commission (June 16, 2026), Agenda Item 6.1 (Short-Term Rental Study Session)

From Alan Galbraith <agalbraith94574@gmail.com>

Date Sat 6/13/2026 4:03 PM

To City Clerk <cityclerk@cityofsthelena.gov>

I appreciate that the focus of Agenda Item 6.1 is fine-tuning the Short-Term Rental Ordinance ("STRO"). I would strongly urge a broader conversation: whether the STRO should be scrapped altogether. In consequence, I would urge the Planning Commission to schedule a meeting that places whether the STRO should be continued squarely on the table for community discussion.

Let me start with a truism: short term vacation rentals constitute commercial activity. Such activity is not residential. It is therefore inconsistent with residential zoning. It is more than time to face up to this plain reality and repeal the STRO.

Now, the Staff Report asserts: "The City's General Plan and Housing Element contain policies supporting existing housing stock while balancing the need for visitor-serving accommodations." The Staff does not recite the specific provisions of the General Plan or of its Housing Element allegedly supportive of this sentence which implies, at least to me, that General Plan and Housing Element Policy recognize "the need" for short-term vacation rentals as a component of City housing policies. The General Plan states that the Housing Element is contained in a separate document. That document today is the 2023-21 certified Housing Element. Now, this is a substantial document. I have looked through it and can find nothing that would suggest that the City's certified Housing Element suggests that there is "the need" requiring the City as a policy matter to maintain a short term rental program. Of course, I might have missed the language that is supportive of Staff's sentence. In consequence, I strongly urge the Planning Commission to require Staff to identify the specific language in the Housing Element that in Staff's eyes puts the City in the position of needing to continue the short term rental program.

I think it is more than fair to say that the vast majority of homeowners in St. Helena do not want to find that they are next door to a short term rental home or even in close proximity to one. Transients are not neighbors. Homeowners want to know their neighbors. Indeed, that is the essence of a neighborhood. My guess is that the community would strongly oppose continuation of the short-term rental program if given a chance.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Galbraith
Planning Commissioner, 2009-13
Mayor, 2014-18

Public Comment for Planning Commission Item 6.1 STR Ordinance for June 16, 2026

From TOM BELT <tmbelt@comcast.net>

Date Mon 6/15/2026 5:07 PM

To Andrew Bradley <abradley@cityofsthelena.gov>

St. Helena Planning Commissioners,

I attended the recent Zoom meeting when the city's new Community Planning Director Ms. Leza Mikhail introduced broadening the city's Short Term Rental (STR) municipal code ordinance. Some of her ideas included expanding the number of STRs to 50 instead of 25 based upon her estimate of the city's housing stock. Ms. Mikhail stated during the Zoom meeting that St. Helena's housing stock was somewhere over 4000 homes (I can't recall the exact number). According to the 2020 census, St. Helena's housing stock was 2812 at the time and of those homes 475 were vacant. Obviously there have been more houses built in our city since 2020 but over 1000 new homes, I doubt it? The other mischaracterization in Ms. Mikhail's information was she did not account for the number of second homes in our city when stating the city's housing stock. When asked why the number of second homes wasn't included Ms. Mikhail responded it would be difficult to come up with an actual number of second homes.

In 2024, Our Town St. Helena completed its Housing Outlook Report that stated 54% of St Helena's vacant housing units are second homes, while only 12% are for rent. Therefore, if 42% of St. Helena's housing stock are second homes, I would submit our city already has a very large number of part time visitors. Do we really want to add another 25 STRs to this number?

One of the statistics that were not covered in the Zoom meeting was how much revenue does the city receive in permit fees and transient occupancy taxes (TOT) per year? For the sake of guessing, lets say the city receives \$250,000 in revenue per year from 25 STRs. The question needs to be asked: How is the city spending the TOT revenue and is it worth the potential disruption to our neighborhoods?

The following are some reasons why STRs pose a threat to residential neighborhoods:

1. In neighborhoods where there are few STRs, neighbors are more likely to know one another.
2. Neighbors build long term relationships and trust.
3. Neighbors attend community events, participate in service clubs, and neighborhood associations tend to have higher participation.
4. Neighbors are regularly present and notice unusual activity. Packages, homes, and vehicles are more likely watched over.
5. Suspicious behavior is noticed and reported more quickly.

6. Local issues like traffic, noise, development, and safety may receive more consistent attention
7. Schools, parks, and community services often benefit more from stable populations.
8. Neighbors often help each other during emergencies, power outages, storms, or during personal crises.
9. Elderly residents and families may have stronger support networks.
10. People are more likely to exchange favors, recommendations, and local knowledge.
11. Full time residents support local businesses year-round rather than seasonally.

Another issue regarding STRs relates to loud noises and disturbing the peace after 10pm. In St. Helena there is very little the police will do about receiving a disturbing the peace complaint after 10pm other than responding to the home where the noise is occurring. In this case the police will issue a warning and inform the people that a complaint has been received about the loud noise, but the police will not issue a citation for the offense. If the neighbor wants a citation to be issued, the neighbor who has had their peace disturbed must make a citizen's arrest. And, I have seen this happen within a block of my neighborhood and it did not promote good relations.

In St. Helena, the municipal code does not set a minimum number of complaints in order for a STR permit to be revoked. The process is an administrative process determined by the city's community development director. I would like to see a change to the municipal code that reads if two substantiated complaints are received by the city about municipal code violations within one year, the city may revoke the STR permit.

The reader of this public comment may conclude that I am opposed to STR permits. This would be incorrect as I believe there is reason to issue a limited number of STR permits in St. Helena. It does provide income to homeowners and also the city in the form of TOT. But the permits and the neighbors living within the location of the permits will best be served if the permits are issued to live-in homeowners during and where the short term rental activity is taking place.

In closing, I am opposed to STR permit holders being able to transfer their STR permits to others desiring a STR permit. This would circumvent the current STR permit process and potentially provide permit holders with the ability to make a profit from selling their STR permit.

Respectfully submitted ,

Tom Belt

Comments for Planning Commission Meeting

From MARY STEPHENSON <stepcomm@aol.com>

Date Tue 6/16/2026 11:19 AM

To City Clerk <cityclerk@cityofsthelena.gov>

Hi Andrew - I realize this is too late for the packet but I am hoping it can be included in the public record. Thanks for your help.

TO: The Planning Commission on the Subject of STR Permits

I am addressing you tonight as an individual not representing any group. Also, I was not able to attend to STR ZOOM meeting, so I apologize if I am asking questions that have already been answered. Here are my questions:

1. What's the Revenue?

How much net revenue is generated on an annual basis by the existing STR permits? Does this revenue go to the General Fund? Is it earmarked for any particular category? Of the total TOT revenue received by the City of St Helena what percentage comes from STR?

2. Has the prospect of generating more revenues by increasing the number of STR permits been analyzed against the cost of replacing a single-family residence taken out of full-time residency?

According to Community Scale, which uses data from ACS, St Helena has lost an average of 16 HH per year since 2010. Permits issues since 2020 represent 1% of housing. The mean cost of a house at \$1.7M, which would require an income of \$373K, but the mean HH income of \$184K, it is safe to say that one of the main reasons we are losing our middle class is lack of housing they can afford to live in.

There are currently around 1873 single family homes in St Helena.

- 1228 owner occupied (65%)
- 309 rented (16%)
- 336 vacant, which most likely includes the 25 STR properties (18%)

Also, consider this: the Hunter, Spring Grove and Spring Vineyard projects which are using 24 acres of land will only provide 31 affordable houses. All the rest will be priced at \$1.5M and above with new rentals at \$5000 per month.

So, I ask you to weigh the increase in revenue from TOT tax on 10-20-30 new STRs against the cost of replacing those living spaces for local working families? Is it worth it?

3. Why is the revenue from STR not going into the Affordable Housing Trust Fund since the program is removing homes from use by full-time residents?

The Affordable Housing Trust Fund is underfunded partly because the City has chosen not to charge the maximum impact fees for commercial and hotel development and because other revenue sources (like an added sales tax) does not earmark any new revenue for housing.

No matter how many STR there are, at the very least, revenue gained should go toward providing housing for the 75% of our workforce who commute into town every day.

In my opinion this is one more example of a lack of understanding of how local housing plays a vital role in the economic vitality of our community. We can have sustainable tourism revenue, an updated infrastructure and even great pickle ball courts and walking paths, but what good is it if we do not have a diverse and thriving population.

Mary Stephenson

707 849 2583

Agenda Item-STR ordinance

From Jordan Coonrad <c180@sbcglobal.net>

Date Mon 6/15/2026 8:41 PM

To Public Comment <publiccomment@cityofsthelena.gov>; Jackie Oneal <joneal@cityofsthelena.gov>; Natalie Bresee <nbresee@cityofsthelena.gov>; Leza Mikhail <lmikhail@cityofsthelena.gov>

Some people who received this message don't often get email from c180@sbcglobal.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Planning Commissioners and Staff,

I appreciate the considerable effort that has gone into reviewing and updating the City's Short-Term Rental Ordinance. In particular, I understand and support the goal of preventing excessive concentrations of STRs in any one neighborhood.

The proposed 300-foot separation requirement appears to be a reasonable attempt to balance the interests of STR operators, neighboring residents, and the community as a whole. However, I would encourage the City to consider one potential unintended consequence of the proposal.

Under the proposed system, an STR permit within a particular area could potentially remain in place indefinitely, provided the permit holder continues to comply with the ordinance and renew the permit each year. As a result, other property owners located within the 300-foot exclusion zone may never have an opportunity to participate in the program, regardless of how long they remain on the waiting list.

While I understand the importance of protecting neighborhoods from over-concentration, I am not sure it is entirely equitable for one property owner to effectively control access to a permit area indefinitely while neighboring property owners remain permanently excluded.

One possible solution might be to establish a longer-term permit cycle in addition to the proposed annual renewals. For example, permits could remain valid for up to five years, subject to annual compliance reviews. At the end of that period, if there are qualified applicants on the waiting list whose properties fall within the same 300-foot exclusion area, those applicants could be given an opportunity to obtain the permit. If no qualified applicants are waiting, the existing permit holder could simply be renewed for another term.

Such an approach might preserve the City's objective of limiting neighborhood concentration while also providing a fairer opportunity for participation among property owners who are otherwise permanently excluded by the spacing requirement.

I recognize that there may be administrative challenges associated with such a system, and there may be better ways to accomplish the same objective. My purpose in raising this issue is simply to encourage discussion regarding whether the benefits of the 300-foot spacing requirement can be achieved without unintentionally creating permanent barriers to participation for other qualified property owners.

Thank you for your consideration and for the work you continue to do on behalf of the community.

Thank you,

Jordan Coonrad

Public Comment for STR permit issue June 16 Planning Comm meeting

From Lisa Pelosi <lisahdew@gmail.com>

Date Tue 6/16/2026 8:04 AM

To Natalie Bresee <nbresee@cityofsthelena.gov>; Planning <planning@cityofsthelena.gov>

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Dear Members of the St. Helena Planning Commission:

Thank you for taking the time to hear from the community. I would like to share these thoughts and what I would envision being brought into the conversation as the STR permit process is coming under consideration for changes:

- I support increasing the permits INCREMENTALLY, perhaps by 5 a year. I am NOT in favor of the increase going from 25 to 50 in one year. I feel like the enforcement part of this equation needs to be fully vetted before doubling the permit.
- What does enforcement actually look like? is this an outside personnel position?
- I would like to see the 300 foot spacing requirement be doubled at least (600 feet). In looking at the map with existing STR permits, 300 feet hardly seems to be sufficient especially if these STR permits are going to saturate a neighborhood. 360 feet is a foot ball field and I can hear the high school football games from my house on Chiles Avenue. The boundary needs to be greater than 300 feet.
- I support moving to an annual permit process. If a STR permit holder receives 3 reported and recorded violations (noise or otherwise), the STR permit holder should lose their permit immediately; allowing the STR to continue for 3 months seems like a reward for "bad behavior". Please consider maintaining a 2 year probationary period before applying for a renewal on the permit.
- Please keep in mind that too many STR homes does in fact change the makeup of a neighborhood.
- Inventory of homes: this is a muddy topic to be sure. We have many second homes in our community and it's important that every effort is made to get an accurate count of what the home inventory is.
- School enrollment continues to decline and part of the issue is housing. The lack of inventory, most importantly, affordable inventory is a major contributor to families not being able to reside in St. Helena.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Appreciate your service to our community.

Lisa Pelosi
Chiles Avenue

Agenda Item 6.1

From Elaine de Man <elainedeman@gmail.com>

Date Mon 6/15/2026 9:03 PM

To Public Comment <publiccomment@cityofsthelena.gov>

Cc Leza Mikhail <lmikhail@cityofsthelena.gov>; Jackie Oneal <joneal@cityofsthelena.gov>; Natalie Bresee <nbresee@cityofsthelena.gov>

You don't often get email from elainedeman@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Planning Commissioners and Staff,

I want to thank the staff, first of all, for the considerable time and effort that has gone into reviewing the City's Short-Term Rental Ordinance. I also want to commend them for being responsive to residents' questions and thoughtful in their efforts to balance competing interests. This has been a breath of fresh air.

Personally, I am not opposed to the idea of increasing the number of STR permits, provided it is done thoughtfully and with careful consideration of any unintended consequences. However, I do have concerns regarding some of the larger policy changes being proposed.

Permit Cap Increase

The proposal to increase the citywide permit cap from 25 to 50 permits is perhaps the most significant change under consideration. However, I am not yet convinced that the City has enough information or enforcement capability to justify doubling the number of permits at this time.

Rather than immediately increasing the cap from 25 to 50, I would encourage the City to consider a more incremental approach by authorizing a limited number of additional permits initially (five, for example) and then evaluating the effectiveness of the revised ordinance after one or two years before determining whether further expansion is warranted. If the program proves successful, expansion could always be accelerated later.

This would allow the City and residents to assess whether the new reporting, verification, and enforcement provisions are working as intended before substantially expanding the program and increasing public confidence in the process.

Enforcement

Before expanding the program, I think the City should place a stronger emphasis on enforcing the regulations already in place. Effective enforcement is essential to creating and maintaining public confidence in the program. It would also help ensure that responsible permit holders are not placed at a disadvantage compared to those who may choose not to comply with the rules. It creates fairness, and I think everyone wants to see that.

If additional resources are needed, perhaps that should be considered first or in conjunction with expansion efforts. The City might consider a dedicated enforcement officer or sharing enforcement resources with a neighboring jurisdiction. Whatever approach is taken, enforcement should be viewed as a critical component of any future expansion of the STR program.

Annual Renewal

I also support the proposal to move from two-year permits to annual renewals. More frequent review should improve accountability and provide additional opportunities to verify compliance.

However, I do not believe that serious or repeated violations should have to wait until the next renewal cycle to be addressed. I hope the City will consider whether there should be a mechanism for suspension or revocation when there is a documented pattern of verified violations. Any such process should clearly define what constitutes a violation and distinguish between verified violations and unsubstantiated complaints so that responsible operators are treated fairly.

Geographic Distribution and Neighborhood Impacts

I think the proposed 300-foot spacing requirement is a good start toward reducing concentration in certain neighborhoods, but expansion of that distance should be considered. I am not convinced that a 300-foot separation distance—or even a 500-foot spacing requirement—alone adequately addresses cumulative neighborhood impacts.

The issue is not simply whether two STRs are located next door to one another. The issue is whether certain neighborhoods or streets experience a concentration of visitor accommodations while other neighborhoods experience none.

If the entire community will be sharing the benefits associated with STRs, including increased TOT revenue, it seems reasonable to discuss whether the impacts should also be distributed more equitably.

Rather than relying solely on a 300-foot or even a 500-foot spacing requirement, the City should perhaps consider neighborhood concentration and cumulative impacts as part of

the permit review process. One possibility that might not require as much staff time would be to give priority to applications located in areas that do not already contain existing STRs within a larger radius, such as 1,000 feet.

The City might also consider whether future permits can be distributed more evenly throughout the community rather than becoming concentrated in a limited number of neighborhoods.

Administrative Review by Staff

I am generally supportive of transferring permit review authority from the Planning Commission to professional planning staff, assuming it would improve consistency, reduce administrative burdens, and allow applications to be processed more efficiently.

At the same time, I hope nearby residents will continue to have meaningful opportunities to participate in the process. Residents within a reasonable notification radius should receive notice and have an opportunity to provide comments before a permit is issued or renewed.

One aspect of the current program that has worked relatively well is ensuring that nearby residents have 24-hour access to a local contact person when issues arise. I hope that feature will remain part of the program.

Housing Availability and Housing Stock

The staff report references approximately 2,897 housing units and evaluates permit availability as a percentage of that housing stock.

However, I am not convinced that this figure, by itself, provides a meaningful basis for determining future permit levels. A more meaningful question may be how many of those units are actually available as housing for full-time residents and workforce households.

Before relying on housing-stock percentages as a basis for expansion, I would encourage the City to take a closer look at housing availability and occupancy patterns within the community.

Additional Concerns

One provision that stands out to me is the proposal allowing continued operation for up to three months after a permit is not renewed. I do not understand the purpose of allowing continued operation after a permit has been determined ineligible for renewal or has otherwise expired. I would encourage the City to take a closer look at whether this provision is necessary.

I also support excluding affordable housing from STR eligibility but would encourage the City to ensure that the definition of what is considered affordable housing is clear and easily understood. Perhaps that definition should be included directly in the ordinance.

One final thought

While St. Helena is undoubtedly a world-class visitor destination, it is also much more than that. It remains a residential community with deep agricultural roots, longstanding neighborhoods, and a unique small-town character that residents and visitors value greatly. Whatever decisions are made regarding short-term rentals, I hope the City does not lose sight of the fact that St. Helena is first and foremost a place where people live, work, raise families, and build community. Preserving that balance is an important part of what makes St. Helena such a desirable place to visit in the first place.

So, while I think there may be room for additional STR permits, I encourage the City to proceed carefully, continue gathering information as the revised program is implemented, and consider a more gradual approach to expansion while the effectiveness of the new ordinance provisions is evaluated.

Thank you for the work you do and for your consideration of these comments.

Elaine de Man