

Short-Term Rental (STR) Goals

Purpose: The Planning Board proposed to study the issue of short-term rentals in the Town of Camden and to explore how they might better regulate them to minimize negative impacts to the community. At a recent public workshop, the Board reached a consensus to develop goals to regulate short-term rentals to provide a road map toward the development of new regulations. While the Planning Board certainly acknowledges the many positive social and economic benefits offered by the different types of short-term rentals in our community, they also recognize the importance of addressing the negative impacts.

Nation-wide, many communities are faced with the question of how to respond to the growing impacts that are created by the increase in STRs. These communities grapple with issues such as a shortage of long-term rental properties, a lack of workforce housing stock, and a lack of neighborhood cohesiveness and compatibility that occur from the increase in unregistered and unregulated STRs.

Although there are various types of STRs offered in the Town of Camden, the primary type that is of concern is the *nonprimary un-hosted rentals* (nonprimary rentals simply mean that the property is not the owner's primary residence). The Board believes that better regulating this type of STR, in addition to the other types of STRs, would minimize negative impacts to our community.

Achieving a consensus on identifying the goals for regulating STRs is central to the creation of effective regulations that address the negative impacts generated from this land use activity. The Planning Board realizes the Town has a responsibility to protect the health, safety and welfare of its residents, and it is vital that life-safety issues are addressed for all tenants of short-term rentals. In addition to life-safety issues, the Planning Board's identified concerns in regulating STRs is to mitigate negative impacts created by:

- The removal of regular single-family homes from the market (*i.e.*, homes that would have otherwise been available for purchase by future year-long residents of our community, or that would be made available for long-term rentals) that are purchased for the sole purpose of creating short-term rentals;
- The worsening issue of a lack of workforce housing for those who want to live and work in our unique and beautiful community; and
- The incremental loss of character that occurs due to unregulated or inappropriately regulated short-term rentals, which negatively impacts neighborhood stability and cohesiveness.

Additionally, the Planning Board is very cognizant of the need to create a fair and equitable system for regulating STRs and has discussed the importance of protecting the traditional practice of our local primary residents that have historically offered their own residences as seasonal vacation rentals, as well as the importance of protecting our existing lodging industry (inns, hotels, and motels) when developing an effective regulatory process for short-term rentals.

The following Goals and Objectives have been identified and agreed upon by members of our Planning Board in the regulation of STRs in the Town of Camden:

Goal:

“Increase the available housing stock of long-term rentals and/or properties offered for sale in the Town of Camden.”

Objective:

“Address the proliferation of short-term rentals by minimizing the conversion of long-term rental properties into short-term rental properties resulting in a reduction of housing stock in the local market.”

Goal:

“Ensure the safety of STR occupants and the public.”

Objective:

“Create more robust requirements that ensure increased homeowner and tenant accountability through a more formal application, registration, monitoring, inspection and enforcement process for STRs in Camden.”

Goal:

“Protect the Town’s sense of community and it’s desirability as both a renowned vacation destination and an attractive place to live and work.”

Objective:

“Improve compatibility between STRs and established neighborhoods by limiting the potential for complaints, addressing complaints related to noise, parking and waste generated from STRs effectively.”

Goal:

“Protect the traditional practice of Town residents offering their primary residences as seasonal vacation rentals themselves.”

Objective:

“Differentiate between nonprimary un-hosted STRs”.

Goal:

“Successfully address the current unequal playing field between our existing commercial lodging industry and unregulated short-term rentals.”

Objective:

“Develop and implement a fair and equitable regulatory framework that increases the Town’s capacity to adequately monitor and enforce life safety standards for short-term rentals.”

The Town of Camden’s Comprehensive Plan, approved by the Camden Voters on June 13, 2017, identifies primary issues of concern and provides statements of goals and implementing policies to address these concerns. The goals and objectives developed by the Town of Camden’s Planning Board are supported by those goals and implementing policies provided for in the Town’s Comprehensive Plan. Comprehensive Plan goal statements, recommendations, questions, and strategies on how to achieve them focus on such issues as *the encouragement of a year-round population and concerns over vacant structures for most of the year, the creation of more opportunities for affordable housing; and efforts to promote a more positive view of workforce housing in our community.* These policies, goals, recommendations, and strategies to address these issues can be found in Comprehensive Plan’s **Chapter 4 Downtown, Chapter 11 Housing, and Chapter 20 Planning and Community Development.**