

Clatsop County residents challenge ordinance opening all rural residential neighborhoods to vacation rental businesses

North Coast Neighbors United says the proliferation of short term rentals aggravates the housing shortage, hurts local communities

A grassroots group of Clatsop County residents has filed a referendum petition challenging a new ordinance that paves the way for licensing of vacation rentals in all rural residential communities. North Coast Neighbors United has until September 20 to collect 742 valid signatures from Clatsop County voters to place the ordinance on the ballot.

“While communities all over Oregon and around the world grapple with the negative impacts of vacation rentals on residential neighborhoods, and amid a historic housing shortage, Clatsop County has gone in the opposite direction and opened the door to licensing rentals in every rural residential neighborhood,” said Cove Beach resident and co-petitioner Jeff Davis.

County Commissioners approved Ordinance 22-05 in June. The ordinance changes the County’s land use zoning regulations to include short term rentals as a permitted use in 16 residential zones.

Although not a permitted use until now (except in Arch Cape), short term rentals have exploded in rural Clatsop County since 2018, with some coastal communities now seeing 30% of residential housing stock licensed as vacation rental businesses.

In March, the Clatsop County Planning Commission reviewed the proposed ordinance and rejected it, voting instead to recommend the County ban short term rentals in most rural residential zones. A 2019 housing study commissioned by the county also recommended that existing homes should be preserved for residential use and that commercial uses should be banned or strictly curtailed.

“Every home that is converted to short term rental business use is a house that is no longer available to local residents at any price,” said co-petitioner Dr. Clare Hasler-Lewis of Surf Pines. “Meanwhile, short term rentals bring noise, trash and traffic to rural residential neighborhoods that don’t have the capacity or resources to manage it. The County has ignored the advice of its own Planning Commission and housing study, as well as the pleas of hundreds and hundreds of residents who wrote letters and gave testimony at public meetings over the past two years. Ordinance 22-05 is just bad policy for Clatsop County residents, and voters deserve to have a direct say in the matter.”

Falcon Cove resident and chief petitioner Charles Dice says the group’s members and supporters reach across geography and political differences.

"We are property owners and renters, housing advocates, business owners, and retirees from towns and rural areas around Clatsop County," he said. "We are Republicans, Democrats, independents, and everything in between. Above all, we are your neighbors, united in our commitment to protecting our north coast residential neighborhoods--because neighborhoods are for families, not vacation rental businesses."

Facts about Ordinance 22-05 and short term rentals

- Ordinance 22-05 amends Clatsop County's Land and Water Development and Use Code (LAWDUC) to include short-term rentals as a Type I permitted use in 16 zoning designations. [Read the ordinance.](#)
- The 2019 [Clatsop County Housing Strategies Summary Report](#) recommended zone restrictions and caps on short term rentals to protect the supply of housing available to residents. See Housing Strategy #10: Limit Short Term Rentals in Residential Zones, p. 11.
- In March of 2022, the Clatsop County Planning Commission reviewed the proposed ordinance (what became Ordinance 22-05) and rejected it, voting instead to recommend the County allow short term rentals only in commercial zones and the Arch Cape Rural Coastal Residential zone. [Compare the Planning Commission's recommendation with the County's proposal](#) (p. 4)
- In December of 2021, the Clatsop County Southwest Coastal Citizens Advisory Committee recommended keeping the existing zoning ordinances in place for all residential zones in the county . [Read the final draft.](#) See page 26 for discussion on Short Term Rentals.

Learn more at www.northcoastneighborsunited.com