



Subject: Community Engagement on Proposed Short-Term Rental Accommodations By-law

To: Council

From: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

Report Number: 2025-152

Meeting Date: July 8, 2025

Recommendation:

That Chief Administrative Officer Report 2025-152 be received; and

That Council direct staff to revise the proposed By-law to License, Regulate and Govern Short-Term Rental Accommodations in Port Colborne (Appendix A), with specific adjustments related to limitations on the number of renters and guests, garbage management requirements, and the number of required parking spaces; and

That Council direct staff to bring forward a finalized By-law to License, Regulate and Govern Short-Term Rental Accommodations in Port Colborne at the September 9, 2025 Council meeting.

Purpose:

On May 13, 2025, Council approved report 2025-112, which included a proposed By-law to License, Regulate and Govern Short-Term Rental Accommodations in Port Colborne (Appendix A), and a proposed comprehensive public engagement plan to gather feedback from the community about short-term rentals in Port Colborne.

This report, 2025-152, includes a summary of the feedback gathered during those public engagement activities, provides a high-level list of the suggestions received from residents, and recommends adjusting the proposed by-law in the areas related to limitations on the number of renters and guests, garbage management requirements, and the number of required parking spaces

Background:

Short-term rental accommodations have existed in most municipalities for a long time, particularly among cottage owners who rent or lend their seasonal homes to friends, family, or acquaintances for leisure. In recent years, residents have begun using internet-based sharing platforms, such as Airbnb and VRBO, to rent out entire homes or dwelling units to the public. This increased accessibility has driven higher demand for short-term rental accommodations and has led to a rise in complaints from nearby residents, regarding issues related to safety, noise, parking, zoning compliance, litter, property standards, and fire safety violations.

To support community demand for some type of oversight of these short-term rental accommodations, Council directed staff to pursue a by-law to govern the use of short-term rental accommodations in Port Colborne.

On April 9, 2024, Council received report 2024-25 from the Planning Division that outlined three options regarding a potential regulatory framework for short-term rental accommodations in Port Colborne. At that meeting, Council approved option 3, which included a combined approach involving amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law, along with the implementation of a comprehensive Licencing By-law for short-term rental accommodations in Port Colborne. To supplement the new licensing by-law further, additional amendments to both the Official Plan and Zoning By-law will be required.

On October 8, 2024, Council approved report 2024-176, which included an initial round of amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-laws that would enable the future licensing by-law for short-term rental accommodations in Port Colborne.

On May 13, 2025, Council approved a proposed By-law to License, Regulate and Govern Short-Term Rental Accommodations in Port Colborne (Appendix A), and a proposed comprehensive public engagement plan to gather feedback from the community about short-term rental accommodations.

This report, 2025-152, provides a summary of the engagement activities and feedback received from the public related to short-term rental accommodations between the dates of May 15, 2025, and June 9, 2025. Overall, the engagement activities aimed to gather feedback from the community through a brief online and paper-based survey, and two drop-in style open houses. It sought input from the community about the proposed by-law, including their thoughts on subjects such as:

- What type of concerns or disruptions residents have experienced related to short-term rental accommodations in Port Colborne
- The number of renters that should be permitted at each short-term rental accommodation property

- The number of guests that should be permitted at each short-term rental accommodation property
- The number of parking spaces that should be required at each short-term rental accommodation property
- Fire safety requirements and inspection conditions
- What other requirements should be in place for a property to be licensed as a short-term rental accommodation

To ensure Port Colborne residents and owners of short-term rental accommodations in Port Colborne were aware of the opportunity to provide feedback in a way that worked best for them, the plan included:

1. Online survey
2. Paper survey
3. In-person open houses

The detailed results and findings from each of these activities are provided in Appendix B of this report. In the interest of transparency, a full list of open-ended responses received in both the online and paper surveys will be posted on

www.portcolborne.ca/shorttermrentals

Discussion:

Public engagement activities related to the proposed By-law to License, Regulate and Govern Short-Term Rental Accommodations in Port Colborne (Appendix A) began on May 15, 2025.

Quick stats about the engagement activities:

- 311 surveys were completed (284 online and 27 paper)
- 767 open-field comments to analyze and categorize
- Average time to complete the survey: 6:56 minutes (online survey)
- Estimated completion rate: 81% (online survey)
- A total of 21 people attended the open houses
 - Staff organized an impromptu booth at the Farmers' Market on June 6 and spoke to 46 people about short-term rental accommodations in Port Colborne
- A total of 19% of survey respondents reported they owned a short-term rental. Of those, 73% were located inside Sherkston Shores Sun Retreats.

Detailed results from the survey and a summary of feedback collected during the open houses is available in Appendix B of this report.

Overall, the feedback received indicated general support for the proposed By-law to License, Regulate and Govern Short-Term Rental Accommodations in Port Colborne, with most of the comments being related to restrictions on the number of renters and guests, management of garbage, and parking space requirements. Appendix B of this report summarizes the feedback received from the public during the community engagement activities and includes a summary list of feedback which is intended to support transparency and help inform potential refinements to the by-law. The summary of feedback received begins on page 4 of Appendix B.

At this time, staff recommend pursuing changes to three areas in the by-law:

1. Number of renters and guests permitted to accommodate an additional two individuals under the age of 18
2. Management of garbage
3. Number of required parking spaces to be less restrictive than one per bedroom but still require all renters and guests with a vehicle to use only on-site parking

Should Council agree, by-law services staff, the new Chief Building Official and legal counsel will work together regarding the specific wording and clause amendments over the coming weeks. A revised by-law would come to Council for approval at the September 9, 2025 meeting.

It is proposed that a finalized version of the By-law to License, Regulate and Govern Short-Term Rental Accommodations in Port Colborne would come into effect on November 1, 2025, in advance of the 2026 rental season.

Internal Consultations:

Staff from Planning, Legislative Services, By-Law Services, and Corporate Communications have worked collaboratively to develop the proposed by-law and to implement the related community engagement activities.

Additional input has been provided by staff from Finance, Tourism, and the Fire Department, as well as external legal counsel and planning consultants MHBC.

As the project transitions from development to implementation, the primary responsibility for administering and enforcing the by-law will shift to the City's new Chief Building Official, who will lead its ongoing coordination and oversight, and will bring a finalized version of the by-law back to Council on September 9, 2025.

Financial Implications:

This report is focused primarily on the public engagement activities related to the proposed licensing of short-term rental accommodations in Port Colborne. All expenses related to the public engagement activities are captured in the 2025 operating budget.

Additional staff resources will be required to implement the licensing and inspection process, though the fees collected through the program will cover the costs of the additional resources required for enforcement.

Licensing fees will be recommended at the September 9, 2025 Council meeting.

Public Engagement:

Public engagement on the proposed by-law has been completed. Residents and short-term rental owners were invited to provide feedback through a range of activities, including an online and paper survey and open houses. A detailed summary of the engagement process and the feedback received is included in Appendix B.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

The initiative contained within this report supports the following pillar(s) of the strategic plan:

- Welcoming, Livable, Healthy Community
 - Economic Prosperity
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Conclusion:

The public engagement process has provided valuable insights into community perspectives on short-term rental accommodations in Port Colborne. Based on this feedback, staff recommend specific refinements to the proposed by-law to address concerns related to renters and guests, garbage management, and parking.

Moving forward, the new Chief Building Official will assume primary responsibility for finalizing and implementing the by-law. A revised version will be brought back to Council for consideration at the September 9, 2025 meeting, with a proposed effective date of November 1, 2025.

Appendices:

- a. Proposed By-law to License, Regulate and Govern Short-Term Rental Accommodations in Port Colborne
- b. Short-term Rental Accommodations in Port Colborne Engagement and Survey Results

Respectfully submitted,

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Report Approval:

All reports reviewed and approved by the Department Director and also the City Treasurer when relevant. Final review and approval by the Chief Administrative Officer.