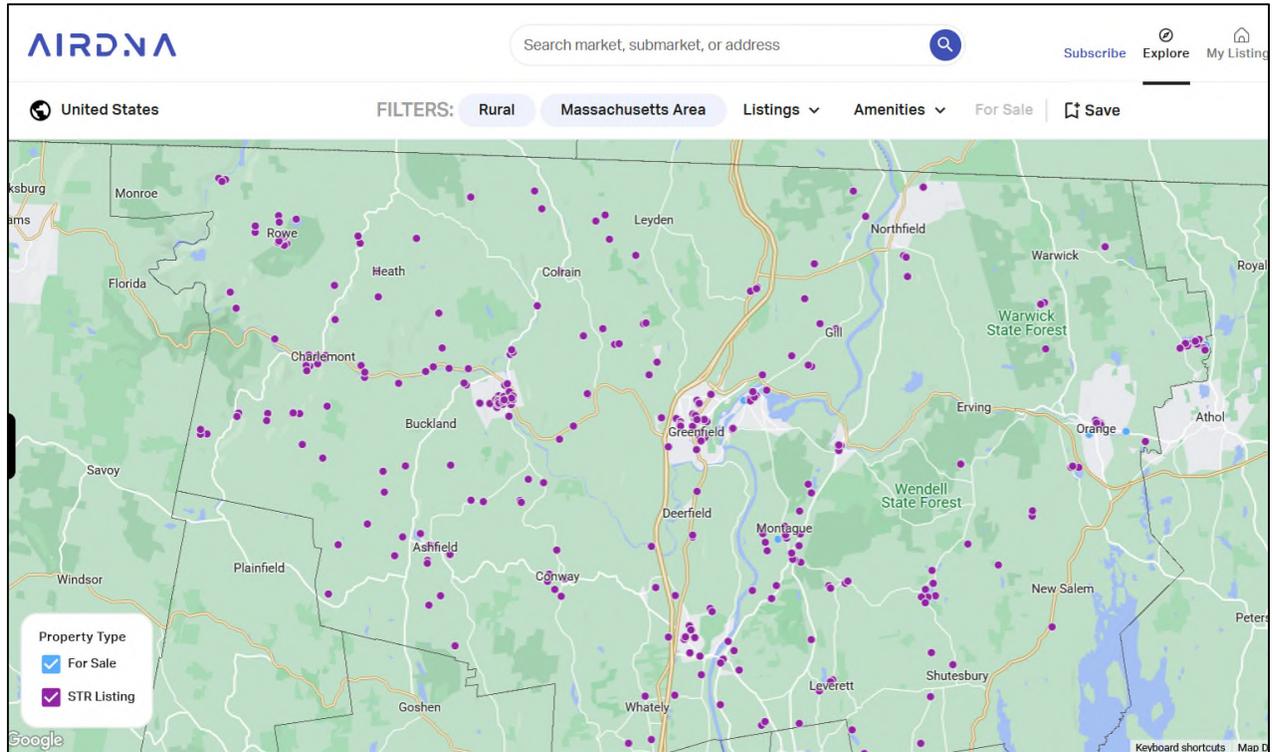


Short-Term Rental Update for Franklin County, MA



March 2025



Cover image: Active short-term rentals (purple dots) shown on AirDNA's database as of March 2025

The work to compile this information for towns is supported in part by a grant awarded to FRCOG called Improving Housing to Improve Health from Massachusetts Community Health and Healthy Aging Funds (MA CHHA Funds).



— Massachusetts —
COMMUNITY HEALTH AND
HEALTHY AGING FUNDS

Statewide changes and trends

Larger growth sector than hotels. Statewide, short-term rental (STR) bookings and revenue are *growing faster* than hotels. According to the MA Office of Travel and Tourism, between January and July, 2024, STR bookings were up 13% compared to the same period in 2023 and revenues were up 11%, whereas hotel bookings were up 1.3% and revenues up 4.9% for the same time period. During that time period, STRs represented 15% of total lodging bookings and 22% of revenue state-wide. Although we don't have information like this specific to Franklin County, STRs are a significant part of the lodging industry.

State zoning law changes. The Affordable Homes Act included a revision to state zoning law (M.G.L. Ch. 40A) that allows accessory dwelling units (ADUs) by right, and the state has recently issued regulations clarifying and protecting that right. Towns are, however, allowed to restrict the use of ADUs as short-term rentals. We recommend towns think about addressing how STRs fit into their town more comprehensively, however, than only restricting them in ADUs.

Change in state building code. The latest edition of the state building code includes a requirement for annual inspections of STRs by a building inspector.

Recent town bylaws developed to address short-term rentals

At the May 2024 annual town meeting, three Franklin County municipalities passed bylaws to address short-term rentals, and they did it in very different ways. Here is a summary of what passed.

- Buckland. Developed a general bylaw and a zoning bylaw that was approved by the Attorney General's Office in July 2024. The zoning bylaw sets a preference for owner-occupied short-term rentals, allowing existing non-owner occupied and properly registered short-term rentals to continue operating, and new non-owner-occupied short-term rentals in the village commercial, commercial, and historic industrial zoning districts by special permit through the ZBA. The zoning bylaw establishes performance standards for parking, outdoor lighting, and events. The general bylaw sets up a registration and inspection system.
- Colrain. Developed a zoning bylaw that has not yet been acted on by the Attorney General's office (as of March 2025). It creates a permit system and requires a special permit through the planning board, and some STR units require a site plan review, depending on the size and zoning district. Owners can rent out only one property in Colrain at a time.
- Orange. Developed a zoning bylaw that was approved by the Attorney General's Office in September 2024. It establishes a registration process and sets performance standards and requires that the property be in compliance with all state and local statutes, rules, and regulations pertaining to health and safety.

As of this writing, Shelburne has prepared a set of changes to their zoning bylaw related to STRs that was modeled after Buckland's bylaw but modified to fit the needs of their town. The changes will be up for annual town meeting vote this May 2025.

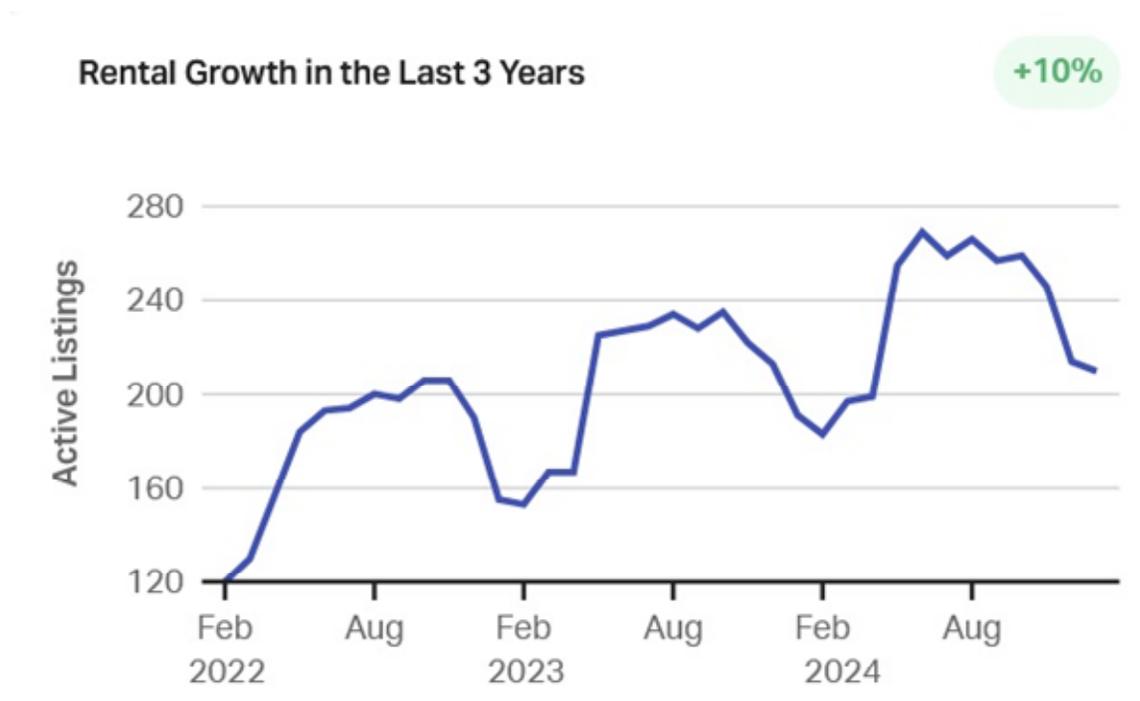
FRCOG has assembled a summary of all bylaws we have found that address short term rentals in MA. This summary is included as Attachment 1.

Short-term rental data for Franklin County

Though the MA Department of Revenue (DOR) keeps a [Public Registry of Lodging Operators](#), we have found that their data do not necessarily represent *active* lodging facilities. Moreover, the lookup by town is problematic in our area and seems erroneously tied to zip code, not to the town.² Short-term renting can be a fluid market, with units going on and off the market for a variety of reasons. If a lodging operator does not close out their account with the MA Department of Revenue, the lodging type will remain on their system.

For this reason, we used grant funds to pay for a one-year subscription to AirDNA, a short-term rental data and analysis company. AirDNA separates their data into Markets and Submarkets. The smallest submarket in our area is the entire county, which they, interestingly, call “Shelburne.” As you can see from the graph below, there is a seasonal pattern showing that active listings in Franklin County decline in the winter and increase in the summer to fall. Nevertheless, there has been overall growth in the number of listings in Franklin County each of the last three years.

Figure 1. Number of Active Short-term Rental Listings in Franklin County, 2022-2025



More county-wide information is summarized in the table below.

² The registry is online at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/public-registry-of-lodging-operators>

Table 1. County-wide statistics available from AirDNA

AirDNA category	Summary of Franklin County
Number of listings	363 total listings 199 active listings as of 3/2025 Active listings are lowest in late winter and highest in the period of May – October
Average revenue per listing	\$35,000 per year Lowest revenue month = March Highest revenue month = July
Average daily rate	\$219.43
Where properties are listed	73% Airbnb 12% VRBO 16% both
Listing type	81% “entire home” 19% “private room”
Occupancy rate	Average 52% Ranges from 35% to 68% depending on the month

Unfortunately, we cannot get summary statistics like this by town. AirDNA does, however, show dots on a map and some limited information can be gleaned by clicking on the individual dots. FRCOG would be happy to sit down with anyone to try to determine more information by town.

Local lodging tax revenues continue to increase

Massachusetts cities and towns are permitted to charge a local room occupancy excise tax up to 6% (6.5% for Boston). The room occupancy excise tax applies to room rentals of 90 days or less in hotels, motels, bed and breakfast establishments, and lodging houses, and for short-term rentals of property for 31 days or less.³ Local and state taxes are paid by the lodging renter, not the owner or operator.

In Franklin County as of March 2025, 16 out of 26 municipalities have opted to levy the local room occupancy tax. According to the MA DOR, **tax revenues in Franklin County towns for all lodging types in 2024 totaled \$954,167**. Revenues have climbed steadily since 2020 and 2024 was almost double the amount in 2021.

These tax revenues for lodging are sent to the towns by DOR on a quarterly basis. There are no restrictions on how towns can use this revenue. FRCOG encourages municipalities to consider earmarking a portion of lodging tax revenues for housing-related projects or assistance, or infrastructure projects that enhance housing in your community.

³ The local room occupancy tax was added and short-term rentals included starting July 1, 2019.

See Table 2 below for lodging tax revenues that have come to towns that have opted into the local tax. Ashfield opted into the tax in 2023, adding an extra \$20,000 of tax revenue to the town budget in 2024. Greenfield and Deerfield have the highest local tax revenues because of larger hotels. Charlemont, Orange, and Shelburne follow with the next highest revenues.

It has recently come to our attention that Leyden has not been receiving their due taxes because of a zip code problem, and we continue to work with Leyden and the MA Department of Revenue, with the support of Anne Gobi, MA Director of Rural Affairs, to sort this out. Please contact us if your community has other issues we should know about.

Table 2. Local option lodging tax revenues by Franklin County municipality, 2020-2024

Municipality	Current room tax rate (% of nightly charge)	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Ashfield	6%	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,957	\$20,326
Bernardston	6%	\$11,076	\$22,611	\$25,516	\$31,270	\$37,601
Buckland	6%	\$5,801	\$12,690	\$17,439	\$17,463	\$15,528
Charlemont	6%	\$28,613	\$46,717	\$50,895	\$79,814	\$66,055
Colrain	6%	\$873	\$18,532	\$14,762	\$15,432	\$16,164
Conway	6%	\$2,190	\$767	\$856	\$3,223	\$5,871
Deerfield	6%	\$127,337	\$188,282	\$247,395	\$273,637	\$272,674
Erving		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Gill	6%	\$2,470	\$2,385	\$3,127	\$3,060	\$5,434
Greenfield	6%	\$155,945	\$216,230	\$282,933	\$331,235	\$350,514
Hawley		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Heath		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Leverett	6%	\$1,821	\$167	\$862	\$1,862	\$4,820
Leyden	3%	\$1,111	\$175	\$0	\$3	\$0
Monroe		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Montague		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
New Salem		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Northfield		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Orange	6%	\$20,013	\$29,677	\$40,585	\$74,618	\$58,364
Rowe		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Shelburne	6%	\$17,336	\$24,136	\$26,129	\$62,743	\$67,292
Shutesbury	6%	\$157	\$3,812	\$3,343	\$19,287	\$12,772
Sunderland	6%	\$3,775	\$5,590	\$8,201	\$17,872	\$12,704
Warwick		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Wendell		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Whately	6%	\$5,781	\$6,351	\$7,345	\$7,434	\$8,048
TOTALS		\$384,299	\$578,122	\$729,388	\$740,199	\$954,167

Potential next steps in your town or city

If you would like more specific information for your town on anything in this report, please get in touch with Andrea Donlon at adonlon@frcog.org.

Select Boards/Town Administrators:

If your town has not yet opted to charge a local room occupancy excise tax, there are sample town meeting warrant articles at our website at <https://frcog.org/short-term-rental-law-workshop-for-towns/>. As we noted earlier, Ashfield passed the local tax in 2023, and in 2024, the tax revenues added \$20,000 to the town. The tax is paid by the lodging renter, not the lodging operator. At the 6% level, a room rented for \$200/night would add \$12 to the bill. It is highly unlikely that lodging renters specifically look to rent an STR in a town that does not have this tax.

If you are wondering how many STRs are located in your town to get a sense of the tax revenues your town may gain, FRCOG can look up data on AirDNA for you.

If your municipality is garnering significant income (more than \$50K) from the local option tax, consider earmarking some portion of the revenues to re-invest in your community in the form of housing development, housing repair, rental assistance, or municipal infrastructure projects for (water, sewer, sidewalks, etc.) that would benefit the Town in some way.

Planning Boards:

Zoning bylaws address many types of businesses. The Planning Board may want to consider the lodging types existing in your town or may have listed in the zoning bylaws, if you have not already. Short-term rentals are often located in residential areas and like any business use, you may wish to consider where/how that is appropriate. If you wish to address STRs in your zoning bylaw, consider doing so on a more comprehensive level than only restricting them in ADUs.

FRCOG has created a summary list of general bylaws and zoning bylaws across the state that have been adopted to address short-term rentals. The list is included as Attachment 1. For more information or assistance with bylaw changes, please contact Megan Rhodes at mrhodes@frcog.org.

Town Clerks:

Are lodging operators registered as a business in your town under M.G.L. Part I, Title XV, Chapter 110, Section 5? Does the town have a process for registering non-owner-occupied short-term rentals so that there is a local contact person who can be quickly reached if there is an emergency or complaint? For copies of sample registration policies, contact Andrea Donlon. Does your list of STRs match the list that the MA Department of Revenue has, and is your municipality getting the appropriate tax revenues? If not, please contact Phoebe Walker at walker@frcog.org.

Tax Assessors:

Are you aware of the locations of all lodging businesses (including STRs) in your town, and is the board of assessors assessing the properties as such?

Health Inspectors:

FRCOG's regional health district, the Cooperative Public Health Service (CPHS) treats short-term rentals as a lodging type and our regional health agents conduct annual inspections for all lodging facilities and coordinates with the building inspectors. Contact Randy Crochier, CPHS Program Manager, for information on this permit at rcrochier@frcog.org.

Building Inspectors:

As of the beginning of 2025, the latest version of the MA Building Code now requires an annual building inspection of STRs. Building Inspectors are responsible for making sure a short-term rental is compliant with zoning and building codes. FRCOG's Franklin County Cooperative Inspection Program (FCCIP) has developed a Certificate of Inspection process for this new requirement. Contact Gabby Grise for more information at ggrise@frcog.org.

Summary of bylaws related to short-term rentals in MA

Compiled as of 1/21/2025 by Andrea Donlon of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments. (Please send additions or corrections to adonlon@frcog.org)

The purpose of this spreadsheet is to summarize what other towns have done to regulate STRs. Please refer to the actual bylaw language of that town for more information.

Municipality	Type of bylaw or regulation	Date	Reference	Summary
Amesbury	General	2021	Chapter 376	Article 1 - Short Term Rental Licensing. In order to rent your property as an STR, you must first obtain a license from the City. Subject to an annual fee of \$200. Must comply with Short Term Rental Bylaw. Must report rental agreements with the Board of Health and MA Dept of Revenue. Application documents outlined, including property survey and room design layout, and copy of health and safety inspection report. Lays out noise guidelines, violations, penalties, actions for noncompliance. Records (described in bylaw) must be retained for 3 years.
Amesbury	Zoning	2021	Zoning bill 2021-105	Defines STR, less than 30 days, and is not a B&B, investment home, or inn/motel. Investment properties defined in bylaw. The following cannot be rented as an STR: affordable housing, investment properties, dwellings with code violations. The # of rooms rented cannot be more than the # of lawful bedrooms. No more than one renter at a time; separate rooms can't be rented to separate parties. An STR cannot be sublet to a 3rd party, and no long-term rental unit can be used as a short-term rental. No renting by the hour and the minimum duration is 10 hours. Entire dwelling subject to fire and safety inspection even if just one room is rented. Must be up to date on tax bills, water and sewer charges. License and registration required with the City.
Arlington	General	2019	Article 18	Makes the following ineligible as STR: 1) Affordable housing, 2) unit with violations, 3) ADUs. All STRs shall register with select board annually. Fee of \$25/bedroom/year. Sets up rules for complaints and violations. Rentals are subject to excise tax. Lists required communication with guests about contact info, fire & police contact info, noise requirements, parking info, waste disposal and recycling. The operator must reside in the house, or in one of the units if it is a 2- or 3-family dwelling. Operator must live there for at least half the year and must present proof of residency. One off-street parking space required for each lawful bedroom.
Barnstable				The town tried to pass a general and zoning bylaw but these were withdrawn by town council in 2020. See https://www.townofbarnstable.us/Departments/planninganddevelopment/Barnstable-Short-Term-Rental-Information.asp for more information.
Boston	General	2018	Code 9-14	STR is rental not more than 28 consecutive days. Detailed definition of terms, types of units eligible to be STRs, ownership and capacity. Makes the following ineligible as STR: 1) Affordable housing, 2) properties restricted by other laws or condo rules, 3) properties with violations or complaints. Lodging houses, B&Bs, hospital stay rentals are not subject to some of the provisions. Operator must register a local contact who can respond within 2 hours of a call. Lodging records must be retained for 3 years. Sets up registration process and fees. Rentals are subject to excise tax. Sets up process for complaints, violations, penalties, and enforcement. City must prepare a yearly report on STRs to submit to the Mayor and City Council. Sunset provision allowed STRs ineligible under this bylaw to go ahead with booked rentals up to a certain date.
Brookline	General	2022	Article 17	STR is rental not more than 27 consecutive days. Operator of the STR must be owner. Makes the following ineligible as STR: 1) Affordable housing, 2) properties with violations or complaints, 3) properties with code violations, 4) properties with outstanding property tax bills. Occupancy is (# of bedrooms x 2) or max of 8. Sets up registration process. If it's in a condo, must have a letter from the condo association. Operator must register a local contact who can respond within 2 hours of a call. Sets up process for complaints and inspections. STR limit is 90 days/year, but can get special permission for 180 days/year. Registration # must be part of advertisement. Rentals must have binder with info about contact name of owner, recycling, parking, etc.
Brookline	Zoning	2021	Article 14	Defines rental as being for not more than 27 days. Allows STRs by right in all zoning districts as long as there is a valid registration through the Town. Refers to the requirements of the town general bylaw in the zoning bylaw.
Buckland	General	2024	Chapter XIV	STRs must be registered on an annual basis with the town clerk. Registration application must include 24/7 contact, certificate of liability insurance, must have a health inspection and certificate of compliance with sanitary, building, and fire codes. Registrations are non-transferable. Registration number should be on the listing. Operator must keep occupancy records for two years. Sets up compliance. Initial compliance period for existing STRs is 6 months. Passed at ATM in May 2024, approved by AG on 7/22/24.

Summary of bylaws related to short-term rentals in MA

Compiled as of 1/21/2025 by Andrea Donlon of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments. (Please send additions or corrections to adonlon@frcog.org)

The purpose of this spreadsheet is to summarize what other towns have done to regulate STRs. Please refer to the actual bylaw language of that town for more information.

Municipality	Type of bylaw or regulation	Date	Reference	Summary
Buckland	Zoning	2024	Section 4-9	Allows owner occupied STRs with 1-2 rooms by right in all zoning districts except industrial district. Allows owner-occupied STRs with 3-4 rooms by special permit through the ZBA in all districts except industrial districts. Allows non-owner occupied STRs with 1-4 rooms in village commercial, commercial, and historic industrial districts only. Non-owner occupied STRs are not allowed in village residential and rural residential districts, and no STR with more than 5 rooms allowed. Owner occupied is residence for at least 9 months/year. Allows existing non-owner occupied STRs that are registered and inspected to continue operating as long as they continue to be registered and inspected. Establishes performance standards. Passed at ATM in May 2024, approved by AG on 7/22/24.
Cambridge	Zoning	2017	Ordinance 1397	STR is any rental less than 30 consecutive days. Operator is owner or leaseholder with written permission from the owner or condo association. Rentals are allowed in all residential districts, but only owner-occupied or owner-adjacent rentals are allowed. Owner-adjacent rentals must be rented to a single party at a time, not individual rooms separately, and any time an operator is gone for 7 days, the owner-occupied rental must be to a single party and not individual rooms separately. An operator may not rent more than 1 owner-occupied dwelling with a max of 3 rooms and 1 owner-adjacent dwelling. The number of rented rooms cannot exceed the # of lawful bedrooms. Rentals < 10 hours in duration are not allowed. Commercial meetings and uses are not allowed. Information must be made available to renters: waste disposal, emergency exit routes, contact info for the operator, and certificate of registration. Records for owner-adjacent rentals must be kept for 3 years. Establishes rules for registration and proof of residency of the operator.
Colrain	Zoning	2024	Section 17	No action yet from AG, but was approved as Article 41 at ATM on 6/4/24. Creates a permit system, with an initial fee of \$100 and subsequent permits are no cost. Uses the term "BnB Establishment" for 4+ rooms for rent and "BnB Home" for 3 or fewer rooms in the table of uses. All require a special permit through the planning board and some require a site plan review, depending on size and zoning district. Owners can only rent one property in Colrain at a time.
Deerfield	Zoning	2023	Section 3934	ADU bylaw passed at 2023 ATM states that accessory apartments cannot be used as short term rentals. However, short term rental is not defined or addressed anywhere else in the zoning bylaw.
Fairhaven	General	2021	Chapter 190	Occupancy is for not more than 30 days. Excludes "cottage colonies," hotels, B&Bs etc as STRs. STRs can be in single, double, or multi-family buildings but not accessory units. Must register with Building Dept. Owner only can rent out STR. Total # of licenses in town is 64; after 12/31/2022 the # of allowed licenses in town at any one time is 120. All abutters within 300 ft must be notified upon application of STR license. Registrations renewed annually with \$200 fee. Town registration number must be listed on rental advertisement. Operator can be a business but need contact person able to respond to complaints within 1 hour 24/7. Trash must be removed immediately after occupancy or 1/week, whichever is less. On-site parking must be provided. Rentals < 24 hours duration not allowed. Commercial meetings and uses not allowed. Smoke and CO alarms required. Max occupants = (# of bedrooms x 2) + 2. Records must be kept for 2 years. Properties ineligible as STRs include Affordable housing, those with violations, those with back taxes. An inspection is required at first registration and every 2 years. Sets up process for complaints, violations, enforcement. STR data will be published in Annual Report.
Great Barrington	General	2022	Section # TBD	Must be registered annually through the town (and MassDOR). An owner may rent only one dwelling unit as an STR. Up to 2 bedrooms or an entire secondary dwelling unit on the same parcel allowed to be rented by right. If owner occupied, rent can be as many days/year as desired. If not owner occupied, rental limited to 150 days/year. Corporation cannot own STR. If owned by an LLC, each owner must be a person. No STRs in affordable dwellings. No tenant can rent out unit as an STR. Fire detectors required. Dwelling must be in compliance with all town codes and bylaws. No tents or amplified music that would normally require a permit is allowed. No advertising signs allowed on the property. Sets up registration, penalty system. Gives Select Board power to create forms, fees, etc. Goes into effect January 1, 2023.
Kingston	Zoning	2019	Zoning bylaw	Zoning bylaw has a section in the definitions called "Lodging Related Terms." In definitions, defines STR and says that it requires a special permit as a home occupation. Must be occupied by owner or operator at least 270 days/year. If STR is hosted, occupancy by no more than 2 parties at any one time. If not hosted (occupant rents entire house while not there), only one rental party allowed.
Lenox	General	2019	Chapter 28	Creates a registration requirement with town clerk. STR operators must register and provide contact info, with local contact info if the owner does not reside in Berkshire County.

Summary of bylaws related to short-term rentals in MA

Compiled as of 1/21/2025 by Andrea Donlon of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments. (Please send additions or corrections to adonlon@frcog.org)

The purpose of this spreadsheet is to summarize what other towns have done to regulate STRs. Please refer to the actual bylaw language of that town for more information.

Municipality	Type of bylaw or regulation	Date	Reference	Summary
Lenox	Zoning	2019	Section 8.4 of zoning bylaw	Allows STRs in all districts by right. Up to 2 bedrooms in a dwelling unit can be rented year-round by right, if owner or tenant is occupying dwelling unit at the time of the rental. An entire dwelling unit may be rented up to 75 days per year by right; an additional 35 days (up to 110 days) per year by Special Permit through ZBA. Only one dwelling may be used for STR of rooms or STR of entire dwelling unit on a parcel at a time. Overnight parking must be provided in the property's garage or driveway. Events that include tents or amplified music or would customarily require a license or permit are not allowed. Advertising signs are not allowed. The STR must not have building code, fire code, or BOH violations.
Lexington	Zoning	2020, amended 2024	^6.10	Allows operator-occupied and operator-adjacent short term rentals. Not listed in the Table of Uses. Defined as a rental of a dwelling unit for less than 30 days, not a B&B home, hotel, or motel. STRs not allowed in affordable housing, accessory apartments, or in a dwelling unit with 3 or more units. Restrictions on how many bedrooms available to rent at any one time. No more than 1 operator-adjacent STR. Limit of 1 parking spot/bedroom and no more than 4 vehicles allowed on a lot. If operator not sleeping overnight at the dwelling, the operator-occupied STR may be rented only as a whole unit. Operator cannot be absent for 120 days per calendar year that the room is rented. Must have a Certificate of Registration through the Building and Zoning office, with inspection.
Manchester-by-the-Sea	General	2016	Article X, Section 20C	Sets up process for annual registration for short term paying guests. Fee starts out as \$100. Short term rentals are any rentals less than 6 consecutive nights, and are allowed in owner occupied dwellings. A property must be in compliance with local BOH and fire requirements, there needs to be a local contact for each rental, and owner must maintain a guest registry. Sets up authority and process for complaints and enforcement.
Mount Washington	Zoning	2021	Section 215-12F	Short term rental defined as a rental on a property occupied by an owner rented for not more than 31 consecutive days. Bylaw section very short. Just 2 stipulations: 1) STR is rental of a room or unit on a property occupied by the owner as their principle dwelling for not more than 31 consecutive days and 2) STR must register and comply with Board of Health, zoning, and state regs and laws.
Mount Washington	Board of Health	2019	Section 300	Vacation and short term rental defined as owner-occupied residence or rooming unit rented out for not more than 28 consecutive days (different than zoning bylaw!). Sets up licensing and inspection. Regulation ends mid sentence, so unclear if there is more.
Newton	General	2019	Chapter 20, Article IX	Article IX. Operator of STR is owner or leaseholder with written permission of the owner. STR is any rental less than 30 consecutive days. Use is secondary to the primary residential use of the dwelling unit. There is an annual registration and certification process, with annual notice to abutters and abutter of abutters. Properties with 3 violations within 12 months are not eligible as STRs for 6 months. Sets up registration process with \$100 fee and proof of ownership or permission from owner, and a contact person who can respond within 2 hours if the owner is away during a rental. Inspections may be required. Lists responsibilities: 1) Operator generally responsible for following rules and behavior of guests, 2) STRs should not be a nuisance, 3) must comply with all codes and rules, 4) commercial events prohibited (weddings, banquets, fundraisers, etc.), 5) renters must be at least 18 years old, 6) Operator must maintain a guest registry, 7) fire code must be followed, 8) registration number displayed at rental unit and in advertisements, 9) renters aware of house rules, 10) adequate egress routes, 11) building must be adequately maintained. Sets up enforcement, violations, penalties.
Newton	Zoning	2019	Chapter 30, Section 6.7.5	Refers to general bylaw in the purpose. Defines STR - same as general bylaw definition. Cites registration requirements. STR allowed in any residential use except for associations of people living in a common dwelling, congregate living, elderly housing, lodging house, dorms, and accessory apartments. Resident must occupy the dwelling for at least 9 months of a year. Max # of bedrooms is 3 and max # of guests is 9. Apartments that are for rent in buildings with >10 units can be rented temporarily for up to 6 months as STRs while the apartment is advertised for rent and vacant -- requires a special permit and registration.
Northampton	Zoning		Section 350 Zoning bylaw	Listed in use table as short-term rental and is allowed by right in all districts, but allowed only upon annual registration with the City. Use as a registered rental is only valid for the year in which registration is completed and expires December 31 each year.
Orange	Zoning	2024	Section 7900	Establishes a registration process and performance standards for short-term rentals. Owners shall register (annually?) and shall receive a business certificate from the Town. Registration Certificate with MA DOR must be provided with Town registration. Property must be in compliance of all state and local statutes, rules, and regulations pertaining to health and safety. First registration fee is \$100 and renewal is \$75. Approved as Article 18 from ATM 6/19/24 and approved by AG on 9/12/24.

Summary of bylaws related to short-term rentals in MA

Compiled as of 1/21/2025 by Andrea Donlon of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments. (Please send additions or corrections to adonlon@frcog.org)

The purpose of this spreadsheet is to summarize what other towns have done to regulate STRs. Please refer to the actual bylaw language of that town for more information.

Municipality	Type of bylaw or regulation	Date	Reference	Summary
Plymouth	Board of Health Regulation	2023	BOH Regulation	STRs that are not allowed are mobile homes, multifamily residences of 3 or more units, unless the owner is a full time resident there, affordable housing, recreational vehicles. Owner/operator must show sufficient parking and septic system conforms with title 5. Condos must demonstrate association approval. All STR operators shall file for a permit to license with the Plymouth Department of Public Health and show proof of registration with MA DOR, and show insurance. Town will ensure that all local taxes and fees are paid. Will have to comply with all health and safety requirements. Commercial meetings and uses prohibited. Describes information to be posted. Fee is \$50/year. Sets appeal and effective date in 2024. The regulation is similar to many zoning and general bylaws, but is passed by BOH, not through a town meeting vote.
Richmond	Zoning	2019	Section 4.8 A & B	Establishes a category called short term rental business, which is non-owner occupied or investor owned. Definition does not apply to owner-occupied who vacates home for not more than 30 days and rents out home when away. Short term rental business has to go through special permit process before the ZBA, according to Section 4.8A (primary uses) #13. Under Section 4.8B (accessory uses) #3, allows for rental of rooms by right in all districts for owner-occupied situation as long as no separate kitchen facilities are maintained, and allows rental of rooms to 2 or more guests nightly or weekly with meals provided but no separate kitchen facilities by special permit through the ZBA.
Salem	General	2018	Chapter 15	Definitions for several terms. STR is a rental for less than 30 consecutive days. Ineligible if owner or operator does not live on property as primary residence (unless it qualifies as an existing owner-occupied unit) or property has any violations of code, back taxes, etc. Provision does not apply to lodging houses, existing B&B's, residential units contracted for hospital stays, or residential unit for business stays. Operator must be owner, tenant with owner permission, and if applicable, doesn't violate condo rules. Operator must register annually. Operator of home share unit or owner-adjacent unit can rent entire unit, not individual rooms. Non-owner occupied STRs existing prior to passage of the bylaw can continue as long as they go through special permit process with ZBA. If operator is away, there must be a local contact who can respond within 2 hours. Booking agents must provide the town with quarterly reports on rentals in that town. Must comply with excise tax requirements. Sets up provisions for complaints, violations, and enforcement.
Shelburne	Zoning	?	Definitions and use table	Short-Term Vacation Rental is furnished dwelling rented by the owner to another party for not more than 30 consecutive days. Also defines "Tourist Home" which is owner-occupied single-family dwelling which may rent up to a max of 3 rooming units and a max of 6 renters per day, no kitchen facilities, and either private or shared bathroom. These are allowed by right in all zoning districts, subject to building code and board of health regulations. As of January 2024, the Shelburne Planning Board is working on a short term rental bylaw modeled after Buckland's, but modified.
Shutesbury	Zoning	?	Section 3.3	STRs seems covered in two areas. Section 3.3-2: "Renting rooms to lodgers, boarders or tourists shall be permitted as an accessory use, provided that no separate cooking facilities are maintained, and provided that no more than three rooms are rented. Accommodations shall be limited to a total of six persons in addition to the resident family." Lodging Facilities are allowed in all zoning districts through special permit through the PB. These are defined as "any hotel, inn, or other establishment, not located within the owner's principal dwelling, providing sleeping accommodations for transient guests, with or without a dining room."
South Hadley	General	2023	Chapter 136	STRs require license from Building Commissioner, and must comply with all local and state health, building, and fire codes/laws. Excludes hotels, motels, inns, hostels, B&Bs, halfway houses, and group homes. Defines principal residence for owner occupancy, and is determined by a Code Official. Allows only spaces intended for human habitation and does not allowed campers, yurts, or other mobile or temporary structure to be used as an STR. Rooms can only be rented to owner occupants. Non-owner occupants means that the owner is not at the property during the rental period. Commercial meetings and uses are not allowed. License renewed annually on fiscal year basis. Sets a townwide limit on the number of licenses - 25 total - no more than 5 can be non-owner occupied, and only 1 license per owner in total. Sets inspection requirements, information to be provided to renters, record retention of 3 years, occupancy limits, parking, enforcement and appeals. Passed at ATM in May of 2023.

Summary of bylaws related to short-term rentals in MA

Compiled as of 1/21/2025 by Andrea Donlon of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments. (Please send additions or corrections to adonlon@frcog.org)

The purpose of this spreadsheet is to summarize what other towns have done to regulate STRs. Please refer to the actual bylaw language of that town for more information.

Municipality	Type of bylaw or regulation	Date	Reference	Summary
South Hadley	Zoning	2023	255-51	Allows short term rentals by site plan review in all zoning districts except for industrial districts. STR is all or part of legally established dwelling unit that is rented for no more than 28 consecutive days. Establishes application requirements and general criteria. The tax parcel must be compliance with the dimensional schedule, and must be current on all local taxes and fees. Owner occupied = owner resides on the property during the rental period. Non owner occupied = Owner is license applicant but does not reside on the property during the rental period. Limit of 25 licenses in town. Requires business license, lodging permit from Board of Health, license from Building Commissioner. Permits and licenses are not transferable. Passed at ATM in May of 2023.
Springfield	General	2020	Chapter 238	Limits operation of STRs to residential units that are the operator's primary residence (must live there 9 months of the year), or a portion of the operator's primary residence while the operator is present, or an owner-adjacent unit. Residential units with affordability covenants are not eligible. Not subject to the provisions are licensed lodging houses, existing bed and breakfasts, and residential units contracted for hospital stays. An STR can only be rented to one party at a time, 8 guests total, no more than 4 bedrooms at a time (2 guest/bedroom). An unoccupied residential unit is limited to 90 days of rental in a calendar year. Sets up requirements for record retention, notifications to renters, parking plan to be approved by Planning Department. Annual registration and inspection process, \$200 fee, not transferable. Sets up penalties and enforcement.
West Newbury	General	2016	Article 14	"Short term paying guests in homes." Must be registered annually through the town with fee. Short term paying guests allowed in owner-occupied premises. Short term = less than 14 consecutive nights. Property must be compliant with BOH regulations and fire code, must have certificate of occupancy, must have local agent able to act on owner's behalf, must have registry available for review. Sets up complaints and enforcement process.
Whately	Zoning	2019	Article V, 171-22	B&B's and tourist homes as accessory use require Special Permit process in all zoning districts. Rentals of less than 30 days allowed by SP through ZBA. <u>For owner occupied units:</u> Must comply with health regs. Max # of bedrooms = 3. Rooms shall not have an independent kitchen. Breakfast may or may not be served. No other meal besides breakfast can be served. All bedrooms within the dwelling shall have a common entrance. The portion of the dwelling devoted to transient occupancy shall be secondary to the use of the dwelling. One parking space/room should be provided. The Special Permit shall specify the max number of occupants and the number of parking spaces. No loud music, excessive traffic, or any other disturbances. Owner must have all the necessary state licenses. <u>For dwellings that are not owner-occupied,</u> can be in a single-family home, an ADU, or a unit in a 2- or 3-family home. Tenant/renter may not sublet or hold functions like weddings and large parties. Properties cannot be rented more than 120 days/yr. All bedrooms shall have a shared entrance and shared kitchen facilities. May have a kitchen. No meals provided. The Special Permit shall specify the max number of occupants and the number of parking spaces. Adequate potable water and wastewater system must be provided. No loud music, excessive traffic, or any other disturbances. Owner must have all the necessary licenses.
Williamsburg	General	2019	Transient Lodger Bylaw	STR rentals in a single-family dwelling is an accessory use and must be primary residence of owner or leaseholder. Rental period not to exceed 31 consecutive days. Max # of bedrooms = 4. STRs in a 2-family dwelling is an accessory use and both units must have the same owner or lease-holder. One unit would be the primary residence of the owner or leaseholder, and the other rented for STRs. Rental period not to exceed 31 consecutive days. Max # of bedrooms = 4. In a 2-family dwelling, the primary residence of the owner cannot be rented as an STR. A bed & breakfast establishment is considered a single-family short term rental. Defines a Lodging Facility, which is not an STR and is a commercial venture. Primary residence means person lives there at least 183 days/year. All STRs must register with the town clerk annually. Must comply with zoning, health, and state regs. Subject to annual inspection. Must maintain a guest register for 2 years. Sets up authorization for enforcement.
Williamsburg	Zoning	2019	Section 9-31	Lodging Facility, short-term rental in a single-family dwelling, and short-term rental in a two-family dwelling are all listed as commercial uses and require a special permit in all 3 zoning districts. Definitions section defines terms as also defined in the general bylaw. Any transient lodging that doesn't meet the definition of lodging facility or short-term rental is prohibited in town. Homeowners must make sure renters don't make too much noise or odor or light or any other nuisance. Max # of renters = 10. Provides standards/limits on # people/room, # of parking spaces. Rental of detached structures is not permitted. No meals other than breakfast may be served. Lodging Facilities may have a dining room, and if >5,000 sq ft on first floor, will require a site plan review.

Staff time to conduct this research funded by the Community Health and Healthy Aging Funds (Improving Housing to Improve Health project aka IH2)