

## Rebecca Mansour

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**From:** Megan Finaly <mfinaly@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 13, 2019 11:02 AM  
**To:** Patrick Slayter; Rebecca Mansour; Kari Svanstrom  
**Subject:** Rentals in Sebastopol and how homes are being leveraged  
**Attachments:** Sonoma Vacation Rental Permit.pdf; Sonoma County Code for Vacation Rentals.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

I am a single Mom living in Sebastopol. One of the reasons I moved to Sebastopol is because of its unique charm and because of its charter schools. My son attends the Reach School. His Dad lives in Occidental. During the first two years after moving to Sebastopol I did not have a full-time job. I was forced to find work out of town. Being able to rent my primary residence while doing contract work out of town, allows me to not only stay relevant in the work world, it allows me to earn a living and most importantly allows me to maintain my primary residence and not sell my house. Under the proposed moratorium, I would not be allowed to do that. I think that single Moms with school-age kids should be able to afford to live here. I do not believe that, by renting out my house short term, it will diminish or affect the character of the neighborhood. Wherever I have lived, I have maintained excellent communication with my neighbors. Due diligence, communication and respect are essential. In fact, I have had some of the most interesting people come to stay with me or rent my house in the past few years. I have met people from all over the world. I have also met locals that simply needed a place to stay short term.

I would like to kindly recommend that the number of days one is able to rent out their primary residence extend up to 120 days. The reason being that many standard work contracts are between three to six months, with the initial three months usually requiring the contractor to work on-site. This is a win-win situation as it saves time, money, and spares the air.

For the same reasons above, I also support hosted rentals.

I have attached the Sonoma County Vacation Rental Program as a useful and current reference for how other locales are dealing with this issue. I believe we have the same values, are concerned about homelessness and need to work together on these issues (my son and I recently volunteered at the Redwood Empire Food Bank).

With kind regards,

Megan



# COUNTY OF SONOMA

## Vacation Rental Permit

Vacation rentals are the rental of a private residence for periods of 30 days or less. Vacation Rentals do not include Bed and Breakfast Inns or hosted rentals permitted in accordance with the Sonoma County Code for <sup>1</sup> [B&Bs](#) <sup>1</sup> and hosted rentals <sup>1</sup>, or occasional home exchanges that are not otherwise subject to [Transient Occupancy Tax \(TOT\)](#) <sup>2</sup>. Vacation rentals must have a [Certified Vacation Property Manager](#) <sup>3</sup> and meet Performance Standards to ensure compatibility with surrounding residential uses.

**Coastal Zone:** The [Vacation Rentals Ordinance](#) <sup>4</sup> has not been adopted for the Sonoma coast (e.g. Sea Ranch, Bodega Bay) and is not applicable to rentals in those communities. However, the owners of Coastal Zone vacation rentals **must** register to pay [Transient Occupancy Tax](#) <sup>5</sup>.

### Vacation Rentals vs. Hosted Rentals

Find out which situation applies to your property.

[Compare](#) <sup>6</sup> »

## Where are Vacation Rentals Allowed?

Vacation rentals are allowed (with permit) in the following locations:

- In homes in single-family residential zoning districts (AR, RR, and R1)
- In **existing** single-family residences in the LC zoning district
- Agricultural and resource zones including LEA, DA, and RRD (except for lands within an Agricultural Preserve that is subject to a Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act) Contract)

Vacation rentals are **not** allowed in the following locations:

- Higher-density residential districts (R2, R3, PC)
- Lands within an Agricultural Preserve that is subject to a Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act) Contract
- Land Intensive Agriculture (LIA) zoned properties
- Accessory Dwelling Units (previously known as Second Dwelling Units)
- Farm Family, Agricultural Employee, or Farmworker housing units
- Non-habitable structures
- Areas designated (e.g. the [Exclusion \(X\) Combining District](#) <sup>7</sup>)

If you are unsure of what your zoning is, please consult Permit Sonoma's [Official Zoning Database](#) <sup>8</sup>.

## Permit Type Required

A Zoning Permit or Use Permit is required for all vacation rentals. Vacation rentals with up to five (5) guest rooms require a Zoning Permit. Vacation rentals with five (5) or fewer guest rooms do not require a Building Permit for change of occupancy, but still require a Zoning Permit from Permit Sonoma (PRMD) and compliance with all Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) registration and payment requirements. Vacation rentals with six (6) or more guest rooms require a Use Permit.

## Apply for a Vacation Rental Permit

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### Vacation Rental Permit Application Package

The following **must be submitted in person**. They are **not** accepted by mail.

1. **Vacation Rental Zoning Permit Fee** (as of July 5, 2017 through June 30, 2018):  
Up to \$849.00 (includes the first year Annual Monitoring Fee (prorated by quarter) and the Tech Enhancement Fee)
  2. **Certified Property Manager Requirement**  
All new vacation rental permits are required to provide the 24 hour contact information of a property manager<sup>9</sup> who has already passed the property manager certification exam and paid the fee.
  3. **Vacation Rental Application Forms**  
All forms listed must be completed prior to bringing to the Permit Sonoma office.
    - Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) Registration Form<sup>10</sup> (PDF: 310 [kB](#))
    - PJR-001 - Planning Application<sup>11</sup> (PDF: 82 [kB](#))
    - PJR-011 - Indemnification Agreement<sup>12</sup> (PDF: 61 [kB](#))
    - PJR-096 - Vacation Rentals Application<sup>13</sup> (PDF: 56 [kB](#))
    - PJR-119 - Property Report Checklist<sup>14</sup> (PDF: 151 [kB](#))
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### Additional Vacation Rental Permit Fees

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(as of July 5, 2017 through June 30, 2018)

- Annual Monitoring Fee: \$216.00  
Recurring fee paid by the vacation rental owner per property
  - Property Manager Certification: \$65.00  
One-time fee paid by the Property Manager when obtaining certification<sup>15</sup> from Permit Sonoma
  - Noticing Fee: \$85.00  
Paid by the vacation rental owner when changing the Property Manager<sup>16</sup> for a vacation rental property (for notifying neighbors of the change)
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### Cessation of Vacation Rental Use

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Vacation Rental Zoning Permits and Hosted Rental Zoning Permits expire automatically upon the sale or transfer of a vacation rental or hosted rental property. Property owners who have sold their property should also let Permit Sonoma know as soon as possible in order to not be held liable for any vacation rental or hosted rental use of the property once it has been sold.

This form should be completed and submitted in all cases where the home is no longer being used as a vacation rental or hosted rental.

Fill out the Affidavit of Cessation of Vacation Rental or Hosted Rental Use<sup>17</sup> (PDF: 158 [kB](#)) and follow the instructions on the form for submission.

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#### Contact Information

**Vacation Rentals**<sup>18</sup>  
Permit & Resource Management  
Department<sup>19</sup>  
County of Sonoma<sup>20</sup>

Email: PRMD-  
VacationRentals@Sonoma-

County.org

Business Hours

Monday – Friday

10:30 AM to 12:30 PM and 1:30  
PM to 3:30 PM

Holiday Closure Calendar<sup>21</sup> »

Contact us by Phone

Phone: (707) 565-1932

Address

**Permit Sonoma**

2550 Ventura Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

## Links

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1. <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Vacation-Rental-Permit//PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Code-for-B-and-Bs-and-Hosted-Rentals/>
2. <http://www.sonoma-county.org/tax/tot/index.htm>
3. <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Vacation-Rental-Permit//PRMD/Property-Manager-Certification-Test/>
4. <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Vacation-Rental-Permit//PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Vacation-Rentals-Ordinance/>
5. <http://www.sonoma-county.org/tax/tot/>
6. <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Vacation-Rental-Permit//PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-Rentals/#comparison>
7. <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Vacation-Rental-Permit//PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Exclusion-Combining-District/>
8. <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Vacation-Rental-Permit//PRMD/Zoning-Information/>
9. <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Vacation-Rental-Permit//PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Property-Managers/>
10. <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Vacation-Rental-Permit//WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=2147555083>
11. <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Vacation-Rental-Permit//WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=2147543810>
12. <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Vacation-Rental-Permit//WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=2147543824>
13. <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Vacation-Rental-Permit//WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=2147553830>
14. <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Vacation-Rental-Permit//WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=2147554281>
15. <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Vacation-Rental-Permit//PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Property-Managers/#certification>
16. <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Vacation-Rental-Permit//PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Property-Managers/#update-manager>
17. <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Vacation-Rental-Permit//WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=2147555084>
18. <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Vacation-Rental-Permit//PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-Rentals/>

19. <http://www.PermitSonoma.org/>
  20. <http://sonomacounty.ca.gov/>
  21. [https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Vacation-Rental-Permit//\\_templates\\_portal/Page.aspx?id=2147503046](https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Vacation-Rental-Permit//_templates_portal/Page.aspx?id=2147503046)
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# COUNTY OF SONOMA

## Sonoma County Code for Vacation Rentals

### Section 26-88-120

- a. **Purpose.** This section provides requirements and standards for the operation of vacation rentals. These standards are intended to ensure that vacation rentals are compatible with and do not adversely impact surrounding residential and agricultural uses.
- b. **Applicability.** The provisions of the section shall apply to all vacation rentals except where there is a primary owner in residence. This section does not apply to legally established Hosted Rentals or Bed and Breakfast Inns, which are regulated by Section 26-88-118. As used in this section, "primary owner" does not include residences or condominiums owned as a timeshare, limited liability partnership or corporation, or fractional ownership of six (6) or more interests. Vacation rentals shall not be permitted in non-habitable structures, nor on parcels where the AH Combining Zone or the X Combining Zone have been placed. Vacation rentals shall also not be permitted within second dwelling units, nor in structures or dwellings with County covenants or agreements restricting their use including but not limited to affordable housing units, agricultural employee units, farmworker housing, farm family units, or on lands under a Williamson Act Contract. Tents, yurts, RVs, and other provisions intended for temporary occupancy are not allowed as a part of a vacation rental.
- c. **Permits Required.** Vacation rentals that meet the standards outlined in this section shall be allowed as provided by the underlying zone, subject to issuance of a zoning permit. Vacation rentals that do not meet the standards in this section may be permitted, subject to the granting of a use permit.
- d. **Term of Permit.** Zoning permits shall run with the landowner and shall automatically expire upon sale or transfer of the property. Use permits shall run with the land but may be issued for limited term, as specified by the decision-maker. Both types of permits may be revoked for failure to comply with adopted standards, subject to the administrative and revocation procedures of Article 92 unless otherwise specified by this section.
- e. **Permit Requirements.**
  1. **Maximum Number of Guestrooms.** Vacation rentals may have a maximum of five (5) guestrooms or sleeping rooms. Vacation rentals with more than five (5) guestrooms or sleeping rooms may only be allowed if adequate sewage disposal capacity exists and neighborhood compatibility can be demonstrated, subject to the granting of a use permit. For purposes of determining the appropriate level of permit required, the actual number of bedrooms in the structure plus any additional rooms intended or used for sleeping shall be used.
  2. **Maximum Overnight Occupancy.** Maximum overnight occupancy for vacation rentals shall be up to a maximum of two (2) persons per sleeping room or guestroom, plus two (2) additional persons per property, up to a maximum of twelve (12) persons, excluding children under three (3) years of age. Vacation rentals with larger overnight occupancies may only be allowed subject to the granting of a use permit. For homes on a conditional or non-standard septic system, or those with capacity limited by a voluntary repair, the maximum overnight occupancy for vacation rentals shall be equal to the design load of the septic system. The property owner shall ensure that all contracts and online listings and advertisements clearly set forth the maximum number of overnight guests permitted at the property.
  3. **Maximum Number of Guests and Daytime Visitors.** The maximum number of total guests and visitors allowed at any time in a single vacation rental shall not exceed the maximum overnight occupancy plus six (6) additional persons per property during the daytime, or eighteen (18) persons, whichever is less, excluding children under three (3) years of age. Daytime visitors shall not be on the property during quiet hours. Vacation rentals with larger numbers of guests and visitors may only be allowed subject to the granting of a use permit. Notwithstanding, maximum guest limits may be exceeded on the following national holidays: Easter, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas, so long as the holiday event does not otherwise trigger the requirement for a special or cultural events permit.
  4. **Limit on Number of Residences or Structures per Parcel.** Only a single family residence, and a legally established guest house meeting current standards shall be used as a vacation rental. Only one (1) tenant shall be allowed on-site at any given time: Only one transient rental is allowed per parcel. Parcels containing multiple residences or habitable structures may only be used as vacation rentals subject to the granting of a use permit, except that two (2) residences or structures may be used when the total number of guestrooms does not exceed five (5).

5. **Parking.** Parking shall be provided as follows: a minimum of one (1) on-site parking space for a vacation rental with up to two (2) guestrooms or sleeping rooms; two (2) on-site parking spaces for a three (3) or four (4) guestroom vacation rental. Larger vacation rentals must demonstrate adequate parking with a minimum of three (3) spaces. On-street parking may be considered for up to one (1) of the required parking spaces; otherwise, the number of vehicles allowed for overnight guests shall be limited to the off-street parking available, as demonstrated by the application materials and the property checklist, but shall not exceed one vehicle per bedroom. This maximum number of vehicles permitted for guests shall be clearly set forth in all rental agreements and in all online advertisements and listings.

**f. Performance Standards**

1. **Noise Limits.** All activities associated with the vacation rental shall meet the general plan noise standards contained below. Quiet hours shall be from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. The property owner shall ensure that the quiet hours and limits on outdoor activities are included in rental agreements and in all online advertisements and listings.

Hourly Noise Metric <sup>1</sup> , A-Weighted Decibels (dBA)	Activity Hours 7AM to 10PM	Quiet Hours 10PM to 7AM
<b>L50 (30 minutes in any hour)</b>	50	45
<b>L25 (15 minutes in any hour)</b>	55	50
<b>L08 (5 minutes in any hour)</b>	60	55
<b>L02 (1 minute in any hour)</b>	65	60

<sup>1</sup> The sound level exceeded n% of the time in any hour. For example, the L50 is the value exceeded 50% of the time or 30 minutes in any hour; this is the median noise level. The L02 is the sound level exceeded 1 minute in any hour.

If the ambient noise level exceeds the standards above, adjust the standard to equal the ambient level, up to a maximum of 5dBA above the standard, provided that no measurable increase (i.e. 1.5 dBA or more) shall be allowed.

Reduce the applicable standards above by 5 dBA for simple tone noises, noises consisting primarily of speech or music, or for recurring impulsive noises, such as dog barking.

2. **Amplified Sound.** Outdoor amplified sound shall not be allowed at any time associated with a vacation rental.
3. **Pets.** Pets, if allowed by owner, shall be secured on the property at all times. Continual nuisance barking by unattended pets is prohibited.
4. **Trash and Recycling Facilities.** Recycling and refuse storage bins shall not be stored within public view unless in compliance with neighborhood standards. Recycling and trash receptacles shall be returned to screened storage areas within 24 hours of trash pick-up.
5. **Outdoor Fire Areas.** Outdoor fire areas, when not prohibited by state or local fire bans, may be allowed but shall be limited to 3 feet in diameter, shall be located on a non-combustible surface, shall be covered by a fire screen, and shall be extinguished as soon as it is no longer in use or by 10:00 p.m., whichever is earlier. No fire or fire area shall be located within 25 feet of a structure or combustible material.
6. **Septic Systems and Sewer Connections.** The owner shall maintain a properly functioning septic system or sewer connection. In some cases, a per-room sewer fee may be applied.
7. **Transient Occupancy Tax.** The vacation rental owner or authorized agent shall maintain a transient occupancy tax certificate and remain current on all required reports and payments. Owner or authorized agent shall include the certificate number on all contracts or rental agreements, and in any advertising or websites.
8. **Certified 24-hour Property Manager.** All vacation rentals operating within unincorporated Sonoma County must have a certified property manager who is available 24 hours per days, 7 days per week during all times that the property is rented or used on a transient basis. Certified property managers may be professional property managers, realtors, property owners, or other designated person provided that the individual has successfully completed a training course and achieved a qualifying score on a county-administered certification test. Certification shall be granted by the County and may be revoked by the County. Once certified, a property manager must continue to comply with all provisions set forth in this Section, including timely reporting of all complains and their resolutions, in order to remain certified. Certified property managers must be located within a 30 mile radius of the vacation rental and must be available to respond to complaints at all times during the rental period. Any requested change to the certified property manager for a vacation rental property shall be made through submittal of a new Vacation Supplemental Application or similar form provided by the Department, and shall include the signature of the certified

property manager and the desired effective date of the change. In no case may a vacation rental operate without a current certified property manager. Operation of a vacation rental without a valid certified property manager shall be considered a violation of this Section. The name and 24 hour contact information of the certified property manager shall be provided to any interested party upon request.

9. **Emergency Access.** The owner of any vacation rental located behind a locked gate or within a gated community shall provide gate code or a lockbox with keys ("Knox Box" or similar) for exclusive use by the sheriff and emergency or fire services departments.
10. **Posting and Neighbor Notification of Permit and Standards.** Once a vacation rental permit has been approved, a copy of the permit listing all applicable standards and limits shall be posted within the vacation rental property. The owner shall post these standards in a prominent place within 6 feet of the front door of the vacation rental, and include them as part of all rental agreements. At the permit holder's expense, the County shall provide mailed notice of permit issuance to property owners and immediate neighbors of the vacation rental unit using the standard 300' property owner mailing list. All advertising handouts, flyers, internet listings, or any other information provided for vacation rentals shall conform to the approved occupancy limits and standards as stated on the vacation rental permit. Advertising may only be conducted for properties operating under a valid permit. Advertising for a particular property inconsistent with the approvals for that property shall be considered a violation of these performance standards
11. **Requirements for All Internet Advertisements and Listings.** All online advertisements and/or listings for the vacation rental property shall include the following:
  - a. Maximum occupancy, not including children under 3;
  - b. Maximum number of vehicles;
  - c. Notification that quiet hours must be observed between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.;
  - d. Notification that no outdoor amplified sound is allowed; and
  - e. The Transient Occupancy Tax Certificate number for that particular property.

**g. Enforcement Process.**

1. **Initial complaints** on vacation rentals shall be directed to the certified property manager identified in the zoning permit or use permit, as applicable. The certified property manager shall be available 24 hours during all times when the property is rented, and shall be available by phone during these hours. Should a problem or arise and be reported to the certified property manager, the certified property manager shall be responsible for contacting the tenant to correct the problem within 60 minutes, or within 30 minutes if during quiet hours, including visiting the site if necessary to ensure that the issue has been corrected. The certified property manager shall complete the online reporting form to report any such complaints, and their resolution or attempted resolution(s), to PRMD within 24 hours of the occurrence. Failure to respond to complaints or report them to PRMD shall be considered a violation of this section, and shall be cause for revocation of certification status.

If the issue reoccurs, the complaint will be addressed by PRMD code enforcement section who may conduct an investigation to determine whether there was a violation of a zoning or use permit condition. Sheriff reports, online searches, citations or neighbor documentation consisting of photos, sound recordings and video may constitute proof of a violation. If code enforcement verifies that a zoning or use permit condition violation has occurred, a notice of violation may be issued and a penalty may be imposed in accordance with Chapter 1 of the Sonoma County Code.

At the discretion of the code enforcement officer or the Director, the zoning permit or use permit may be scheduled for a revocation hearing with the board of zoning adjustments. If the permit is revoked, a zoning or use permit for a vacation rental may not be reapplied for or issued for a period of at least one (1) year.

2. **Enhanced penalty for non-permitted rentals.** A vacation rental that is determined to be operating without the necessary permit required under this Section shall be subject to a penalty of ten times the normal application fee.
3. **Three Strikes Penalty.** Upon receipt of any combination of three administrative citations, verified violations, or hearing officer determinations of violation of any of the permit requirements or performance standards issued to the owner or occupants at the property within a two year period, the vacation rental zoning permit is summarily revoked, subject to prior notice and to appeal, if requested within 10 days. Should such a revocation occur, an application to reestablish a vacation rental at the subject property shall not be accepted for a minimum period of two years.
4. **Violation of Performance Standards – Administrative Citations.** In addition to all other legal remedies, criminal or civil, which may be pursued by the County to address any violation of the County Code, this subsection provides for Administrative Citations.
  - a. Use of Administrative Citations shall be at the sole discretion of the County.

- b. This subsection is adopted pursuant to the authority conferred by the Government Code, including Section 53069.4.
- c. Violations of the following permit requirements and performance standards may be deemed infractions for the purposes of this subsection, and are subject to administrative citation:
  1. Conduct of a cultural event, special event, party, wedding or other similar activity exceeding the allowable maximum occupancy;
  2. Exceeding the maximum permitted occupancy, not including children under 3 years of age;
  3. Noise violations, as set forth in (f), above, including the use of outdoor amplified sound;
  4. Violations of quiet hours (10:00 PM – 7:00 AM);
  5. Exceeding maximum number of vehicles;
  6. Exceeding fire limits, including lighting fires during bans;
  7. Unsecured pets and/or nuisance barking;
  8. Operation of a vacation rental without a certified property manager;
  9. Failure of the property owner to include the specified limits in rental agreements and online listings or advertisements;
  10. Failure to include the individual property's Transient Occupancy Tax Certificate number in all contracts, advertising and online listings;
  11. Failure of the property owner to maintain current Transient Occupancy Tax status.

**h. Monitoring and Enforcement Fee.**

1. An annual fee may be adopted by the board of supervisors and collected by PRMD or the county tax collector to pay for monitoring and enforcement of vacation rentals.

### Contact Information

#### Vacation Rentals<sup>1</sup>

Permit & Resource Management  
Department<sup>2</sup>  
County of Sonoma<sup>3</sup>

Email: PRMD-  
VacationRentals@Sonoma-  
County.org

#### Business Hours

Monday – Friday

10:30 AM to 12:30 PM and 1:30  
PM to 3:30 PM

[Holiday Closure Calendar<sup>4</sup> »](#)

#### Contact us by Phone

Phone: (707) 565-1932

#### Address

**Permit Sonoma**  
2550 Ventura Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

## Links

1. <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Code-for-Vacation-Rentals//PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-Rentals/>
2. <http://www.PermitSonoma.org/>

3. <http://sonomacounty.ca.gov/>
  4. [https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Code-for-Vacation-Rentals/\\_templates\\_portal/Page.aspx?id=2147503046](https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Vacation-and-Hosted-Rentals/Code-for-Vacation-Rentals/_templates_portal/Page.aspx?id=2147503046)
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## Sonoma County Coalition of Hosts

Dear Mayor Neysa Hinton and Sebastopol Town Council Members:

I am a local Windsor resident, vacation rental owner, and member of the Sonoma County Coalition of Hosts. I urge you to support home sharing as another way to encourage and sustain economic growth in the city of Sebastopol.

My children and family live a great distance from Windsor. I have them visit as much as time permits. They specifically recommended to me to share my home when they aren't able to be here. They also encouraged the option of supplemental income to keep my home in good repair so they are able to visit when opportunities arise. This is a good balanced use of my home for myself, my neighborhood and the county through paid TOT tax and all the businesses we support throughout Sonoma County communities

Simple, easy to understand rules, not convoluted or impossible to follow restrictions, will allow hosts and their guests to enjoy choosing Sebastopol as their center for activities while here in Sonoma County.

Convoluted, hard to understand, or impossible to follow rules may lead hosts to go "underground" and electing, by your recommendations, "not to comply". I ask you to establish clear, simple rules and educate new hosts and residents about the "current" laws that exist. Use Transient Occupancy Tax revenues to hire increased enforcement.

My rental contract states "quiet times" and "parking rules". Airbnb provides me with reviews of potential guests. I accept only positively reviewed guests. My surrounding neighbors wish our other neighbors nearby would be as quiet and polite as my guests and family.

My guests return often and use my home to visit Windsor's shops, restaurants, breweries, wineries and many diverse service providers including cleaning services and local tradesmen. You have a group of potential visitors to Sebastopol who wish to live like locals, and support local businesses. Airbnb states these guests spend more time in town than hotel guests, spend more money locally and can be a source for building future residency in Sebastopol.

Please encourage responsible home sharing.

My rental house offered shelter to local displaced residents after our firestorms in October of 2017. Becoming creative in these housing times of need should be our goal. Not closing doors.

I contacted Airbnb and asked that they list my rental as a home to which displaced Sonoma County residents could find a "turnkey" shelter. All vacation rentals are furnished and equipped to house anyone immediately, be it current residents, displaced residents, first responders or service providers.

My vacation rental took in a burned out couple from Mark West Springs Rd. and their 2 children. The following week the rental provided shelter for Service Pro employees from Portland, Oregon. The next week a retired couple from Mark West Springs who lost their home became full time renters living in the vacation rental for 6 months. They called me "their angel". This flexibility is an asset to our community and should be supported.

If Sebastopol denies short term vacation rentals it would be an economic loss to its businesses and potential employees that we as rental owners employ. Sebastopol would merely give up the potential Transient Occupancy Tax it could collect and transfer those gains to other cities and county municipalities that encourage home sharing. An economic loss to the community of Sebastopol.

If Sebastopol wishes to provide more housing there needs to be an emergency plan to attract building single family homes. The small numbers of individuals renting out their homes would not be realistic in providing the housing needed in today market.

Please encourage responsible home sharing.

Thank you.

Sincerely Submitted,

*Michael Robison*

Windsor, CA

Sonoma County Coalition of Hosts

Greetings Esteemed Sebastopol City Council Members,

I wish to express my opposition of an ordinance imposing a moratorium on new non-hosted vacation rentals of more than 30 days per year. Airbnb has been in operation since 2008, VRBO since 1995 and vacation rentals have been in Sonoma County for over a century, yet in that span of time, Sebastopol only has 18 non-hosted vacation rentals operating more than 30 days. Doesn't seem to be a big rush to rent out short-term. This figure means that 99.5% of the available housing stock (3,408 households - U.S. Census 2017) in Sebastopol are traditional long-term housing, while only half of one percent (0.5%) are vacation rentals purposed for more than 30 days a year. If the proposed moratorium were to go into effect, the 5 remaining legal vacation rentals will amount to 0.1% of the housing stock.

I am pleased to support the Staff Report's assertion that *"ADUs are being built... as a way to afford to own a home in Sebastopol, and changes to this policy could negatively affect these owners,..."*. I would also add, placing a moratorium on vacation rentals of more than 30 days per year, could negatively affect these folks as well. One never knows when some life changing event will happen in their life (whether it be loss off a job, care of a loved one, divorce or death of a spouse) and they find themselves in a situation where they need to earn extra income and offering a home or room on a shot-term basis is the only way to make ends meet.

Most short term rental properties are someone's 2nd home. They may have hopes of retiring and living in it permanently one day, but while working -- they can't afford two homes, two mortgages, two insurance policies or pay taxes on two properties. The only way average folks can retain use and still afford a retirement home is to offer it short term until they pay off the property in 10 to 15 years, at which time, they can retire and live in it permanently.

The ability to earn short term income on the property is what makes that ownership affordable — allowing middle income folks to afford a 2nd home. The circumstances include properties inherited from parents where children prefer to share ownership and use, or folks who work in the bay area who can't afford housing there but want to begin building equity themselves (and enjoy a weekend home) while continuing to work/rent down south. Without the option to earn extra income through flexible short term rentals, siblings might have to sell the inherited family home, and only the uber-rich who can afford to maintain a vacant home during their own absences will be purchasing (as has happened in Sonoma and Healdsburg).

Sebastopol's housing problem arises from the fact that 51.4% of the current long-term housing are rentals while 48.6% are owner occupied. (U.S. Census 2017). If a city doesn't build more affordable housing as it grows, you just end up with older homes that cost more to purchase or rent. Supporting & providing encouragement to projects that provide real, large-scale solutions (such as encouraging development of multi-family housing and/or projects that

provide a moderate/low income component) are better steps towards adding housing than restricting the property rights of the very folks who are grappling with making ends meet.

Some have expressed there is an economic incentive to rent out short term, this overlooks the fact that operating a vacation rental requires extra time and expense for the homeowner because vacation rentals have the added expense of furnishings, cleaning service, gardening, management and TOT. Most owners opt for the traditional rental model and simply prefer renters who will take care of their property. Vacation rentals also have the added benefit of providing a living wage job to house cleaners / maids / landscapers / managers and other service personnel who wish to go into business for themselves. The average hourly price for a housecleaner is around \$30-\$40. Who at a hotel makes a living wage...maybe the general manager?

In addition to providing living wage jobs, vacation rentals can also offer an economical housing option in many more "typical" short-term (less than 30 day) situations such as traveling medical professionals (doctors, nurses, x-ray tech's, etc.), medical students, students attending continuing education programs, winery interns, and others seeking temporary housing -- as it's often easier to book a vacation rental than to find a temporary apartment.

During times of crisis, vacation rentals also offered immediate lodging for individuals who lost their home or sought shelter after the 2017 Tubbs fire and 2019 floods, and many converted to year-round housing to help disaster victims as they made important life decisions about rebuilding or "next steps". They also provided lodging for first responders and relief workers (firefighters, PG&E workers, Insurance Agents etc.) and continue to offer economical accommodations for construction workers and other trade personal during rebuilding as it's cheaper to house a crew in a home - than multiple hotel/motel rooms.

I'd also like to take this opportunity and share what I learned after visiting the Sonoma County PRMD Vacation Rental Desk. Since the County adopted its vacation rental "Three Strikes Penalty" guidelines, no Vacation Rental (Yes...whole house Vacation Rental) in Sonoma County has ever received even 1 verified "strike"- let alone 3. I think this shows hosts, of all types, are responsible and sincerely care about their neighbors.

Instead of placing a moratorium, I would recommend the City Council restrict corporate vacation rental ownership but allow private individuals the option to purpose a home as a vacation rental more than 30 days per year. This seems a more measured and appropriate next step given the reasons mention above and the low percentage of vacation rentals in Sebastopol.

Charles Metz

## Kari Svanstrom

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**From:** Toni Kiely <kielykids@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 13, 2019 4:10 PM  
**To:** Kari Svanstrom  
**Subject:** Please don't limit vacation rentals!

I want to express my concerns about the possible limiting of vacation rentals in Sebastopol. When visitors stay in a neighborhood home, they patronize the local businesses - places they can actually walk to!!! Owners always tell their guests about the best local things to do, their favorite local restaurants, and things to see or experience that visitors might not know of otherwise. This gives small businesses a real boost!

Property owners are often older people too, and the additional income *really* helps them when their income or social security is not enough to make ends meet.

I own a second home in Forestville and when we're not using it I rent it to guests. I'm retired now, but when I was working that house helped me put my 2 daughters through college so they could graduate with the crushing student debt so many thousands of young people are currently struggling with.

Please, continue to allow people who can really use the extra income to rent out their homes! It can make all the difference in their lives and the lives of those who depend on them.

Thank you for your time.

Toni K.

August 13, 2019

Mr. Patrick Slayter, Vice Mayor  
City of Sebastopol  
7120 Bodega Ave.  
Sebastopol, CA 95473



Dear Patrick-

I wish that I could attend the city meetings this month regarding short term vacation rentals in Sebastopol, but unfortunately I have a prior commitment on Tuesdays. I did want to share a letter in favor of continuing to have non-owner hosted vacation rentals.

I work in San Francisco and I have an owner-occupied vacation rental on Bodega Ave., this is my fifth year in business. I purchased my home in late 2013 with the specific intent of renting the larger home out as a vacation rental and living in the smaller. I have no desire to be a landlord or to share my property 24/7, 365 days a year. Hosting a vacation rental is the perfect fit for my lifestyle and goals.

I come from a hospitality background and I love being in a business where I can meet people from around the world and share my community with them. I take great pride in promoting Sebastopol online, in print and in person.

I also own a vacation rental in Guerneville, and I put just as much effort into promoting the offerings of the Russian River area for those guests, as I do in Sebastopol. I may not be able to meet everyone that stays there, but the feeling of warmth and community is evident and I am happy to say I have a 5-star rating in each location.

I believe that non-owner occupied vacation rentals in Sebastopol, like mine in Guerneville, are helping support tourism in our area. With the influx of beer/cider/wine tasting rooms, the large annual attractions like the Sonoma County Fair, the Heirloom Festival and Ironman, plus our own events like the Sebastopol Documentary Film Festival and the Gravenstein Apple Fair, we are a destination. A destination that doesn't have adequate hotel space for our guests. Even when the new hotel is built, we will still be accommodation deficient for the number of people that want to stay.

Vacation rentals, owner occupied or not, provide additional accommodations to people that are coming to visit us. They can provide a more comfortable and cost effective space for families or larger groups. A family of six visiting for a wedding can't necessarily afford \$300 a night for guest rooms and may not choose to stay at all. Vacation rentals help bring, and keep people in the area. People that spend money not only at "attractions", but also at the everyday businesses.

I have guests that stay multiple times a year for a week-plus each time. They live here, making use of the grocery stores, dry-cleaners, auto shops and pharmacies. They go to the movies, taquerias and the pool. They enjoy Peacetown in the summer and the Farmer's Market year-round. One family visits every year from Illinois, staying 2-3 weeks each visit, their hope is to purchase a home and retire in Sebastopol.

I understand wanting to retain the sense of community and not "gutting" our neighborhoods, but isn't there a better solution than to ban more vacation rentals?

Other counties have come up with solutions that we could consider. Limit the amount of vacation rentals allowed on any given street/neighborhood or come up with a vacation rental cap, X% of homes in Sebastopol can be vacation rentals.

I truly believe there is a way to preserve our neighborhoods, support new vacation rental owners and the guests that want to come and stay without banning future vacation rentals.

Best regards-

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori Solomon".

Lori Solomon  
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