

**City of Newport**  
**Department of Planning and Economic Development**  
**Staff Report to the Planning Board**

**Statement of Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan**

Meeting: September 13, 2021  
Applicant: John R. McCarthy  
Address: 19 South Baptist Street  
TAP: 32, Lot 186  
Zoning: R10  
Petition: Special Use Permit

The applicant has applied for a guest house use in an existing two family residential structure. The Applicant resides in the second floor unit and is seeking permission to convert the existing long term rental unit on the first floor to a guest house use for short term rentals.

**Standards of Review**

As part of the Zoning Board of Review (ZBR) review process, the Planning Board has been requested to provide the ZBR “an opinion as to the petition’s conformance to the (Newport) comprehensive plan.” (Newport Zoning Board of Review Policies & Procedures)

Staff have reviewed the following components of the Comprehensive Plan in order to determine consistency:

*Goal LU-1 – To provide a balanced city consisting of residential, commercial and employment uses consistent with the character, environmental resources and vision of the community.*

*Policy LU-1.7 – The City shall protect the existing character of residential neighborhoods while encouraging local neighborhood business.*

This proposal does not protect the existing character of the residential neighborhood, or provide a commercial opportunity that supports the neighborhood and provides limited employment opportunities.

*Goal ED-1 – To develop a robust and diverse economy, providing suitable employment opportunities for residents, and a stable tax base.*

The growth of the short-term rental market (guest house use) is directly related to Newport’s tourism sector. The Comprehensive Plan calls for diversification in the City’s economy.

*Goal H-1 – To preserve and protect existing housing resources in the community.*

*Policy H-1.2*

*The City shall make a priority the enforcement of codes that relate to the protection of existing housing and neighborhoods.*

*Goal H-2 – To preserve and enhance existing moderate workforce and low moderate income (LMI) housing.*

*Policy H-2.3*

*The City shall monitor public and private actions to identify potential negative impacts on the supply of workforce and LMI housing.*

The removal of a long-term rental from the housing market may have a negative impact on the supply of workforce housing.

*Goal H-3 – To reduce the percentage of seasonally vacant homes and increase neighborhood stability and vitality.*

*Policy H-3.1*

*The City shall identify and implement actions to limit or reduce the percentage of City homes that are vacant on a seasonal basis, focusing on neighborhoods most affected by these homes.*

Converting a long-term rental to a short term, potentially increases the percentage of homes that are vacant on a seasonal basis.

*Policy H-3.2*

*The City shall identify and implement actions to enforce short term rental regulations.*

*Goal T-5 – To provide sufficient and suitably located parking, designed to eliminate, mitigate or reduce impacts.*

The property is located in the “Yachting Village”, a densely developed area, and is in close proximity to the Limited Business District along lower Thames Street. There are no proposed renovations as part of the petition, and the application states that there is currently sufficient on-site parking for the two existing dwelling units.

**Planning Department Recommendations**

Due to the proliferation of guest houses, and consequent impact to city neighborhoods and their vitality, the planning department does not find this proposal consistent with the city’s housing goals and related policies. Converting a long-term rental to a short term, potentially increases the percentage of homes that are vacant on a seasonal basis. By their nature, short term rentals are more intense than long term rentals and may potentially negatively impact existing housing resources. The Planning Department recommends the Planning Board find this petition inconsistent with the housing Goals and Policies and not substantially in compliance with the City’s Comprehensive Plan.