CITY OF JOPLIN
COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

ITEM:
Council Bill No. 2026-002 – AN ORDINANCE amending throughout Chapter 30 – BUSINESS, Article III. Licenses, Division 6. Hotel, Motel, and Tourist Courts to include short-term rentals under the hotel/motel tax paid by transient guests; and establishing a time for this ordinance to become effective.

MEETING DATE
January 5, 2026

ATTACHMENTS
Council Bill No. 2026-002

REVIEWED BY
City Attorney, Peter Edwards; Director of Finance, Leslie Haase; Director of Planning, Troy Bolander; and City Manager, Nicholas Edwards.

SUMMARY
This council bill amends the hotel/motel tax to include the taxation of short-term rentals paid by transient guests. The bill requires striking language pertaining to an eight (8) minimum, amending definitions to include short-term rentals, amending the penalty on unpaid tax to comport with the statute, as well as a new section regarding enforcement.

BACKGROUND
The current hotel/motel tax rate of 4% was approved by voters in 2000. Since that time, there has been a significant increase in the operation of short-term rentals (STRs). Although offering sleeping rooms to transient guests for less than 31 days, the tax has not been imposed on short-term rentals (STRs). As written, the City Code excludes establishments with fewer than 8 rooms. The modern trend among large municipalities in Missouri is to include short-term rentals under any tourism tax paid by transient guests. In *St. Charles Cnty. Convention & Sports Facilities Auth. v. Mydler*, 950 S.W.2d 668, the Court of Appeals affirmed the circuit court's judgment which found that the owners of a bed and breakfast were liable for the tourism tax. The court reasoned that the owners' bed and breakfast fell within the statutory definitions of "hotel" or "motel" because the court applied the terms in their ordinary and usual sense by the dictionary definitions, and the dictionary did not limit a "hotel" or a "motel" by the number of rooms. The City of Branson has applied this reasoning to impose their tourism tax on STRs in recent years. This bill provides the City of Joplin the same opportunity to impose the tax for sleeping rooms following the same logic.

FUNDING SOURCE
N/A

RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends this Council Bill be approved on First Reading.