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.

COUNCIL BILL NO. 2026-002 ORDINANCE NO.

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; enacting a new section; and establishing a time for this ordinance to become effective.

WHEREAS, the City of Joplin is authorized by RSMo. 67.1000. *Transient guests to pay tax on sleeping rooms in hotels and motels, purpose to fund convention and visitors bureau, any county and certain cities — limitation on tax, certain cities and counties.* — 1. The governing body of the following cities and counties may impose a tax as provided in this section: (3) Any city or county with more than three hundred fifty hotel and motel rooms within the boundaries of such city or county; and

WHEREAS, the City of Joplin is authorized by RSMo. Section 67.1000 to impose a 4% tax on the charges for all sleeping rooms paid by the transient guests of hotels or motels situated in the city, which was approved by voters on November 7, 2000; and

WHEREAS, it has become apparent that short-term rentals are operating within city limits and charging transient guests for sleeping rooms; and

WHEREAS, because short-term rentals are intended to provide sleeping rooms for transient guests, the City Council finds that it is proper to amend the tax definition to include short-term rentals; and

WHEREAS, the City Council believes the increase in tax revenue shall benefit the Convention and Visitors Bureau for the purpose of promoting tourism in the City of Joplin; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that it is in the best interest of the City of Joplin to impose the tax paid by transient guests for sleeping rooms upon short-term rentals.

BE IT ORDAINED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOPLIN, MISSOURI, as follows:

Section 1. That Chapter 30 – BUSINESS, Article III. Licenses, Division 6. - Hotel, Motel, and Tourist Courts. Subdivision I. - In General, be amended as follows:

"Sec. 30-251. - Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this division, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

"Gross receipts means the amount charged to a patron or customer of a hotel, motel, ~~or~~ tourist court, or short-term rental, for room charge only, plus all applicable sales and transportation tax and such other tax as may be required by law to be included therein to be gross receipts on which the occupational license fee imposed by this division shall be applied.

Hotel, motel, ~~and~~ *tourist court,* *and short-term rental shall* mean any structure or building, under one management, which contains rooms furnished for the accommodation or lodging of guests, with or without meals being provided, and kept, used, maintained, advertised or held out to the public as a place where sleeping accommodations are sought for pay or compensation to transient guests or permanent guests[.]~~, and having more than eight bedrooms furnished for the accommodation of such guests.~~

Transient guest means a person who occupies a room in a hotel, motel, ~~or~~ tourist court, or short-term rental for 31 days or less.

Sec. 30-252. - Tax levied.

Every person engaging in the business of renting, leasing or letting living quarters, sleeping accommodations, rooms or a part thereof in connection with any hotel, motel,~~ or~~ tourist court, or short term rental, shall pay to the city a license tax equal to four percent of the gross rental receipts derived from or paid by transient guests for sleeping accommodations.

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Sec. 30-256. - Penalty on unpaid tax.

For each and every month, or part thereof, any such occupational license tax provided for under this division remains unpaid after the tax shall be due and payable, there shall be added to such license tax as a penalty of one percent and interest not to exceed two percent per month on unpaid taxes which shall be considered delinquent thirty days after the last day of each quarter[.] ~~ten percent of the amount of such license tax for the first month or part thereof the tax is unpaid, and for each and every month thereafter, two percent of the amount of such license tax shall be added until the tax is fully paid. In no case shall the total penalty exceed 30 percent of the tax.~~ Failure to remit tax shall result in the immediate revocation of an occupational license. In addition to the penalties provided in this section, any person required to pay to the city the license tax imposed by this division shall be subject to all other provisions of this article not specifically provided for in this division or in conflict herewith.

Section 2. That a new section under Chapter 30 – BUSINESS, Article III. Licenses, Division 6. - Hotel, Motel, and Tourist Courts. Subdivision I. - In General, be enacted as follows:

"Sec. 30-258. - License and certification required.

Under this division, it shall be unlawful to operate any hotel, motel, tourist court, or short-term rental within the city without an occupational license and certificate of compliance as established in Appendix 29A, the Joplin Development Code. The Director of Finance shall have the power to suspend or revoke any license granted under the terms and provisions of this chapter and to direct the City of Joplin Police Department to take the actions necessary to secure the

business so that it can no longer operate or remain open for business whenever it shall be shown, or whenever there is knowledge that a person is conducting said business in violation of this division or any ordinance of the city. The chief of police and the police department shall cooperate with the finance department and other city officials for the strict enforcement of this division. Any person who operates a hotel, motel, tourist court, or short-term rental without a valid occupational license shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor.

Section 3. That this ordinance shall be in full force and effect twenty days (20) after its passage.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOPLIN, MISSOURI, this _____ day of _____, 2026, by a vote of _____.

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Keenan T. Cortez, Sr., Mayor

ATTEST:

_____
Holly Nagy, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

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Peter C. Edwards, City Attorney