Kelowna STR Comeback Playbook 2026

What Property Owners Should Be Doing Right Now to Be Ready When Short-Term Rentals Reopen

🧠 The Shift (What's Happening Right Now)

Short-term rentals in Kelowna are in a transition period.

- The province previously restricted STR activity due to low vacancy rates
- The City of Kelowna has submitted a proposal to allow STRs sooner
- The city is currently accepting applications for short-term rental licenses

👉 Those applications are expected to be processed if and when the province approves reopening.

There are also indications that the city is expecting more clarity on short-term rentals by the end of April.

Nothing is confirmed yet—but it does give a sense of when things could begin moving.

⚠️ The Real Opportunity

When short-term rentals reopen:

- There will be a surge of demand
- Major events will drive short-term pricing
- Listings that go live early will have a clear advantage

This summer includes:

- The Memorial Cup
- BC Lions games
- Peak Okanagan travel demand

👉 The key isn't being first—it's being ready to go immediately.

❌ The Biggest Mistake Owners Will Make

> Most owners will wait until short-term rentals are officially reopened before taking action.

At that point, they still need to:

- finalize their licensing
- prepare their unit
- coordinate setup
- build and launch their listing

👉 Which means they miss the early demand window while everything gets organized.

🧠 What This Actually Means

Short-term rentals aren't something you turn on overnight.

Even when allowed, there are still steps:

- licensing approval
- property readiness
- staging and presentation
- listing setup
- pricing strategy

👉 The delay doesn't happen when STRs reopen.
👉 The delay happens after.

✅ What Smart Owners Are Doing Right Now

Instead of waiting, they're focusing on what can be done in advance:

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1. Getting Licensing in Motion

- Submitting applications with the city
- Understanding requirements ahead of time

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2. Preparing the Property

- Addressing maintenance or wear from long-term tenants
- Planning upgrades or improvements
- Identifying what's needed for a STR setup

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3. Planning Setup & Inventory

- Understanding required kitchenware, linens, and essentials
- Preparing to purchase and install once timing is clear

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4. Coordinating a Launch Plan

- Having a management and setup strategy ready
- Structuring everything so it can be executed quickly

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5. Working With a Management Team Early

- Getting systems prepared in the background
- Having listings, pricing, and operations ready to deploy

👉 So when approvals come through, everything is already lined up.

🏆 What Determines Who Wins When STRs Reopen

The difference won't be who owns the best property.

It will come down to:

⏱️ Speed to Launch

How quickly your property goes live after approval.

📸 Presentation Readiness

Having a plan for:

- staging
- linens
- photography
- visual appeal

⚙️ Pricing Execution

- Adjusting for demand spikes
- Avoiding underpricing or overpricing early

🌐 Distribution Setup (Behind the Scenes)

- Properties can be prepared inside management systems
- Then quickly pushed live across platforms once licensing is approved

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🧼 Operational Readiness

- Cleaning systems
- Turnover processes
- Guest communication workflows

🧠 Why This Matters

Owners who are prepared:

👉 Launch quickly
👉 Capture early bookings
👉 Build momentum faster

Owners who are not:

👉 Spend weeks getting organized
👉 Miss peak demand opportunities
👉 Fall behind listings already live

⏱️ The Real Advantage

This isn't about guessing when STRs reopen.

👉 It's about removing delay once they do.

> The owners who win will be the ones who don't need to "start" when it happens—they're already ready.

🗓️ Year-Round Strategy (Beyond Summer)

Most successful owners structure their property for:

- Short-term rentals (June–September)
- Long-term tenants (September–April)

👉 Students and seasonal tenants are often strong options for off-season stability.

This approach helps:

- reduce vacancy
- create consistent income
- maximize annual returns

🏢 About Stay Locations

Stay Locations manages ~40 active properties across:

- Kelowna

- West Kelowna
- Big White

Previously managing 130+ properties prior to regulatory changes.

Our Approach

- Dynamic pricing based on real-time market demand
- Professional photography and listing presentation
- Multi-channel exposure (Airbnb, VRBO, Booking.com, Expedia, Direct)
- In-house cleaning operations
- Fast guest communication
- Strong track record of high occupancy during peak seasons
- Established base of repeat guests

🔥 Final Takeaway

> When short-term rentals return, the opportunity won't last forever.

👉 The difference will come down to preparation.

Owners who are ready will move quickly.
Owners who wait will spend valuable time catching up.

📩 Property Setup Checklist

If you want a copy of our Property Setup Checklist (what's required to fully prepare a unit for short-term rentals):

Just click [here] to download