



short-term accommodations what we heard summary

Public Introductory Discussion Session

March 15, 2018 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Memorial Hall, City Hall

A public introductory discussion session was held on March 15, 2018 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. in Memorial Hall at City Hall (216 Ontario St.). This session included a presentation by City Planning Staff, and a focus group brainstorming exercise. 14 people attended this session. Attendees were invited to view and add to storyboards that highlighted background information from other communities and for Kingston. Feedback opportunities included:



- Comment sheets
- Storyboards with dot democracy and post-it notes
- Focus group discussions and summaries
- Conversation with staff



Next steps

All comments received during this meeting were compiled and reviewed. In conjunction with the results of the online survey, staff will draft an information report for Planning Committee to consider.



Contact

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Comments

Defining STAs: There was discussion on the definition of STAs that limited stays to 28 days. “Medium-term accommodations” required with temporary stays for work or study reasons do not fit into STA definitions, but are not really long-term either. This type of rental use needs to fit somewhere.

Fairness to Hospitality Industry: Participants expressed being open to STAs paying the same hospitality fees as other accommodators, if the City imposed a new tax.

Long-term housing: Affordable housing was identified as an important, but separate issue from STAs. STAs make housing more affordable for those who operate them.

Neighbourhood concerns: Most STAs are perceived to blend in and most don't know where they operate currently. There are cases where they have caused social conflict in neighbourhoods such as Grenville Park. This is upsetting to some of the residents there, and is dividing the neighbours. All the issues of parking, noise, loss of 'neighbourhood feel' were identified as concerns in this case to some participants. There were differing opinions on where STAs should be allowed.

Type of Hosts: There was concern about deterring different kinds of hosts, including smaller operators looking for additional income, and discouraging people from visiting Kingston because it is harder to find places to stay. Overall, it was acknowledged that there exists a spectrum of STA operators, from large corporate operators, to investment properties, to geared-to-rental, to smaller operators that cannot afford the pinch of regulations.

Questions asked

- Are we looking to control behavior? Or location? Or density?
- Is this actually a concern in Kingston?
- Why is 28 days the cut-off for an STA? How was this number determined?
- Shouldn't STAs have to pay the hotel tax as well?
- Should STAs be only near hospitality locales or only away from them?
- Where do medium-term uses fit into a possible new framework?
- Will STAs be held to the same standards as hotels?
- How would a cap on the number of days rented be determined?
- Are STAs commercial uses or residential?
- Why is it the fault of STAs that the City has not provided affordable housing?
- Will STA operators' rules of their platform or the City take priority?
- How much would a legal challenge of our regulations by a platform cost the City?



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Scenarios explored

Two scenarios were explored for opportunities and concerns: a room rented nightly, when the resident is home, and a home rented nightly when the resident is away. Participants agreed that there was a difference in impact between the two.

“Room rented nightly” scenario

Opportunities

- Sense of greater regulation of guest because unit resident is present
- Greater capacity to monitor STA guests
- Someone is there to explain acceptable/not acceptable behaviours
- Encourages tourism and allows for porous secondary accommodation market

Concerns

- Un-level playing field. What standards will be applied, and to whom?
- Hard to regulate being ‘quiet’ or common sense—even if someone is present, that does not mean they will keep their guests below the acceptable threshold
- Regulation does address the fundamental “change of neighbourhood” concern
- Sense of place is destroyed by STAs regardless of regulation

“Whole home rented when resident is away” scenario

Opportunities

- Ability to host larger groups
- Greater privacy for the guest(s)

Concerns

- Not always actually as private as guests think they may be (homeowner might be in the basement, or a basement unit, for example)
- More likely to become a “party place”

Potential Solutions

There was discussion about what might be a good way to manage STAs. Licencing was better received than site-specific zoning. Spreading out the locations throughout the city was identified as a way to avoid concentration of adverse impacts on neighbourhoods. The benefits of licencing discussed included knowing who and where the STA operators are. However, there are practical issues of how to administer and enforce such a licencing program.