



Guelph STR Town Hall #2 December 8, 2022 10-11:30 a.m.

Public participation at the second digital Town Hall varied throughout the session. Of the four people that joined the session, two actively participated for the entire session and one left soon after it began without contributing. One individual had also attended the previous digital session.

Scott Green provided a brief introduction that offered context to the STR by-law review currently underway. He discussed the process, the purpose of the public engagement sessions, the objectives of the bylaw review and offered the current licensing fees for bed and breakfasts as a comparator.

A combination of Mentimeter, oral conversation and the chat were used to ask questions and gather feedback from participants. The notes that follow capture the input received at the second digital meeting.

What is your relationship with short-term rentals inside Guelph? (Participants were asked to choose all that apply; 2 responses)

Host or owner	1
Prospective host	1
Traveller/Visitor to Guelph	1
Guelph resident who also uses STR in Guelph	1
Neighbour to an existing STR	1
Long-term renter interested in the by-law	0
Homeowner interested in the by-law	1
Local business owner/operator in the tourism industry	1
Other	2

What do you most want to say/ask today?

- One participant noted their concern with the approach the City is taking. Stressed the need to identify the problem to be solved, and take action based on real objectives, before looking for solutions. Want to see the evidence for the need for this review. “No real issues have been presented.” No proven value for licenses, just added cost for STR property owners. [This individual attended the previous digital session and voiced similar concerns.]

- Another individual noted they had completed the online survey and attended as they were interested in learning more. Currently have a LTR unit in basement and live next door to a STR. Curious in learning what hotels and bed and breakfasts pay for licensing, and what the fee would look like for STR. Also interested in a discussion about the primary residence piece.

Scott reviewed an example of estimated fee based on the current cost recovery rates.

Business licensing has a cost recovery model – the cost covers the time/administration for staff to complete the inspections and process the business license. STR owners would pay an initial inspection fee and a fee for the business license the first year. In subsequent years there would be a renewal fee only. Owners would complete a checklist. If an inspection is required, there is no additional fee. No STR fee has been determined yet.

- LTR are regulated separately (zoning by-law). There is interest in the community to ensure that LTR are also monitored but the City. LTRs do not require a business license. STRs are considered accommodation, like a hotel, and would require a business license.
 - ‘LTR is absolutely a business.’
- See the value in inspections but why does it cost so much money to process a form each year? Evidence to suggest the process would any value?
 - Cost is associated with the cost of performing the inspections, administration etc.
- One participant agreed with the City's view for STR running as a business and that LTR are not. Supported by CRA's view that LTR are considered passive income vs. short terms that can be considered active businesses.



Rank these bylaw goals based on what is most important to you (1 response)



Comments/questions

- Comment regarding adequate housing supply – STRs are popular as there is a demand and different needs in the community. Very expensive to live in our community. If trying to offer low-cost options, it's usually government that offers these options. Market dictates price. It's not up to businesses to provide these options.
 - This is 100% correct. Housing supply for short term rentals is vitally important to the community's needs. There is an issue in Ontario today, with LTB (Landlord and Tenant Board) decisions not made timely. We just had a gentleman rent a unit from my family because his long-term tenants are refusing to pay rent and refusing to leave, so he nowhere to live, literally. So we are stepping in, and for a very modest fee, we are providing accommodation to this gentleman, who is being underserved by LTB.

Ownership and Operating Models

- Treating STR as a business – owner could be running it as a corporation. STR could be separate business as well. Shouldn't matter whether it's a primary residence or a residence owned within the city. There's nothing in place to stop people outside Canada from buying property here as an investment or rental.
- Let the market decide.
- Should the City be involved in using regulations to intervene? (re: buyers outside the country) There have been cases of international buyers purchasing lots of properties that then sit vacant in neighbourhoods.



- Consider occupancy requirements – units should not be allowed to sit vacant, whether they are STRs or not.

Limitations

Should the City be involved in the regulating the number of guests per unit or on the property?

- Hard to say. Depends on the size of the property, number of rooms, people per room. Could be issues with restrictions. I don't think there should be a limit. May need to revisit if there have been a lot of noise complaints due to high numbers of people at a STR.
- Could post as a party house for an unlimited amount of people. Puts neighbors in a devastating situation. City should do something to prevent that from happening. Would that be regulated by preexisting noise by-laws? Airbnbs own policies?
- New action should be rooted in something. See if bylaw fines solves the problem. If not, amend the STR bylaw later (i.e. higher fines for STR business)
- Equity is important. Who owns the hotels in the city? If they want equity – look at the ownership structure for those hotels. Do their owners have to live there?
 - Not identical regulations across all businesses
 - Could Airbnbs not have different rules? Not have to pay for inspections and renewal?
 - We're gathering feedback at this stage for the WG to make recommendations. no decisions have been made yet.
- What about STR companies that rent units? (“Arbitrage”) Has the working group thought about this?
- Airbnb arbitrage – individual opens company that rents LTR units. Then rents out properties as STR (like sub-letting).
 - Does that scenario require different regulations? How should the City handle it?
 - Should be handled the same way
 - Property owner follows LTR requirements, renter follows STR requirements. Renter is the ‘resident.’
- One participant wanted to know how to speak to the decision-makers.
 - Encouraged to contact Councillors directly
 - Can register to speak as a delegate at Council meeting when the recommendations report goes to Council > <https://guelph.ca/city-hall/mayor-and-council/city-council/agendas-and-minutes/delegations-and-comments/>
- Level of engagement so far?
 - Small turnout so far at digital meetings.
 - 147 responses to the survey.

Geographic locations

- Don't think there should be limitations on specific locations within the city
 - Council may need to re-examine based on how it rolls out (i.e. a lot of STR related complaints in a particular neighbourhood?)



- Laws need to be evidence based. So they should pivot with new evidence and data

Final Thoughts

- City should be more hands-off. Licensing model like any other business. Light touch.
- Primary residence shouldn't be a requirement. Contact person needs to be able to respond to an incident or have someone available to respond.
- Corporations should be allowed.

Next steps

- Community consultations will end in mid-December. Staff will review the input and report back to the Working Group in January.
- Working Group will make recommendations to staff, who will then make final recommendations for Council's consideration.
- Report will go to Council in March 2023

