

April 19, 2019

Subject: City of Lake Oswego Proposed Short Term Rental Ordinance

Dear Commission, Mayor and Council:

Host2Host.org is a local, non-profit trade association that advocates for hosts who welcome travelers into our homes. We wanted to be able to speak for ourselves, recognizing that cities often hear only from platforms such as Airbnb and HomeAway. We use those platforms, but our interests often differ. Our association fully supports STR hosts being permitted, paying occupancy taxes and meeting reasonable regulatory requirements. We provide continual educational opportunities to our members to enhance their hospitality skills, and to understand city requirements. We are proud to have a member serving on the Board of Travel Portland, which recognizes the value of short-term rentals in the overall mix of hospitality offerings.

Short term rentals, if managed correctly, add value to the city by

- offering exciting diversity in hospitality choices and prices;
- creating city “ambassadors” in the form of hosts motivated to take the time to direct guests to the best the city has to offer;
- allowing visitors to stay in the same neighborhood as their family members who may not have enough room in their house to accommodate them;
- enabling older hosts to age in place, through the additional income from hosting, and younger hosts to augment their income.
- contributing revenue to the city through occupancy taxes, and
- strengthening small businesses in the neighborhoods
- enhancing cultural bridges

What does the phrase “if managed correctly” mean? The biggest hazard is the loss of long-term housing. Requiring the STR to be an owner’s or renter’s principal residence largely solves that issue. We have talked to many hosts regarding their STR space and if STR were not an option, would it otherwise be long-term housing? By far, the majority of situations show that the hosts either do not have the kitchen/bathroom facilities to accommodate long-term housing, or they desire to have their space available for visiting family or friends, and would not choose to use their space for long-term rental.

We commend the City of Lake Oswego for the proposed ordinance allowing for STRs, as we believe it will add value to city as noted above. We offer the following suggestions as you deliberate the proposed ordinance.

1. Requiring the host to always be present from midnight to 6:00 am is overly restrictive. Most hosts do a careful job of vetting guests. The city can enforce quiet time regulations and rescind STR permits if repeated or unresolved.
2. Specifying the overall number of STR permits is also overly restrictive. There is a natural “market” for short term rentals. Although people who host generally love to do it, none of them do it for free or would do it for free, because it’s not easy. It’s the people who need the extra income to maintain or keep their home, pay bills, visit kids and grandkids etc. There is no danger of every house in the city becoming a short term rental. The three-year sunset clause is also a check on this, if necessary.
3. 120 days maximum for rental is an unnecessary requirement. Many STRs will list their room for as little as \$40/night, and if the income is very important to them, that would cap their income at less than \$5,000/year. Again, there is a natural “market” for short term rentals, with summer being fully booked and winter being barely booked. We recommend there be no limit during the three-year trial period.

Thank you for your progressive approach to allowing short-term rentals. We would be happy to provide further input if you want it.

Respectfully,

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Chair, Host2Host

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