

THE MUNICIPALITY OF LAMBTON SHORES

Report CL 35-2021

Council Meeting Date: December 21, 2021

TO: Mayor Weber and Members of Council
FROM: Stephanie Troyer-Boyd, Clerk
RE: Short-Term Rental Public Consultation Results

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report CL 35-2021 regarding the Short-Term Rental Public Consultation Results be received for information.

SUMMARY

This report provides Council with information and results from the public consultation process regarding short-term rentals in Lambton Shores.

BACKGROUND

At its February 9, 2021, meeting, Council passed the following resolution:

***THAT** Report CL 03-2021 regarding “Short Term Rental Licensing” be received; and*

***THAT** staff be directed to develop a consultation process in order to identify issues which could be addressed by a short-term rental regulatory program.*

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic provided unique challenges with respect to public consultation. Traditionally, the Municipality would aim to have a mix of online and in-person consultation. However, given the time sensitive nature of the topic, staff conducted a virtual consultation process for feedback relating to short term rental accommodations.

The purpose of the public consultation process was aimed at better understanding the public’s opinion on short term rentals and potential licensing and regulatory options.

The consultation process included:

1. Online Public Survey: April 30 to September 15
2. Direct Mail to Short Term Rental Property Owners: week of October 25
3. Virtual Stakeholder Meetings with short-term rental owner/operators: November 10, 12, and 15
4. Virtual Stakeholder Meeting with short-term rental stakeholders: November 24

5. Virtual Stakeholder Meeting with hotel, motel, and bed and breakfast owner/operators: December 1
6. Online Public Information Centre: ongoing through the municipal website

Summary of Results

Online Public Survey

The online survey was made available from April 30 to September 15 to allow ample time for respondents to participate throughout the spring and summer months. The availability of the survey was publicized in monthly newsletters, through tax bill inserts, social media, and media coverage. Respondents were encouraged to submit only one response per household.

There were 1,396 survey submissions. The summary of survey results and findings can be found in Attachment 1: Public Survey Results and Findings.

To summarize the demographics of respondents:

- 822 were full-time, year-round residents
- 247 were seasonal residents
- 308 respondents identified themselves as a short-term rental host/operator

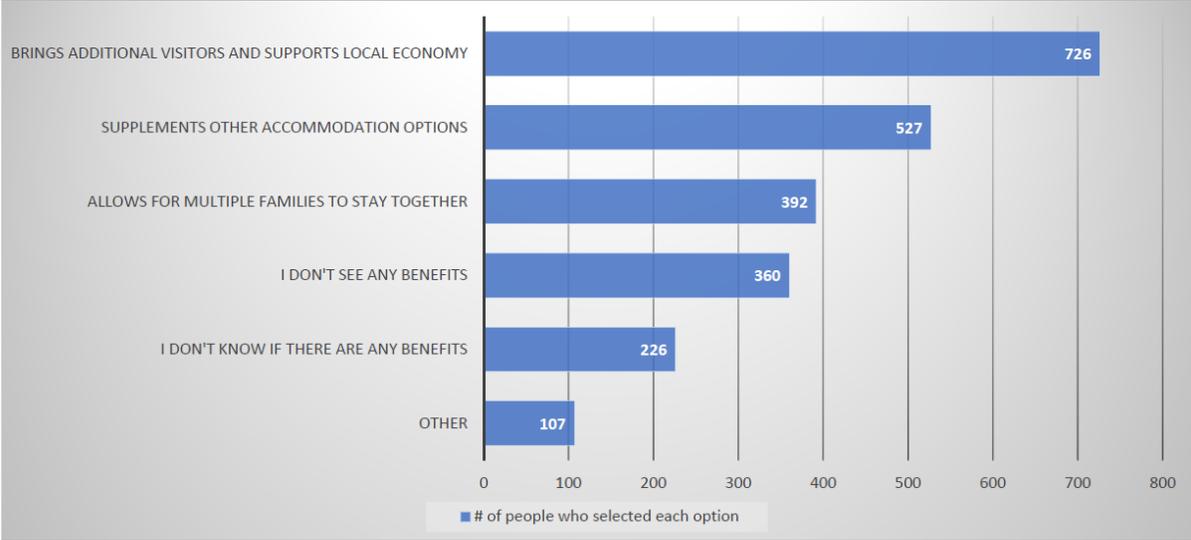
Out of all 1,396 survey submissions:

- 1,264 respondents are aware of a short-term rental operating in their neighbourhood
- 794 respondents said they have been disrupted by a short-term rental in their neighbourhood (348 said disruptions happen “frequently” and 388 said disruptions happen “sometimes”)
- 886 respondents (64%) believe short-term rentals should be regulated
- 855 respondents (61.9%) believe Lambton Shores should implement a licensing program for short-term rentals
- 687 respondents (49.7%) believe Lambton Shores should implement additional zoning regulations for short-term rentals

From the survey responses, STR operators identified that most STRs are detached dwellings (87%), and the majority are in Grand Bend (73%), Port Franks (15%) and Ipperwash (7%). It should be noted that this data is strictly based on the survey responses and has not been confirmed.

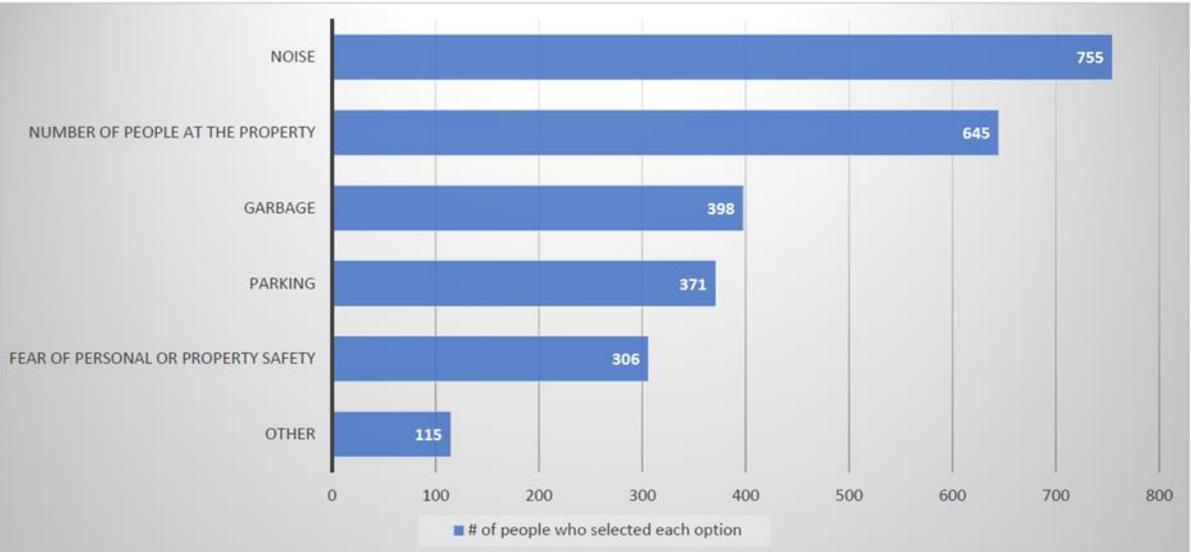
The survey responses identified the following benefits of STRs:

Q: What do you think are the benefits of STRs? (Select all that apply)



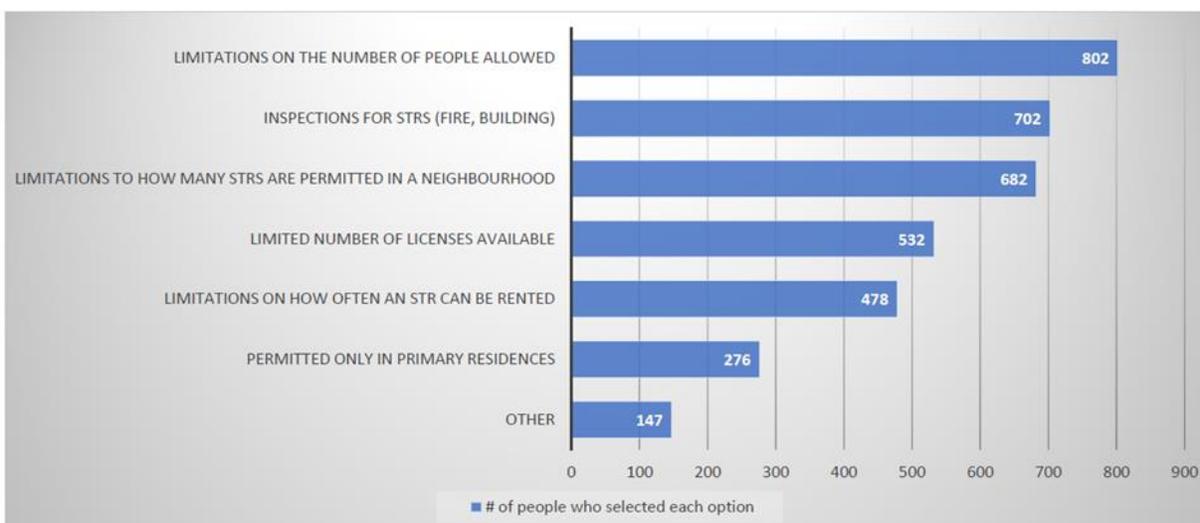
For those respondents that have been disrupted by STRs, the following were the most common issues experienced:

Q: If you've been disrupted before, what issues have you experienced that are related to STRs? (select all that apply)



As noted above, 61.9% of respondents believe that Lambton Shores should implement a licensing program to help regulate STRs. Respondents supported the following for a licensing program:

Q: If you think they should be licensed, what do you think should be part of a licensing program? (Select all that apply)



In addition to the quantifiable data received through the survey, respondents were asked to provide additional comments related to STRs, which can be categorized as common themes:

Q: Additional Comments

Common themes – concerns regarding STRs:

- Concerns regarding safety (fire code, behaviour, too many people in a house)
- Concerns regarding parking, garbage, and septic issues
- Concerns over the enforcement of existing by-laws (noise, parking, etc.) and a belief that increased by-law enforcement and steep fines for repeat offenders will provide relief to issues (and a way to fine both the 'renter' and 'operator' for by-law infractions)
- STRs are a business and should operate as such (licensing and regulations similar to Bed and Breakfasts, motels, hotels, etc.)

Common themes – supporting STRs:

- Belief that most STR operators are respectful and careful with who they rent to; general concern that regulation or licensing will "punish" both the "bad" and "good" operators
- Importance of tourism for the local economy and the boost STRs provide by bringing tourism to the area and providing alternative accommodations (especially for groups)

Council should be aware that the public survey is not considered to be statistically significant, meaning that the responses are likely to be received from those that have experienced challenges associated with short-term rentals (STRs) and the data is not necessarily representative of the community at large. To obtain a statistically significant survey, a large sample must be randomly selected to complete the survey (usually phone-based). Despite the public survey not being statistically significant, staff believe that the information received through the online public survey still provides valuable insights, especially when combined with the additional consultation measures.

Virtual Stakeholder Meetings:

Each virtual stakeholder meeting was facilitated by Bryan Boyle & Associates. Once all stakeholder meetings were completed, Bryan Boyle & Associates submitted a final report outlining the findings and results from each stakeholder group.

There were three different stakeholder groups, which included:

- Group 1: 71 identified short-term rental owner/operators (invited by direct mail)
- Group 2: 17 other stakeholder groups (e.g., community associations, OPP, EMS)
- Group 3: 7 identified hotel and motel owner/operators and representatives from the Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association

The purpose of each workshop was:

1. Garner input for identified merits and challenges of STRs in Lambton Shores
2. Identify desired outcomes for STRs in Lambton Shores
3. Identify and prioritize key areas of focus and potential actions to address the challenges relating to STRs

1a. Ranking the identified merits of STRs (broken down by stakeholder group):

| STR Owner/Operator Group | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1st | Brings visitors to the area and supports the local economy |
| 2nd | Provides additional income for property owners |
| 3rd | Increases accommodation options for visitors |

| STR Stakeholder Group | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1st | Brings visitors to the area and supports the local economy |
| 2nd | Increases accommodation options for visitors |
| 3rd | Allows multiple families or groups to stay together |

| STR Hotel/Motel Owner/Operator Group | |
|---|--|
| 1st | Increases accommodation options for visitors |
| 2nd | Provides a 'personal touch' of hospitality provided in private homes or facilities |
| 3rd | Allows multiple families or groups to stay together |

1b. Ranking the identified challenges of STRs (broken down by stakeholder group):

| STR Owner/Operator Group | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1st | Disruptive behaviour (e.g., noise, trespassing, traffic flow, garbage) |
| 2nd | Inadequate supply of parking |
| 3rd | Compatibility with existing neighbourhoods |

| STR Stakeholder Group | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1st | Disruptive behaviour (e.g., noise, trespassing, traffic flow, garbage) |
| 2nd | Compatibility with existing neighbourhoods |
| 3rd | Inadequate supply of parking |

| STR Hotel/Motel Owner/Operator Group | |
|---|--|
| 1st | Unfair competition with existing traditional accommodations |
| 2nd | Disruptive behaviour (e.g., noise, trespassing, traffic flow, garbage) |
| 3rd | (TIE) Inadequate supply of parking; and safety concerns (e.g., building code, fire code) |

2. Desired outcomes (ranking of feedback from all three stakeholder groups):

| Desired Outcomes (All Stakeholder Groups) | |
|--|---|
| 1st | Our community benefits from STRs |
| 2nd | Positive relationships with neighbours |
| 3rd | Municipal government understands and takes actions re: STRs |
| 4th | Positive image of STRs prevails |
| 5th | Positive response from guests |
| 6th | Fewer complaints |
| 7th | Best management practices are widespread |
| 8th | Personal financial gain for STR owners |

3. Potential actions (ranking of feedback from all three stakeholder groups)

| Areas of Focus (All Stakeholder Groups) | |
|--|--|
| 1st | Encourage Municipal regulation, planning and zoning |
| 2nd | Encourage best practices |
| 3rd | Ensure by-law enforcement |
| 4th | Quantify specific metrics |
| 5th | Promote STRs |
| 6th | Interact proactively with guests (TIE) |
| 6th | Improve Municipal communication with STR owner operators (TIE) |
| 8th | Establish a self-governing STR association |
| 9th | Build a strong relationship with neighbours (TIE) |
| 9th | Encourage positive approach to STR at the Municipality (TIE) |
| 9th | Improve garbage and recycling pickup (TIE) |

The full report can be found in Attachment 2: Lambton Shores Short Term Rental Input Workshops Final Report.

Online Public Information Centre (PIC)

The online Public Information Centre is found at lambtonshores.ca/ShortTermRentals. The web page includes information regarding the short-term rental public consultation and related staff reports. The online PIC will be updated on an ongoing basis as new information is available.

ALTERNATIVES TO CONSIDER

There are no alternatives presented as the recommendation is to receive this report for information. Staff will provide a subsequent report to Council in February 2022 outlining regulatory options for STRs for consideration.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The recommendation is to receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no direct financial impact associated with receiving this report. The financial impact of various regulatory options for STRs in Lambton Shores will be provided in a subsequent report to Council.

CONSULTATION

Attachments:

1. Public Survey Results and Findings
2. Lambton Shores Short Term Rental Input Workshops Final Report

Ashley Farr, Manager of Community Development
Alex Boughen, Communications and Economic Development Coordinator