



Michigan Association of Planning
A Chapter of the American Planning Association

May 2, 2017

Representative Jason Sheppard
House of Representatives
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Honorable Representative Sheppard,

I am writing to oppose House Bill 4503, which seeks to address short-term rentals (STRs) by eliminating local government's ability to regulate. The Michigan Association of Planning strongly opposes this bill. Communities across Michigan have been struggling with the impacts of short-term rentals (usually airbnb and VRBO's) for several years. These uses can have a huge and detrimental impact on the quality of life in a neighborhood, and local government should be able to address the issues locally.

Many municipalities have enacted regulations to address the impacts of STR's on their communities, in various ways. These attempts should not be undermined. Airbnb's and VRBO's can be a less expensive alternative to hotels, and can supplement commercial accommodations, which is particularly important with Michigan's huge tourism economy. However, there is a middle ground between no regulations at all, and over regulation at the local level. We would like to seek that middle ground.

The Michigan Association of Planning would be happy to sit down with you and discuss some compromises. We recommend the establishment of a work group to bring together stakeholders to identify solutions that allow for tourism while protecting our communities, schools, and local businesses that compete with STR's.

Negative impacts to consider with completely opening up the short-term rental industry include:

1. It undermines local control.
2. It can seriously and deleteriously affect quality of life for neighbors near STR's, especially if they are concentrated.
3. It can remove housing units from the market when many communities are facing big challenges with providing enough housing, particularly affordable housing, and drive up the cost of housing for existing residents.

1919 West Stadium Blvd.
Suite 4
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103

p: 734.913.2000
f: 734.913.2061

Michigan Association of Planning

A Chapter of the American Planning Association

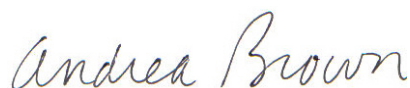
4. In addition, concentrations of airbnb's on single blocks in desirable tourist areas can completely change the environment of a residential neighborhood and replace tax paying, church going, locally employed residents who contribute socially and economically to THEIR community with transient tourists. A balance is necessary.
5. Where rooms are individually rented, neighborhood on-street parking is impacted, and this is particularly relevant in denser cities and towns. The noise of slamming car doors late at night, and jovial tourists returning to STR's late at night also affects quality of life.
6. Property owners SHOULD be able to rent out rooms in their homes to supplement income, but when a neighborhood home or apartment complex shifts completely to STR, it becomes a commercial enterprise, which if located in a residential area, should be regulated.
7. Building code requirements that apply to multi-family or rental housing are sidestepped, creating health and safety issues
8. Regulations should be made at the local level, every municipality is different, Detroit would need a different set of standards than Traverse City or Adrien or Ann Arbor. This is first and foremost a local control issue.
9. There is a risk of units effectively being used as illegal hotels. We have State fire, building and safety codes for hotels for good reason, and to at least some degree, they should be applied to STR's as well.

We must enact a sensible framework for short-term rentals but carte blanche exemption from local control is not the answer. The Sharing Economy is here to stay; let us find ways to make it work for communities, proprietors, and the STR platforms that support the system.

The Michigan Association of Planning represents community planners, local elected leaders, appointed officials like planning commissioners and zoning board of appeals members, attorneys, developers, and others with a stake in creating quality communities in Michigan.

We are eager to work with you to identify and implement solutions that protect our communities, while allowing for the business opportunities that the STR industry offers.

Sincerely,



Andrea Brown, AICP
Executive Director, Michigan Association of Planning

1919 West Stadium Blvd.
Suite 4
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103

p: 734.913.2000
f: 734.913.2061