Submission – Godfrey Gottfredsen

Item 5 of the Report of the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development, Heritage and Downtown Development dated April 5, 2022 regarding Regulating Short-Term Rentals

Dear City Council and Executive Planning Committee,

We have a tremendous opportunity to ensure that travel recovers in a way that is safe, sustainable and benefits everyone – spreading economic benefits to more people. We remain committed to work with you as part of this consultation. Winnipeg short-term rental regulations will provide more stable and consistent guidance for governments and support for communities recovering from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. These regulations also have the potential to benefit the regular people who share their homes throughout Winnipeg and earn valuable income that helps them pay their bills.
For this consultation to succeed, it is critical that we recognize how the COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed travel and develop forward-looking rules that reflect the way people will travel in the weeks, months and years to come. To that end, today, we are writing to share insights regarding travel in Europe that we hope you will consider as this consultation begins:

Travel has become more distributed. More people are seeking out remote, less densely populated destinations, helping to spread tourism to new areas, almost 60 percent of overnight stays in the first half of 2021 were in less populated areas, compared to 40 percent of overnight stays in the first half of 2019.

The lines between work, travel and living are blurring and people are living on Airbnb. Technology is making it easier to live and work anywhere, and people are embracing this new flexibility. Over half of all nights booked on Airbnb in the first half of 2021 were part of reservations that lasted at least a week. This new trend creates tremendous economic opportunities for places such as Winnipeg, where digital nomads who may spend weeks or months in different destinations.

Winnipeggers are benefiting from hosting. Airbnb enables everyone to have the opportunity to financially benefit from tourism, with the vast majority of the economics on Airbnb going directly into the pockets of ordinary people. They are spending in local neighborhoods and supporting businesses. Tourist taxes is another way to help authorities recover from the pandemic and Airbnb supports the collection and remittance of tourist taxes.

We hope the forthcoming public consultation will consider these and other trends in travel, and we are eager to build on our strong record of collaborative work with regulators and policymakers around the world. Already, Airbnb has helped advance more than 1,000 regulatory frameworks for short-term rentals, with a growing number of agreements underpinned by the City Portal – a digital one-stop-shop, built by Airbnb to support cities and tourism organizations. In Europe, Airbnb has 35 City Portal partnerships in place with governments and organizations including in France and Denmark and has committed to reaching 50 such partnerships by year's end.

I look forward to working with you closely during the coming months as we set the foundation for a rebalance of Canadian travel those benefits everyone for decades to come.

Tourism taxes are key revenue-generating mechanisms for jurisdictions across the country. In recent years, these taxes have become even more important as cities and towns have looked to not only

recover from the financial impact of the pandemic, but also embrace the opportunity of a fundamental shift in travel that has brought guests to thousands more communities around the world. Prior to 2014, jurisdictions did not have an efficient way to receive these funds from travel booked on short-term rental platforms. Airbnb changed that by forming tax collection agreements with San Francisco and Portland, Oregon that year and signaling to the world that the company wanted to collect and remit tourism taxes and work with local governments.

Airbnb, to our knowledge, the largest collector and remitter of such taxes in the world.
As we approach Tax Day – a month from today – we're sharing new data on the tourism tax dollars we delivered to communities last year, supporting the provision of countless local services. In the US, we collected and remitted a total of more than $1.5 billion in tourism taxes in 2021, in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico – an 87 percent increase over 2019. In Canada, we collected and remitted approximately $54 million CAD in 2021.

We're also sharing updates on our collection and remittance in a number of states and provinces last year:

Arizona – over $63 million, an increase of approximately 120% over 2019
Colorado – approximately $25 million, an increase of approximately 90% over 2019
Florida – over $308 million, an increase of approximately 125% over 2019
Georgia – over $56 million
Michigan – over $16 million, an increase of approximately 100% over 2019
New York – over $10 million, an increase of approximately 200% over 2019
North Carolina – over $90 million, an increase of approximately 135% over 2019
Ohio – approximately $3 million, an increase of approximately 145% over 2019
Rhode Island – approximately $6 million, an increase of approximately 70% over 2019
Tennessee – over $92 million, an increase of approximately 185% over 2019
Texas – over $64 million, an increase of approximately 95% over 2019
British Columbia – approximately $40 million CAD
Quebec – over $8 million CAD

In addition to tax collection, Airbnb has worked to help cities and towns directly benefit from travel over the last two years in a number of ways, including offering our new tools to work with cities and by sharing our singular knowledge of consumer travel trends. To date, we have secured more than 140 partnerships and collaborations with destination marketing organizations around the world, including nearly 40 in the US and Canada.

In September 2020, we launched the Airbnb City Portal, a collaborative product for use by governments and tourism organizations. This first-of-its-kind solution provides governments and tourism organizations with tools and insights with respect to activity on Airbnb in their community. The City Portal was launched with 18 pilot partners composed of local governments and tourism organizations from around the world. Over the first year, we went on a roadshow to educate and subsequently partner with local governments and tourism organizations and now have more than 160 City Portal partners, with the goal of having 250 by the end of year two.