February 21, 2023

City Council,

We are writing to you in support of regulating short-term rentals in Winnipeg and in strong opposition to several aspects of the regulations being considered by council.

We support short-term rental licensing, taxation, safety requirements, criminal record checks for hosts. These aspects will improve safety for guests, hosts, and neighbourhoods, contribute to local tourism, and will foster a sustainable short-term industry that benefits both Winnipeggers and visitors.

We are strongly opposed to the following aspects of the proposed regulations:

1. **Banning all non-primary residential short-term rentals in R1 and R2 zoned areas.** This will limit short-term rentals to multi-unit residential buildings in only commercial zones of the city. This will deny visitors access to comfortable furnished rentals in authentic and vibrant Winnipeg neighbourhoods close to their family and friends.

2. **Limiting licensed short-term rentals to less than 30 days.** This arbitrarily restricts visitors from accessing furnished rentals when working remotely, visiting family, transitioning to the city as newcomers, and caring for elderly family members. Medium-term stays are an essential offering provided by short-term rental platforms that are underserved by traditional commercial accommodation businesses.

We are working professionals who have lived in Crescentwood/River Heights neighbourhoods for over ten years. We purchased a small 1930's bungalow in Crescentwood in 2013 and over a span of eight years we restored and updated the house. In 2021 we purchased a house in South River Heights and chose to keep our little house in Crescentwood. This decision was sentimental, as it would be difficult for us to say goodbye to a house we put so much hard work and love into, and we saw an opportunity to share our home with Winnipeg visitors using the Airbnb platform.

Since September 2021, we have welcomed over 50 groups of guests to our Crescentwood home, providing a comfortable, peaceful, and authentically Winnipeg experience. Guests choose our home because of the proximity to their friends and family, who live in the neighbourhood, and because of the comforts of having their own kitchen, living, and outdoor areas where they can spend time with their loved ones. Short-term rentals, like ours, fulfil a specific accommodation need in Winnipeg. They offer visitors comfort and convenience that allow them to stay and enjoy our City for longer periods.

Many of our guests are returning to where they grew up, reminiscing in the charm and character of our heritage neighbourhood. Other times, it is our guest's first stay in one of Winnipeg's residential neighbourhoods. These guests compliment their peaceful experience under the canopy of elm trees, the warmth of our community, and the accessibility to shops and restaurants that are beloved in our neighbourhood. This is the Winnipeg we want our visitors to tell their friends back home about. This is what we, as Winnipeggers, want to be known for.

If the proposed regulations are implemented, banning STR's in non-primary residences in R1 and R2 zones, we would be forced to sell our short-term rental business. We know that most of our guests would avoid coming to Winnipeg or would significantly reduce their length of their stay if short-term rental options in residential neighbourhoods are not available to them.

We urge The City to take a measured approach to regulating short-term rentals. We propose that licensing, taxation, and safety measures be implemented now and that The City monitor the impacts of these changes before also restricting the locations of short-term rentals. This approach will avoid the abrupt termination of many upstanding small businesses that bring revenue to their owners,

neighbourhood businesses, and The City, and fulfill the unique demand for accommodation in residential areas. If, after a period of time, it is determined that licensing, taxation, and safety measures alone are not sufficient to address concerns about the short-term rental industry, then the city should re-evaluate at that time.

To highlight the value that short-term rentals in residential Winnipeg neighbourhoods provide, we would like to share a few excerpts from our guest reviews below. We challenge you to consider whether these guests would have the same experience and be left with the same impression of Winnipeg if they were to stay in a hotel or condo building.

Thank you for your consideration,

Mitchell Haw and Blair Mukanik

Beny Nov. 1 – 30, 2022 (Family immigrating from Israel)
“It was an amazing experience, as it was our first home as a new commers” “There were also many coffee shops and restaurants in the near area. Overall experience was fabulous, all 4 of us had an amazing time there.”

Sabrina - Oct. 16 – 23, 2022 (Family moving from Vancouver)
“Location is central, safe and has a great neighbourhood vibe - established trees, people out and about.”

Sarah Oct. 5 – 14, 2022 (Educators holding French language workshops in schools)
“We found the neighbourhood very well located, quiet and beautiful, yet close to vibrant parts of the city and all services.” “We would definitely come back there again for another work stay and we recommend it unreservedly.”

Sasha - Sep. 26 – Oct. 3, 2022 (Visiting from Calgary to visit family and work remotely)
“I really appreciated all of the little extra details (ex: the professionally made book with info about the house/rules, the historical photographs of Winnipeg, etc). The neighbourhood was nice; the leaves were all turning when I was there and it was a great area for walking.”

Catherine Sep. 16 – 24, 2022 (Visiting from Seattle, visiting family)
“My mother, who has Parkinson’s, came over for lunch one day and I didn’t have to worry about accessibility for her. She had space to walk around with her cane and the chairs in the kitchen & living room were high enough and firm enough for her to get in and out of them.”

Laura - Sep. 2 – 7, 2022 (Visiting from Yukon, visiting family)
“It’s in a great location, perfect for evening strolls to restaurants, gelato or just neighborhood walks in general.”

Victoria – Aug. 26 – 30, 2022 – (Family visiting from Dryden for back to school shopping)
“The house is charming and in a great location for shopping and the zoo which was perfect for us. The gardens were spectacular, making the backyard a nice relaxing oasis.”

Linda - Jul. 26 – Aug. 10, 2022 (Visiting from Toronto to visit children)
“The kitchen had everything possible for cooking and meal prep, and the beautifully landscaped back yard was ideal to enjoy morning coffee and evening sunsets.” “The street itself is quiet and serene, making this Air B&B a top choice for us - we will be back!!”

Sarah - Jun. 26 – Jul. 2, 2022 (American couple working remotely during Canadian road trip)
“Great place to stay in Winnipeg.” “Location is good. Nice quiet neighborhood but in minutes you can be downtown or at the park.”

Mieke - Jun. 23 – 26, 2022 (Friend group from Alberta and Ontario visiting for weekend)
“Elm Tree Place was incredible to stay at! Located in a historic neighbourhood close to some great restaurants. The house itself is beautiful, with lovely decor and pristine cleanliness. My favourite part was the back garden, which was a great place for a morning coffee.”

Bill – Jun. 11 – 22, 2022 (Couple from Victoria visiting family)
“Excellent accommodation in quiet, residential area close to many amenities. Host is very accessible and attentive.”

Boi Boi - May 6 – 12, 2022 (Young family from Calgary attending grandma’s 80th birthday party)
“The house pays homage to Winnipeg and it’s the finer details that impressed me.”

Jennifer - Feb. 18 – 21, 2022 (Couple visiting from Dryden for weekend getaway)
“Our trip was super relaxed and we were able to rest comfortably. My husband said to tell you our stay exceeded his expectations in every way and he will be booking with you again over a hotel next every time if you will have us.”

Isabel - Jan. 11 – 24, 2022 (Couple from Vancouver staying while curating show at WAG)
“The historic property has been updated while keeping the character giving it a charming feel.” “The location is great. There are restaurants, bakeries, and shops nearby.”

Ruth – Dec 29 – Jan 1, 2021 (Couple from St Genevieve visiting for staycation)
“This centrally located bungalow is a wonderfully clean and peaceful place to stay.” “There is comprehensive information available about the property and many recommendations for visiting the area. There are lots of walks in this historical part of the city with great restaurants and take outs close by. A real treasure to stay in and much recommended to others considering a stay here.”

Sharon – Nov. 11 – 15, 2021 (Family visiting from Vancouver Island to attend wedding and 94th birthday party)
“A wonderful find in Winnipeg , very clean, close to stores, restaurants, airport! Everything you need to call it home away from home.”

Lynn - Nov. 3 – 7, 2021 (Couple from Calgary visiting family)
“This gem of a home in one of Winnipeg's loveliest neighbourhoods has everything a visitor could want […] and a location that is central to everything you could want to visit.” “We visited in Nov, but in warmer weather an idyllic back yard under huge elm trees would be the ideal place to enjoy a cool glass of wine after a day of touring the city.”

Nancy - Oct. 27 – Nov. 1, 2021 (Couple from Luxembourg visiting family)
“The house is in a very nice and quiet neighbourhood, conveniently located near trendy restaurants and shops. Feels like a home away from home!”

Drew - Sep. 19 – 21, 2021 (Family visiting from Ottawa to attend funeral)
“What a gem this house is.” “The yard was nice to sit in and having a garage is a nice bonus. A great house for 1-4 people. The neighbourhood is quiet and safe. We walked to the co-op grocery store in about 15 minutes.”

Chris - Sep. 9 – 16, 2021 (Siblings from Toronto/BC to help 90 year old mother move)
“Literally, we could not ask for a better stay, nor a better appointed house. Just as advertised - a lovely two-bedroom bungalow in a well-located part of Winnipeg. With a lovely backyard.”

Tim - Sep. 21 – Oct. 19, 2021 (Couple from Toronto visiting family)
“We have stayed at numerous Airbnb properties in Canada and the US, and this one is by far the best one yet. Beautiful home, tastefully furnished (and comfortable) and perfectly located. Great walking in the area with loads of shops up along Corydon. Best area of the city in our opinion and that's based on living there for 20+ years.” Mitch was a fantastic host. While there were no issues that needed any attention, he was always readily available for questions about the house, furnishings etc. Super comfortable beds, excellent fully equipped kitchen, and the basement home office setup was perfect for working remotely during our month-long stay. The home is quiet, gets great natural light at all times of day (great sunrises) and the backyard deck area is perfect. We spent a lot of time on the deck enjoying the abundance of migratory birds in the area. The 2 car garage was a welcomed luxury being brand-new, and large enough to fit our long pickup truck. When we make our next trip to Winnipeg, we will book Mitch's place again and would change our travel dates as needed based on its availability. 100% recommend this property to anybody travelling to Winnipeg.”

Joanne - Sep. 3 – 6, 2021
“We have stayed at MANY Airbnbs and this one was a cut above all the rest.” “Beautiful backyard and deck, and a garage for your car. For those that don’t know Winnipeg, the house is located in a nice neighbourhood which is very quiet and safe.”