

Terms of Reference

Provincial – Local Government Advisory Group on Short-Term Rentals

Overview

The advent and popularity of Airbnb and other online or app-based accommodation providers has completely disrupted the travel accommodation market and has also impacted housing markets across the world.

In many areas of the province, Short-Term Rentals (STRs) have increased significantly. As detailed in UBCM's January 2018 housing strategy, STRs have had a range of negative impacts in different communities, including on the availability of affordable rental stock and by contributing towards demand pressures on housing prices by making investment in residential real estate more desirable. In recent years, STRs have been the focus of UBCM resolutions, and UBCM identifies STR platform accountability as a priority issue in its current annual report.

Some local governments have developed policies to regulate STRs to address such impacts, while recognizing that STRs can also offer attractive benefits to hosts, guests and communities.

The Rental Housing Taskforce recommended that the Province work with local governments to develop, implement and enforce STR rules to better protect long-term rental stock (recommendation #11). In the Province's May 2019 response to the Taskforce recommendations, the Province agreed to address the STR recommendation in 2020 through further consultation with stakeholders and local governments.

The Province recognizes that local governments have a critical role to play in addressing the impacts of STRs and will seek to survey the various strategies put forward by local governments to address STRs, gathering perspectives on what is working and where there are remaining challenges. The Province will also work to understand local governments' perspectives and interests in potential provincial policy responses.

In light of the above, the Province and UBCM have established the Advisory Group on STRs.

Purpose

The Advisory Group will facilitate discussions with local governments about the impacts of STRs and tools for addressing them. Information generated by the Advisory Group will help inform the Province's consideration of potential policy approaches to STRs, including possible measures to support local governments interested in taking further actions to address STR impacts.

Functions

The Advisory Group's functions include providing input on:

- The nature and extent of impacts from STRs, with consideration given to different impacts in different types of communities;
- Existing local government approaches and tools to address STRs;
- Local government challenges with existing tools;
- Best practices and guidance for local governments;

- Topics about which further information and analysis is required; and
- Areas in which provincial action on STRs might be helpful in support of local governments, and recommended potential policy options.

Membership

The Advisory Group shall be comprised of representatives from UBCM and the Province.

The UBCM representatives shall consist of six to eight local government representatives to be appointed by the UBCM Executive under the following categories:

- Elected officials; and
- Senior staff members.

Additionally, one staff member from the Union of BC Municipalities shall sit on the Advisory Group. When making appointments, consideration will be given to providing regional and urban/rural diversity within the Advisory Group, and communities with different experiences with, and approaches to, STRs.

The representatives of the Province shall consist of:

- The Executive Director of the Planning and Land Use Management Branch;
- The Executive Director of the Housing Policy Branch; and
- Up to two additional members of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Representation on the Advisory Group may be assessed by the Advisory Group and/or either UBCM and the Province from time to time, and modifications recommended to the UBCM Executive and the Assistant Deputy Ministers, Office of Housing and Construction Standards and Local Government Division, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, as appropriate.

The Advisory Group chairs may invite representatives of the Province, local government or stakeholders to attend meetings as required, and/or Advisory Group representatives may schedule meetings with the appropriate provincial staff to discuss issues raised and report back to the Advisory Group.

UBCM and Provincial staff will jointly provide secretariat support to the Advisory Group.

Advisory Group Chairs

The Advisory Group will be co-chaired by one representative from UBCM and one from the Province.

Meetings

It is expected that the Advisory Group will meet approximately 3–5 times from November 2019 to April 2020. The Advisory Group will meet in-person and/or via teleconference approximately once per month.

Potential meeting topics include:

- **Meeting 1:** Overview of the genesis and purpose of the Advisory Group; general discussion on the nature and extent of community impacts of STRs (including the impact on different types of communities); what the Province has learned (e.g. outcome of jurisdictional scans); what participants would like to get out of the process.
- **Meeting 2:** Existing local government's approaches and tools for managing STRs; why local governments chose to regulate STRs (or not); nuances between different type of communities

and the issues of STRs; challenges with approaches/tools pursued to date; reflections on what they might do differently and/or have learned through the process.

- **Meeting 3:** Emerging best practices and ideas from across BC and other jurisdictions for local government and provincial approaches to STRs; how existing and new approaches/tools might complement each other; perceived gaps and remaining issues in contending with the challenges of STRs.
- **Meeting 4:** Ideas for new actions on STRs (e.g. addressing gaps in current framework; engagement with STR platforms, provincial actions, LG actions, supports for LGs).
- **Meeting 5:** Summary of what was heard; considerations and ideas for the Province; potential next steps.

Accountability

The Advisory Group or its representatives will report to the UBCM Executive, the Assistant Deputy Ministers, Office of Housing and Construction Standards, and Local Government Division, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Outcomes/Deliverables

The Advisory Group will prepare a report summarizing what it heard during its meetings and outline key considerations and ideas for the Province and local governments for potential STR-related policy options to support short term rental strategies. This information will be provided to the UBCM Executive and the Minister and Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The Advisory Group may also provide updates to UBCM Executive and the Province, at the determination of the Advisory Group, or at the request of either of those parties.

Confidentiality

Advisory Group members are expected to be open and candid in discussions. For this reason, it is important to maintain confidentiality. Members are committed to respecting the personal privacy of participants and agree not disclose personal information or views expressed during meetings.

The background documents, minutes, or other products of the Advisory Group are subject to freedom of information protocols.