

## The Proposed Principal Residence Restriction Would Harm Traveling Families

Prepared Remarks for Richard de Sam Lazaro of Expedia Inc.  
Hearing of the Licensing & Standards Committee  
Toronto City Council  
November 16, 2017

My name is Richard de Sam Lazaro, and I'm speaking here today on behalf of the Expedia family of brands, which includes vacation rental leaders such as HomeAway and Vacation Rental by Owner. Thank you for this opportunity.

Expedia and HomeAway are supportive of all five guiding principles identified by City Staff for the regulation of short-term rentals. In particular, we recognize that:

1. even though Toronto's rental vacancy rate was much lower in the 1990s, the availability of long-term rental housing is a major concern for City Council, and housing affordability in Toronto is an important challenge;
2. City Council wants to ensure that short-term rentals do not create major nuisances, especially noise.

Although we agree with most of City Staff's recommendations, we do not believe that they have struck the right balance when it comes to their proposal to restrict short-term rentals to principal residences.

In fact, we believe that a principal residence restriction would be in direct conflict with another guiding principle identified by City Staff: "Enable greater diversity in tourism accommodations."

We also note that – in the only scientific poll commissioned by the City – 67% of Torontonians supported allowing short-term rentals in secondary residences.

Let's speak frankly.

The current problem with short-term rentals is not related to secondary residences. The problem is investors purchasing many dwellings in a single condo building purely for conversion into short-term rentals.

The principal residence restriction unnecessarily risks eliminating a type of accommodation that has long been available in Toronto for traveling families.

Traveling families want kitchens, washing machines, and separate bedrooms – amenities that are not available in hotels. Moreover, in our experience, families typically want whole-home rentals, not to stay in someone else’s residence.

We believe that a principal residence restriction would make it more difficult for families to visit Toronto, therefore harming tourism.

To achieve the balanced outcomes we all want, we’re seeking for this committee to replace the principal residence restriction with one short-term license per person – an idea noted, if not endorsed, by City Staff in their report.

This change would:

- eliminate the current problem of investors buying up condos for conversion into short-term rentals;
- ensure that traveling families enjoy a diverse choice of accommodation, thereby safeguarding Toronto as an attractive and affordable destination for families; and
- be much easier for the City to enforce than a principal residence restriction.

We believe that Council should heed the two-thirds of Torontonians who support short-term rentals in secondary residences.

Thank you. I look forward to any questions you may have.

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