

S O N D E R

Hello Councillors,

My name is Caitlin O'Neill, Public Policy Director at Sonder. We're a professional short-term rental provider in Toronto. We appreciate having been invited to consult with the Municipal Licensing and Standards Division, but we are disappointed that our business model has not been accounted for and not included in the proposed recommendations.

Sonder is a Montreal-founded technology start-up and hospitality company that provides short-term stays to travelers in cities across the world. You'll see most of our units in multi-family buildings in vibrant neighborhoods with a lot of commercial activity like restaurants and shops. Our guests want to enjoy Toronto like a local, but with added amenities like Sonder's concierge service.

Our model allows us an extra layer of control over each rental that most platforms can't provide, and it means we can directly address civic concerns like nuisance and cleanliness — for example, trash never piles up because we partner with local housekeeping companies to regularly maintain each property.

We understand the desire to limit the use of residential property for short-term rentals. That's why we're urging the creation of a new licensing category for commercial operators, that would be permitted *only* for short-term rental units within commercial zones. We would be pleased to take on a greater regulatory burden, such as one million dollars of liability insurance on each unit, 24/7 support from our local management team, and remittance of any applicable taxes as part of this regulatory process.

The former Mayor of Austin, Lee Leffingwell, learned first-hand the downside of regulation which effectively bans all traditional whole home short-term rentals. He wrote to Mayor Tory and Council in September to explain that family travellers desire this model and will seek it out even if it exists underground and that contrary to popular belief, "traditional whole home short-term rentals had no clear impact on housing stock or affordability".

Providers like Sonder are allowing travelers to experience the real Toronto by fully immersing themselves in the local culture, and our units are designed to ensure that each guest gets that unique experience.

We hope the Committee will support the development of short-term rental policy that best reflects the innovations of our industry. Thank you for your time and your work on this issue.