

271 Cambridge Street
Cambridge, MA 02141

March 31, 2017

Dear Councillors,

Sonder is a collection of hand-selected, private homes located in a city's most unique and vibrant neighborhoods. With over six hundred locations across eleven cities, Sonder provides a new lodging option for travelers, while contributing to the local economy in the greater Cambridge area. We do this by leasing properties directly from landlords or partnering with them to fully manage their property – listing it on a flexible-term basis and providing end-to-end service to our guests.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit comments regarding proposed regulations for short-term rentals in Cambridge. Sonder supports a regulated industry, including proper licensing and registration for all units, remittance of all applicable taxes and excise, and compliance with local safety and nuisance mitigation requirements. We also support the ineligibility of units designated as below market rate or income-restricted.

The proposed ordinance does not take into consideration an important category: the professional provider. Professional providers like Sonder have teams of local professionals to service our units, and are able to immediately respond to any issue that may arise. Our support team is available 24/7, and includes accounting and legal functions to ensure compliance with any licensing or registration. Providers like Sonder are well-established serving the area's corporations, hospital communities, and universities. Nowadays, these travelers seek lodging for shorter periods of time. It's important that we can continue to provide this service to the community without a limit on rental days per year or a minimum stay requirement.

Attached is language that outlines our proposed changes. We encourage the City to amend its draft to include this category of operators, and adopt a higher standard of criteria for professional providers. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Caitlin O'Neill

Director of Public Policy

caitlin.oneill@sonder.com

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
CITY CLERK
2017 APR 20 PM 2:16

Attachment: Sonder (COM 220 #2017 : Sonder)

Model language for professional short-term providers

Definitions

Short term rental: Rental of all or any portion thereof of a residential dwelling unit for dwelling, lodging or sleeping purposes to one party with duration of occupancy of less than thirty (30) consecutive days. Hotels, motels, and other land uses explicitly defined and regulated separately from short term rentals are not considered to be short term rentals.

A short term rental is further defined as follows:

Temporary short term rental: A residential dwelling which rents all or any portion thereof for overnight paid occupancy as a temporary use. No owner or resident is required to be present during the guest's stay.

Professional short term rental: An entire dwelling unit that rents for overnight paid occupancy. No owner or resident is required to be present during the guest's stay, but there shall be an in-town contact available at all times.

Standards

General short-term rental standards

- a. In addition to the regulations below, all short term rentals shall comply with the regulations of the [Local Regulating Department].
- b. All short term rentals shall require a license. The license shall be prominently displayed on the front of the property in a location clearly visible from the street during all periods of occupancy and contain the license number, the contact information for the owner or in-town property manager, and the license type (Temporary or Professional).
- c. Short term rentals shall not be operated outdoors or in a recreational vehicle.
- d. Only one party of guests shall be permitted per short term rental unit.

Temporary short-term rental standards

- a. A short-term rental license shall be secured prior to operation; and short term rental operators shall comply with all applicable license requirements provided in the Code of the City.
- b. Temporary Short Term Rental licenses allow a maximum of 90-rental nights per license year.
- c. Temporary Short Term Rental licenses may be issued for separate periods or for a continuous 90-day duration. If an applicant chooses to seek permits for separate periods, a new license application must be filed and approved.

Professional short-term rental standards

- a. A short-term rental license shall be secured prior to operation; and short term rental operators shall comply with all applicable license requirements provided in the Code of the City.
- b. There shall be no limitation on the number of rental nights per license year.
- c. There shall be an in-town contact if the owner or operator is out of town during the time of the rental.
- d. Professional providers must submit proof of at least \$1 million in liability insurance per unit.
- e. Professional providers must maintain an up-to-date database of guest information.
- f. Public or subsidized housing is not permitted for use of a professional short-term rental.
- g. Written consent must be obtained by homeowner or condominium board to operate professional short-term rentals.