



AUSTINCODE DEPARTMENT

To: Mayor and City Council Members
From: Carl Smart, Director, Austin Code Department
Date: August 11, 2015
Subject: Results: Short-Term Rental July Pilot Program

I write to provide the results of the Short-Term Rental (STR) enhanced enforcement pilot program initiated on July 3, 2015. This enforcement effort involved interdepartmental teams based on the Public Assembly Code Enforcement (PACE) model that included Code, Police and Fire. The team worked in concert with Austin 3-1-1 to deploy teams based on complaints, as well as perform proactive spot inspections at known trouble spots. The teams were deployed for five weekends between the hours of 10 p.m. to 4 a.m.

Code Enforcement Activity

We received 120 service requests which resulted in 146 complaints made through 3-1-1 or directly to departments during the entire time period beyond the pilot hours. Of those, 54 complaints were for operating without a license, 25 were for over-occupancy, 41 were for excessive noise, 15 were for parking violations, seven were for alleged illegal activity and four were for trash/debris.

During the actual pilot hours, a total of 19 complaints were received. This resulted in 19 site visits/inspections. Only two of those complaints resulted in notices of violations being issued. Some of the visits in response to the complaints turned up no violations. Also, not all properties with complaints were Short-Term Rentals. And it was determined that some properties reported for no licenses actually had active licenses. The Police Department shut down a party and told a few others to lower their noise levels during the pilot, but none of the parties were at licensed Short-Term Rental properties.

Inspectors also made 249 proactive visits to known repeat offender properties during the pilot. This includes multiple inspections in the same night. Thirty-two of these visits were also controlled inspections on non- problem properties.

Challenges

The pilot was a learning experience for our staff. Among the challenges staff encountered were the inability to gain entry to properties, inability to prove occupants relationship to each other, and a general lack of sufficient evidence to prosecute violators.

Financial Summary

The total expenditure for July pilot (excluding the last week in July 07/26-07/31) was \$4,923.13. (The last week in July will not post in payroll until HR enters timesheets on 08/10/2015 and payroll posts on 08/14/2015.) Using the total cost of \$4,923.13 in July, the annual estimated cost using this method comes out to \$59,000.

Recommendations

Proposed changes to the STR ordinance are addressed by separate memo. In addition, we will continue to conduct enhanced enforcement efforts coinciding with major special events in Austin, such as South by Southwest, Austin City Limits, Formula One, etc. Additionally, we plan to implement in FY 16 regular evening and weekend patrols to respond quickly to after-hour calls for service.

If you have any questions, or need additional information about the pilot, please contact me at 512.974.1970 or via email at carl.smart@austintexas.gov. Thank you.

cc: Marc A. Ott, City Manager
Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager
Art Acevedo, Austin Police Chief
Rhoda Mae Kerr, Austin Fire Chief