

Arlington, TX Short Term Rentals – Fact vs Fiction

1. **FICTION: Short term rentals are popping up everywhere and taking over our neighborhoods!**

FACT: The 373 unique properties used as short term rentals in Arlington (as reported in the Host Compliance study the City of Arlington paid for in August 2018) represent less than 1/3 of 1% of the 135,000 housing units in Arlington. <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/arlington-tx/#housing> https://legistarweb-production.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/attachment/pdf/240988/Host_Compliance_Short-term_Rental_Data_Report_-_City_of_Arlington_TX_-_8-9-2018_Draft_003_.pdf

FACT: Many have tried to extrapolate Host Compliance data from the slow season in January 2018 to the tourist season in July to show 50% or more growth in short term rentals, but that does NOT show an overall trend, it simply reflects the significant seasonality of the sector.

2. **FICTION: Short term rentals are all party houses causing disruptions all the time!**

FACT: City of Arlington staff has found only 16 STR properties with more than 10 calls for service (not citations or violations) over the past few years.

3. **FICTION: The problem is too big for the city to enforce!**

FACT: Again, the Arlington Neighborhood Integrity Action Plan has identified only 16 of the 373 STR properties in Arlington that have more than 10 calls for service and is already providing additional scrutiny to those properties to ensure they do not violate city ordinances.

4. **FICTION: Regulations do no not work!**

FACT: The Host Compliance report the City of Arlington paid for in August 2018 ([see link above](#)) asserts that by identifying the scale and scope of the short-term rental activity, Arlington can make the enforcement of short-term rental regulations “effective and economical” as other cities have already done.

5. **FICTION: The START Movement has rejected all regulations ever proposed!**

FACT: The START Movement has submitted multiple proposals to the Council for consideration including most recently, on February 15th of 2019, regulations very similar to those included in the Zoning Ban ordinance but without the unconstitutional zoning restrictions. <https://www.startmovement.org/START-STR-Proposal>

6. **FICTION: Short term rentals bring down the value of properties!**

FACT: Politifact rated as “Mostly False” a statement by an anti-STR politician who said Airbnb “decreases real estate values and increases costs for workforce housing.” The article concluded most evidence is anecdotal, and if anything it points to STRs increasing home values. <https://www.politifact.com/florida/statements/2017/mar/20/philip-levine/does-airbnb-decrease-housing-values-and-increase-w/>

7. **FICTION: Short term rentals bring in dangerous strangers, criminals and sex offenders!**

FACT: I’m not going to try to prove a negative, but I challenge you to find anything more than scattered anecdotes among the millions of short term rental stays concerning any criminal behavior, sexual deviancy or crimes against children. These are unfounded fears and any actual problems are more a reflection of our society at large than a consequence of short term rentals.

8. **FICTION: Short term rentals are illegal in Arlington!**

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FACT: In May 2018 the Texas Supreme Court asserted in Tarr vs Timberwood that short term rentals are a residential use of a property. <https://caselaw.findlaw.com/tx-supreme-court/1896622.html> As such any ordinance or code that denies an owner of a residential property the use of that property for a residential purpose is unconstitutional and violates property rights and/or the owner's right to due process

FACT: Furthermore, over the past several years the city of Arlington, TX has endorsed the registration of dozens of single family short term rentals that that have paid hundreds of thousands of dollars in hotel and occupancy tax and property taxes.

9. **FICTION: Most short term renters in Arlington come just for the Entertainment district!**

FACT: My home is just 2 ½ miles from the stadiums and at least 80% of my guests never even go to the entertainment district during their stay. They come for weddings, to see family, for business, to see both Dallas and Fort Worth, to house hunt, and for a host of other reasons.

FACT: This is even truer the farther the house is from the entertainment district and is backed up by reporting from hosts across Arlington who verify it by their guest books, questionnaires they give to their guests, and through their interactions with their guests.

10. **FICTION: Short term rentals are mostly owned by big investors taking over large swaths of neighborhoods!**

FACT: According to the Host Compliance study the City of Arlington paid for and released in August 2018 ([see link above](#)) "over 80% of STR operators in Arlington have only 1 property".

FACT: The Zoning Ban would make over 90% of existing short term rentals illegal; the vast majority of which do not have complaints lodged against them.

FACT: Many law abiding citizens who rely heavily on their short term rental to make ends meet would be uncomfortable with violating the law and would feel pressure to shut down and by doing so face some really tough choices

- Like the teacher who recently lost her father. Her short term rental means she doesn't have to take another job but can spend more time caring for and enjoying the company of her elderly widowed mother.
- Or the parents who bought their short term rental to ensure their severely autistic adult child would never be homeless should anything happen to them.

These are not made up stories. These are real constituents who have told the City Council how much this means to them. I know this because these people shared with me the emails they've written to Arlington City Council members spelling out the devastating impact this zoning ban would have on their families.

11. **FICTION: Passing this Zoning Ban will put this issue to rest for Arlington!**

FACT: Any ordinance like the Option 2B zoning ban will face significant delays in the courts and will ultimately be overturned by the Texas Supreme Court as that court gets closer to hearing Austin's lawsuit and/or overturned by the Texas legislature that is taking up bills for which the Option 2B Zoning Ban ordinance would be in violation of at least 8 separate requirements.

- The START Movement
www.STARTMovement.org