

**Draft**

**Short Term Rental  
Policy Proposals**



# Definition of Short Term Rental

**Short-term rental (STR).** An accommodation for transient guests where, in exchange for compensation of any type or amount, a residential dwelling unit is provided for lodging for a period of time not to exceed 30 consecutive days.



# Community Input

In response to an article in the Decatur Focus soliciting community input, the City of Decatur gathered feedback on the positive and negative aspects of short term rentals.

City staff also researched “best practices” from other cities and counties as to how different places regulate short term rentals (e.g. Brookhaven, Cobb County, Raleigh, Eugene OR, Macon-Bibb, Atlanta)

Lastly, city staff sought legal expertise in finalizing the proposed policy for Decatur’s specific short term rental needs.



# Short Term Rental "Pros"

Community input regarding the positive aspects of STRs include:

- ❖ Flexibility for life situations
  - ❖ For use by resident who must vacate home for brief period;
  - ❖ Visiting nurse, doctor, scholar;
  - ❖ Military person;
  - ❖ Person moving to area while seeking longer term residence;
  - ❖ Family visiting;
  - ❖ Occupant with pet.
- ❖ Income generation for property owner that is flexible and managed by a third party;
- ❖ Owner property rights;
- ❖ Helps increase tourism and offset tourism spikes.



# Short Term Rental “Cons”

Community input regarding the negative aspects of STRs include:

- ❖ Removes potential long-term rentals from the market;
- ❖ Fear of “bad actors” renting home / party houses;
- ❖ Disturbances to neighbors
  - ❖ Trash and debris not stored properly for collection;
  - ❖ Overflow parking;
  - ❖ Excessive noise;
  - ❖ Excessive number of guests.



# Development of Goals

## City staff goals for policy development:

- ❖ Know what we have: gather data on STRs through third party
  - ❖ STR location
  - ❖ Type of STR (room, home, accessory unit)
  - ❖ Number of days / time periods booked
  - ❖ Number and type of complaints
  - ❖ Compliance (Phase II)
- ❖ Develop oversight: create certification system for STRs
  - ❖ Owner/Agent (responsible party)
  - ❖ List of requirements for STR owners
  - ❖ Life-safety inspection, initial and annual
  - ❖ Neighbor notification
  - ❖ System for violations
  - ❖ Letter mailing to alert of renewals/violations



# DRAFT UDO

## Draft modifications to Unified Development Ordinance:

- ❖ Allowed as Limited Use, all Zoning Districts except "I"
- ❖ Short term rental certificate required/posted
- ❖ Subordinate to HOA / Covenants
- ❖ Occupancy 2 adults per bedroom
- ❖ Life safety inspection
- ❖ Owner must post information in unit:
  - ❖ Noise ordinance hours, address, occupancy, parking locations, emergency contact, floor plan/fire extinguishers, waste disposal instructions
- ❖ Process to revoke or suspend STR certificate.



# DRAFT Application

## Draft Application:

- ❖ STR certificate required to operate
- ❖ Certificate is non-transferrable
- ❖ Submit to Planning and Zoning, online application
- ❖ Fees based on Zoning Compliance Certificate / Fee Schedule
- ❖ Proof of insurance for short term rental
- ❖ Assign agent / responsible person (may be owner)
- ❖ Post required information in unit
- ❖ Tax and fee payment responsibilities





# DRAFT Inspection

Initial inspection to be performed by Decatur Fire / Rescue:

- ❖ Visible address, access and egress to unit
- ❖ Occupancy per unit verification
- ❖ Fire escape plan posted, fire extinguisher, working alarms
- ❖ Electrical and appliance working, safety
- ❖ Information posted in unit:
  - ❖ Emergency contact / police / address
  - ❖ Escape plan, noise ordinance, location of fire extinguisher(s)
  - ❖ Proper waste disposal, location for parking and # vehicles allowed, occupancy limits



# DRAFT Annual Fee/Inspection

Fee and annual self-inspection:

- 1) Checklist submitted annually.
- 2) Fees comply with Zoning Compliance Certificate.
- 3) Compliance required each calendar year.



# DRAFT Third Party Assistance

## Third party assistance:

- 1) STR Identification and data
- 2) Generation of letters to STR owners/agents
- 3) 24-hour call-in line for complaints

Third party assistance items can begin as soon as approved.



# Thank you & Questions

