

Frequently Asked Questions

Is Neighbors for Neighborhoods (N4N) a Political Advocacy Group?

No N4N is a nonpolitical advocacy group formed to stop and reverse the Short Term Vacation Rental commercial exploitation of our neighborhoods and return the quality of life back to the full time residents of La Quinta.

This is not a Democrat, Republican or Independent issue. This is an issue that needs to be addressed by every person living full time in a residentially zoned La Quinta community.

What are Short Term Vacation Rentals (STVRs)?

An STVR is a rental of a residential dwelling unit or accessory building for less than 31 consecutive days.

Why Do STVRs create so many problems for the neighborhood?

The root cause of the problem is STVRs are revolving door rentals, i.e. by the night. These are hotels dressed up like a home. Owners who rent these houses by the night are operating a hotel with no security and no on site management.

As a result of the proliferation of STVR permits approved by the La Quinta elected officials, many neighborhoods have been adversely impacted by the influx of ill-behaved transient renters, noise issues, trash, parking and safety problems. Family homes have been transformed into “party houses” which ruin the quality of life for the neighborhood.

Do STVRs alter the character of a neighborhood and burden community services?

STVRs undermine the residential character of a neighborhood in a way that elevates the rights of the individual far above those of the community.

Short term renters use common community facilities (e.g. swimming pools) more frequently and intensely than full time residents. This results in increased dues and fees for full time residence.

Short term renters have total disregard for community rules, CCRs and golf course regulations as there are no consequences. Their behavior routinely shows little respect for the rights, privacy and quiet enjoyment of the residents. The community has the added tax burden of paying for STVR security and other incremental expenses.

Are STVRs commercial businesses?

Yes a STVR is a commercial activity for a number of reasons;

1. Short-term vacation rentals are a monetary transaction and fit the definition of a commercial activity
2. STVRs in La Quinta require a permit
3. STVRs in La Quinta are subject to a transient occupancy tax similar to hotels
4. The IRS requires real estate rental income to be separately reported either as “supplemental” or “business income.”

The city already recognizes STVR as commercial operation by requiring the owner to apply for, receive and display a license. Also pay taxes for each night the home is rented.

Do STVRs comply with local zoning ordinances?

It is the city’s responsibility to protect homeowners from commercial operations in residentially zoned communities that alter the character of a neighborhood and burden community services. STVRs are not homes but commercial hotels with no on site security or management.

What action can be taken to eliminate the STR problems?

Any proposed solution to the problems STRs create must be able to show it has the potential to reduce complaints to close to zero. Policy options to address the STVR problem are summarized on this website.

A minimum rental period of 8 days would begin to address the problems that come with nightly rentals. The rationale is there is an inflection point at 8 days (set by Coachella, Stagecoach multiple family vacations and golf group outings) when the complaints would start to decline.

A better solution is a minimum rental of 30 days. The longer term renters become part of the neighborhood resulting in a significant reduction in complaints compared to nightly rentals.

It can be argued that community disruption and neighbor complaints can only be eliminated by phasing out STVRs, similar to the recently passed Cathedral City ordinance.

How have other cities dealt with STVRs?

With the rapid growth in STVRs across the country in the last 10 years combined with the effect of Airbnb, both large cities and smaller communities alike have had to address the impact. Lawmakers across the country are enacting strict regulations limiting short term rentals to keep its rapid growth in check. Restrictions in some cases include an absolute prohibition or minimum rental stays of 30 days. It is most common that the only short term rentals allowed are in the owner's personal residence where the owner is present ("home sharing").

Cathedral City here in the Coachella valley, after more than a year of public input, has recently adopted a city ordinance to completely phase out STVRs by 2023.

Won't identifying the few bad apples fix the problem?

A better question would be are there any STVRs that aren't a bad apple. Complaints are overwhelming the complaint Hotline, emails to elected officials, and emails submitted to city council meetings confirm the STVR problem is out of control. In addition, we believe only a fraction of affected residents are complaining.

How many STVR permits has La Quinta approved?

La Quinta current list of active STVR permits totals 1286.

Cathedral City's has 384 active STVR permits.

Cathedral City's population is 25% larger than that of La Quinta. Based solely on quality of life concerns for their full time residents the Cathedral City council passed an ordinance to phase out STVRs by 2023.

Currently it is unknown how many STVRs are operating in La Quinta and Cathedral City without a permit.

What about homeowner rights?

Home-Share is when a home is the primary residence and the owner is living in the home and wants to rent a spare bedroom or casita they are within their rights to do so.

A person, who has an emergency and must leave their home for an extended period of time, should be able to rent their home to defray expenses. This is a case where a minimum rental of some number of months would be appropriate. Safe guards must be put in place to not allow subletting for this to become a loop hole for nightly rentals.

It is the city's responsibility to protect homeowners from commercial operations in residentially zoned communities. If the city provides waivers for commercial operations in residentially zone communities it has abrogated its responsibility to the homeowners.

If the home is not the primary residence of the owner, and is being rented by the night this is clearly a commercial (hotel) operation and is in violation of communities zoned as residential. Many of the STVRs are owned by an LLC, are not a primary residence, and are clearly a for profit commercial operation. For owners that the house is one of some larger number of houses they own and is not their primary residence, this house is a for profit commercial operation.

Because these homes are operating as commercial hotels they alter the character of their residential neighborhood with increased noise, traffic, parking, trash, community services and safety concerns. Therefore awarding STVR permits in La Quinta residential neighborhoods should be prohibited.

How will STVRs affect housing for permanent residents in La Quinta?

Recent research has concluded that the conversion of housing units into short term vacation rentals will reduce available housing stock for permanent residents, create affordability problems and drive an increase in permanent rental rates. This will force young couples and working families to move from La Quinta.

What is the future of our La Quinta neighborhoods?

If STVR rental problems are not eliminated, the only people buying homes in STVR home communities will be STVR investors. Quality of life in residential neighborhoods will continue to decline. Violations and complaints will increase and the need for additional enforcement will grow (sheriffs, police and local security).

Under full disclosure you must list a STVR as a nuisance. Any potential buyer familiar with the problems created by STVR will not want to buy into a community where they are permitted. Therefore the number of STVRs will continue to grow until their business model breaks, which is when there are more STVRs than renters. Leaving inflated property values and no buyers.

Housing availability and affordability will become an issue forcing working families to move outside of La Quinta.

Is there a significant economic benefit to La Quinta from STVRs?

Cathedral City Councilor Mark Carnevale recently quoted that he believes it is unproven that STVRs bring money into the city. Furthermore he believes that STVRs took more energy to administer and enforce than any other land use, including cannabis.

What have the La Quinta elected officials done about this issue?

The Mayor and City council have recently recognized the negative impact STVRs are having on our neighborhoods and quality of life of their residents. As a result they have taken two decisive steps;

1. Commissioning an ad hoc committee to study and analyze the problems STVRs are creating and write a report making recommendations on solutions to these problems.
2. Placing a moratorium on awarding new STVR permits until February 2nd. This will freeze the number of approved permits at 1286, placing a hold on the conversion of homes to hotels.

These two steps combined with statements from the Mayor and City Council members expressing their commitment to restoring the quality of life to La Quinta neighborhoods should be encouraging to all those residents whose lives are being impacted by STVRs.

However we are concerned because the ad hoc committee does not accurately reflect the population distribution of full time La Quinta residences to STVR owners (a majority who are not La Quinta residents) and property managers. This unbalanced representation will force the ad hoc committee toward compromised band aide solutions which will not achieve the N4N desired outcome of totally restoring the character of our neighborhoods and returning the quality of life to their residents.

How will the moratorium on new permits through February 2 affect the La Quinta STVR problem?

The current moratorium which runs through February 2 regarding the issuance of new permits is simply a temporary holding pattern and not a long term solution

Unless there is a change in the law regulating STVRs, to either prohibit or limit the minimum rental period, on February 2 it will be back to business as usual. The approving of all STVR permits requests.

How can I help restore the quality of life to La Quinta residential neighborhoods?

A detailed description of the actions you can take to contribute to returning quality of life to La Quinta neighborhoods and stop the STVR madness is presented on this website.

To summarize; Vote, Complain, Volunteer and Report un-permitted STVRs.

Can N4N affect a STVR city policy change?

Approximately 7500 total votes were cast in the 2018 election. With 1286 registered STVRs in La Quinta and many additional unregistered STVRs, the potential number of residents who have been adversely impacted by STVRs activities and would vote on this issue could approach 4000. If mobilized this would constitute a large voting block which could dramatically impact the election.

Why should I get involved there are no STVRs on my block?

If the city continues to issue new STVR permits, there will be a STVR coming to your block in the near future. From the problems STVRs create to the overwhelming number of neighbors' complaints you do not want to live near a STVR. Get involved and stop the STVR madness before it reaches your block.