

VISION – ENFORCEMENT

ENFORCEMENT

The Ad Hoc Committee Report and Recommendations_Rev3 identifies all of the events involved with the STVR code enforcement process. As the different pillars of N4N’s VISION FOR LA QUINTA were being defined and analyzed, time was spent trying to understand the intersection of the STVR program enforcement with each pillar. There is a definite intersection between STVRs and two of the pillars; tourism and residents’ quality of life. There are commercial STVRs with Embassy Suites, La Quinta Resort, Legacy Villas, Silver Rock and The Signature, and residential STVRs with La Quinta neighborhoods. What would the code enforcement process need to look like to address these intersections?

N4N’s goal was to simplify and shorten the timeline from verifying a complaint to serving a citation. La Quinta covers 37 square miles making timely enforcement very challenging. To file a complaint a resident must be a first responder by calling the hotline, learn to use a decibel meter, and hope code enforcement arrives before the situation subsides or risk getting a citation for filing a false claim. Not a situation La Quinta residents want to sign up for. How do we make it simpler and more effective?

First we need to assess where we are at. In the INTRODUCTION section of this report one of the questions posed for N4N to answer was “Do code enforcement citations accurately reflect the impact “nightly” STVRs have on their neighbor’s lives?”

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS REGISTERED AND CITATIONS

MONTH	Jul_20	Jun_20	May_20	Apr_20	Mar_20	Feb_20	Jan_20
COMPLAINTS	246	164	151	117	101	20	17
CITATION NOISE/BEHAVIOR	17	5	1	0	0	0	0
CITATION FOR NO LICENSE; ETC	10	7	7	7	1	1	1
NON-RESPONSE	13	5	0	1	2	2	0
PERMIT REVOICATIONS	8	3	3	3	0	0	0

STVR Ad Hoc Committee Citation Data_Rev2

Only 7% of complaints result in a citation. Survey comment on the citation process;

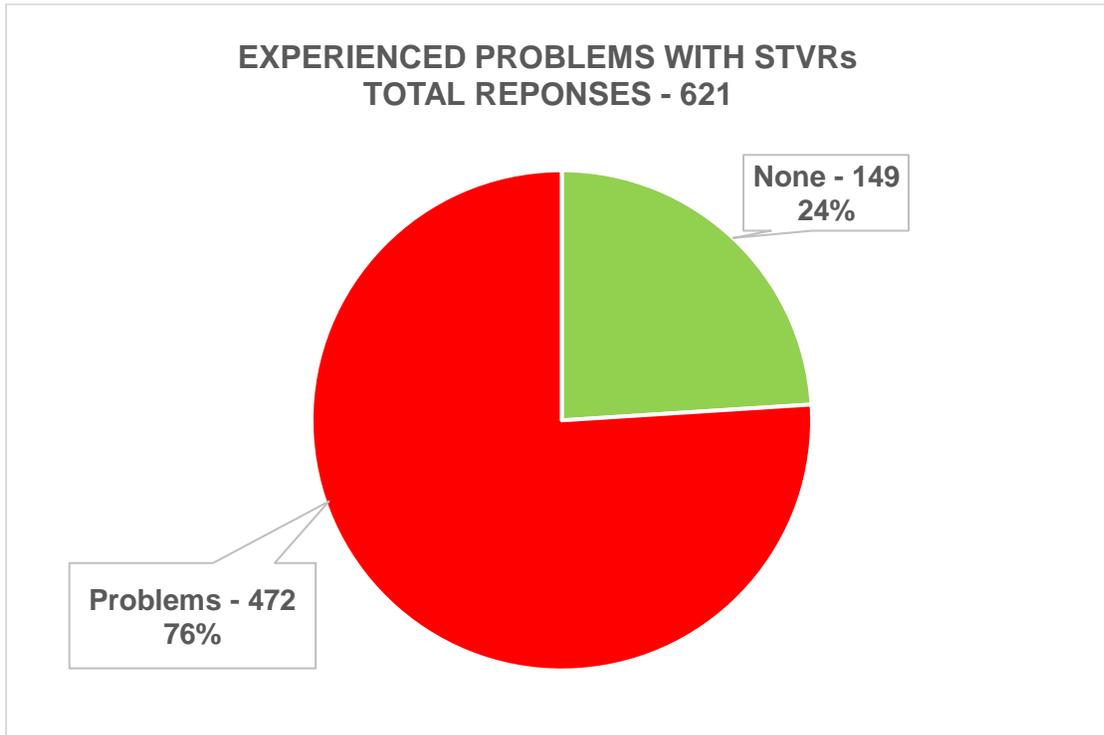
- “Effort is not worth the penalty. Violations are seldom cited, appeals are often approved, such a small percentage of fines actually are enforced why waste my time. Go to the casita to sleep, ignore everything else it will be gone in a couple of days.” (Survey #609)

Let’s look at the survey data to evaluate how effective each step in the enforcement process is. Charts and data are presented in FACTS – LESSONS LEARNED section of this report. To summarize;

1. 66% of residents are aware of the Hotline
2. 27% have used the Hotline
3. 24% have called or spoken with a code enforcement officer.

Residents are aware of the hotline, but many don’t use it. Could this be because they don’t have a reason to use it?

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Question #6 – What problems if any have you had with the STVRs?

So, 76% of the neighbors of STVRs have experienced problems, but only 27% have called the Hotline. Almost 2 to 1 people who have a problem don't use the hotline. So, there are up to twice as many complaints not made as made.

It would appear residents just don't want to get involved. Being required to call the hotline is the second impact on a resident's quality of life, the first is the disturbance which requires the call to be made. Evidently that is one too many disruptions for most residents living near an STVR.

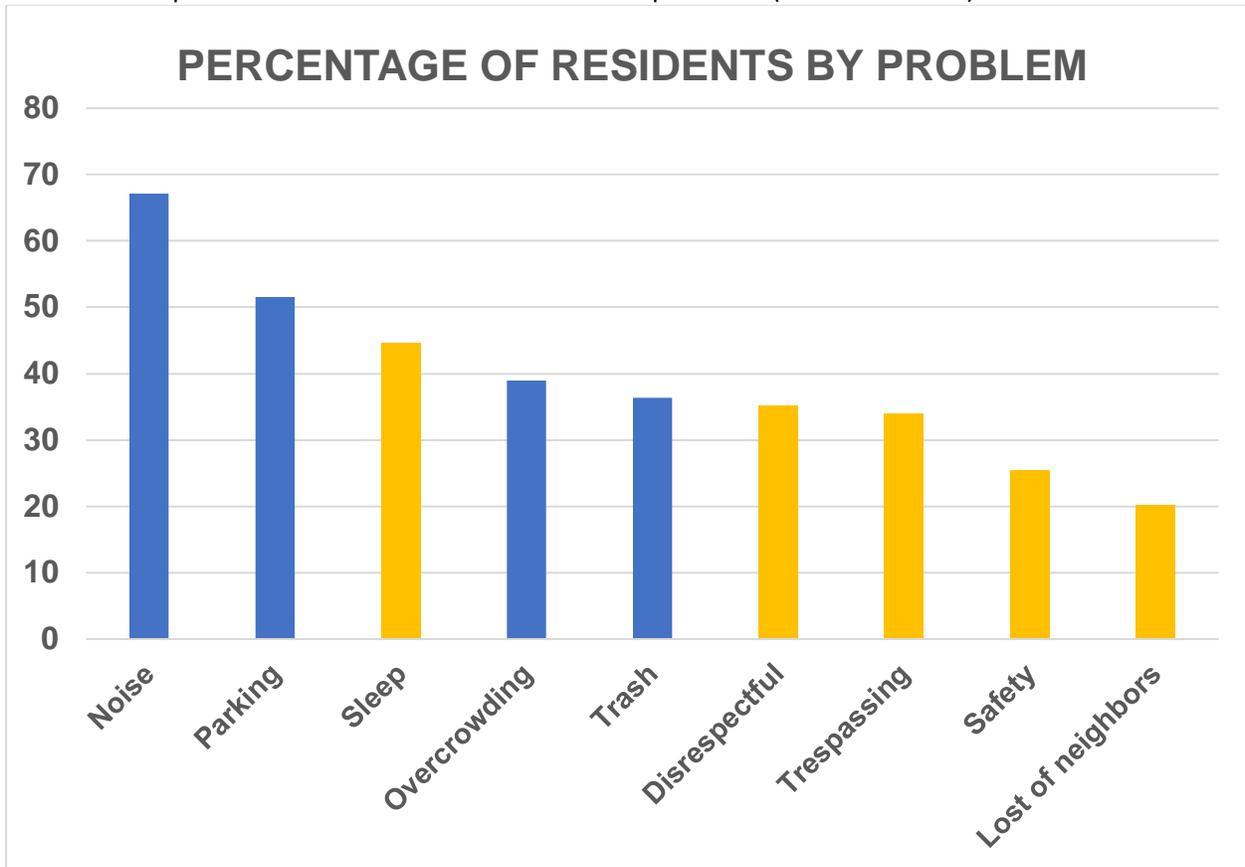
More eye opening is the percentage of citations compared with the "real" number of problems. Combine the 7% citation rate with 33% of complaints are called into the hotline, and you find approximately 2% of STVR neighbors' problems receive a citation.

Do all the problems experienced by an STVR neighbor deserve a citation? The survey asks residents to identify problems they experienced from the following list;

- None
- Noise
- Safety
- Parking
- Sleep disturbance
- Overcrowding
- Trespassing
- Disrespectful
- Loss of neighbors and friends

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103 residents provided additional comments on other problems (Attachment 6-1).



Of all the residents who took the survey 67% had a noise problem. Four out of the top five problems are the usual suspects; noise, parking, overcrowding and trash. These four problems are measurable, observable and if they continue longer than the response time of code enforcement could qualify for a citation.

The problems identified with the gold bars, create personal stress and anxiety but do not qualify for a citation. They will create angry residents but will not be reported in any enforcement evaluation.

A special note on the 20% of the residents who have lost a friend or neighbor due to STVRs. During the preparation of this report two N4N members announced they were moving due to STVRs. The survey did not put a time frame when the STVR neighbors experience their problems, the 20% loss of neighbors equals 124 homes, approximately 248 La Quinta residents gone. This is too many people to lose from our city no matter the time frame.

What have we learned about applying citations issues as a measurement of STVR disruption to their neighbor's quality of life?

- Lots of hotline complaints with few citations issued
- For every hotline complaint there are two complaints not reported
- 45% of the resident's problems do not even qualify for consideration of issuing a citation

The survey would suggest that the anxiety and anger neighbors of "nightly" STVRs are feeling will not go away until there is a paradigm shift in the STVR program. The pieces to implement this paradigm shift

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are mentioned in the Ad Hoc Committee’s Report and Recommendations Rev3, they only need to be integrated together into the STVR program. Key concepts are;

- Minimum Stay Requirement (page 34 of 48) – STVRs in residential communities
- Specialized STVR focused communities (page 16 of 48) – ‘Nightly’ STVRs in commercial transient zones

How and why to make these concepts part of the STVR program is presented in the VISION – RECOMMENDATIONS section of this report and detailed in;

- Recommendation #2 – Three Types of Permits
- Recommendation #3 – STVR Residential Minimum Stay

As the minimum STVR rental stay increases in residential communities, disturbances and complaints will decrease. In parallel as commercial STVR units become available at Embassy Suites, La Quinta Resort, Legacy Villas and with the build out of commercial transient zone developments; e.g., Silver Rock Resort and The Signature; “nightly” rentals will be focused in small areas. Concentrating nightly rentals in commercial transient communities which can be patrolled by code enforcement. Having boots on the ground patrolling will address most situations and their local presence will significantly shorten the complaint response time line.

This approach reduces the need for a large enforcement staff being a critical part of the STVR program.