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To: [Joe Vinatieri](#); [Cathy Warner](#); [Fernando Dutra](#); [Octavio Cesar Martinez](#); [Mary Ann Pacheco](#); [WebMail - CCD](#)
Cc: [Brian Saeki](#)
Subject: Whittier Short Term Rental (STR) Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, October 9, 2024 12:27:43 PM

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Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, and Council Members,

On March 28, 2023, we brought you a petition signed by 60 hillside residents asking you to ban all Short Term Rentals (STRs) in the city of Whittier. You chose not to do so. We now ask you to ban all STRs in Whittier's hillside residential neighborhoods.

Short Term Rentals are proliferating in Whittier's hillside residential neighborhoods. We live in Starlite Estates where 3 un-permitted STRs have been operating for years. We ask the City Council to ban STRs in our hillside residential R-1 zone. The best way forward would be to ban short term rentals in all of Whittier's hillside residential neighborhoods.

Our Starlite Estates neighborhood is surrounded by brush covered hills in a very high fire severity zone. Yearly inspections are conducted by the L.A. County Fire Department. Their yearly defensible space compliance letter states that we must provide defensible space that will help protect our home, family and firefighters during wildfire events. Our State Farm homeowners insurance was increased by 55% this year due to very high severity wildfire danger.

There is no security and safety against fire hazards that can be applied to STRs. STR guests are not allowed to smoke inside so they smoke outside. They have been observed throwing their cigarette butts into planters and sideyards. They light fireworks in STR backyards and in the street in front of our houses. The STR guests have no concern for wildfire danger. They don't live here so they don't care what happens here in our unprotected neighborhood.

Starlite Estates is a one way in and one way out neighborhood, as many hillside neighborhoods are. When STR guests have parties they have many cars parked on both sides of the street. This creates an impediment to the access and safety of first responders, including firefighters, police and paramedics. If first responders can't reach an ill or injured person in time, it could result in traumatic bodily injury or loss of life. There are 3 STRs in our neighborhood and they have had up to 25 to 35 cars parked in the street.

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STRs have caused the degradation of our neighborhood. These 3 STRs have had some parties with up to 50 people participating for 2-4 consecutive days and nights. Our neighbors have had 3 cars sideswiped during STR all night parties. We have had our stone planter walls broken twice by drunken STR guests. These STRs have hosted alcohol, drug and sex parties. Neighbors have witnessed pornographic films being made on STR properties. We and our neighbors have found discarded drug paraphernalia, condoms, items of clothing, trash and graffiti after STR parties are over.

When we call the police to report all of the various disturbances, we are unable to tell them who the owners are. It is impossible for us to speak with anyone who is responsible for permitting all of these disturbances and violations to the quiet enjoyment of our home life. None of us bought our homes so we could live next to an unsupervised STR motel house in our residential neighborhood. The best solution to our STR problem is to ban them in Whittier hillside residential neighborhoods. This is the only way to restore the lost quality of life we worked all of our lives to establish.

If you choose not to ban STRs in our endangered hillside neighborhoods, we are left with few alternatives. We then ask you to limit STRs to “primary residence only STRs”, following the strict legal meaning of the term, which is “the house where you live and sleep”. We also ask you not to create a provision in the new STR ordinance that legally permits Whittier residents to “grandfather in” any existing un-permitted STRs, with no exceptions. We do not want you to change the residential zoning codes to permit vacation rental STR commercial businesses in our hillside residential neighborhoods.

Thank you.

Leonard and Marilyn Avila
Greenleaf Ave. - Starlite Estates