



PRESS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 31, 2020

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City Planning Launches First-of-Its-Kind Compliance System to Remove Illegal Short-Term Rental Listings from Company Websites

Protects Los Angeles's Housing Stock Utilizing New Advancements in Technology

LOS ANGELES—City Planning has launched a new online system that makes it easier to identify and take down illegal short-term rental listings. The system incorporates technology to enable the Department to automate the collection and verification of short-term rental listings.


The Application Programming Interface (API) implements the agreement, developed by City Planning, that Airbnb entered into with the City. The agreement provides additional recourse for Los Angeles to initiate actions against platforms that allow unregistered or illegal listings to continue to advertise online. A notable feature of the API is its ability to remove unregistered properties across the City that are not owner-occupied but operating as party homes.

By using the API, Los Angeles is leading the conversation on how cities can incorporate technology to improve the quality of their services. In the case of Home-Sharing, this online system is an example of City Planning partnering with property owners, rental platforms, and neighbors alike to find innovative solutions and achieve better compliance.

Until recently, cities did not see the need to regulate short-term rentals. With the growth of the internet and the sharing economy, and particularly with Airbnb's launch in 2008, the home-sharing model took root. Today, individuals and families seek out homes, condominiums, and apartments for nightly rentals, as opposed to simply booking hotel accommodations—prompting the City Council to establish a regulatory framework in Los Angeles.

Since the start of enforcement in November 2019, Los Angeles has witnessed a 64 percent decrease in short-term listings, amounting to over 23,000 fewer citywide listings as of August 1, 2020. With the launch of the API this month, the overall numbers have decreased by an additional 14 percent (78 percent, in total), of which more than 1,350 ineligible listings were removed last week alone during the pre-testing phase leading up to the rollout of the API.

“In developing this system, we looked first and foremost to ways we can ensure data safety and security using an encrypted, cloud-based database,” said Vince Bertoni, Director of Planning. “But we also wanted a system that was able to rely on technology to run and create reports—a framework that would enable the City to pursue the takedown of illegal listings with greater positive results, beyond what we may have even originally imagined to be possible.”



In addition to assisting with enforcement, the API provides Los Angeles with the ability to monitor many of the world's short-term rental websites using secure artificial intelligence algorithms that link multiple listings for the same property across hosting platforms. Another benefit of this system is its project management capability. The online management system gives City Planning the means to store and manage its home-sharing registration and permits in one central location, without having to maintain and consult manual spreadsheets.

“By integrating multiple types of permitting, compliance monitoring, and enforcement into one integrated cloud-based system with a secure external API, the entire City can now seamlessly and quickly address compliance issues and send take-down notices to the relevant short-term rental platforms in real time,” said Ulrik Binzer, General Manager and founder of Granicus’ Host Compliance division, which has designed and built the new system for City Planning. “No other city in the world has this capability at this time, and I expect that Los Angeles’s new innovative system will serve as a model for countless other cities.”

Airbnb will be the first hosting platform to pilot this program. Once fully operational, Airbnb listings that are ineligible or without a registration number will be removed on a daily basis. These ineligible listings include rent stabilized and affordable housing units, as well as units that were either subject to recent evictions under the Ellis Act or have been registered on the “Proactive Prohibition” list by the landlord or manager in charge of the property.

About the Home-Sharing Program

The City Council set up the Home-Sharing Program (CF 14-1635-S2) to prevent the wholesale conversion of homes into rental properties. The program established a regulatory framework to restrict short-term rentals to hosts' primary residences. Residents of Los Angeles may rent their primary residence, provided that they qualify, by registering through the City's online portal and adhere to all of the requirements as specified under the adopted ordinance.

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