

ORDINANCE NUMBER (CCS)

(City Council Series)

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF  
SANTA MONICA ADDING CHAPTER 6.20 TO THE SANTA MONICA  
MUNICIPAL CODE CLARIFYING PROHIBITIONS AGAINST VACATION RENTALS AND  
IMPOSING REGULATIONS ON HOME SHARING

WHEREAS, the City consists of just eight square miles of coastal land which is home to 90,000 residents, the job site of 300,000 workers, and a destination for as many as 500,000 visitors on weekends and holidays; and

WHEREAS, Santa Monica's primary housing goals include preserving its housing stock and preserving the quality and character of its existing single and multi-family residential neighborhoods. Santa Monica's prosperity has always been fueled by the area's many attractive features including its cohesive and active residential neighborhoods and the diverse population which resides therein. In order to continue to flourish, the City must preserve its available housing stock and the character and charm which result, in part, from cultural, ethnic, and economic diversity of its resident population; and

WHEREAS, the City must also preserve its unique sense of community which derives, in large part, from residents' active participation in civic affairs, including local government, cultural events, and educational endeavors; and

WHEREAS, Santa Monica's natural beauty, its charming residential communities, its vibrant commercial quarters and its world class visitor serving amenities have drawn visitors from around the United States and around the world; and

WHEREAS, the City affords a diverse array of visitor-serving short term rentals, including, hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, vacation rentals and home sharing, not all of which are

currently authorized by local law; and

WHEREAS, operations of vacation rentals, where residents rent-out entire units to visitors and are not present during the visitors' stays are detrimental to the community's welfare and are prohibited by local law, because occupants of such vacation rentals, when not hosted, do not have any connections to the Santa Monica community and to the residential neighborhoods in which they are visiting; and

WHEREAS, the presence of such visitors within the City's residential neighborhoods can sometimes disrupt the quietude and residential character of the neighborhoods and adversely impact the community; and

WHEREAS, judicial decisions have upheld local governments' authority to prohibit vacation rentals; and

WHEREAS, with the recent advent of the so called "sharing economy," there is growing acceptance of the longstanding practice of "home-sharing," whereby residents host visitors in their homes for short periods of stay, for compensation, while the resident host remains present throughout the visitors' stay; and

WHEREAS, long before the advent of the sharing economy, home-sharing activities were already commonly undertaken throughout Santa Monica and throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, history has shown that home-sharing activities spread the good-will of Santa Monica worldwide and have enhanced Santa Monica's image throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, home-sharing does not create the same adverse impacts as unsupervised vacation rentals because, among other things, the resident hosts are present to introduce their guests to the City's neighborhoods and regulate their guests' behavior; and

WHEREAS, history has shown that home-sharing activities are relatively very small in number, when compared to the number of persons utilizing vacation rentals or the City's hotels and motels; and

WHEREAS, while the City recognizes that home-sharing activities can be conducted in harmony with surrounding uses, those activities must be regulated to ensure that the small number of home-sharers stay in safe structures and do not threaten or harm the public health or welfare; and

WHEREAS, any monetary compensation paid to the resident hosts for their hospitality and hosting efforts rightfully belong to such hosts and existing law authorizes the City to collect Transient Occupancy Taxes (“TOTs”) for vacation rentals and home-sharing activities; and

WHEREAS, existing law obligates both the hosts and rental agencies or hosting platforms to collect and remit TOTs to the City.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANTA MONICA DOES HEREBY ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 6.20 of the Santa Monica Municipal Code is hereby added to read as follows:

**Chapter 6.20 HOME SHARING AND VACATION RENTALS**

**6.20.010 Definitions**

For purposes of this Chapter, the following words or phrases shall have the following meanings:

(a) Home-Sharing. An activity whereby the residents host visitors in their homes, for compensation, for periods of 30 consecutive days or less, while at least one of the dwelling unit’s primary residents lives on-site, in the dwelling unit, throughout the visitors’ stay.

(b) Hosting Platform. A marketplace in whatever form or format which facilitates the Home-Sharing or Vacation Rental, through advertising, match-making or any other means, using any medium of facilitation, and from which the operator of the hosting platform derives revenues, including booking fees or advertising revenues, from providing or maintaining the marketplace.

(c) Vacation Rental. Rental of any dwelling unit, in whole or in part, within the City of Santa Monica, to any person(s) for exclusive transient use of 30 consecutive days or less, whereby

the unit is only approved for permanent residential occupancy and not approved for transient occupancy or Home-Sharing as authorized by this Chapter. Rental of units within City approved hotels, motels and bed and breakfasts shall not be considered Vacation Rental.

#### **6.20.020 Home-Sharing Authorization**

(a) Notwithstanding any provision of this Code to the contrary, Home-Sharing shall be authorized in the City, provided that the Home-Sharing host complies with each of the following requirements:

(1) Obtains and maintains at all times a City Business License authorizing Home-Sharing activity.

(2) Operates the Home-Sharing activity in compliance with all Business License permit conditions, which may be imposed by the City to effectuate the purpose of this Chapter.

(3) Collects and remits Transient Occupancy Tax ("TOT"), in coordination with any Hosting Platform if utilized, to the City and complies with all City TOT requirements as set forth in Chapter 6.68 of this Code.

(4) Takes responsibility for and actively prevents any nuisance activities that may take place as a result of Home-Sharing activities.

(5) Complies with all applicable laws, including all health, safety, building, fire protection, and rent control laws.

(6) Complies with the regulations promulgated pursuant to this Chapter.

(b) If any provision of this Chapter conflicts with any provision of the Zoning Ordinance codified in Article IX of this Code, the terms of this Chapter shall prevail.

#### **6.20.030 Prohibitions**

(a) No person, including any Hosting Platform operator, shall undertake, maintain, authorize, aid, facilitate or advertise any Home-Sharing activity that does not comply with Section 6.20.020 of this Code or any Vacation Rental activity.

#### **6.20.050 Hosting Platform Responsibilities**

The operator / owner of any Hosting Platform shall:

(a) be responsible for collecting all applicable TOTs and remitting the same to the City.

The Hosting Platform shall be considered an agent of the host for purposes of TOT collections and remittance responsibilities as set forth in Chapter 6.68 of this Code.

(b) disclose to the City on a regular basis each Home Sharing and Vacation Rental listing located in the City, the names of the persons responsible for each such listing, the address of each such listing, the length of stay for each such listing and the price paid for each stay.

#### **6.20.080 Regulations**

The City Manager or his or her designee may promulgate regulations, which may include but are not limited to permit conditions, reporting requirements, inspection frequencies, enforcement procedures, advertising restrictions, disclosure requirements, or insurance requirements, to implement the provisions of this Chapter. No person shall fail to comply with any such regulation.

#### **6.20.090 Fees**

The City Council may establish and set by Resolution all fees and charges as may be necessary to effectuate the purpose of this Chapter.

#### **6.20.100 Enforcement.**

(a) Any person violating any provision of this Chapter shall be guilty of an infraction, which shall be punishable by a fine not exceeding two hundred fifty dollars, or a misdemeanor, which shall be punishable by a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars, or by imprisonment in the County Jail for a period not exceeding six months or by both such fine and imprisonment.

(b) Any person convicted of violating any provision of this Chapter in a criminal case or found to be in violation of this Chapter in a civil case brought by a law enforcement agency shall be ordered to reimburse the City and other participating law enforcement agencies their full investigative costs, pay all back TOTs, and remit all illegally obtained rental revenue to the City so that it may be returned to the Home-Sharing visitors or used to compensate victims of illegal short term rental activities.

(c) Any person who violates any provision of this Chapter shall be subject to administrative fines and administrative penalties pursuant to Chapter 1.09 and Chapter 1.10 of this Code.

(d) Any interested person may seek an injunction or other relief to prevent or remedy violations of this Chapter. The prevailing party in such an action shall be entitled to recover reasonable costs and attorney's fees.

(e) The remedies provided in this Section are not exclusive, and nothing in this Section shall preclude the use or application of any other remedies, penalties or procedures established by law.

SECTION 2. Any provision of the Santa Monica Municipal Code or appendices thereto inconsistent with the provisions of this Ordinance, to the extent of such inconsistencies and no further, is hereby repealed or modified to that extent necessary to effect the provisions of this Ordinance.

SECTION 3. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this Ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid or unconstitutional by a decision of any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance. The City Council hereby declares that it would have passed this Ordinance and each and every section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase not declared invalid or unconstitutional without regard to whether any portion of the ordinance would be subsequently declared invalid or unconstitutional.

SECTION 4. The Mayor shall sign and the City Clerk shall attest to the passage of this Ordinance. The City Clerk shall cause the same to be published once in the official newspaper within 15 days after its adoption. This Ordinance shall become effective 30 days from its adoption.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

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MARSHA JONES MOUTRIE  
City Attorney