

# Township of North Kawartha STRAC STR Final Recommendations Feedback Form

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## SURVEY RESPONSE REPORT

17 March 2026 - 01 June 2026

### PROJECT NAME:

Township of North Kawartha STRAC Final Recommendations Feedback

**Q1. Please share any thoughts, comments, or concerns you may have regarding the Short-Term Rental Advisory Committee's final recommendations for Council's consideration**

Anonymous

3/17/2026 07:37 PM

I think youre giving too much freedom to STRs and should be cracking down a bit harder - especially on those obviously egregious listings.

There are 2 on the small lake my family's legacy cabin is on and they are huge troublemakers, litter everywhere, reckless boating, music at all hours of the night... Awful.

There should be restrictions on how many % of STRs can operate on one lake.

Anonymous

3/18/2026 08:37 AM

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the Short-Term Rental Advisory Committee's recommendations.

North Kawartha has long been known as a cottage and tourism community where families, visitors, and seasonal residents have been welcomed for generations. Short-term rentals are simply a modern version of the traditional cottage experience that has always been part of this region. They allow families who do not own property in the area to enjoy the lakes and natural beauty while supporting local businesses and the broader tourism economy.

Visitors who stay in short-term rentals contribute significantly to the local economy by supporting restaurants, gas stations, grocery stores, marinas, trades, and other local services. Many property owners also reinvest in their cottages and properties, supporting local contractors and maintaining properties that might otherwise sit vacant for much of the year.

It is important that the Township recognize that the vast majority of short-term rental owners operate responsibly and already manage their properties carefully to respect neighbours and the community. Most owners communicate expectations clearly with guests regarding noise, waste management, parking, and respectful behaviour. Existing bylaws already provide tools to address nuisance issues if they arise. Noise bylaws, parking regulations, waste bylaws, and property standards are already in place and apply equally to all property owners, whether a property is owner-occupied, seasonally used, or rented. Enforcement of these existing regulations should remain the primary approach when issues occur.

Introducing additional layers of regulation, permits, or licensing could create unnecessary administrative burden for both property owners and the Township without necessarily addressing the small number of situations where issues may occur. Many cottage communities across Ontario have found that focusing on enforcing existing bylaws is more effective than creating complex new regulatory systems.

Short-term rentals also help support property owners who rely on occasional rental income to offset the rising costs of maintaining cottage properties, property taxes, insurance, utilities, and ongoing upkeep. In many cases, this income allows owners to keep and maintain family cottages that might otherwise be difficult to afford.

North Kawartha's lakes, forests, and outdoor lifestyle are the very reasons visitors are drawn to the area. Responsible cottage rentals allow more people to experience the township while helping sustain the local economy.

For these reasons, I encourage Council to focus on education and enforcement of existing bylaws rather than introducing new licensing systems, permits, or additional regulatory requirements.

Thank you for considering this feedback as the Township continues its review.

Anonymous

3/21/2026 12:03 PM

My main concern regarding short term rentals around our lakes is proper septic maintenance. There are still a significant number of older cottages with older septic systems that were designated for a small amount of seasonal use. Short term rentals lead to significantly more use of properties throughout the season. Furthermore, there is a higher chance that the amount of occupants in the dwelling will be pushed past limits. I am in favour of owners being able to use their properties as they see fit. However, I do feel it is our collective responsibility (therefore the township responsibility) to keep the lakes healthy to maintain our enjoyment but also our desirability for ownership. If the septic systems start to pollute the lakes, it will significantly lower desirability and your tax basis. I would urge the committee and council to develop a septic inspection program for properties that are within a certain distance of lake front and regulate regular maintenance and strict occupancy/usage limits. Thank you for your time.

Anonymous

3/22/2026 05:11 PM

Subject: Feedback on Short-Term Rentals in North Kawartha

I would like to share my perspective regarding short-term rentals in North Kawartha. Our region depends heavily on tourism and seasonal visitors to help sustain local businesses and services. Visitors who stay in short-term rentals support restaurants, local shops, marinas, gas stations, and outdoor recreation providers. These businesses rely on that activity to remain viable, particularly in smaller communities like Apsley and surrounding lake areas.

Short-term rentals also help keep properties maintained and invested in. Owners who welcome guests often make significant improvements to their properties and ensure they are well cared for, which contributes positively to the overall appearance and value of the community.

Many families also discover North Kawartha through short-term stays and later return as seasonal property owners or long-term visitors, strengthening the township's tourism base.

I believe that encouraging responsible short-term rentals helps keep the area vibrant while still respecting the needs of the community. Maintaining a reasonable approach that allows property owners to continue participating in the tourism economy benefits both residents and local businesses.

Thank you for considering this feedback.

Sincerely,



Anonymous

3/30/2026 07:44 AM

Is this a university essay or an action plan? There seems to be no action other than describing what could be done in the future. Very disappointing. STRs need to be regulated and limited as soon as possible.

Anonymous

3/30/2026 09:22 AM

I am concerned about the lack of follow up when we make complaints about by-law violations etc. There is rarely any evidence of active follow up. As this report relies on that process, it is alarming.

Anonymous

3/30/2026 10:16 AM

Hello. I am a cottage owner on Big Cedar Lake. Having read the report, I am concerned that it only focuses on enforcement (unlikely to be effective) of existing rules (shown to be ineffective) and more data collection through reporting (we have tons of data). It lacks any actual change in how people are permitted to use their properties. All cottagers know, without any additional data, that the majority of the problems stem from 1) Very short term rentals - single nights/weekends, and 2) absent owners who aren't part of the community and only see it as an investment property. The latter are particularly challenging because they are never there to 'face' their neighbours and address the issues. Policing 'good behaviour' has never worked.

There are 2 very simple ways to address 90% of the issues:

- 1) Apply a minimum duration (E.g. 1 week) for rentals. Families renting for their annual cottage week are rarely the problem. I was one of those for years and we have many on our lake that we look forward to seeing year after year.
- 2) Limit the number of weeks a year a property can be rented. This addresses the issue of absentee landlords running ghost hotels. People should be allowed to do some renting to cover costs etc. but not simply operate investment properties. As you know, many aspects of cottage life rely on things like volunteering, community participation, etc. These things disappear when someone has no personal investment in the lake. Worse, those people lack any personal accountability.

I am curious if you looked at the demographics of your respondents to the initial survey, that you suggest as 'evenly split'. As someone who works in the field, I suspect you will find that everyone on the 'opposed to STR' side is a cottage owner who uses their cottage, and everyone on the 'pro STR' side uses it as an investment property, and likely more than half of them are realtors.

You need hard rules about what is allowed - with some balance for renting - while protecting the communities (the latter being the more important of the two). This report essentially says we'll have a 1-800 number for complaints, which won't do anything to address the issues.

Anonymous

4/07/2026 04:30 PM

I will focus mainly on the septic issue. We need NK to actively monitor and enforce septic regulations. The cottage next door to me advertises 3 bedrooms for nine people. A toilet left running led to an overflowing tile bed (which is probably filled with roots) and water flowing onto my property. The septic system is old and in poor shape yet this "ghost hotel" is under no mandatory inspection program.

Register all the STR's at no cost so you know where they are and enforce septic inspections (and fire safety regs).

Anonymous

4/07/2026 10:04 PM

None

Anonymous

4/08/2026 09:01 AM

A significant negative issue not yet addressed in the recommendations is light pollution. While this concern is relevant to short-term rentals, where outdoor decorative lighting and floodlights are commonly left on all night, it is by no means limited to them. Permanent residents, seasonal property owners, and commercial operations all contribute to the growing problem of excessive artificial light at night in North Kawartha.

The recommendations rightly identify noise as a common complaint; light pollution shares many of the same qualities. It crosses property boundaries, cannot be easily ignored, and has well-documented harms. Artificial light at night disrupts human circadian rhythms and suppresses melatonin production, leading to sleep disturbances and associated health risks. (<https://watersheds.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Regulatory-Guidelines-for-Light-Pollution.pdf>) It also threatens local wildlife by interfering with the natural behaviours of migratory birds, nocturnal mammals, and aquatic species — concerns especially relevant in an ecologically sensitive lake community. Furthermore, excessive outdoor lighting is a significant waste of energy, with much of the light directed upward or sideways where it serves no purpose. (<https://www.oakville.ca/home-environment/environment/light-pollution-guidelines>)

Overlighting is not confined to urban areas; rural communities like North Kawartha also contribute through unshielded fixtures and improperly directed lights (<https://leotek.com/light-pollution>). Some properties, whether STRs or permanent residences, leave large floodlights on all night or drape string lights across their entire property. While decorative lighting may be aesthetically appealing, there is no justification for it to remain on through the night when no one is actively enjoying it.

I would recommend the township consider a community-wide outdoor lighting policy that applies to all properties, not just short-term rentals. This could include:

- Outdoor lighting curfews for non-essential decorative lighting (e.g., off by 11:00 PM)
- Requirements for shielded, downward-facing fixtures to minimize light trespass onto neighbouring properties
- Encouragement or incentives for motion-sensor security lighting instead of all-night floodlights

Resources such as the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada's (RASC) Dark-Sky Sites Program (<https://www.rasc.ca/lpa/dark-sky-site-program>) and DarkSky International's Municipal Code templates (<https://darksky.org/news/darksky-international-launches-new-lighting-policy-templates-for-municipalities-and-territories/>) offer ready-made frameworks that municipalities can adopt. The RASC actively works with Canadian municipalities to improve lighting legislation, and DarkSky International provides free model lighting ordinances specifically designed for local governments.

(<https://darksky.org/resources/guides-and-how-tos/outdoor-lighting-for-policy-makers>) Pursuing a dark-sky designation could even become a point of pride and a tourism draw for the township. (<https://www.rasc.ca/lpa/application-and-cgol>)

Anonymous

4/08/2026 09:07 AM

Firstly, If I wanted to cottage beside the holiday inn I would have purchased there. I purchased to be in a quiet well maintained area. I have RENTALS MAYBE THREE NOW IN BY BAY  
Dangerous and un concerned about boating relations or b laws for noise and garbage. I live on a private road, I pay more taxes than these rentals and they charge 4500.00 a week to Toronto people who bring 14 people to a little cottage . It's a circus all hours of the day. Paddleboarders out drinking at 2 am with no lights in the middle of lake , 6 of them . Stuff like this is just asking for trouble. Water skiing way to close to shore and causing shore damage and wake surges that cause my dock to bounce onto shore. Let alone try to sit out there and enjoy my once peaceful and quiet weekends. If you want to keep these commercial venues then lower my taxes to 100.00 bucks. The price they charge should allow them to pay more taxes and then we can have a township road not a private road. [REDACTED]

Anonymous

5/10/2026 05:21 PM

I think that it is overreach by councils and municipalities to regulate how people utilise their property. Any infringements such as noise complaints etc are already covered by bylaw and should be up to bylaw enforcement and police.

The public have a right to compete in the financial market through property utilization considering the real estate market is too high and unaffordable for many. A way to afford is to be able to maximise revenue through short term rentals, including renting small dwellings, trailers, tiny homes etc.

It is not within the purview of the municipality to use this as a means to raise revenue, or to pander to larger businesses such as hotels who see it as competitive to their revenue.

Commercial businesses can be competitive in the market by other means.

Short term rentals allow the public who do not have access to expensive cottages or hotels to be able to visit cottage country. Denying this is exclusionary and short sighted as they will spend money in the community.

For instance, Apsley only has ONE motel and minimal campgrounds. There are no facilities for casual visits and this is exclusionary to people without access to cottages.

Anonymous

5/22/2026 01:19 PM

None of the recommendations recognise or deal with the issues of density - the ratio of STRs vs the actual number of dwellings/cottages, especially regarding small lakes.

Density matters. Tallan Lake is small - just over 1 km at its widest point. There are six full-time homes and 17 cottages on this small lake. At some point in the past 20 years Tallan was deemed to have reached capacity.

The MNR used to stock the lake with trout every 2 or more years, making Tallan very popular with day-tripping fishermen. Tallan is land-locked, fed by several small surface streams and an unknown (to me) number of underground streams. The drought of 2025 dropped the water level by 3' and it remained that low going into winter. The surface streams dried up; the outflow of the lake dried up; Tallan Stream no longer feeds into Little Tallan Lake, aka Barney's Pond. There are now a number of large weed beds along the shoreline. One pre-existing bed has more than doubled in size; others are new this year. To say that Tallan is fragile is an understatement.

There are currently 5 AirBnB cottages on Tallan, and one very occasional, "word of mouth" bunkie rental, far less active than the other 5 and not problematic. Of the 5, two have their docks on the Township road allowance for Tallan Lake Rd, presumably with encroachment agreements.

On any summer weekend when all 5 of these places are operating at what they claim as full capacity, the population of the lake more than triples, as does the noise and the gray water runoff.

There is no number high enough to measure the annoyance and concern caused to full-time residents who actually have a stake in the welfare of this small lake.

**Optional question** · 13 responses · 0 skipped

**Question type** : Essay Question