

North Star Township  
2023 Questionnaire on Short-Term Rentals  
Results Summary

223 questionnaires mailed to residents, non-resident cabin owners, vacant land owners  
(address list provided by St Louis County)

5 questionnaires could not be delivered by the US Post Office for various reasons.

One questionnaire per property owner

140 questionnaires returned – 64% return

Question 6: What is the status of your property in North Star Township (check all that apply). Some indicated multiple categories.

Year 'round resident	73 (52.1%)
Non-resident cabin	60 (42.9%)
Vacant Land	10 (7.1%)
Home that is rented year 'round	0 (0%)
Waterfront	80 (57.1%)
Off-Waterfront	11 (8.0%)
Existing permitted STR	0 (0%)
Hunting/Remote Recreation Cabin	11 (8.0%)
Other	0 (0%)

Question 1: How would you feel about having a STR next door to your property?

Positive	13 (9.3%)
Neutral	25 (17.9%)
Concerned	25 (17.9%)
Negative	76 (54.2%)
No answer	1 (0.7%)

Question 2: How do you feel about having any STR on any lake or on the river in North Star Township?

Positive	18 (12.9%)
Neutral	31 (22.1%)
Concerned	36 (25.7%)
Negative	54 (38.6%)
No answer	1 (0.7%)

Question 3b: What is your opinion of having STR properties in North Star Township?

Enjoy having non-resident people visit our township	17 (12.1%)
Concerned about having strangers not property owners	83 (59.3%)
Indifferent about strangers not property owners	24 (17.1%)
I've been adversely affected by neighboring STRs	12 (8.6%)
No answer	4 (2.9%)

Question 3a: What action should North Star take to address STRs in the township?

3a. ALL RESPONDANTS

None	25 (17.9%)
Enact a township ordinance	27 (19.3%)
Encourage the county to address STRs	39 (27.9%)
Ban all STRS	46 (32.9%)
No answer	3 (2.0%)

3a. YEAR-ROUND RESIDENTS

None	14 (19.2%)
Enact a township ordinance	14 (16.2%)
Encourage the county to address STRs	25 (34.2%)
Ban all STRS	19 (26.0%)
No answer	1 (1.4%)

3a. NON-RESIDENT CABIN OWNERS

None	8 (13.3%)
Enact a township ordinance	12 (20.0%)
Encourage the county to address STRs	14(23.3%)
Ban all STRS	26 (43.3%)

Q4: What would be an acceptable number of operating STRs for a single small lake or on th river?

0 61 responses

1 20 responses

2 15 responses

3 6 responses

4 0 responses

5 6 responses

Other: various responses, including "no limit" (11), 1 per 8-10 cabins, 25% of properties, 5 % of residences, etc.

Q5: Select statements you agree with regarding STRs in your neighborhood

Meet new people and share township lakes	21 (15.0%)
STRs make it harder to find affordable housing for families	40 (28.6%)
STRs bring tourist spending	36 (25.7%)
STRs increase noise and traffic	84 (60.0%)
STRs are important sources of income for property owners	37 (26.4%)
STRs reduce privacy and increase chance of trespassing	88 (62.9%)
Governments should not tell me what to do with my property	33 (23.6%)
STRs present environmental risks	71 (50.1%)
STRs threaten security for me and my neighbors	67 (47.9%)
STRs create extra noise and stress on our lakes	82 (58.6%)

**North Star STR Survey 2023 Additional Comments provided by survey respondents.**

Rentals belong in cities. STRs are a burden and nuisance on full time residents, while the STR owner profits. Not acceptable.

As long as short term renters follow the same rule as the rest of us, I don't see a problem. Maybe take a stepped approach and set a maximum STR limit 5% of properties. If no problems, raise the maximum to 10% per waterbody or total residential properties

We moved her for the quiet. To be away from people We have no desire for STRs to invade the privacy, security and peacefulness of our home.

I would not like strangers, people not known around. I am a single woman by myself.

No parties allowed with number limits per house. Limit days per month that property can be rented.

This property was purchased for its privacy. We have fought the DNR for years to keep public access off Little Alden Lake. We cannot have strangers around that have no stake in preserving our lake/land/roads, etc.

Please do not allow STRs on our lake and waterways in North Star. We were broke into a few years ago. After a family had a graduation party that brought many people to the lake. Just to party/look at Bear Lake Campground it's a mess every year.

Instead of limiting the number, we could make other restrictions, such as: owner cant be an entity, number of guests/bedroom or square foot, minimum age of guests (not including children with adults), number of watercraft

Besides summer regulations, we think winter STR regulations should be considered (ie snowmobiles, etc), hunters, ice fishing, skiing, and snowshoeing vacationers. Require host to include educational material about invasive species, loon habitat, no wake zones.

The township has no jurisdiction in zoning currently, and we simply don't have a budget to deal with these type of issues. This is a county issue. Creating limits on STRs would lower my property value and desirability, and I would be interesting in taking legal action if North Star Township gets involved here!

The questions are slanted in a very bias way - help needed to write more valid sample of questions. Obvious that they were written by those opposed to STR in order to have a truly unbiased survey this should be addressed.

If a lake has a public access there is already people we don't know coming onto the lake. I have used STRs around the country and LOVE having the opportunity to experience a quiet new environment.

Don't do STRs

This questionnaire is too general. There are too many variables for permitting STRs. I would like to know if any homeowners have had problems being next to STRs, busy is busy. This is a very bias questionnaire. I would like to attend meetings and have more info.

With the STRs you never know what you'll get and who they bring. Not a good program at all.

This survey is bias against STR and some people are trying to bully their way of thinking onto every property owner. I feel the township should not be telling owners how they use their property.

I have a STR next to my cabin and I am looking at selling and moving out of North Star Township.

According to our association MN Power does not allow us to rent out our places. There is the privacy issue and strangers nearby. At this point I feel safe, allowing my grandchildren to walk our road and shore - with STRs I would not feel safe allowing them to do this. I would like to see no STRs but if we are forced to allow - very few - maybe 3-4 in the township total. We are all small close knit communities - don't change that!

If STRs are allowed, I would favor limiting the number and duration of permit. I.e. Only 1 or 2 years at a time. This would prevent buying a property as an investment and fairly allow others to apply for the limited number of permits.

Private property and STRs should be able co-exist. Regulations limiting the number of STRs are needed. Enforceable and enforced rules to minimize impacts caused by STR operator and renters needs to be in place.

Do not let them bring their own boats to our lakes.

Several years ago a neighbor gave keys to his cabin and the locked gate to a "friend". This friend refused to return the keys, invited several friends, and made use of the cabin and surrounding area when he knew the owner was working. This group also used our remote location for hunting. Their potential presence added safety concerns when accessing our property. They also added significant truck and atv traffic to the privately maintained road. Locks had to be changed to keep this group out. This cabin was not an STR.

Please tell us what other townships in the state are doing and their pros and cons. On Briar "the lodge" was expensive to own so renting it kept it affordable to maintain and from falling into disrepair. % of units like 25% of cabins could be rental (LT and ST) or maybe the unit itself could be rented out at 50% vacancy? I have not studied the options and how the township would regulate it so I don't know best practices. (many other comments w the questions).

We do understand the appeal for some cabin owners to finance their property thru rental income. We come up to our cabin to enjoy the peace and quiet! If cabins (especially unlimited number) were rented out this could totally change the dynamics and purpose we made our purchase for. As part of a road association, is it fair to have rentals with increased traffic pay the same amount as non-rental properties? We love our north woods!

The township should implement a sound, supported plan to regulate this usage, preferably before next years summer season.

Whether the county or township does it, there needs to be only 1 per lake. Otherwise, we will have "resorts" on the lake.

Please stop trying to dictate what property owners can do with their property

I am against any renting of lake property on Little Alden Lake (it is an environment lake - it is not a recreation lake)

In my experience people who rent properties don't respect neighbors and are a disruption. If STRs were limited it may be acceptable.

My concern with STRs is how do we control noise or unsafe boating? Who do we call for immediate relief? I am not concerned with lack of privacy or security issues. We don't have an HOA, so how do rules/laws get reported or enforced. How are owners held accountable?

Businesses like Sportys or the Pequaywan Inn rely heavily on their regulars but often isn't enough. Tourists during the summer/winter help out a ton from just word of mouth alone. Bartenders/servers/owners livelihood could be negatively affected by banning or putting too many regulations on STRs.

Please take swift action to address this growing issue and concern. The longer the township waits the bigger the problem will become.

There could be an occasion to rent short terms to family or relatives of a friend by home or cabin owner. Do not want uncaring corporations to buy and rent on our small lakes and rivers.

I think STRs should be licensed according to existing county regulations and don't feel that the township needs to be involved.
A 1 1/2 page letter was attached, available on request. Excerpt: My main concern is how well renters are vetted, which falls to the owner. If the owner lives on the lake or nearby, they know their neighbors and may be more careful. My concern with the township enacting an ordinance are 1) how it will be enforced and 2) how restrictive it will be. Residents should be expected to abide by the same guidelines. Owners should provide guidelines clearly and make an attempt to notify immediate neighbors and make introductions if possible. I have more questions than answers. I trust you, our elected officials, to act in the best interest of all, although there is disagreement in the community. Thank you for researching this topic.
Thank you for your efforts to gather broad input.
How would this affect someone that doesn't live on a lake? Is there a way to regulate the screening process?
Every resident should fill one out, not one per household. This gives a skewed response
I rent short term rentals for fishing/hunting trips every year with friends throughout the midwest. We always have positive experiences everywhere we go. It would be hypocritical for me to not want STR around here when I enjoy using them so much. The important part is having responsible property owners managing their rentals.
I enjoy my cabin for the peace and quiet. If a STR were next door with a new set of people every weekend, I would be annoyed. Maybe a buffer zone - distance from each neighbor's house - required...or STRs not on waterfront lake/river.
We have had loud, noisy groups at the one STR on our lake. One example being a wedding with lots of noise, drinking involved. Live band with amps that the whole lake could hear (I have asked others). The closer you live to such a place - the worse the problem becomes.
Bad idea & questionable people of security, trespassing and accountability for STRs, noise and number of people that end up at the STRs.
I'm all for people having a good time at the lake and hanging out by the fire at night making a little noise once in awhile. The problem with STRs on SMALL lakes is there can be new people in them regularly and they are on vacation from work so they will be having fun and making noise all week every week. Residents tend to be occasional and on weekend only. We all do it now and then but with STRs on small lakes it is constant every week. Briar Lake has only 1 that I know of and that's too much for a lake this size.
I attended the info meeting. I have 2 inlaws living full time on lakes with STRs and neither had anything negative to say. The lawyer costs alone make this unnecessary. Statute not viable.
A county regulation specifying # of STRs per river or shoreline mile would be best but probably take a long time. Our lakes are under stress already. STRs would have less impact on larger lakes.
People using STRs generally do not respect the lake, trash thrown in the lake, and speed on the lake. Additionally, for the small lakes that don't have public access, allowing STRs to have knowledge & access to the road into other areas has increased risk of arson and theft.
STRs are an especially bad idea on or around the small lakes within the township.
Especially concerned about how STRs would fit in with the roles and responsibilities of property owners in the Common Interest Community/Owners Associations established as part of MN Power's recent sale of formerly leased lots on Alden, L Alden and Spring Lake.
I've watched Little Alden convert from a cabin dominated lake to year round and many of the year rounders think they own the lake and road as well as their property. They will want to ban rentals but as taxes go up some cabin owners may need to rent out their property to pay for all the costs. Don't let them destroy the cabin culture...it's already on life support.

My two main concerns are 1) the number of STRs that could pop up and 2) businesses or corporations buy up properties for STRS, as opposed to an individual or single family changing their property into an STR. I'm against allowing business to buy up property, but I am OK w/ individuals converting their own property.

I have used many STRs in different parts of the county and world, and it's an excellent option to have great experiences. This topic should be based on the behavior of specific people at an STR. If they are harming the lakes, then talk to them or involve law enforcement, just like your neighbors. My sister had medical issues and renting her house as an STR saved her financially.

Allowed as long as they're limited and managed as such.

We are one of 2 permanent residents on our lake. I don't know if we are or would be affected by STRs.

Our neighborhoods are too small and close knit to accommodate this type of commercial activity. Lodging is available at hotels in town and that is where tourists should stay.

St Louis County has regulations for STRs. The township does not need to have additional rules. Let us enjoy our neighbors - long term and short term.

Number of "units" on a lake and probably careful screening of "guests" are important. Consider background checks and requiring owner maintain and retain files. Seasonal cabins can be uniquely exposed to threats.