

# STAs IN ORO-MEDONTE

May 2023

HEADLINES IN THE NEWS

## 1. ENFORCEMENT: A GIANT LEAP FORWARD FOR HOMEOWNERS

The Township of Oro-Medonte has posted a Notice on their website and on Facebook regarding enforcement of the existing zoning by-law that does not permit short-term rental accommodation (STAs) in residential zones. Here are some excerpts from that Notice:

“It is important to understand that under Zoning By-law 97-95, short term rental accommodations (STAs) **are not legally permitted** within the majority of areas/zones throughout the Township.”

“The following areas in the Township are currently zoned under Zoning By-law 97-95 to permit a timeshare or commercial unit allowing for short term accommodation:

- Horseshoe Resort Condos
- The Carriage Hills and Carriage Ridge developments”

“STA’s found to be in contravention of Zoning By-law 97-95 will be required to cease operation. Failure and/or refusal to cease operation will result in legal proceedings as per the Ontario Municipal Act.”

### Neighbours of possible STAs are encouraged to report as follows:

“If you have a concern regarding a potential STA and its illegal use, please email [municipallaw@oro-medonte.ca](mailto:municipallaw@oro-medonte.ca) All concerns will remain in confidence and will be addressed accordingly.”

### Noise or nuisance?

“If concerns are related to noise/nuisance and the owner/occupant is contravening the Noise By-law, please contact our office at 705-487-2171”

To view the full Notice go to <https://www.oro-medonte.ca/community/township-news> and click on Short Term Accommodations Update - May 10, 2023.

## PROTECTING HEALTH AND SAFETY (NOT MENTIONED IN TOWNSHIP NOTICE)

Homeowners living near a dwelling that they suspect is being used to illegally provide short-term accommodation should take the following additional steps to protect health and safety:

- If you have conflicts with either the visitors or the owner/operator of an STA, **do not confront them**. Confronting people who have been consuming drugs or alcohol can be dangerous. Instead, seek assistance from the police, fire services, or municipal by-law enforcement.

- If your personal safety or the safety of anyone is at risk, or if there is a risk of damage or loss to property because of activities at a suspected STA, you should call 911 immediately and ask for the police.
- If fire or smoke threaten anyone's health or property, call 911 and ask for Fire Services.
- If there are persistent sewage odours or if sewage appears at the ground surface, then contact Septic Maintenance Program at 705-487-2171 ext. 2181 or email [smp@oro-medonte.ca](mailto:smp@oro-medonte.ca) or in an emergency, contact Municipal Law Enforcement at 705-487-2171.

## KEEPING A RECORD

Keep a record of the activities at suspected STAs near you. If you take photos, make sure you take the photographs from a 'public place' like a roadway or on the water. Consider including a copy of your records when you report any illegal use to Municipal Law Enforcement.

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## 2. ILLEGAL STAS IN ORO-MEDONTE ARE WIDESPREAD

The map on the following page shows 301 Airbnb and VRBO listings in Oro-Medonte as of May 15, 2023. The data were reported by Airdna, a leading provider of information on the short term rental industry. From the map it is clear that this isn't just a shoreline problem. This is a problem that can adversely affect all residential neighbourhoods throughout the Township. Only a very small portion of the 301 sites shown here are legally permitted (e.g., STAs in the Horseshoe Resort Condos and the Carriage Hills and Carriage Ridge developments ). STAs are not permitted at most of the sites shown on the map.

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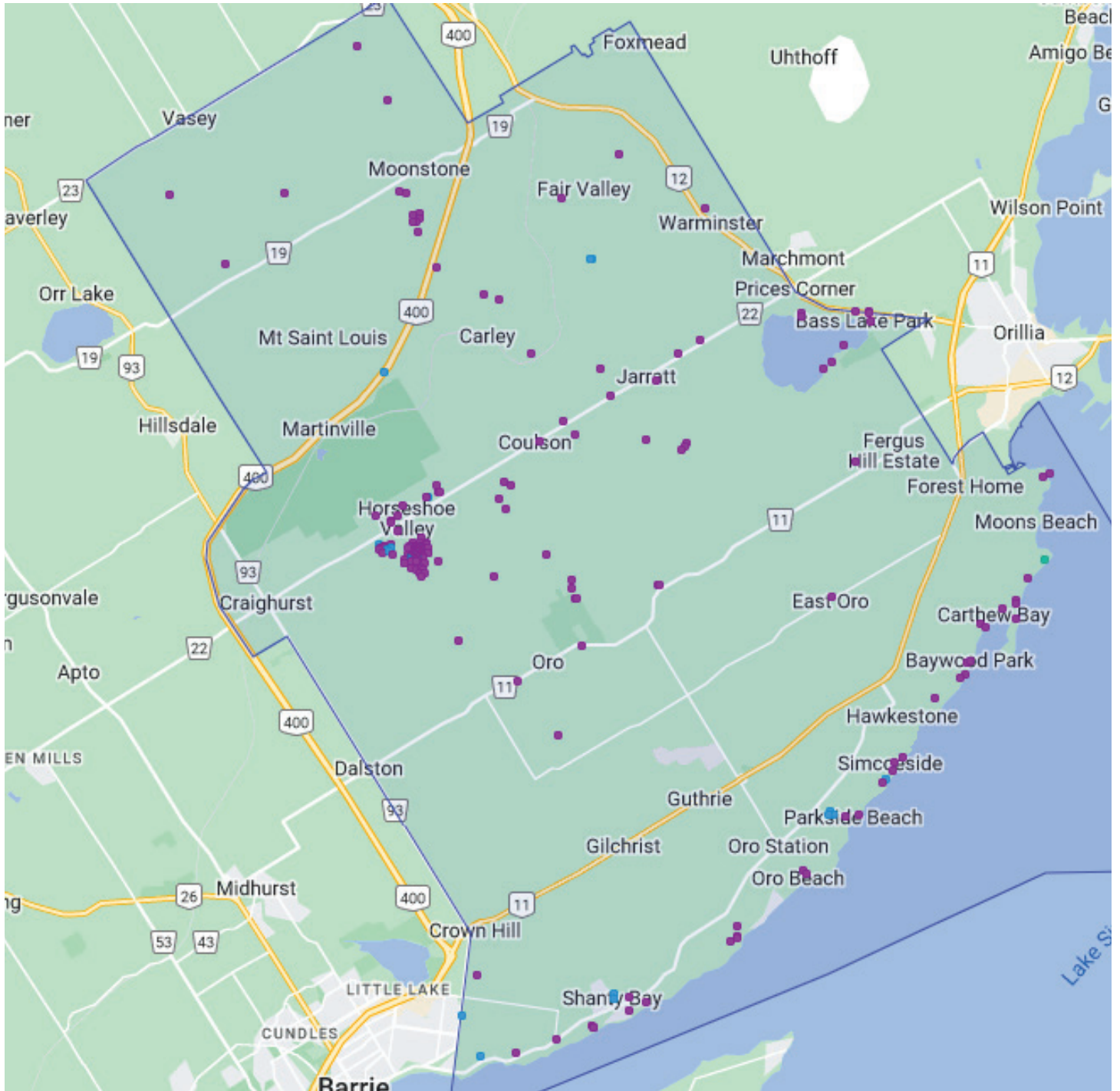
## 3. LICENSING STAS: A COSTLY FAILURE IN BLUE MOUNTAINS

Lobbyists for the short-term rental industry often point to the Town of The Blue Mountains and lead people to believe that legalizing and then licensing STAs is the best way to control them. What the lobbyists don't tell you is that STAs are NOT permitted in low density residential zones in Blue Mountains.

They also don't tell you that Blue Mountains had to resort to licensing STAs because 54 STAs were allowed to continue to operate in low-density residential zones. These STAs were granted legal non-conforming use status. It is these uses that have been very difficult if not impossible to control.

Licensing has been a costly failure. In an open letter, here is what Terry Kellar, Chair of The Blue Mountains Ratepayers' Association STA Committee recently wrote:

- "In 2009, Blue Mountains chose to protect the safety, security and integrity of all residential zones from the intrusion of short-term accommodations (STAs) by separating temporary accommodations including STAs from places where people reside."



Each dot is an STA in Oro-Medonte

- “Blue Mountains successfully excluded STAs from all residential neighbourhoods. Yet, following this success, for some unknown reason, the Town permitted owners of approximately 54 STA properties that were in existence at the time the by-law amendments were passed in 2009 to continue to carry on business in residential neighbourhoods as legal non-conforming uses (LNCUs).”
- “Ten years experience in Blue Mountains has shown that it is the LNCU STAs that have been most problematic.”
- “Despite the expenditures of our tax dollars to try and control approximately 340 licensed STAs, licensing conditions intended to impose a level of control have failed. Blue Mountains has not revoked one license. Conflicts continue.”
- “In reviewing OPP records provided by the Town (of The Blue Mountains), the incident rate of reported disruptions from licensed STA properties is vastly disproportionate to the rate generally in residential neighbourhoods. In the period 2017 to 2022, the OPP attended licensed STAs 11 times more frequently than all other dwellings.”

To view Terry Kellar’s complete letter go to [Licensing-has-Failed-to-Control-Conflicts-26-04-23.pdf](https://www.goodneighboursoromedonte.ca) at <https://www.goodneighboursoromedonte.ca>.

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## 4. EDITORIAL: WHAT TO EXPECT AND WHAT YOU CAN DO

As law-abiding and taxpaying homeowners, we reasonably expect that once informed, STA operators will cease operations immediately and conform to the zoning by-law. Conforming includes removing advertising and transactions on all rental platforms such as Airbnb, VRBO, etc. If the operators conform to the zoning by-law, as taxpayers, we all save. We save the cost of enforcement along with a reduction of the potential risk to the safety of Township enforcement staff. Most importantly, year round we will all be able to enjoy safe and peaceful seasons in our homes once more.

Unfortunately, there will be some STA operators who will attempt to delay being in conformity with the zoning by-law by claiming that the laws are in dispute and therefore are not enforceable. Or alternatively, they may argue that they are a legal non-conforming use and should be allowed to continue to make money at your expense. Based on the Blue Mountains’ experience, (see Terry Kellar’s letter above) it is critical that the Township refute these claims. Providing temporary accommodations in residential neighbourhoods in Oro-Medonte has not been legal at least since Zoning By-law 97-95 came into force in 1997. If an STA operator wants to be in the temporary accommodation business, they can be in conformity with the existing zoning by-law by carrying on business in zones where they are permitted.

The Township and the overwhelming majority of the Township’s residents have already spoken. The STA operators are the only ones that want to have STAs legalized. Once informed, no one wants to live near a short-term accommodation that could disrupt their neighbourhood. So, this summer be vigilant, have conversations with your neighbours, and with your Ward Councillor. Let them know that you support enforcement and putting an end to the STA problem in Oro-Medonte.

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