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URA consults on proposed regulatory framework for use of private residential properties as short-term accommodation

On 16 April 2018, the Urban Redevelopment Authority ("URA") launched a public consultation on a proposed regulatory framework for the use of private residential properties as short-term accommodation ("STA"). The consultation closes on 31 May 2018. Set out below are some of the key proposals:

- **New STA use category for private residential properties:** URA proposes to introduce a new use category of STA for private residential properties. This will apply only to private properties that are already approved for residential use, and not for HDB properties.
- **Owners' consent:** The consent of property owners is required for the STA use to be applied to their properties. For non-strata-titled properties (i.e. developments without management corporations strata title ("MCSTs")), the owners can decide on the matter and apply to URA to be registered as STA, subject to certain requirements. For strata-titled properties (i.e. those governed by an MCST) such as apartments and condominiums, the MCST needs to garner the support of **at least 80% of the share value** in favour of STA use in the development. This MCST endorsement will be valid for **two years** and needs to be renewed with an updated vote count each time. If the level of consent falls below 80%, the earlier endorsement will not be renewed. Amendments to the Building Maintenance and Strata Management Act are required to provide for this arrangement.
- **Planning criteria and requirements for STA:** In assessing the applications for STA, URA will consider the impact of STA use on the surrounding community, taking into consideration factors such as the type of residential development involved, the character of the area and the presence (or absence) of a formal self-governance structure within the residential estate.
- **Measures to guard against erosion of residential amenity and character of housing estates:** URA proposes to introduce the following measures to guard against the erosion of residential amenity and character of housing estates:
 - Annual rental cap of 90 days that the property can be used for STA;
 - Occupancy cap of six persons per unit at any one time, in line with URA's occupancy cap of six un-related persons for private residential units;
 - Compulsory registration by each individual property owner with URA prior to listing the property for STA use, or to allow such use to take place;

- All approved STA hosts will be required to provide URA a record of guest details for each stay. This is aligned with the requirement for the particulars of all guests staying in hotels to be recorded for security reasons.
- **Fire safety requirements:** URA proposes to require STA homeowners to equip their homes with equipment such as home fire alarm devices and fire extinguishers and to require fire safety infrastructure in buildings where there are STA activities to be upgraded to meet the requirements of the prevailing edition of the Fire Code, such as the provision of rising mains, hose reels at every floor, upgrading of one passenger lift to a fire lift.
- **Role of MCSTs:** To get support for STA use in the development, MCSTs can put in place additional measures to manage potential dis-amenity and disturbances, such as introducing by-laws to regulate STA over-and-above those prescribed by the Government. MCSTs can also consider requiring owners of STA units to pay additional maintenance fees for common areas and facilities. This may help to get buy-in and support from the other residents who do not intend to put out their units for STA use.
- **Regulation of commercial platform operators:** URA will consider the licensing of platform operators that advertise or market rental units in Singapore for STA use. Under such a framework, all STA transactions would have to be channelled through “licensed platform operators” (LPOs). Unlicensed platform operators will not be permitted to advertise or market units in Singapore for STA use.

Reference materials

The following materials are available on the URA website www.ura.gov.sg:

- Media release
- Consultation paper

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