

# SLT embarks on path to find consensus on VHRs



Several dozen people on Nov. 16 weigh in on vacation home rentals in South Lake Tahoe.  
Photo/LTN

**By Kathryn Reed**

Sifting through assumptions and reality. That is the goal of a consulting team hired by the city of South Lake Tahoe to work on the vacation home rental quagmire.

More than 70 people attended a meeting Wednesday night aimed at getting the public's opinions about these rentals that are usually found in residential neighborhoods.

Reps from Michael Baker International have been in town for a few days gathering data. They are tasked with coming up with ideas of how the city can go forward with VHRs (or not) in order to appease people and the city's budget.

These whole house rentals pay transient occupancy tax, which is one of the city's main revenue sources.

But plenty of people are less worried about the city's coffers and more worried about their quality of life.

People at the Nov. 16 meeting spoke about how these extra people in town are impacting the condition of city streets, some questioned if everyone is paying TOT, and many are concerned with lack of enforcement.

Restricting the number of VHRs was an idea, while others recognize hotels aren't where people want to stay.

Some said VHRs are already regulated, noting these owners face more scrutiny than those renting to full-time residents.

Others fear the value of their home is lessened with neighboring VHRs.

Three stations were set up in the senior center where people could write comments as well vote via a sticker on what they like-dislike about VHRs, as well as cast a vote related to their perceptions about current conditions.

Most people agreed VHRs are a good source of revenue for the city and the homeowner, that they contribute to jobs, and expand lodging opportunities for tourists. They also don't believe there has been an increase in commercial enterprises in neighborhoods.

It was a pretty even split on agreeing-disagreeing about whether VHRs put a strain on public services and if they degrade neighborhoods.

The consultants will compare the trends and perceptions of the public against the factual data. The results of the study are likely to be released in the spring, at which time the City Council will address the findings. There will be more time for public comment before then. Taking this **survey** is another way to have a voice about VHRs.