



Berkeley, California

Balancing innovation with regulation: Berkeley's proactive approach to short-term rentals

86%

conversation rate on
5,000+ letters sent

95%

listing compliance

435

properties converted
to long-term rentals

\$1.38 million

in tax revenue
collected

OVERVIEW

Facing an affordable housing shortage and increasing short-term rental (STR) violations, the City of Berkeley turned to Granicus' Short-term Rentals (Host Compliance) solution to streamline enforcement and protect long-term housing availability. The city now leverages the platform to stay ahead of rentals with strategic monitoring and outreach — saving staff time, increasing compliance, and supporting community concerns.

SITUATION | A HURTING HOUSING MARKET

Berkeley, like many California cities, faces an affordable housing shortage. In response, a growing amount of STRs pose a threat to long-term housing availability. "The whole state of California is having a housing crisis and Berkeley is certainly no exception," said Russell Roe, associate planner for the City of Berkeley. "Housing has gotten really expensive here. It's tempting for property owners to take existing rental units off the market to build short-term rentals because they can make a bigger profit with less legal commitment. That really hurts the housing market."

Initially, enforcement was managed by a single staff member — making it difficult and time consuming to keep up with violations and community complaints. With nearly 7,900 listings across multiple platforms, the city needed a scalable solution to identify properties, enforce compliance, and recover lost tax revenue.

MUST HAVE SOLUTIONS

Short-term Rentals

“Host Compliance scans all of the major listing sites for us, which saves us a tremendous amount of time. I don't know how we could possibly manage that manually — so that's a big benefit.”

– Russell Roe, Associate Planner, City of Berkeley



SOLUTION | SURFING FOR STRS

Granicus' Short-term Rentals solution provided Berkeley with automated monitoring of major listing sites, customizable letter templates, and a centralized system for managing STR violations.

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With technology doing much of the heavy lifting, the city can assign a single, dedicated staff member to oversee STR enforcement – allowing for consistent tracking and efficient follow-up. “If the tool finds a violation, then we’ll send the first warning notice out with information on how to legalize the rental,” said Roe. “We use the templates to automatically generate notices, which saves a lot of time and effort.”

In addition to the platform’s streamlined reporting tools and templates, Granicus’ Short-term Rentals hotline offered an additional channel for community input – helping Berkeley better serve the public. With the housing crisis a hot topic for concerned residents, this open line of communication reassures locals and builds trust in Berkeley’s ability to make an impact on the STR dilemma.

RESULTS | HIGH COMPLIANCE AND COMMUNITY TRUST

Berkeley’s strategic use of Granicus’ Short-term Rentals technology has resulted in high compliance rates, significant tax revenue recovery, and improved community oversight. Most notably, Berkeley achieved a 95% listing compliance rate and sent more than 5,000 enforcement letters, converting 86% of violators. The city also collected \$1.38 million in STR-related taxes.

The city’s proactive approach serves as a model for municipalities seeking to balance innovation with regulation in the short-term rental space.

SHORT-TERM RENTALS, POWERED BY AWS

Granicus’ Short-term Rentals (Host Compliance) capability helps governments and associations collect short-term rental tax revenues while enforcing the safety and quality-of-life standards that helps create communities where people want to live and visit. Short-term Rentals uses **AWS**’s Relational Database Service (RDS) to efficiently connect identification, enforcement, and revenue collection tasks. AWS’s Simple Storage Service (S3), Elastic Container Service (ECS) and Elastic Compute Cloud (EC2) ensure fast, reliable access to keep compliance efforts moving.

Interested in finding out how Granicus can
work for your organization?

Contact us