

**AGENDA REPORT  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING  
February 19, 2025**

**SUMMARY**

A request by Elena Sass (owner) seeking approval to allow 1707 Nelwood Drive to be used as a short-term rental for a maximum of six transient guests and up to 210-nights annually pursuant to Sec. 29-3.3(vv) and Sec. 29-6.4(m)(2) of the Unified Development Code. The subject dwelling sought for STR operations is the western half of an existing duplex that is addressed 1705 & 1707 Nelwood Drive. The 0.46-acre subject site is located on the west side of Nelwood Drive, approximately 105 feet north of its intersection with Quail Drive.

**DISCUSSION - APPLICATION EVALUATION**

The applicant seeks to obtain a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow 1707 Nelwood Drive to be used as a short-term rental (STR) pursuant to Sec. 29-3.3(vv) and Sec. 29-6.4(m)(2) of the Unified Development Code. As of June 1, 2025, any dwelling operated as an STR must fully comply with the provisions of the STR regulations, which include the acquisition of an STR Certificate of Compliance, Business License, and submission of accommodation taxes. Approval of this request is a required prerequisite to proceeding forward in obtaining the STR Certificate of Compliance and business license.

The owner of the subject site was notified of an illegal STR operation through a mailed letter on August 4, 2025, requesting compliance by September 4, 2025. The applicant applied for an STR CUP on January 12, 2026. While action on this request is pending, enforcement on the illegal operation of the dwelling as an STR will be suspended. Continued operation of the dwelling as an STR following final City Council action without acquiring the STR Certificate of Compliance and business license would constitute an illegal use of land and would be subject to revocation, if authorized, as well as other enforcement actions identified in the City Code.

The following is a site-specific analysis of the property:

**Dwelling Unit Details**

<b>Property Address</b>	1707 Nelwood Drive
<b>Zoning</b>	R-MF (Multiple Family Dwelling)
<b>STR Request Type</b>	Tier 2, 210 nights
<b>Maximum Guests Requested</b>	6
<b>Bedrooms</b>	3
<b>Parking Spaces</b>	3 spaces required and are accommodated.
<b>Abutting Properties</b>	R-MF to the south, west, and east. IG to the north.

**Owner/Agent**

<b>Owner</b>	Elena Sass
<b>Designated Agent</b>	Alisa Sass
<b>Agent's Distance to Property</b>	4 miles, 10 minutes

**Listing Information**

<b>Listing Links</b>	<a href="https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/1308853748135984521">https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/1308853748135984521</a>
<b>STR previously offered?</b>	Offered since December 2024, booked for 154 nights in 2025
<b>STRs within 300 feet?</b>	There are no STRs within 300'
<b>Primary residence?</b>	No
<b>Previous Violations?</b>	6 total cases including the other half of the duplex. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 illegal STR violation and 2 solid waste violation for 1707 Nelwood Drive</li> <li>- 3 solid waste violations and 1 landscape management violation for 1705 Nelwood Drive</li> </ul>

**Conditional Use Analysis**

Operation of an STR within the subject dwelling requires approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP), which has been analyzed for both **general and technical** compliance pursuant to the provisions found in Sec. 29-6.4(m)(2)(i) and (iii) of the UDC. Staff's analysis of these provisions is shown below. The owner's analysis of the criteria is attached to this report.

**Sec. 29-6.4(2)(i) General CUP Review Criteria:**

- (A) The proposed conditional use complies with all standards and provisions in this chapter applicable to the base and overlay zone district where the property is located;**

A short-term rental that is not a long-term resident's primary residence or to be operated for up to 210 nights in a residential district is subject to approval of a CUP. The submitted application has illustrated technical compliance with the minimum regulatory standards established within Sec. 29-3.3(vv) of the UDC. Additional regulatory review to ensure compliance with the remaining UDC and Rental Unit Conservation Law requirements will occur upon issuance of the CUP and prior to issuance of an STR Certificate of Compliance and business license.

- (B) The proposed conditional use is consistent with the city's adopted comprehensive plan;**

The comprehensive plan does not speak directly to the use of residential dwellings for alternative purposes such as an STR; however, does contain policies, strategies, and actions relating to the topics of livable and sustainable neighborhoods, land use and growth management, and economic development. The adoption of the regulatory provisions governing the use of a residential dwelling for STR purposes is seen as addressing several of these policies, strategies, and actions.

With respect to the goal of creating **livable and sustainable neighborhoods**, approval of the requested CUP would support the mixed-use concepts of Policy # 2, Strategy # 1 (page 144) of the Plan. While this strategy focuses on the concept of creating "nodes" of neighborhood scale commercial and service uses as a high priority, the first "action" within the strategy recommends using planning tools and decision-making to locate small-scale commercial and service businesses adjacent to residential development. STRs have been determined to be a commercial use and offer a "community-wide" service by providing supplemental housing for visitors to Columbia. Staff believes adoption of the STR regulations and their requirement of a CUP are relevant planning and decision-making tools consistent with the intent of this policy and assist to fulfill the idea of supporting mixed-uses within residential neighborhoods.

With respect to **land use and growth management**, Policy # 3, Strategy # 3 (page 146 of the Plan) would be fulfilled given the regulatory limitations on occupancy and rental nights that are contained within Sec. 29-3.3(vv).

And finally, with respect to **economic development**, Policy # 3, Strategy # 2 (page 149 of the Plan) would be fulfilled by supporting local entrepreneurial ventures. The adopted regulatory provisions governing the use of a residential dwelling for STR purposes were created with options to allow owners and/or renters the ability to participate in the STR market, subject to reasonable regulation. This ability for participation not only supports individual entrepreneurial ventures, but also broader city-wide economic objectives relating to tourism and tourism-related activities.

**(C) The proposed conditional use will be in conformance with the character of the adjacent area, within the same zoning district, in which it is located. In making such a determination, consideration may be given to the location, type and height of buildings or structures and the type and extent of landscaping and screening on the site;**

The residentially zoned properties surrounding the subject site are improved with two and multi-family residences, and there are industrially zoned properties to the north. The dwelling has not been modified structurally to accommodate the STR use. If the requested CUP is approved, an additional two occupants would be permitted within the dwelling compared to the maximum four unrelated occupants in rental dwellings located on the surrounding R-MF zoned property.

While an increase in occupancy would occur if the requested CUP were approved, it is uncertain if the frequency of occupant turnover would be any greater than that of surrounding development, given that the dwelling is surrounded by other rental properties, with 65 of 66 properties used for rental purposes. Any possible increase or potential impacts of a higher turnover rate may not be noticeable, given the current usages of the surrounding properties.

Any potential negative impacts can be mitigated through the adopted regulatory provisions that provide a means to report and address violations. The regulations permit the imposition of fines and possible revocation of the STR Certificate of Compliance after 2 verified violations within a 12-month period.

**(D) Adequate access is provided and is designed to prevent traffic hazards and minimize traffic congestion;**

The site is located on the west side of Nelwood Drive. Nelwood Drive is a local residential street that intersects Vandiver Drive, a major arterial, to the north. The subject site has three UDC-compliant parking spaces on the STR's side of the duplex, meeting parking requirements to support the desired six guests. There are no sidewalks installed along Nelwood Drive. There is no evidence to suggest that an STR of the requested intensity would be detrimental to current and future traffic in this area.

**(E) Sufficient infrastructure and services exist to support the proposed use, including, but not limited to, adequate utilities, storm drainage, water, sanitary sewer, electricity, and other infrastructure facilities are provided; and**

The site is sufficiently served with public infrastructure to support its use as an STR. There are no known infrastructure capacity issues associated with the site that would be negatively impacted by the approval of the CUP.

**(F) The proposed conditional use will not cause significant adverse impacts to surrounding properties.**

The subject site is adjacent to two and multi-family dwellings to the south, west, and east, and industrially zoned properties to the north. Residential dwellings within the R-MF district are permitted to be occupied by no more than four unrelated individuals when used as long-term properties. While the occupancy sought would permit two more individuals than a traditional long-term rental dwelling in the R-MF zoning district, the dwelling has been used as an STR since December 2024 without apparent incident. The lack of reported issues suggests that continued use as an STR with a maximum of six guests would not create adverse neighborhood impacts.

Any potential negative impacts can be mitigated through the adopted regulatory provisions that provide a means to report and address violations. The regulations permit the imposition of fines and possible revocation of the STR Certificate of Compliance after 2 **verified** violations within a 12-month period.

**Sec. 29-6.4(2)(iii) Supplemental STR CUP Review Criteria:**

**(A) Whether the proposed STR is used for any part of the year by the registrant as a residence. If so, for how long?**

The registrant has stated they will use the property 4-8 days throughout the year.

**(B) Whether or not there are established STRs within three hundred (300) feet of the proposed STR measured in all directions from property lines “as the crow flies.”**

The registrant has stated there are no established STR’s within 300 feet in all directions. Staff did not identify additional STR properties within 300-feet of the dwelling.

**(C) Whether the proposed registrant has previously operated an STR and if such operation has resulted in a history of complaints, a denied STR certificate of compliance, or revocation of an issued STR certificate of compliance.**

The registrant has stated that their operation of an STR has not resulted in a history of complaints or a denied/revoked STR Certificate of Compliance. Staff has identified a total of six violations involving the entire property. The only STR-related violation with respect to the overall property was a notice of illegal STR operation within 1707 Nelwood sent in August 2025.

**(D) Whether the proposed STR will increase the intensity of the use of the property and cause increased traffic or noise coming from the property.**

The registrant has stated that the proposed STR will not increase traffic or noise from the property. As a general staff observation, using the subject dwelling for transient accommodations for 210-nights with a maximum of six guests could result in increased impacts; however, how significant is unknown. The significance of possible impacts is subject to many factors, such as dwelling unit desirability, pricing, rental occupancy, etc. The regulatory structure provides standards for limiting impacts (occupancy and nights) and has enforcement mechanisms to mitigate possible negative outcomes.

**(E) Whether there is support for the establishment of the proposed STR from neighboring property owners.**

The registrant has stated there is support from the neighboring property owners. As of writing this report, one letter of support has been received.

**CONCLUSION**

Given staff’s technical review of the submitted application and the analysis of the above criteria, issuance of a conditional use permit to allow 1707 Nelwood Drive to be operated as a 210-night, maximum six-guest STR is not believed to be incompatible with the surrounding development. The property abuts R-MF and IG zoned properties. The proposed occupancy of six guests is two individuals greater than that allowed in the dwellings located in the adjacent R-MF zoning districts. There is no evidence to suggest that the neighborhood has been previously negatively impacted by this dwelling’s use as an STR, which has been operating since December 2024.

Approval of the CUP would grant “legal status” to the existing use and close the current Notice of Violation issued on August 4, 2025, for operating a short-term rental without a license. Furthermore, if the CUP is approved, it would afford neighbors as well as the City additional regulatory tools to ensure compliance with the adopted standards governing STRs. Authorization of the CUP is not seen as being detrimental to adjacent properties and would fulfill several policies, strategies, and actions of the Columbia Imagined Comprehensive Plan.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Approve the conditional use permit to allow the dwelling at 1707 Nelwood Drive to be operated as a STR subject to:

1. The maximum occupancy of six transient guests;
2. A maximum of 210-nights of annual rental usage

**ATTACHMENTS**

- Locator maps
- STR Application
- Supplemental “Conditional Accessory/Conditional Use Questions”

**HISTORY**

<b>Annexation date</b>	1962
<b>Zoning District</b>	R-MF (Multiple-Family Dwelling)
<b>Land Use Plan designation</b>	Neighborhood
<b>Previous Subdivision/Legal Lot Status</b>	White Gate Second Addition

**SITE CHARACTERISTICS**

<b>Area (acres)</b>	0.46 acres
<b>Topography</b>	Flat
<b>Vegetation/Landscaping</b>	Trees and natural ground cover
<b>Watershed/Drainage</b>	Hinkson Creek
<b>Existing structures</b>	Two-family dwelling

**UTILITIES & SERVICES**

All utilities and services provided by the City of Columbia

**ACCESS**

<b>Nelwood Drive</b>	
<b>Location</b>	East of subject site
<b>Major Roadway Plan</b>	Local residential
<b>CIP projects</b>	None
<b>Sidewalk</b>	None

**PARKS & RECREATION**

<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>	Whitegate Park
<b>Trails Plan</b>	None
<b>Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan</b>	None

**PUBLIC NOTIFICATION**

77 “public hearing” letters were mailed to property owners and tenants within 185-feet of the subject property. 1 letter was provided to the Council Ward representative. 2 letters were sent to neighborhood associations and homeowners associations within 1,000 feet of the subject site. All “public hearing” letters were distributed on February 2, 2026. The public hearing ad for this matter was placed in the Tribune on February 3, 2026.

<b>Public Notification Responses</b>	None
<b>Notified neighborhood association(s)</b>	Mexico Gravel, White Gate
<b>Correspondence received</b>	1 letter in support

Report prepared by: Ross Halligan

Approved by: Patrick Zenner