

Comments from board from Public Meeting on rental inspections - 2-11-26

- Current system works for me
- I am very satisfied with the inspection schedule as it is. No need to change!
- Keep it once every 5 years. I have gone without issues for years on the 3/6 yr system and already renewed on the 5 yr system.
- Inspection fees are way too high.
- Include in the papers given to tenants, along with occupancy disclosure information on when they would want to contact code enforcement and how to do that.
- Increase inspections
- Leave it alone
- Increase inspections for bad actors.
- More frequent inspections need to happen in a town with higher rental turnover.
- It its a first ward problem, only change it for the first ward.
- Tenants given responsibility. Documents at move in provided to property managers by the City.
- When properties change ownership or management companies they should get inspected and all documentation about prior inspections should be shared.
- The current 5 year system is just right.
- I don't understand the problem you're trying to solve. Keep them like they are.
- Leave the way it is. Already gone from once every 6 years to every five. And tripled inspection fees, Average \$45 before and \$135 now.
- I am OK with it as long as it's enforced equally.
- 5 year inspection or _____ works. If _____ need 5 year open to remain.
- Leave it. But I preferred the furnace inspection every three years.
- Keep it as is for those who are not a problem. Increase for those that don't comply or are large violators.
- The City just changed the frequency of inspections. Can we watch this for a few years and see how it goes - collect some data, for example - then reassess at that point with concrete, factual evidence? Let's contain this anecdotal evidence about needing more frequent inspections before we create more policy based on stories and not facts.
- Make inspections more frequent for Ward 1 if that is the only ward with the problems.
- The inspection period just changed 2 years ago from what was effectively 6 years down to 5 years. Let's leave the current process in place for at least two full cycles (10 years from 1/1/2025).
- Let's keep it the way it is. All the changes implemented last year play out.

Re: Feedback Invited on the City's Rental Inspection Program

1 message

Jeff Galen <jgalen001@gmail.com>
To: Leigh Kottwitz <Leigh.Kottwitz@como.gov>

Fri, Jan 23, 2026 at 12:27 PM

Hi Leigh,

Unfortunately the Columbia Be Heard only allows for 140 characters to post, so here I my response.

As a residential property manager / owner responsible for maintaining safe, habitable housing for our community. I strongly oppose the City's proposal to increase the frequency of required Rental Unit Compliance (RUC) inspections. The current schedule, one inspection every five years, reflects a careful balance between protecting residents and minimizing unnecessary burdens on occupants, property owners, and city resources. I would support increased frequency of inspections for homes where severe violations are found.

The City's rationale for initially reducing inspection frequency from once every three years to once every five years remains valid and should continue to inform policy decisions:

1. **Alternative Mechanism for Safety Issue Identification:** Residents may report violations at any time through the City's reporting system. This complaint-driven mechanism ensures that urgent health and safety issues are addressed without waiting for a scheduled inspection.
2. **Resident Burden and Disruption:** Mandatory inspections require tenants to take time off work, arrange schedules, and often be present for the inspector. Increasing visitation frequency exacerbates this burden, particularly for working families and individuals with limited flexibility.
3. **Operational Burden on Owners and Managers:** Frequent inspections require owners or authorized representatives to be present, pulling staff away from day-to-day tasks. Each inspection also necessitates coordinating with HVAC professionals and other specialists, incurring significant time and scheduling complexity.
4. **Financial Costs:** More frequent inspections result in higher cumulative fees paid to the City and higher out-of-pocket costs for HVAC checks and other inspection requirements. These costs ultimately contribute to operating expenses that may pressure rents higher over time.
5. **Resource Requirements for the City:** Increasing inspection frequency without evidence of need would require hiring additional inspectors and administrative support at taxpayer expense — a questionable investment without demonstrated benefit.

Critically, the City **has not provided compelling evidence that more frequent inspections will measurably improve housing quality or resident well-being** compared to the existing framework. The policy shift to longer intervals was predicated on a logic that remains unchanged: properties are monitored through complaints, and proactive scheduling imposes burdens without clear return.

It's also important to note what the research and policy literature does say about rental inspection programs:

- Many housing policy organizations emphasize that proactive rental inspection programs are most effective when they are coupled with other tools such as **targeted enforcement, risk-based prioritization, performance-based licensing, tenant education, and a complaint system** — not simply more frequent blanket inspections. ([National League of Cities](#))

- Studies comparing complaint-triggered and periodic inspections show mixed results; there isn't a clear consensus that shortening the inspection cycle alone generates significantly better housing outcomes across the board. For example, the Pew Charitable Trusts found proactive elements can help some cities, but their effectiveness varies widely with implementation and context, and many cities still rely primarily on complaint-driven systems. ([Pew Charitable Trusts](#))
- National housing policy guides caution that proactive inspection programs should be strategically implemented, with performance-based approaches that reduce inspection frequency for high-performing properties and increase it only for properties with histories of violations. ([National League of Cities](#))

The literature does not support blanket increases in inspection frequency as inherently beneficial. Indeed, it highlights better targeting and prioritization, not arbitrary regularity, as essential to effective code enforcement.

Additional concerns include:

- **Inequitable burden:** Smaller property owners and low-income tenants may disproportionately feel the financial and time costs of more frequent inspections.
- **Risk of superficial compliance:** Even well-intended inspection regimes can devolve into check-the-box exercises that do little to improve actual safety, as seen in some jurisdictions where mandated checks were performed hastily or with inadequate oversight. ([Herald Sun](#))
- **Opportunity costs:** City resources spent on increased inspection volume could be better allocated to higher-risk properties, targeted enforcement, rental property education programs, and enhancing the complaint response system.

Given these considerations, I suggest that the Council:

1. Reject the proposal to increase inspection frequency at this time.
2. Commission a cost-benefit analysis with measurable outcomes (including safety improvements, resident satisfaction, and administrative costs) before any changes are enacted.
3. Strengthen the City's complaint response system and tenant outreach to ensure safety issues are identified promptly without unnecessary mandates.

Take care,

Jeff Galen

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From: Leigh Kottwitz <Leigh.Kottwitz@como.gov>

Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2026 4:44 PM

Subject: Feedback Invited on the City's Rental Inspection Program

Hello! Earlier today, our office sent a message to our rental property, real estate, and neighborhood contacts seeking feedback on City rental inspections. I am following up with a smaller group of stakeholders to ensure you received this information and to ask that you help share it with others.

At the request of City Council, our department is seeking public input on City rental inspections, particularly to gauge public interest in increasing inspection frequency, either for all properties or for those with maintenance violations. We are using **BeHeard** to gather survey responses, receive questions, and share information. The survey will be open through February 20.

There will also be a public meeting on the topic on **Tuesday, February 10**, 4-6 p.m. at the ARC, 1701 W. Ash. This is an open house-style meeting; residents can drop in anytime during the two-hour event.

Thank you for providing input in this process and for sharing this information with others in the community who may want to lend their voice. Please be in touch if I can answer any questions or assist in any way. Have a great night.

Leigh

Leigh Kottwitz

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[Volunteer Information Center](#) - self-scheduling and service reporting

www.CoMo.gov/neighborhoods

[Citizen Self Service](#) - Check code cases, permits, inspections and licenses

Hello and thank you for your time today.

My name is Matt Clay and I am a 22 year old resident in Columbia Missouri. On September 13th, 2024, my partner and I moved into 2921 Northland Drive, Apartment 101, in Columbia. This is a property managed by RE/MAX Boone Realty/The Susan Horak Group. We had decided on this complex due to fear of being unable to find a place within the time range we had, and for my partner and I it seemed easiest to navigate financially - with rent being \$850 a month. To quote my father, you get what you pay for.

Within less than 24 hours of moving into our new apartment, we were immediately aware of the presence of german cockroaches, and filed a complaint about this to RE/MAX. On October 30th, 2024, that complaint was labelled as 'canceled' by the company.

As one could imagine, the months that followed were filled with on-going complaints and requests submitted as the infestation in our unit grew. While living there we killed countless roaches- they had taken to crawling on and inside of everything we owned- to the point where electrical outlets had been covered in feces, and they had begun to nest behind paintings and in our bookcase by the end of our lease. During all of this, RE/MAX had eventually sent out pest control to our unit a small number of times, with said pest control spending less than one minute in our unit spraying.

Thankfully, with the help of MidMissouri Legal Aid, my partner and I were able to gain assistance in how to navigate the situation. We learned that what had been happening was a breach of Missouri's Warranty of Habitability, and that we had the right to break our lease. As of December 19th, 2025, we filed a petition against RE/MAX for our deposit and damages to our property during our stay. And as of August 13th, 2025, we have since been living in a non-infested duplex managed under a different company.

During my frustration and desperation to find a solution, prior to applying for MidMo Legal Aid, I found myself calling the City of Columbia Neighborhood Services. When I called, I was told by one of your representatives that quote " Those (Northland Drive Apartments) should be condemned, but there's nothing we can do because they (RE/MAX) continue to rent them out. " end quote. And since working with MidMo Legal

Aid on our case against RE/MAX, it was also discovered that these particular apartments had their rental Certificate of Compliance expire while we were still living there, and as of January 9th 2026 RE/MAX had not gotten it renewed.

Being someone who is young and/or looking for an affordable rental in a college town isn't impossible, as long as you are willing to compromise your mental health and belongings it seems. The predatory behavior displayed by larger rental companies cannot continue to be overlooked in our town. My prior apartment was the second rental I had ever signed a lease for. My current apartment is almost twice the price in rent compared to the last, and it is a sacrifice my partner and I are willing to make to guarantee a safe and sanitary living environment, a sacrifice that not everyone has the privilege to make. To quote my attorney -

"The dilemma it raises for them is that they must continue to pay rent and endure the conditions of untenability or abandon the premises and hope to find another dwelling which, in these times of severe housing shortage, is likely to be as uninhabitable as the last.."

I came today to speak so that I could share my experience renting in Columbia Missouri, but also to urge the City of Columbia Neighborhood Services to increase the frequency of rental unit inspections. I strongly believe that, especially larger companies, should be having their units inspected yearly, and those companies experience legitimate consequences for renting units in uninhabitable conditions to young and/or low-income individuals. Access to safe and sanitary living conditions should be available to all, and an individual paying to live somewhere should not have to endure gross negligence based on where they are able to afford to live.

I again, thank you for your time today, and hope to see the City of Columbia Neighborhood Services push to enforce regulations that can make renters in our community feel safer in their homes.