

## AGENDA

### City of West Fargo Short-Term Rental Committee

Tuesday, August 26, 2025

4:30 PM

Commission Chambers, West Fargo City Hall – 2515 6<sup>th</sup> St E

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1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Order of Agenda
4. Approval of Minutes – July 28, 2025
5. Public Comment Period (*Members of the public will be allowed 2 minutes and 30 seconds to address the Committee*)
6. Public Survey
  - a. Review and discuss survey results
7. Discussion on Key Policy Questions
  - a. Primary Residency Requirement – Should short-term rentals be limited to properties that serve as a primary residency, or should the city allow properties to operate STRs year-round without a primary residency requirement?
  - b. Occupancy Limits – Should occupancy limits for short-term rentals match those for long-term residential dwellings, or should STRs be permitted to host a greater number of guests?
  - c. Timing of Renewal Period – Should short-term rental licenses be renewed annually every calendar year (e.g., by December 31), or should an alternative timeline or a rolling 12-month renewal system based on the date of issuance be considered?
8. Next Steps
  - a. Discuss and approve the next steps of the Committee, including research/informational needs, member assignments, and/or agenda items for the next meeting
  - b. Approve date, time, and location of next meeting
9. Adjournment

# MEETING MINUTES

## City of West Fargo Short-Term Rental Committee

Monday, July 28, 2025

4:30 PM

West Fargo Room, West Fargo City Hall – 2515 6<sup>th</sup> St E

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### 1. Call to Order

Chair Nelson called the meeting to order at 4:30pm.

### 2. Roll Call

Committee members present: Chair Nelson, Commissioner Anderson, Deputy Fire Chief Sprecher, Captain Burkhartsmeier, Vice-Chair Jorgensen

Committee members absent: None

### 3. Approval of Order of Agenda

Commissioner Anderson moved to approve the order of agenda. Vice-Chair Jorgensen seconded. No opposition. Motion passed.

### 4. Approval of Minutes – June 30, 2025

Vice-Chair Jorgensen motioned and Deputy Fire Chief Sprecher seconded to approve the meeting minutes from June 30, 2025. No opposition. Motion passed.

### 5. Public Comment Period *(Members of the public will be allowed 2 minutes and 30 seconds to address the Committee)*

Kelcey Burgstahler: Lives directly behind an STR. States that property boundaries are not respected by guests at the STR. Police have been involved. She proposes that STR properties have fencing and that a primary contact should be elected to call for complaints that would be responded to in one hour. Since there are no background checks on renters- she would like to require any booking systems or platforms track all people staying at the STR. She supports a 3-strikes rule to suspend a license after incidents.

Letty Tieman: Shares backyard property line with STR. She has contacted the owner via finding the contact information on Air BnB. She has provided videos to the owner of renters letting dogs off leash and not cleaning up after they make messes in her yard. She is requesting that fences should be required at STRs.

Monica & Glenn Ulmer: lives in same neighborhood as Letty Some guests are quiet/respectable, but others cause problems. They've had lots of litter, cigarette butts,

blocking parking to residence, renters throwing up in their yard. They've installed a privacy fence and installed signs regarding property lines. Many renters stay over-occupancy. There are parking problems (4 spots in the driveway at the rental). They will block the driveway at times. They have submitted a letter to the STR owner regarding the problem and possible safety hazard.

Erik Stewart: He is here as a resource to the City as a STR property owner. He said that his properties are operated through AirBnB. Some of the complaints mentioned may be about long-term renters or property owners- complaints are not only regarding STRs.

## **6. Committee Updates**

### **a. Updates to the Committee Overview document**

Chair Nelson summarized the purpose of the document. The main update has been the addition of a Key Policy Questions section with 3 main questions. Chair Nelson asked if there were any policy questions committee members would like to add or discuss. Commissioner Anderson suggested evaluating the scope based on comments received from the public.

### **b. Ordinance examples from other cities in the region.** (Link to resources: [☐ Short-Term Rentals 2025](#))

Chair Nelson shared the resource information that the city used to research STRs in other cities. It is a OneDrive site available to the public. It contains example STR ordinances from cities in ND, MN, & SD, as well as a comparison summary table. International property maintenance code occupancy limits were provided to the OneDrive by Deputy Fire Chief Sprecher.

### **c. General committee discussion**

Chair Nelson asked if the committee had any comments regarding the documents in the OneDrive file. No comments were made by the committee members.

## **7. Public Survey**

### **a. Presentation and discussion of draft survey questions**

Commissioner Anderson provided some draft survey questions to the committee for review and discussion. Manager of Public Affairs Rachel Richter-Lordemann from the City's Communications Department attended the meeting to discuss the creation of the survey. Chair Nelson invited Communications to speak about the survey. Manager of Public Affairs Richter-Lordemann said the creation of the survey has already been completed in Survey Monkey with minimal staff time. Some of the questions were modified to use more neutral language or for clarity. Manager of Public Affairs Richter-Lordemann pulled up the survey for the committee to review.

### **b. Approval of survey questions and related details**

Commissioner Anderson suggested going through the survey draft to review the flow and language changes that were made by Communications. Edits were suggested by committee members. There will be a limit of one response to the survey per household. Manager of Public Affairs Richter-Lordemann asked if the public members had an issue with sharing their address on the survey. Erik Stewart said no and questioned the efficacy of the survey since questions are based on opinions. Mr. Stewart suggested a registration for all the short-term rental properties that could be used as a cross-reference for complaints/concerns. The questions for the STR owners include details about the properties (parking spaces, garbage, what types of interactions with the neighbors, etc).

Commissioner Anderson motioned to approve the survey with changes mentioned at this meeting and for the duration of August 1-22. Vice-Chair Jorgensen seconded. Roll call vote 5-0 to approve. Motion passed.

## **8. Next Steps**

### **a. Discuss and approve the next steps of the Committee, including research/informational needs, member assignments, and/or agenda items for the next meeting.**

Staff will be working to get the survey link sent out across the City's social media platforms and posted to the City website, and will consider a webpage for the survey link and additional background information of the topic. Captain Burkhartsmeier said that the police department would like the licensing and registration as a tool. He is hopeful for a strong survey response. Captain Burkhartsmeier referenced the table: Mankato, Maple Grove, and New Brighton would be like what we may want to do. Captain Burkhartsmeier would like more consideration the cities identified as having a more "middle" ground on the comparison table discussed earlier. Chair Nelson asked for committee members to review the example ordinances provided on the OneDrive so that they can be discussed at the next meeting.

A member of the public said link to OneDrive was not working. Manager of Public Affairs Richter-Lordemann requested his email address and will provide the information to him and anyone else not able to access the link.

### **b. Approve date, time, and location of next meeting**

Vice-Chair Jorgensen motioned, and Commissioner Anderson seconded to hold the next meeting at the Commission Chambers. Roll call vote of 5-0 to hold the next meeting in the Commission Chambers. Motion passed.

Vice-Chair Jorgensen motioned to hold the next committee meeting on Tuesday, August 26<sup>th</sup> at 4:30pm. Commissioner Anderson seconded. The motion passed with a roll call vote of 5-0.

## **9. Adjournment**

Commissioner Anderson motioned to adjourn the meeting. Vice-Chair Jorgensen seconded.  
Meeting adjourned at 5:30pm.

# Short Term Rental Committee

Stakeholder Survey Results

# Overview

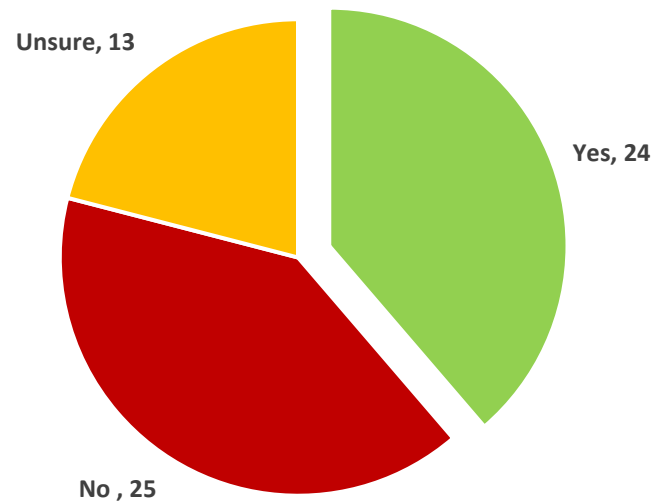
- Survey responses categories by self-identification:
  - West Fargo Resident
  - Owner/Operator
  - Renter
  - Service Provider

# West Fargo Resident Responses

- 122 Responses Received
- **62** responses were able to be analyzed
- 60 responses were unable to be analyzed
  - Respondent did not complete any additional questions

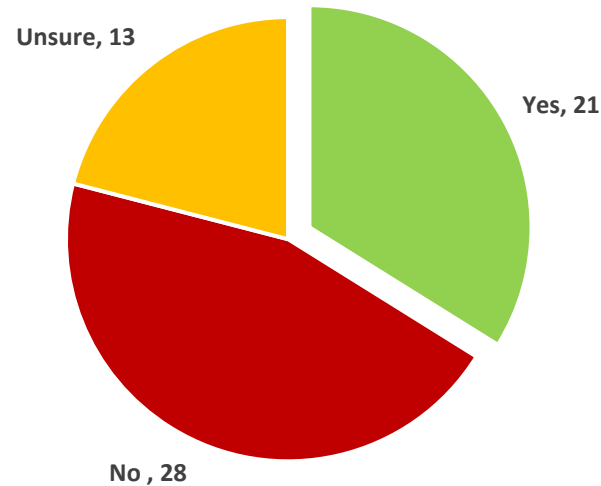
# West Fargo Resident Responses

- Question: Are you aware of any STR Properties within two blocks of your residence?



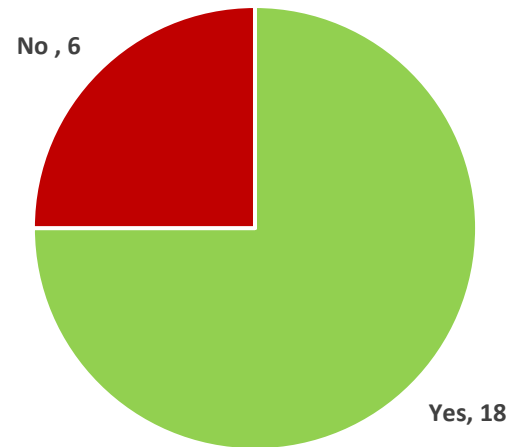
# West Fargo Resident Responses

- Question: Have you had any interaction with STR Properties in your residential area?



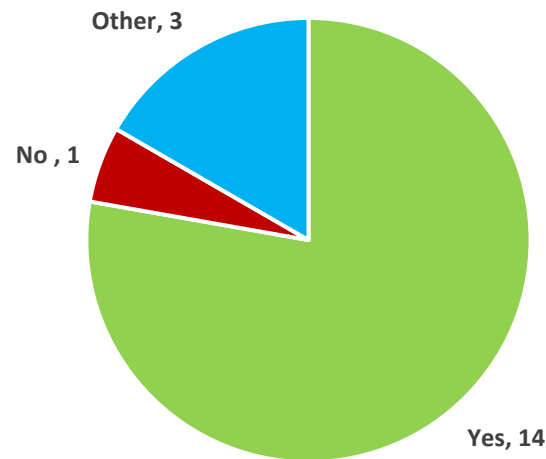
# West Fargo Resident Responses

- Question: Have you ever communicated with the owner of the Short Term Rental Property in your residential area? (Out of 24 who answered Yes previous question)



# West Fargo Resident Responses

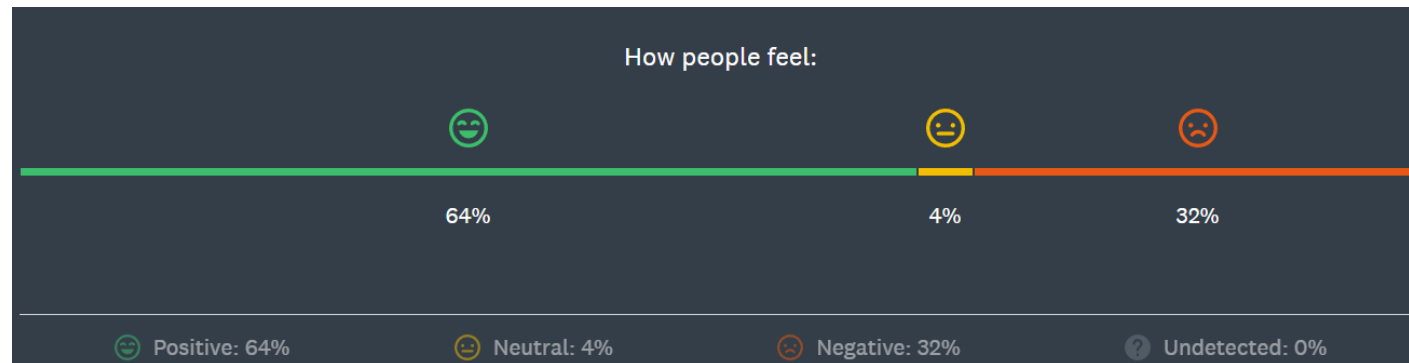
- Question: If you answered Yes to the previous question, were you able to get in direct contact with a property owner or manager?



\*Of the three who answered “other” none provided additional explanation.

# West Fargo Resident Responses

- Question: If there is an STR in your neighborhood, please describe your experiences with the property. Experiences could be positive, negative, or neutral. (Out of 24 who answered Yes.)



# West Fargo Resident Responses

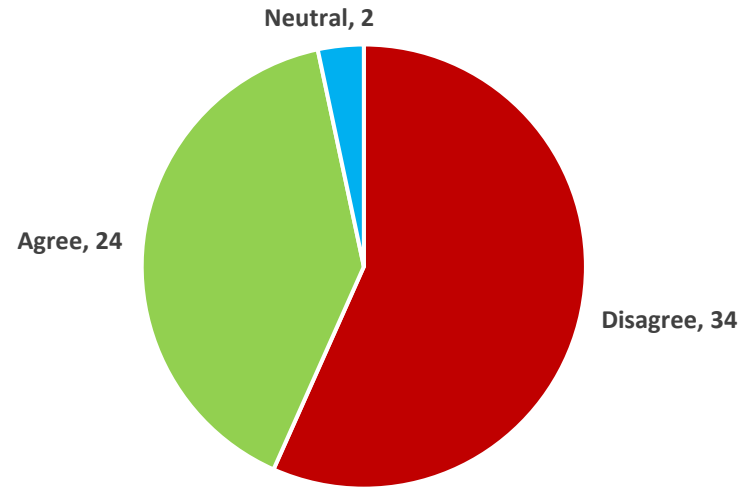
- **Overall Sentiment:** Overwhelmingly positive.
- **Guest Behavior:** Guests are respectful, quiet, and professional—often construction workers, welders, or traveling nurses.
- **Neighborhood Impact:**
  - No issues with noise, parking, or parties.
  - Properties are well-maintained with good curb appeal.
  - Frequent activity brings a sense of vibrancy without disruption.
- **Community Interaction:**
  - Guests are friendly and enjoy the area.
  - Some neighbors have direct contact with property owners, who are proactive and responsive.
- **Economic & Social Benefits:**
  - Seen as beneficial for both homeowners and the neighborhood.
  - Brings positive attention and visitors to the area.

# West Fargo Resident Responses

- Negative Feedback/Themes:
  - 3 Responses related to one property and incident. Property was discussed at previous committee meeting.
  - 1 Response related to a long-term rental in the neighborhood
  - Remaining response themes:
    - **Parking** – specifically blocking driveways, lack of street parking, and increased traffic
    - **Noise** – properties often used for large gatherings, do not follow noise ordinances
    - **Safety** – neighbors express concern over unfamiliar folks coming and going from their neighborhoods

# West Fargo Resident Responses

- Question: Do you agree or disagree with including a Primary Residence Requirement in the STR Ordinance



# West Fargo Resident Responses

## Feedback on Ordinance:

### • General Support

- Many residents support allowing STRs, citing **positive experiences, economic benefits, and well-maintained properties.**
- Most agree that **basic registration and safety inspections** are reasonable.

### • Primary Residence Requirement

- **Widespread opposition** to the requirement that STRs be a primary residence.
- Seen as **unrealistic, exclusionary, and not reflective of how STRs operate** in West Fargo.
- Limits **investment, property improvement, and housing flexibility.**
- Residents argue it **discourages families, investors, and traveling professionals.**
- Some support **owner proximity** (e.g., living in or near West Fargo), but not full-time occupancy.

### • Occupancy Limits

- Many oppose the **5 unrelated persons limit**, especially for **large families or group travelers.**
- Suggestions include:
  - **Flexible occupancy** based on home size or sleeping areas.
  - Avoid penalizing **multi-generational or large family groups.**

### • Other Key Themes

- **Accountability:** Owners should respond quickly to complaints and be responsible for guest behavior.
- **Transparency:** Share contact info with neighbors; maintain a public list of licensed STRs.
- **Enforcement:** Frustration with slow or ineffective city response to violations.
- **Minimal Regulation Preferred:** Many feel the city is overreaching and creating a problem where none exists.

### • Diverse Opinions

- A few residents support **stricter rules or banning STRs entirely.**
- Others want **fewer restrictions**, focusing only on **existing property codes.**

# West Fargo Resident Responses

## Other Comments:

- **Primary Residence Requirement**

- **Supporters** argue it ensures owners are accountable and invested in neighborhood well-being.
- **Opponents** believe it would drastically reduce STR availability, limit economic opportunity, and unfairly restrict property use.

- **Fairness & Regulatory Consistency**

- Many residents feel STRs are being held to stricter standards than long-term rentals, despite similar or worse issues from the latter.
- Calls for equal regulation, including licensing, inspections, and complaint tracking for all rental types.
- Several commenters view the proposed regulations as unnecessary and burdensome, questioning whether STRs are a widespread problem or the result of isolated complaints.

- **Occupancy & Guest Limits**

- Widespread opposition to strict limits on unrelated guests or total occupancy.
- Recommendations include:
  - Basing occupancy on available bed space.
  - Enforcing penalties for disruptive behavior rather than blanket restrictions.

- **Community Benefits of STRs**

- STRs provide flexible, affordable housing for:
  - Medical patients and families needing temporary stays.
  - Traveling professionals such as nurses and trainees.
  - Visiting families who prefer home-like accommodations.

- **Neighborhood Impact & Safety**

- A minority raised concerns about crime, noise, and safety.
- Others noted that STRs are often better maintained than nearby long-term rentals and pose fewer ongoing issues.

# Owner/Operator Responses

- 20 Responses Received
- **2** responses were from owners/operators in West Fargo
- **4** responses were from owners/operators in Fargo
- 14 responses were unable to be analyzed
  - Respondent did not complete any additional questions

# Owner/Operator Responses

## Feedback on Ordinance:

- **Primary Residence Requirement:**

- Oppose defining STRs as primary residences. This effectively bans them and discourages investment.
- Requiring owners to live in the property is overly restrictive and deters responsible investors.
- Delays investment potential. Recommend removing this barrier while keeping strong inspection standards.

- **Occupancy Limit:**

- A flat 5-person cap is too limiting. Suggest limits based on bedrooms or parking spaces

- **Licensing Transparency:**

- Clearly outline STR license fees, violations, and penalties.

- **STR Oversight:**

- STRs are well-maintained due to frequent cleaning and management.

- **General Approach:**

- Keep it simple—annual inspections and a license fee. Let the market regulate poor hosts.

# Renter Responses

- 15 Responses Received
- **5** responses were able to be analyzed
- 10 responses were unable to be analyzed
  - Respondent did not complete any additional questions

# Renter Responses

## General Comments/Feedback:

- There is a clear need for short-term rentals in West Fargo, especially for large families or groups traveling together.
- Short-term rentals can make travel more affordable and convenient.
- However, the rise in short-term rental purchases is reducing the availability of affordable homes.
- This trend makes it harder for young families and first-time buyers to purchase homes and establish roots in the community.
- While investors seek profit, it can come at the cost of long-term community stability.

# Service Provider Responses

- 9 Responses Received
- **6** responses were able to be analyzed
  - Financial Services
  - Snow Removal/Lawn Care
  - HVAC
  - Construction/Maintenance
- 3 responses were unable to be analyzed
  - Respondent did not complete any additional questions

# Service Provider Responses

## General Comments/Feedback:

- **Positive Owner Relationships:** Strong, successful working relationships with STR owners; they are responsive and responsible.
- **Consistent Revenue:** STRs provide a reliable income stream for businesses involved.
- **Well-Maintained Properties:** STRs are managed daily, cleaned regularly, and kept in excellent condition.
- **Quality Remodels:** Renovations for STRs often exceed standard home remodels in cleanliness and upkeep.

# Key Policy Questions Guide

## **Purpose of this Guide:**

This guide is intended to help evaluate the three key policy questions identified by the Short-Term Rental Committee. For each of the three policy questions, a set of potential options, evaluation criteria, and pros & cons list are provided to assist in policy discussion and deliberation.

## **Evaluation Considerations:**

The following criteria may be helpful to consider when evaluating alternative options for each of the key policy questions:

1. **Public Safety:** Potential impacts on health, safety, and related code adherence.
2. **Housing & Neighborhood Impact:** Effect on housing affordability, availability, and neighborhood quality.
3. **Economic & Fiscal Impact:** Influence on tourism, local business activity, and city revenue.
4. **Administrative Feasibility:** Ease of implementation, monitoring, and enforcement.
5. **Parity & Fairness:** Balanced treatment of stakeholders, including residents, operators, and visitors.
6. **Flexibility & Simplicity:** Clarity for users/operators and adaptability to changing conditions.

The guide includes a criteria matrix for each policy question. The matrix can be used to track notes or can be used to identify positive or negative outcomes in relation to each criteria (e.g., insert “+” for a positive impact, a “-“ for a negative impact, or a “0” for a neutral or no impact on the given criteria).

# Policy Question 1:

*Should STRs be limited to properties that serve as a primary residence (occupied by the owner/tenant for a majority of the year), or allowed to operate year-round without such a requirement?*

## Policy Options

- 1) Require STRs to be within a Primary Residence
- 2) Allow STRs to operate year-round
- 3) Place other limitations on short-term rentals
  - a. Limit number of STRs per geographic area (e.g., max number of license issued per block, minimum spacing requirements)
- 4) Others?

## Criteria Analysis

*(See note on page 1)*

| <b>Criteria / Objective</b>   | <b>Primary Residency Required</b> | <b>No Residency Requirement</b> | <b>Alternative Limitations</b> |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Public Safety                 |                                   |                                 |                                |
| Housing & Neighborhood Impact |                                   |                                 |                                |
| Economic & Fiscal Impact      |                                   |                                 |                                |
| Administrative Feasibility    |                                   |                                 |                                |
| Parity & Fairness             |                                   |                                 |                                |
| Flexibility & Simplicity      |                                   |                                 |                                |

## Pros & Cons

| Option                               | Pros                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Cons                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Primary Residency Requirement</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protects residential housing stock for use by residents</li> <li>• On-site owners/operators may result in better maintained properties</li> <li>• May enhances neighborhood cohesion by limiting transient guests and preserving residential feel</li> <li>•</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limits STR income potential of property owners/operators</li> <li>• Limits lodging options for visitors</li> <li>• Additional administrative burden to monitor and enforce</li> <li>•</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>No Residency Requirement</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases lodging options for visitors</li> <li>• Increases income potential of property owners/operators</li> <li>• Less administrative burden to monitor and enforce</li> <li>•</li> </ul>                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May result in increase to housing costs as residents compete with investors/visitors for housing units (increased housing demand)</li> <li>• Increased potential for absentee operators and negative STR impacts to neighborhoods (e.g., noise, parking, etc.)</li> <li>• Some may consider this a loophole that allows commercial use (lodging) without meeting commercial building codes or paying commercial property taxes, as traditional hotels/motels are required to do.</li> <li>•</li> </ul> |

## Notes & Additional Considerations:

## Policy Question 2:

*Should occupancy limits for short-term rentals match those for long-term residential dwellings, or should STRs be permitted to host a greater number of guests?*

### Policy Options

- 1) Match Long-Term Limits (1 family or up to 5 unrelated persons)
- 2) Allow Greater Occupancy
  - a. Up to “X” number of persons
  - b. Variable number based on building code max occupancy
  - c. Variable number based on sleeping space/bedrooms
- 3) Match Long-Term Limits while allowing exceptions (e.g., more occupancy if a dwelling has “X” or more number of bedroom)
- 4) Others?

### Criteria Analysis

*(See note on page 1)*

| <b>Criteria / Objective</b>   | <b>Match Long-Term Limits</b> | <b>Allow Greater Occupancy</b> | <b>Long-Term limits with Exceptions</b> |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Public Safety                 |                               |                                |                                         |
| Housing & Neighborhood Impact |                               |                                |                                         |
| Economic & Fiscal Impact      |                               |                                |                                         |
| Administrative Feasibility    |                               |                                |                                         |
| Parity & Fairness             |                               |                                |                                         |
| Flexibility & Simplicity      |                               |                                |                                         |

## Pros & Cons

| Option                                 | Pros                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Cons                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Match Long-Term Limits                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent occupancy standards for residents and visitors alike</li> <li>• Preserves neighborhood quality by limiting large groups and associated disturbances.</li> <li>•</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limits options for visitors, especially larger groups or multiple families.</li> <li>• May lower STR income by restricting high-occupancy premiums.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                   |
| Allow Greater Occupancy                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More options and opportunities for visitors (especially large groups or multiple families traveling together)</li> <li>• Increased STR incomes</li> <li>•</li> </ul>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased potential for adverse impacts on neighborhood associated with higher occupancy (e.g., more noise, more vehicles, more trash, etc.)</li> <li>• May incentivize conversion of residential units to STR rentals if greater occupancy allowances results in greater revenue potential for STRs.</li> <li>•</li> </ul> |
| Match Long-Term Limits with Exceptions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balances consistency with flexibility for specified scenarios</li> <li>•</li> </ul>                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential for increased administrative burden and costs associated with processing applications for exceptions</li> <li>• Potential for inconsistent application of exceptions if criteria are too subjective.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>                                                                                        |

## Notes & Additional Considerations:

## Policy Question 3:

*Should short-term rental licenses be renewed annually every calendar year (e.g., by December 31), or should an alternative timeline or a rolling 12-month renewal system based on the date of issuance be considered?*

### Policy Options

- 1) One-time annual license renewal
  - a. each calendar year (i.e., by January 1 of each year)
  - b. sometime other than the calendar year (e.g., by July 1 of each year)
- 2) Rolling monthly annual renewal based on the month of issuance. (e.g., a license issued in September of 2025 would have to be renewed by September 2026)
- 3) Others?

### Criteria Analysis

*(See note on page 1)*

| <b>Criteria / Objective</b>   | <b>One-Time Annual Renewal (calendar year)</b> | <b>One-Time Annual Renewal (alternative renewal date)</b> | <b>Monthly Annual Renewal</b> |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Public Safety                 |                                                |                                                           |                               |
| Housing & Neighborhood Impact |                                                |                                                           |                               |
| Economic & Fiscal Impact      |                                                |                                                           |                               |
| Administrative Feasibility    |                                                |                                                           |                               |
| Parity & Fairness             |                                                |                                                           |                               |
| Flexibility & Simplicity      |                                                |                                                           |                               |

**Pros & Cons**

| <b>Option</b>                  | <b>Pros</b>                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Cons</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Mitigations for Cons</b>                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>One-Time Annual Renewal</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple to administer, clear and uniform deadlines</li> <li>• Aligns with City’s fiscal cycle</li> <li>•</li> </ul>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be unfair to new applicants applying shortly before annual renewal period.</li> <li>• Potential to create a peak in workload during renewal period.</li> <li>•</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pro-rate fees for partial year</li> <li>•</li> </ul>                                                        |
| <p>Monthly Annual Renewal</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More fair and flexible for all applicants</li> <li>• Spreads renewal workload out throughout the year.</li> <li>•</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More burdensome to administer—would require monthly tracking and management</li> <li>•</li> </ul>                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential software solutions to assist with automated tracking, notices, and renewals</li> <li>•</li> </ul> |

**Notes & Additional Considerations:**