



CU-26001

City of Sumas

FEB 18 2026

Received

CITY OF SUMAS
Public Works Department
Conditional Use Permit Application

The following information or material must accompany this conditional use permit application. If any of this information is missing or incomplete, processing of the application will not begin.

- Filing fee of \$500 -Includes eight hours of staff time; additional billed actual
- Completed SEPA checklist (non-refundable fee of \$250 may apply for Review/ Determination)
- **Fee Schedule established in Section 3.030.010 SMC
- Complete answers to the 6 questions that are attached. If additional space is needed use a separate sheet of paper.
- A map, drawn to scale, of the location of the proposed conditional use showing existing buildings, street(s) and property lines, as well as any proposed new structures, roads, parking areas, landscaping, or other improvements. If the map is larger than 11" X 17", submit 3 copies. The map must clearly outline the property included in the conditional use request and must state the area (sq. ft.) of the property.
- Self-adhesive address labels preaddressed to the latest recorded real property owners within three hundred feet (300') of the property affected by the application, as shown by the records of the Whatcom County Assessor

Applicant(s) Name(s): Gertrude James

Mailing Address: 1559 Fruiland Drive, Bellingham, WA 98226

Phone Number: 360-441-3954

Address of Affected Property: 540 2nd Street, Building A, Unit 1-2, Sumas, WA 98295

Assessor's tax parcel number for affected property: 410435-092213-0000

Legal Description of affected property: Tract A, Candlewood Lot Line Adjustment, according to the plat thereof, recorded August 5, 1998, under Auditor's File No. 1980800546, records of Whatcom County, Washington

Current use of property: Rental

Proposed conditional use of property (briefly describe): Short-term rental (Airbnb-style lodging for the downstairs unit(s)).

Provide the following information:

*If more space is needed, please continue on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Describe how the conditional use will be harmonious and consistent with the general and specific objectives of the Sumas Comprehensive Plan.

The proposed conditional use—short-term rental occupancy at 540 2nd Street, Building A, Units 1 and 2—is harmonious and consistent with the City of Sumas Comprehensive Plan for the following reasons:

- **Public Safety and Risk Reduction:** The lower units are located in a historically flood-prone area and have experienced repeated flood impacts, including the 2025 historic flood event. Converting these units from long-term occupancy to short-term rental use reduces continuous habitation in the most vulnerable portion of the structure, supporting hazard mitigation and emergency preparedness objectives.
- **Adaptive and Responsible Land Use:** This request reflects responsible adaptation of existing housing stock. It supports continued productive use of the property and reinvestment, helping prevent vacancy or blight in a flood-impacted area.
- **Neighborhood Compatibility:** The building remains residential in scale, footprint, and appearance. No industrial or high-impact commercial activity is introduced, and regular maintenance supports neighborhood stability.
- **Economic Stability and Community Vitality:** Short-term rental use provides a sustainable path to maintain the property and contributes to local spending and community activity.
- **Balanced Housing and Community Benefit:** The lower units are increasingly unsuitable for stable long-term tenancy due to flood risk. Short-term rental use reduces repeated tenant displacement while preserving residential function.
- **Infrastructure and Service Impacts:** Demand on utilities, roads, and services remains consistent with typical residential use, and the owner will comply with all City operational requirements.

2. Describe how the use will be designed, and operated so as to be compatible with the character of the neighborhood. For new construction, provide elevations and a site plan, drawn to scale.

The proposed short-term rental use is designed and will be operated in a manner fully compatible with the residential character of the surrounding neighborhood.

Design Showcasing Residential Quality: No expansion of the building footprint, increase in density, or exterior changes are proposed. The units have been restored following flood damage with modern residential upgrades, including updated finishes, new appliances, full kitchens, in-unit laundry, and upgraded bathroom fixtures.

Operational Controls: Occupancy limits, guest rules, quiet hours, and active owner management will ensure respectful operation. Guests will also be informed of flood safety and evacuation procedures.

Neighborhood Benefit: Maintaining a high-quality property reduces vacancy risk and supports neighborhood appearance and stability.

3. Describe in detail the impact of the use upon public facilities, including streets (e.g. number of trips generated by employees and customers, size and type of vehicles), water system (water used per month), sewer systems, storm drainage system (amount of impervious surface, police and fire services, refuse disposal service, school system).

The proposed short-term rental use is expected to have minimal impact on public facilities and services, remaining consistent with standard residential demand.

Traffic: Guest travel is limited to arrivals and departures in standard passenger vehicles. No additional commercial traffic is anticipated.

Employees: Part-time service providers (cleaner, lawn care, handyman) will visit periodically as needed.

Water & Sewer: Usage remains within normal residential levels and may be reduced due to vacancy between stays.

Storm Drainage: No changes to impervious surface area are proposed.

Police/Fire: Impacts remain consistent with residential use due to house rules and owner oversight.

Refuse Disposal: Waste remains typical of residential use and will be managed through regular service.

Schools: No school impacts are expected as guests do not establish residency.

4. Describe hours of operation; number of employees; type of product service rendered; processes, activities, materials, chemicals, equipment, and conditions of operation.

The proposed use is short-term residential lodging within an existing dwelling and does not operate as a storefront or event venue.

Hours: Guest access is 24 hours, with check-in after 4:00 PM and check-out by 11:00 AM.

Quiet hours

will be enforced from 10:00 PM to 7:00 AM.

Employees: Approximately three part-time service providers support cleaning, lawn care, and maintenance.

Service Rendered: Temporary lodging with standard household amenities.

Materials/Equipment: Only normal household appliances and cleaning products are used.

Conditions: Occupancy limits, no parties/events, and active management will be maintained.

5. Describe associated noise, fumes, glare, dust, odor, smoke, mechanical vibration, and radio or television interference.

The proposed use will not generate noise, fumes, glare, dust, odor, smoke, mechanical vibration, or interference beyond what is typical of a residential dwelling. Quiet hours will be enforced.

6. If applicable describe how natural, scenic, or historic features will be maintained and protected from destruction, loss, or damages.

No land disturbance, grading, or expansion is proposed. Existing natural features, scenic character, and any historic resources will be preserved, as the use is limited to residential occupancy and routine maintenance.

DECLARATION:

I (we) the undersigned hereby declare under penalty of perjury that:

- a. The property affected by this application is exclusively owned by the applicant(s) or has been submitted with the consent of all owners of the affected property;
- b. The project permit application materials contain no known misrepresentation of fact or proposed action or design that, if completed would result in a structure, improvement, lot or condition in violation of the Sumas Municipal Code; and

Signature of Applicant(s): Gertrude James

Date of Submittal: 02/18/2026

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FOR OFFICE USE ONLY BELOW THIS LINE

Date of Notice of Completion to Applicant (mailed): _____

Date of Notice of Application to the Public (mailed, published): _____

Date of Close of Comment Period: _____

Date of Administrator's Decision: _____

Date of Notice of Decision to Public (mailed, published): _____

CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION

Short-Term Rental (Airbnb-Style Lodging)

City of Sumas, Washington

Property Address: 540 Second Street, Building A, Units 1–2, Sumas, WA 98295

Parcel Number: 410435-092213-0000

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant Name: Gertrude James

Mailing Address: 1559 Fruitland Drive, Bellingham, WA 98226

Phone: 360-441-3954

Email: ninigerthomes@gmail.com

Current Use: Residential Rental

Proposed Use: Short-Term Rental (Airbnb-style lodging)

PROJECT OVERVIEW

This application requests approval for a conditional use permit to operate two residential units within an existing four-plex structure as short-term rentals.

The property is a multi-family residential building constructed in 1979, consisting of four self-contained dwelling units. Each unit includes independent kitchen, bathroom, sleeping areas, and separate entrances.

The building has been continuously maintained as residential housing and remains fully compatible with surrounding neighborhood character.

NARRATIVE RESPONSES

1. Comprehensive Plan Consistency

The proposed short-term rental use is consistent with the City of Sumas Comprehensive Plan for the following reasons:

The property is in a flood-prone area and has experienced repeated flood impacts, including the 2025 historic flood event. Converting units to short-term rental reduces long-term occupancy in the most vulnerable portion of the structure and supports hazard mitigation and safety.

The proposal supports adaptive reuse of existing housing stock and prevents vacancies or deterioration.

The structure remains residential in appearance, scale, and use.

No expansion or intensification of land use is proposed.

The use supports continued maintenance and economic sustainability of the property.

2. Neighborhood Compatibility

The proposed use is fully compatible with surrounding residential uses.

No structural changes or expansion are proposed

Units remain residential in design and function

Strict house rules, quiet hours, and occupancy limits will be enforced

No parties or events are allowed

Guests will be informed of expectations prior to arrival

These measures ensure the property maintains neighborhood stability and residential character.

3. Public Facilities and Services

Impacts on public services will remain minimal and consistent with residential use:

Traffic: Limited to standard passenger vehicle arrivals/departures

Water/Sewer: Residential-level use

Stormwater: No changes proposed

Police/Fire: No increase beyond normal residential levels due to active management

Refuse: Standard residential service maintained

Schools: No impact, as guests are temporary occupants

4. Operations, Hours, and Staffing

Guest access: 24 hours

Check-in: after 4:00 PM

Check-out: by 11:00 AM

Quiet hours: 10:00 PM – 7:00 AM

Approximately three part-time service providers support cleaning and maintenance.

The property will not operate as an event venue or commercial storefront.

5. Environmental and Nuisance Impacts

The use will not create impacts beyond typical residential activity.

No noise, odor, glare, dust, or vibration beyond normal residential levels

Quiet hours will be enforced

Active management will ensure compliance with all rules

6. Natural and Scenic Features

No land disturbance or structural changes are proposed.

Existing buildings remain unchanged

No grading or vegetation removal is required

Residential character of the site is preserved

COMPLIANCE WITH SMC 20.52.060

The property meets all requirements for short-term rental approval under City of Sumas code.

(a) Occupancy

Occupancy will comply with applicable building code standards and will not exceed safe or lawful limits based on bedrooms, square footage, and egress capacity. Occupancy will be actively monitored.

(b) Parking

The property provides approximately eight on-site parking spaces serving the four-unit structure. One designated space is allocated for short-term rental use.

Guest parking will be limited to available on-site spaces only. No overflow or street parking will be permitted.

(c) Signage

No exterior signage or advertising will be displayed.

(d) Solid Waste

Standard residential garbage and recycling service will be maintained in compliance with City requirements.

(e) Local Property Representative

The applicant resides within approximately ten miles of the property and will serve as the local contact and property manager.

The applicant will respond promptly to any complaints or issues and will provide required contact information to the City and adjacent property owners.

(f) Interior Information Posting

Each unit will include a posted notice containing:

Occupancy limits

Parking instructions

Emergency evacuation routes

Local contact information

Guest rules and expectations

(g) Fire Safety

The property meets residential fire safety standards, including smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and safe egress points.

Annual fire inspections will be completed as required by the city.

(h) Other Standards

The property complies with zoning requirements including setbacks, height, and lot coverage. No structural expansion is proposed.

Ongoing Compliance Commitment

The applicant commits to full compliance with all City of Sumas regulations, including licensing, taxes, safety requirements, and complaint response procedures.

FINAL STATEMENT

Based on the above information, the property at 540 Second Street meets the requirements for approval as a short-term rental under Sumas Municipal Code Section 20.52.060.

Signature

Gertrude James

Date: 2/9/2026