

Chickens in Proximity to Human Habitation

Should the County amend County Code, Chapter 6, Article 1, Section 6.2 to allow the keeping of a small number of chickens in all residential areas?

All Statements sorted chronologically

As of November 14, 2014, 11:03 AM



As with any public comment process, participation in Open Forum is voluntary. The statements in this record are not necessarily representative of the whole population, nor do they reflect the opinions of any government agency or elected officials.

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Introduction

Editor's note: to access files referenced below in the PDF version, either switch to the HTML version of the Open Forum topic to download them, or, you can review hard copies of the documents at the reference desk of either public library or inside the west vestibule of the Municipal Building.

Residents of the County have made requests for the Council to consider an amendment to the Code of Ordinances to allow the keeping of a small number of chickens in all residential districts.

Section 6-2 of the Code of Ordinances currently prohibits the keeping of chickens within the County, except in the residential agricultural districts (R-A) zone and in all other residential districts, excluding Pajarito Acres and La Senda, if chickens are kept within 200 yards from a residence regularly used for human habitation.

The proposed amendment expands the current ordinance to permit the practice of keeping chickens within all residential districts in the County subject to certain conditions:

- Must be for residential, noncommercial purposes;
- Maximum of 6 on any lot;
- Must be at least 16 square feet of permeable land available for each chicken;
- Must have at least 2 square feet of shelter space per chicken;
- Adequate shelter must be provided;
- Shelter must be kept clean, dry, odor-free and in sanitary condition at all times;
- Adequate fencing must be provided;
- Chickens must have access to the sun during daylight hours and kept in secure shelter at night;
- Cannot be kept closer than 35 feet to a dwelling unit on abutting property;
- Cannot be kept in front, rear or side setbacks;
- Cannot be kept closer than 100 feet to a water well;
- Keeping and maintaining chickens must comply with all applicable health and safety laws;
- All areas devoted to chickens must be constructed and maintained to discourage insects and rodents; and
- No roosters are allowed.

Did the County review ordinances from other communities? Yes. A review and summary of other such ordinances around the state of New Mexico and a few from Colorado are attached here and included as part of the staff report.

What's the next step? This item will be Introduced at the Council's Friday noon-time meeting on Oct. 10th in Council Chambers (Municipal Building, Rm 100). The public hearing will be Friday, Nov. 14th at noon in Council Chambers. Public comment is not accepted upon Introduction; members of the public who wish to make comments in person should plan to attend the Council meeting on Nov. 14. Friday Council meetings are limited to 1.5 hours and end promptly at 1:30 p.m.

What if I don't want to use Open Forum? Citizens who do not wish to use Open Forum can submit comments directly to the Council at countycouncil@lacnm.us

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What is the alternative? On Oct. 10th, Council could choose not to introduce this Ordinance, resulting in the preservation of the status quo, which currently does not allow chickens to be kept in residential zones with the exception of Pajarito Acres and La Senda, and other residential districts only if chickens are kept within 200 yards from a residence regularly used for human habitation. On Nov. 14th (the public hearing), Council could vote against the ordinance, which would maintain the status quo. Or, Council could direct the Attorney to make changes to the Ordinance (which, if substantial, would require the process to begin again for another legal notice publication period, introduction and then public hearing.)

What's different in this version versus the previous version published in September on Open Forum? The earlier version included the ability to keep all poultry in residential areas, such as turkeys and wild peacocks. The new version only applies to keeping chickens. It also had language about slaughtering that was removed in this new version.

Can I comment on this ordinance even if I commented on the earlier ordinance that was posted to Open Forum? Yes. This is an entirely NEW Open Forum topic - so your comments are welcome and encouraged.

I commented on the previous ordinance and my comments are still valid. What happened to my comments now that the previous Open Forum topic was closed? You can read all comments made on the previous version in this attached Open Forum Report. This report will go to Council to consider as additional comments as part of the Public Hearing on Nov. 14th.

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As of November 14, 2014, 11:03 AM, this forum had:

Attendees: 369

All Statements: 65

Hours of Public Comment: 3.3

This topic started on October 7, 2014, 12:30 PM.

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Should the County amend County Code, Chapter 6, Article 1, Section 6.2 to allow the keeping of a small number of chickens in all residential areas?

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 14, 2014, 10:33 AM

Absolutely not. Residential means residential, not housing for chickens or farming for profit or personal egg production. Golly, what next!

Name not shown inside WESTERN (on forum)

November 14, 2014, 9:57 AM

What's all the fuss about? Chickens are pets, just like all the others we may love or simply tolerate in our neighborhoods. Chickens have a long historical presence here on the Pajarito Plateau. I imagine most pre-Manhattan Project residents raised chickens for food. My mom and my aunt used to regale us with wild stories of chicken coop adventures while living "behind the fence" in the 1940s. I grew up in Los Alamos; while hoof stock were not allowed, backyard chickens, ducks and geese were quite common. Our kids have grown up here in Los Alamos with backyard chickens, cats and dogs and the occasional snake or lizard. Before the Cerro Grande fire, while we lived in the "cancer cluster", environmental scientists from LANL collected eggs from our chickens and others in our neighborhood to check for cancer causing agents in the ground. Chickens are relatively harmless and pleasant backyard animals. Responsible pet owners can and should keep their coops clean and keep their chickens well cared for in the same manner that they should care for all animals.

I whole-heartedly support allowing backyard chickens in residential areas throughout Los Alamos County. Rather than a densely packed urban area, we are a somewhat sprawling community, and the urban chicken movement has shown that backyard chickens are an asset, not a detriment. The proposed ordinance seems restrictive. We don't limit cats and dogs to areas inside the setbacks or require them to be 35 feet from the nearest neighbor's dwelling. Requiring a specific number of square feet per chicken seems silly. Limiting chickens to 6 per yard is unnecessary. Chickens do not lower property values, nor do they attract coyotes, mountain lions, raccoons, etc. we already have all these animals in our town. In fact, these predators seem more interested in folks trash and cat or dog food than chickens which are generally kept in a varmint-proof enclosure. The aggressive deer and banded doves that have taken over my neighborhood are far more annoying and troublesome than my neighbors' chickens. Chickens are not noisy; their clucking is much quieter than dogs in my neighborhood, or even kids, cars and construction equipment. Even roosters are rarely annoying and can serve to protect the flock if a predator were nearby. My chickens and dogs have happily coexisted here in Los Alamos and the other chicken-friendly communities we have lived in.

I am dismayed by the negative and vitriolic opinions voiced by some over this issue. Let's use common sense! Please allow chickens with very limited regulation in backyards throughout the county. You will be glad you did.

1 Supporter

Name not shown inside WHITE ROCK (on forum)

November 14, 2014, 8:48 AM

I am absolutely in favor of having backyard chickens!

They are very much like dogs and cats in their "companionship" appeal. In fact, they are less of a neighborhood nuisance than dogs or cats (of which I have both). Chickens don't bark at neighbors or kids or sirens or - a leaf. They don't wander the neighborhood killing birds and pooping in other peoples yards and

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gardens (even though it would do the garden a world of good). They don't cause public safety issues by running away or biting anyone. And you know what? They don't smell any worse than dogs or cats! If you don't clean up your dog poop for 3 weeks, how's your yard? If the cat box doesn't get emptied for 3 weeks (or 3 days for that matter) how's it smell? I think people can use some common sense here.

When we choose to live in a community, we live with people and their pets. We live with their motorcycles, their teenage drummers, their minor announces that add spice to our lives. If we had the same restrictions for dogs and cats as are being proposed for chickens, can you imagine the uproar?

My chicken pen gets cleaned regularly, as does my dog poop and cat boxes. My chickens cluck once a day for less than 5 minutes while laying an egg (really cute actually). Nice that a pet contributes to our dinner table. My neighbors don't seem to mind, and get eggs on occasion.

Let's use some common sense and treat this like we do the other pets in our lives.

2 Supporters

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 14, 2014, 8:44 AM

I am absolutely in favor of having backyard chickens!

They are very much like dogs and cats in their "companionship" appeal. In fact, they are less of a neighborhood nuisance than dogs or cats (of which I have both). Chickens don't bark at neighbors or kids or sirens or - a leaf. They don't wander the neighborhood killing birds and pooping in other peoples yards and gardens (even though it would do the garden a world of good). They don't cause public safety issues by running away or biting anyone. And you know what? They don't smell any worse than dogs or cats! If you don't clean up your dog poop for 3 weeks, how's your yard? If the cat box doesn't get emptied for 3 weeks (or 3 days for that matter) how's it smell? I think people can use some common sense here.

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Name not shown inside WESTERN (on forum)

November 14, 2014, 8:12 AM

I support the keeping of chickens in LA County residential areas.

A vast array of pets are currently kept throughout our town, with livability purported to be among the highest in the country. Relative to other types of my neighbors' pets, chickens are among the more enjoyable, quiet, and pleasant (consider the simple yapping dog); a setback guideline is unnecessary & singles out chickens unfairly (again, the yapping dog at the fence or consider the wondering cat). We do live within the urban/wild(ish)land interface and already share this habitat with coyotes, skunks, rodents, bear, etc. How is it that chickens unfairly change this balance?

Let's be reasonable. Let's not over regulate on chickens.

1 Supporter

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 14, 2014, 8:11 AM

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Let's be reasonable. Let's not over regulate on chickens.

Name not shown inside BARRANCA MESA (on forum)

November 14, 2014, 6:53 AM

We are strongly opposed to having the County Council amend the county code to all the keeping of chickens in all residential areas. We do not want to live in a rural area, and don't think it is reasonable to change the zoning to alter the life style of a neighborhood from the way it was when we decided to move there. This definitely lowers property values, especially if the coop is shabby and visible to neighbors. Even six chickens thirty-five feet away can be so noisy and malodorous that the enjoyment of neighboring outdoor space is adversely affected. Free feeding and having chickens loose in the yard can lead to rodent and snake problems, as well as having chickens unwanted paying visits to nearby houses. Enforcement of the proposed code with such subjective regulations would be difficult. As it is, there is a long delay between citation, court, and enforcement of the existing regulations. This is a bad idea to accommodate the wishes of people who want to enjoy a farm-like atmosphere in the close quarters of a residential neighborhood.

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 13, 2014, 10:07 PM

We are strongly opposed to having the County Council amend the county code to all the keeping of chickens in all residential areas. We do not want to live in a rural area, and don't think it is reasonable to change the zoning to alter the life style of a neighborhood from the way it was when we decided to move there. This definitely lowers property values, especially if the coop is shabby and visible to neighbors. Even six chickens thirty-five feet away can be so noisy and malodorous that the enjoyment of neighboring outdoor space is adversely affected. Free feeding and having chickens loose in the yard can lead to rodent and snake problems, as well as having chickens unwanted paying visits to nearby houses. Enforcement of the proposed code with such subjective regulations would be difficult. As it is, there is a long delay between citation, court, and enforcement of the existing regulations. This is a bad idea to accommodate the wishes of people who want to enjoy a farm-like atmosphere in the close quarters of a residential neighborhood.

Name not shown inside WHITE ROCK (on forum)

November 13, 2014, 5:57 PM

I'm so sick and tired of the few people in this community deciding how I should live my life for me! I personally don't have chickens but I have family that does and because of that I get fresh eggs something I enjoy and my sister in law has great results from her garden each year as well and that she thankfully shares that too!,,, I'm 4 months younger than her but I hope to grow up and be just like her unless my community tells me I can't. Which

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I believe would be a disgrace to my county as Los Alamos is in the United states of America the land of the Free!!!!!!!!!! Yet My County Council believes this is a dictatorship County but boasts they want a family friendlier atmosphere if true stop taking sides with the rich countywide and telling me how I have to live up to someone else's values when I'm part of the poor in the county. And yes not all families and residents of Los Alamos make six figure annual income. and just because those that due think we should live a certain way doesn't make them right. Unless they are going to share there wealth with those that were not able for whatever reason to get Doctorate degrees.

Barbara Calef inside WESTERN (on forum)

November 13, 2014, 4:06 PM

I do not own chickens, but enjoy seeing and hearing the chickens kept by some residents in my neighborhood. I agree with the comment that the required setbacks of the proposed ordinance are too restrictive. I wish that my neighbors with barking dogs would exchange their dogs for chickens! One barking dog is worse than five roosters.

3 Supporters

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 13, 2014, 8:01 AM

OK, here is a form that needs a little common sense interjection and this is where I think I am qualified. First I did not know we had an Ordinance against chickens, so let's just rid of that Ordinance and let the feathers fall where they may!

However, if must have one please make it a friendly one. Please see my comments to each of the items below. When I look at the other poultry codes referenced for New Mexico and other Colorado cities, we should able to pull some items from these.

Must be for residential, noncommercial purposes; (You mean a kid cannot sell eggs to his/her neighbor, is there an Ordinance on lemonade stands? I hope not. No one in the county is going into the chicken business; there are too many other hurdles to go through to start a business. I know this seems a little silly but this is LA.)

- Maximum of 6 on any lot; (Who cares if it is 7 or 8, limit it to 15 or 20. The more you have, sooner or later you will put them in the pot. This will limit the amount you will want to keep!)
- Must be at least 16 square feet of permeable land available for each chicken; (delete)
- Must have at least 2 square feet of shelter space per chicken; (delete)
- Adequate shelter must be provided; (Keep, just says chickens must have room to feed and sleep, there is good reference material on this is.)
- Shelter must be kept clean, dry, odor-free and in sanitary condition at all times; (combine with the above))
- Adequate fencing must be provided; (Fencing is to keep the coyotes, lions, raccoons, foxes, cats, hawks, dogs out, it doesn't take much to keep a chicken in! I would suggest getting dog to keep these critters at bay. The coyotes are in town to feed on cats and other small pets, but that is another story.)
- Chickens must have access to the sun during daylight hours and kept in secure shelter at night; (Secure shelter! – do we chicken thieves!)
- Cannot be kept closer than 35 feet to a dwelling unit on abutting property; (This is again too restrictive. Again why not 8 or 10feet? I would not recommend attaching it to your home. Let common sense rule this.)
- Cannot be kept in front, rear or side setbacks; (Ok, but if this is the best room due to the 35' setback, allow folks to us it, if you can move it who cares!)

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- Cannot be kept closer than 100 feet to a water well; (Where did they get this, there are no private water wells in the County. If we keep this ordinance, it should be written for the county not copied from somewhere else.)
 - Keeping and maintaining chickens must comply with all applicable health and safety laws; (Why not include, state, federal and international laws! Remove this catch all phase. If there are other requirements you want folks to follow list them here or leave this out.)
 - All areas devoted to chickens must be constructed and maintained to discourage insects and rodents; and (blah, blah, this is already covered above)
 - No roosters are allowed. (This is the only one I would keep, again if you buy chicks you won't know your rooster until later, and then is no doubt - another one for the pot!)
- If folks want chickens, let them have chickens. There are plenty of good references out there for a family to how learn to raise chickens safely and in a humane manner, so let that be their guide. I would suggest to get rid of the original ordinance that bans chickens and let folks live free and dangerously – no more rules!

OK I am done

Mike Alexander

Laura Landis inside DENVER STEELS (unverified)

November 12, 2014, 4:16 PM

I feel strongly that chickens should be allowed in residential areas of Los Alamos County. There are animal nuisance ordinance in place to insure peaceful living conditions for everyone in the neighborhood. Therefore, taking away the rights of each family have pets that they enjoy and use to provide for themselves is unethical.

Name not shown inside CLUBHOUSE / PONDEROSA (on forum)

November 12, 2014, 3:53 PM

I support the application to allow the keeping of a small number of chickens in all residential areas.

2 Supporters

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 11, 2014, 3:43 PM

I am ok with it as well, provided there isn't a loud rooster right nearby. All across the country families are seeing the benefits of raising their own chickens for fresh eggs. Chickens of all breeds also make, great pets as well. I see no difference between pet rabbits.

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 10, 2014, 8:45 PM

I think chickens should be allowed in Los Alamos County. My choice for a pet may not be the same animal you would like for a pet. I have had chickens several times while living in Los Alamos. I have never had one complaint about my choice of chickens for pets. No complaints about smell or noise. I have also had dogs while

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living in Los Alamos. My observations are that 6 chickens are quieter than 1 dog and they stay in their own yard better than cats. The litter from the coop, nest boxes and droppings make my garden a spectacular growing spot. I see no reason that there should be regulations about size of coops, use of property in the set backs, or requirements for enclosure fencing (kennels) for chickens alone. Why should some pets be treated differently than other pets? One really good thing about chickens is that when it gets dark they go in the coop and go to sleep. I agree that roosters bother neighbors and should not be allowed in town, however, I also think that there should be a "curfew" for dogs so their loving families have time to enjoy them inside and the neighbors don't hear barking throughout the night.

Martinez (on forum)

November 10, 2014, 8:12 PM

I am so thankful that the county is listening to the people. I previously thought that chickens were allowed in all areas of Los Alamos County because so many people have chickens. I trust that the council take into consideration how minimal complaints must be regarding the current chicken population. Chickens are not the horrific animals that those against this ordinance are making them out to be.

The clucking of chickens is not that loud. They do not cluck without ceasing. They never cluck at night. Their clucking is very minimal. Their odor is almost nonexistent as long as their coop is cleaned periodically, which I do believe those who want chickens will diligently do. Every chicken owner I know does. Their eggs and manure are fantastic products. They are great pets.

I do hope that the maximum number allowed will be reconsidered. I agree with others that it is an arbitrary number. My neighbors have 7 dogs. I like my neighbors and they do their best, I believe, to manage their dogs the best they can. I don't know of a limit to the number of dogs or cats or wild rabbits running loose in a residence, why should chickens, which are mostly kept for their egg producing, be limited?

Lastly, if in fact negligent chicken owners arise, I trust that Los Alamos County Animal Control will do an excellent job.

4 Supporters

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 10, 2014, 7:03 PM

Yes, people should definitely be allowed to have chickens in their back yards. I think the 35' ft rule is ridiculous, though. I know people who have 2 chickens within 6' of their house, and I don't see any problem with that what-so-ever.

Erik Moro inside BARRANCA MESA (on forum)

November 9, 2014, 3:35 PM

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Should the County amend County Code, Chapter 6, Article 1, Section 6.2 to allow the keeping of a small number of chickens in all residential areas?

I am in favor of the proposed amendment, which allows residents to keep chickens in residential areas of Los Alamos County. It is my opinion that Los Alamos County should seek to exercise wisdom, as it establishes the regulations it intends to uphold. It should be the County's goal neither to put into practice regulations it cannot reasonably enforce nor to establish regulations that are overly burdensome to those citizens who seek to keep chickens for personal use.

If Los Alamos County is inclined to formally permit the regulated practice keeping of chickens, they should focus on drafting quantifiable metrics (for example, the minimum proximity requirements) and not on subjective directives (such as having "adequate fencing" or "adequate shelter", or being sufficiently "clean" and "constructed... to discourage insects"). Naturally, the latter will be difficult to enforce and will become a source of contention, between neighbors and between citizens and governing officials. Further, the regulation of being "odor-free" is a bit absurd, as even clean, healthy chickens will smell like clean, healthy chickens. This is an example of a regulation that should not be put into place because it lays the foundation for an unnecessarily complicated and overly burdensome framework.

When the County sees it fit to declare a regulation based on a quantifiable metric, this should be done with great care. I have seen others post to this forum stating that the 35 foot minimum distance between the chickens and a neighboring property would preclude them from keeping chickens, and that, for those who have experience keeping chickens, this distance is larger than it needs to be. The maximum number of chickens per household is another example of a metric that should be set with great care, since a sensible maximum per household could vary tremendously, based on lot size, coop size, etc. Lastly, in general, it does not make sense for the county to declare a minimum square footage per chicken. This is the responsibility of the person keeping chickens, as it is in his/her best interest not to treat their flock poorly. This is based on the general principles of property rights.

2 Supporters

Name not shown inside BARRANCA MESA (on forum)

November 5, 2014, 11:34 PM

No. Existing areas such as the County stables area on North Mesa could be used if a location near LA residences is needed. Reasons for not opening all residential areas include:

1. Property values of houses neighboring chicken coops in residential areas may be adversely affected, especially if coops are very large, unsightly or poorly made and if chickens range from the coop to external fences during the day.
2. Chickens often make loud squawking noises that are tough to control during the day when roused by neighbor's noises, a change in the pecking order, or when roosters are 'visiting'.
3. Within a yard (outside a coop), areas frequented by chickens may get odorous.
4. Bulleted conditions of the ordinance must be more quantitative and less subjective.
5. Compliance and enforcement of the existing chicken ordinance could be improved. Who has the responsibility to enforce the old and new rules? A responsible enforcement official needs to be identified as neighbors often hesitate to formally complain because of detrimental effects to neighborhood relationships.

Name not shown inside BARRANCA MESA (on forum)

November 2, 2014, 8:37 PM

Chickens in Proximity to Human Habitation

Should the County amend County Code, Chapter 6, Article 1, Section 6.2 to allow the keeping of a small number of chickens in all residential areas?

I am in favor of allowing chickens in Los Alamos, although I do believe the restrictions seem a bit overbearing. Six chickens seems like an arbitrary number if lot size isn't even considered. Chickens can be a great addition to any community. I believe the concerns raised really have more to do with bad pet owners (who would be bad pet owners regardless of pet species) and very little to do with chickens themselves.

3 Supporters

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 2, 2014, 7:53 PM

Are you out of your mind? Nothing says hick more than having chicken coops in residential areas. As someone who used to live in the South and very near a chicken farm - permit me to warn you - they smell terrible. So, with this ridiculous proposal, each of my three neighbors can house six chickens, for a total of 18. If that seems unrealistic, keep in mind that there will be nothing you can do to prevent it and good luck trying to get the amendment repealed. I promise you that 18 chickens is enough to generate a horrendous smell and noise. If you support 6 chickens each, then all I want are two hogs in my backyard. Seems like a reasonable compromise.

John Patchett (on forum)

November 2, 2014, 5:14 PM

I support chickens in residential areas preferably with less restrictions than proposed. Particularly, if a max chicken number must be set, let it be based on lot size. Are irresponsible chicken owners any worse for their neighbors than irresponsible dog or cat owners? Can we use the existing process for noise producing and/or ill maintained property rather than make chicken specific rules?

2 Supporters

Name not shown (on forum)

October 31, 2014, 8:18 AM

We enjoy the sounds of our neighbor's chickens. They are sweet and have so much personality. They do have an egg song when they lay, but that does not last but for a few minutes. They sleep all night, and like dogs, and cats they make great pets. I am in favor of allowing residence to own and maintain chickens in their backyards. Chickens eat rodents, snakes, and bugs of all types. Any good pet owner does care for them and clean up after their chickens. There are many wonderful blogs about the many benefits of having backyard chickens. I recommend The Chicken Whisperer, he can be found on twitter and facebook. Chickens are wonderful pets and provide fresh eggs for many families.

3 Supporters

Name not available (unclaimed)

October 31, 2014, 8:16 AM

I have lived next to chickens in Los Alamos county. There were more than 6 and there was a rooster until the owner also got tired of the rooster. We were often woken up by the chickens and the rooster even though we tend to get up early (around 6 AM).

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When the rooster was gone, we would have the chickens making noise in the coop, or out in their yard next to us, or escaped to our yard. The chicken coop was much further than 35 feet away from our house and we still heard the chickens and could smell the chickens.

The chickens would get into our yard and scratch around in the lawn and tear up our flower garden and poop where ever. Or the chickens would be in the street or in other neighbors' yards.

There is also a smell. How does the county decide when the smell is acceptable. The owner may not mind. The county may not mind. But the neighbor may mind the smell. Everyone has different sensitivities to smells. What is a bad smell to one may not even register for another.

The chickens seemed to disappear due to coyote predation. Does the county want to encourage more reasons for coyotes to hang out around the town? I have not heard the coyotes howling below us in the canyon since the chickens all disappeared. I don't know if other things are part of that, but I wonder about any correlations. I see this as another enforcement problem for the neighbors. Certainly there will be the law and the neighbors can call and complain about their neighbors, but why should there be more ordinances that require neighbors to complain about neighbors. Does the county have the manpower and money to pursue every problem?

Certainly the county knew about my neighbor's chickens because they found them outside his yard -- but what did the county do? I see this as another ordinance like the one where people are supposed to meet certain standards with their yards -- it's a good idea but the county doesn't have the money to enforce it, so the county relies on the neighbors to complain and bad feelings arise.

The county allows chickens in certain areas. If someone wants to live in the county and raise chickens then they have that option by moving to an area where that is allowed.

Name not available (unclaimed)

October 28, 2014, 8:17 AM

Has this proposal been through P&Z? It is a land use issue. We need to relying on our boards to vet these types of issues before they go to council.

Name not shown inside WESTERN (on forum)

October 27, 2014, 12:00 AM

I support chickens in Los Alamos. I am uncertain about the setback requirements and am not sure there should be a limit to 6 regardless of property size. I've had no issues with my neighbor's chickens and have even helped care for them on occasion which was a nice experience for me and my child. I have never noticed a smell or noise even when in their yard or the chicken pen. I have never seen any predators in our neighborhood. I do remember someone else in the neighborhood keeping chickens right next to a pathway and it being smelly - it seemed too small a pen, dank, and not well-kept - so it seems like this ordinance would cause that situation to be remedied. Perhaps for some issues like the setbacks and nearness to neighbors, could this be bypassed if say the neighbor agrees and signs a waiver or something? This could handle the case of a duplex or quad agreeing to keep chickens, as someone else brought up. Or is this already covered by the process where homeowners apply for an exemption and neighbors are notified of the application?

1 Supporter

Name not shown inside BARRANCA MESA (on forum)

October 25, 2014, 6:27 PM

Chickens in Proximity to Human Habitation

Should the County amend County Code, Chapter 6, Article 1, Section 6.2 to allow the keeping of a small number of chickens in all residential areas?

I am in favor of the ordinance, with perhaps some less restrictive restrictions.

I am not planning to have chickens, but several of my friends in different areas have them and I have visited their homes (and occasionally have been gifted with absolutely wonderful eggs). Their chickens are not noisy, smelly nor do they escape and bother the neighbors' gardens, so I know it is possible to keep chickens without being a nuisance. I have neighbors who have large dogs who complain and bark at us every time we are out in our back yard. I do not mind that much, because otherwise they are good neighbors, but sometimes I wish they had chickens instead.

3 Supporters

Name not available (unclaimed)

October 23, 2014, 3:14 PM

I am in favor of raising a small number of hens within residential property. My children have long wanted chickens. We moved here from a semi-rural town that allowed backyard poultry. This is a common practice around the country and should be allowed here.

Name not available (unclaimed)

October 20, 2014, 8:48 AM

Just for the record -- not all of us who live in Pajarito Acres are happy about having roosters waking us up at dawn every morning! Nor is it pleasant when neighbors add ducks and turkeys to their "chicken coops," especially when the wind blows their stink toward our houses.

Coleen Meyer inside ASPEN / WALNUT (on forum)

October 19, 2014, 5:02 PM

I fully support chickens in Los Alamos. The restrictions in this proposal seem arbitrary and overly limiting, though. The set backs in particular do not take into consideration various lot sizes. Duplexes and quads are unfairly burdened by these limits. The number of chickens seems arbitrary. Existing noise ordinances and rules/laws that govern animal abuse issues should suffice to protect the animals.

3 Supporters

Name not shown inside WHITE ROCK (on forum)

October 18, 2014, 10:11 PM

No, a residential area is for peace of mind. Chicken smell and cannot be trained to keep quiet. We already bought our houses with the present rules. A change robs us of current values.

I suggest,

Have a special place in town to keep chicken or other animals. We already have such a place in Los Alamos. either expand it, or create another place.

2 Supporters

Name not shown inside QUEMAZON (on forum)

October 17, 2014, 4:27 PM

Chickens in Proximity to Human Habitation

Should the County amend County Code, Chapter 6, Article 1, Section 6.2 to allow the keeping of a small number of chickens in all residential areas?

I DO NOT favor allowing chickens to be kept on residential lots. Our houses are very close together. I cannot imagine having 6 clucking chickens, their fenced-in pen, and their "temporary" manure (even if a "clean-up clause" is included), so close to my back yard and my outdoor deck where I relax and entertain visitors. What if two neighbors decide to keep 6 chickens each? What if three neighbors?

1 Supporter

Name not available (unclaimed)

October 17, 2014, 1:14 PM

I fully support the amendment to allow residents to keep a small number of chickens when abiding by the rules set forth in the amendment.

shawn w inside EASTERN AREA (on forum)

October 17, 2014, 11:37 AM

I fully support the proposed ordinance and would also support lessening the restrictions associated with standoff distances and number. I have spent time on a residential lot, outside of Los Alamos, with twenty or more chickens. If given an adequate amount of real estate, they are not overly odorous. The chickens in my neighborhood are not too noisy. I support local gardening and small scale non-intrusive farming activities within urban centers. A working knowledge of food production is important for every household. Do you know where your food comes from?

2 Supporters

Zena Thomas inside BARRANCA MESA (on forum)

October 17, 2014, 8:48 AM

I am a supported of chickens in residential areas but request reconsideration of the restrictive number.

Name not shown inside DOWNTOWN RESIDENTIAL S (on forum)

October 16, 2014, 7:12 PM

I'm in favor of this amendment change. Chickens are great. Not only that, if chickens were legal a greater kindness among neighbors would exist--have you ever experienced the joy a neighbor shows when they get fresh eggs? small business such as Pet Pangaea will benefit from sales of chicken feed, grit, and straw. Chickens give peace of mind to their owners in an anxious world. They are quiet--if the sun isnt shining, theyre down for the darkness and not a peep. They produce excellent fertilizer. With a bit of effort, extra eggs could go to LA Cares on their distribution day. I so hope this ordinance passes. SAVE THE CHICKENS OF LA! Pass this amendment. Please!?!

3 Supporters

Name not available (unclaimed)

October 16, 2014, 3:25 PM

I have a neighbor in White Rock (not Pajarito Acres) with chickens and a rooster. They do make noise,

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especially the rooster, but frankly it doesn't really bother me. BUT I have bird dogs, so every time the chickens make noise or come up to our fence (free range chickens) our dogs point the birds, run along the fence and often bark, sometime loudly and are hard to stop. With all of the concern recently over barking dogs, in this case I must ask who's fault it is that my dogs are barking at the chickens? They were bred to be bird dogs, chickens are birds...they are only doing what is instinctive! So to keep my dogs from barking the chickens must go!

Name not shown inside NORTH MESA (on forum)

October 16, 2014, 2:42 PM

I oppose allowing chickens in residential areas. Raising farm animals is fine in rural areas, but LA doesn't really have many, if any, of these. While we have a combined city/county government, our environment is much more like a city. With all the recent hullabaloo about barking dogs, do we really want to add chickens?

2 Supporters

Kenneth Coop inside WHITE ROCK (on forum)

October 16, 2014, 12:37 PM

Definitely no! I do not want to listen to my neighbors chickens or smell them. I was raised on a farm where we had chickens and can testify that they make plenty of noise and are smelly. Of course we benefited from raising them, which compensated us for those problems. If my neighbor raises chickens here, I don't benefit in any way---- I just get the negative part.

Perhaps the people pushing this ordinance should move to Pajarito Acres or off the hill if they want to farm. Or, more practically, support the local folks who need to make a living producing eggs and chickens, and leave me in peace.

2 Supporters

Name not available (unclaimed)

October 16, 2014, 8:32 AM

While I'm not necessarily against it, I do wonder what happens after it passes. After all, people in this town can't handle dogs barking. What about chickens clucking, roosters crowing and flying feathers? We are not Stepford, but people seem to want to make us into one.

Name not available (unclaimed)

October 15, 2014, 9:07 AM

The County code used to allow only 4 animals in Residential areas. I think this was a good policy and wish it was still in force. I have nothing against chickens or any animal if owners can keep them without disturbing their neighbors.

If the County allows more than this number, then it leads to more problems of coyotes, mice, etc.(Current code allows any number of cats or dogs in a residential area as long as noise ordinances are kept.)

Robert Wingo inside BARRANCA MESA (on forum)

October 14, 2014, 4:22 PM

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Absolutely, LAC Code should be updated for rearing of a reasonable number of chickens!

The impact of set back requirement is difficult to assess, as it is property specific (in some cases); however, the front set back requirement is appropriate (IMHO), as I'd not be interested in seeing a chicken coop nor chicken run in front yards.

35 ft from a neighbors home (dwelling unit) seems appropriate.

'Clean and odor free?' I'm guessing the drafters of said Code have never experienced the inside of a chicken coop, regardless of it's condition. Less restrictive descriptions may be appropriate.

In my experience, dogs and cats are a greater neighborhood nuisance than half a dozen hens.

3 Supporters

Name not shown inside NORTH MESA (on forum)

October 13, 2014, 9:17 PM

There are aspects of this ordinance that has not been thought through. Why 6 chickens without regard to lot size or placement. This is TOTALLY ARBITRARY!!

I have 10 pet chickens. I have had as many as 12. My coop and yard are large enough for them. Since my lot backs on to county open land, my coop is not near any of my neighbors, and the only reason they even know I have chickens is because I have given them eggs.

I have my pet chickens both for the eggs and their entertainment value (they are pretty and charming). If the ordinance passes, what am I supposed to do with my 4 extra pet chickens? Is animal control going to be scouting in people's yards to count their chickens? What would animal control do with my 4 extra chickens?

Chickens only lay well for a few years, and don't live a really long time. Because of that, I buy new chicks every few years, anticipating that some of mine will be getting old and dying. Sometimes I have more chickens, sometimes I have fewer, but six is not a realistic number for keeping a producing flock, while still keeping the old ones as pets.

There has been a huge movement in the US toward allowing backyard chickens. They are great composters and help reduce food trash in the landfill. Contrary to what has been said, hens are not particularly loud, certainly much less so than the ravens that are everywhere here. I would hate to see Los Alamos being restrictive rather than progressive.

Someone suggested that all chicken lovers move to Pajarito Acres. I would love to, but unfortunately not everyone in Los Alamos has dual Lab incomes and not everyone can afford to move to Pajarito Acres.

Someone else suggested people keep their chickens at the stable area. I would love to see the county designate an area near the gardens for this, but until that happens, this is not a feasible option. The current lots that are for sale are selling for \$3500 to \$7000 for a lease. On top of that, in order to lease a stable lot, you must have an equine on the lot (horse, donkey, etc.). Spending thousands of dollars on a lot and buying an equine to

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be able to have chickens is unrealistic. It is possible that one could find someone with a stable lot who would let one keep their chickens there, but it is certainly not guaranteed.

My chickens have not bothered my neighbors and I see no reason for all the restrictions in this ordinance. As it is, if someone's chickens are a problem (noise, stink), the county can already deal with them as a nuisance.

- Chicken Lover

3 Supporters

Paul Richardson inside WHITE ROCK (on forum)

October 12, 2014, 10:59 AM

I'm against allowing chickens in all residential areas except for Pajarito Acres. If people want chickens they can move to Pajarito Acres or to adjacent counties where ranches and farms are available. This is not a farming community and we don't need chickens crowing, etc. 20 feet from our houses.

1 Supporter

Name not available (unclaimed)

October 10, 2014, 9:08 PM

I think that No Name in Aspen/Walnut either misread or misunderstood my comment. I am happy with the proposed ordinance. I think it's great if property owners have the space and want to raise chickens. I have personal reasons why it wouldn't work for my comfort, but I never said that was a reason for banning, just as banning ponds on properties would be ridiculous.

I also don't think that having a healthy skepticism for people who don't like any conditions to ordinances or standards is being irrational. You are right that it's usually a few bad apples that spoil the bunch. I just think that having reasonable ordinances, in this case an ordinance concerning raising chickens, is very appropriate for safeguarding not only the resident who wants to raise the chickens but also the consideration of the neighbor who would like those chickens to be at an appropriate distance away from their own house.

Name not shown inside ASPEN / WALNUT (on forum)

October 10, 2014, 10:59 AM

To the Name not shown in North Community. As far as coyotes and mountain lions in back yards, we should also ban back yard ponds as a famous and popular local wildlife trap cam focusing on activity at a pond has probably more activity than a properly fenced in and secured chicken coop.

I do agree about neighbors trashing houses, RVs etc, but like these and other contentious issues like barking dogs, handguns & AR15s and junk cars, it's usually the one bad apple that spoils it for the rest of us which is a knee jerk rather than a rational response.

Name not available (unclaimed)

October 10, 2014, 10:56 AM

To the Name not shown in North Community. As far as coyotes and mountain lions in back yards, we should

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Name not shown inside NORTH COMMUNITY (on forum)

October 9, 2014, 7:03 PM

I'm amused at the people who are upset about the "restrictive" setbacks for chickens. The idea that they wouldn't be able to have chickens because their property setbacks are 10 ft. Well, Yeah! Not having chickens might be the sacrifice you'll have to make. Why should your neighbor have to make the sacrifice?

I'm all for the ordinance as written. I think it's great if people have the space and want to raise chickens. I might do it too if I weren't worried about luring more coyotes and mountain lions into my yard. I have children whom I want to keep safe, so that's MY sacrifice.

There are more than a few "neighbors" in Los Alamos who have no problem breaking codes, trashing their homes and property, parking boats and RVs as close to their neighbor's properties as they can, and generally showing contempt for the people who live around them. People who take exception to any kind of conditions in an ordinance get my guard up.

2 Supporters

Name not shown inside ASPEN / WALNUT (on forum)

October 9, 2014, 4:49 PM

Please do not pass this ordinance. If you do, it is just one more example of the vocal minority influencing Council to further lessen the quality of life for the larger majority of our town. It is a very small portion of the population who want this to happen. We absolutely do not have to have chickens in our backyards to have happy, healthy, fulfilling lives and the Coop provides a great selection of humanely raised healthy chickens and eggs, even if they are a little pricey. Chickens are cute and they may have health benefits, but they are noisy (yes even hens), they stink, they attract skunks, raccoons, bugs, rodents and all sorts of other animals that become a nuisance. Even if you don't allow roosters, imagine sitting down in your living room to watch a serious movie with chickens clucking in the background all evening long. Picture trying to have a nice dinner party on your deck with the chickens clucking incessantly and the smell of chicken coop wafting over while you eat. If you think a skunk or barking dog is bothersome when you are trying to sleep, wait until you get a chicken coop (or two or three or four) next door to you or behind you. In my case that could possibly be up to 24 chickens very close to home. Chicken bodies may be cleaner than dogs and cats, but their waste stinks just the same, if not more, when it is concentrated in one location. The ordinance says that the coops need to be kept odor free and sanitary at all times, but that is extremely subjective. Odor free and sanitary can mean very different things to different people. Even one chicken can generate a lot of stinky waste in a coop. Make any argument you want for chickens, the bottom line is that chicken coops are just totally nasty and smell awful. If I wanted to live around livestock, I would live on a farm, not in a residential area. You know that dog in your neighborhood that never shuts up and barks all night long and no one ever does anything about it? Well, that's what will happen with the chickens. They'll be the new yappy dog in your neighborhood that wakes you up early in the morning and drives everyone crazy. (Yes, I do have a dog, love dogs and am tolerant of yappy dogs, but they CAN be a

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nuisance.) Go take a look around Aspen school or in Western Area and tell me how well the nuisance codes are enforced. The code requiring a clean quiet chicken coop will NEVER be enforced. Please don't let the vocal minority get their way on this one. Allowing some people to have chickens in their backyards is simply not necessary for the overall good of this community. It benefits only a very few people and will be a huge nuisance to many more.

Roena Morgan inside NORTH MESA (on forum)

October 9, 2014, 12:06 PM

I believe that the distance limitation is too strict. "Cannot be kept closer than 35 feet to a dwelling unit on abutting property" Most lots are unable to accommodate - this would definitely prohibit us or any of our neighbors from being able to have a small flock. Please change this to allow more homeowners the ability to participate.

4 Supporters

Andrew Sutton inside WHITE ROCK (on forum)

October 8, 2014, 3:35 PM

The 35 ft from a neighbors abode seems very restrictive. Chicken owners are usually more responsible than people think as we rely on them as a source of eggs so they have a vested interest in taking care of them. Having to ensure our chickens are 35 ft from a neighbor AND not in a set back is a backdoor way of banning chickens in most residential areas under the guise of being accommodating. Our setbacks are 10ft! Try drawing that as a boarder around your property and see what you're left with! REWRITE THIS AMENDMENT or please explain how I got this wrong or what the purpose of these requirements are.

3 Supporters

Marsha Boggs inside PAJARITO ACRES (on forum)

October 8, 2014, 2:46 PM

I support backyard chickens and people being as self-sustaining as they can be.

My question is:

Do these proposed ordinances in any affect the existing ordinances for the R-A zoned areas?

This is unclear to me with the current wording.

R-A zoned areas should continue as they have in the past where higher numbers of chickens, including roosters, are allowed. People who buy in the R-A areas do so to be able to be able to live a more rural type of life. Please do not inadvertently pass something that will restrict the status quo of those in RA zoned areas.

2 Supporters

Louis Borges inside PAJARITO ACRES (on forum)

October 8, 2014, 1:01 PM

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Pajarito Acres should continue to be except from these new codes since we are in the agricultural districts (R-A) zone.

3 Supporters

Name not available (unclaimed)

October 8, 2014, 9:29 AM

NO If he wants chickens, he can move back to turkey

Neale Pickett inside DENVER STEELS (on forum)

October 8, 2014, 8:55 AM

I don't care much about chickens, but I should point out that, as written, this would prevent all of my neighbors (between Orange and Nickel) from having chickens. Our back lots are in a unique configuration: everybody's back yard is next to their neighbors' front yards. As such, they're just not large enough to keep anything 35 feet from adjoining dwellings.

If that's the intent of the proposed ordinance, I'm okay with it. Not every house in a city is set up for every agricultural activity. But if the intent is to hop on board with the recent upswing in urban chicken-raising, this is going to exclude some folks in my neighborhood and possibly downtown.

1 Supporter

Name not available (unclaimed)

October 8, 2014, 8:50 AM

People don't even keep their cats and dogs at home and disciplined. The county seems helpless to do anything about that because neighbor does not want to be pitted against neighbor. There is no solution to the cat-dog solution, so the county will just add more friction to neighborhood problems and animal control. Civility--nonsense. If people want livestock, let them rent space at the stables or live on farms, not in residential areas.

Name not shown inside WESTERN (on forum)

October 8, 2014, 8:18 AM

We very much enjoy our small flock of hens, and would comply with the amendments in order to keep them. Although I believe the way we keep them would already be in compliance with the proposed amendments. It's troubling that we're currently, technically "breaking the law".

2 Supporters

Jaclyn Sutton inside WHITE ROCK (on forum)

October 8, 2014, 7:58 AM

I WAS so excited to see that chickens would potentially be allowed in residential areas, but wait awhile... These amendment points make no sense:

- Cannot be kept closer than 35 feet to a dwelling unit on abutting property;

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· Cannot be kept in front, rear or side setbacks

Based on this I will not be able to have chickens, and my mother's property in the Denver Steels (ie and pretty much anyone with the exception of Pajarito Acres) won't actually be able to have chickens in their backyard. Los Alamos County I ask for a rewrite! Fantastic, chickens are allowed if you have a couple acres to spare! You are forgetting the residential/urban aspects of backyard chicken ownership which is the entire point of this.

4 Supporters

Name not available (unclaimed)

October 8, 2014, 5:51 AM

We very much enjoy our small flock of hens, and will comply with the amendments in order to keep them.

colleen swavely inside PAJARITO ACRES (on forum)

October 7, 2014, 9:47 PM

I do not support the conditions as written for Chapter 6, Article 1, Section 6.2. I find some of the conditions set by the proposed amendment to be more stringent than required.

We have chickens and I did my research to determine how much enclosed and outside space they needed to stay healthy and safe before we got them. We spent quite a lot of time and effort building a coyote, bobcat, fox, racoon, roaming dog, whatever-proof enclosure for them. Different breeds of chickens require differing amounts of space. Someone keeping bantam chickens for instance does not need 16 square feet of permeable ground space per chicken, whereas larger breeds may. Why specify an amount of space per chicken? Responsible owners will do this anyway.

I feel any county code should only address things like proximity to neighbors (reasonable distances from housing and or property lines), maintenance (chickens shall have access to housing out of the weather and facility shall be maintained so as not to attract rodents and insects), and basic issues as identified in the current codes for dogs and cats (no roaming chickens). A quick on-line search of chicken codes in Santa Fe, NM and Austin, Tx provide some good examples of common sense codes for reference.

Please don't make these codes so restrictive that most of Los Alamos and White Rock can not have backyard chickens. Homeowners make their own decisions as to the size and type of pets they have inside their homes (and in some cases outside with outside dogs). Some will argue that backyard chickens are simply another type of pet in this regard.

4 Supporters

Name not available (unclaimed)

October 7, 2014, 4:48 PM

Yes to the question of allowing, or not, chickens in residential areas.

Should there be setbacks from property lines, much like a 'shed' or other outbuilding constructed under the LAC permitting guidelines, and other similar guidelines?

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It may not be appropriate for coops to be out in front of a residence, nor abutting a property line on a shared fence.

Name not available (unclaimed)

October 7, 2014, 4:06 PM

The problem with this amendment is that for most places in Los Alamos there is no place to keep chickens 35 feet from a neighboring property. Being someone who lives in a residential area near chickens (a few doors down) I can say that multiple times I have wandered outside and smelled the pen full of chickens from down the street, and I probably live 35 yards away.

Allowing foul in residential areas means that this county code will for sure be violated in 99% of the cases. I (and many others) chose not to live in an area like pajarito acres because we did not want to live near "barn yard" animals. This is not to say that barn yard animals are bad, only that the smell and noise from them is a burden on neighbors in tight "residential" quarters

Name not available (unclaimed)

October 7, 2014, 1:54 PM

There are chickens on Ridgecrest Ave in White Rock and they smell horrible, make noise crowing all the time and shouldn't be allowed in town. It's disgusting.

Name not shown inside DENVER STEELS (on forum)

October 7, 2014, 1:04 PM

I am very pro-self sufficiency and home food-raising. That being said, I do have questions/concerns about the ordinance (I am not a lawyer, so forgive me if some questions are hyper-meticulous, non-applicable or are covered by other ordinances):

- 1) Does this ordinance prevent chicken habitat from abutting neighboring fences? I've seen several instances where chicken habitats were built backing into/adjacent/using existing shared neighboring fencing. (1.a.) No one should be put into a position where they have to manage someone else's chickens' debris because a shared fence line was incorporated into chicken habitat. (1.b.) No one should have to deal with someone else's chickens being so close to a shared fence line that their dogs must now be trained somehow to ignore them.
 - 2) Does the ordinance deal with fluid/lightweight debris run-off issues? Run-off from rain or snowmelt, water used for habitat cleaning, and excess dried manure should not end up in a neighbor's yard or public right-of-way.
 - 3) Does the ordinance deal with inevitable old-chicken slaughter? For example, "processing" is not permitted at the County-owned North Mesa Stables.
 - 4) Does the ordinance deal with liability for damage caused by the inevitable loose chicken (they can tear up gardens looking for grubs, love to pick at shiny objects, sit and poop on cars, etc.)?
 - 5) Does the ordinance deal with liability for a loose chicken being attacked by someone else's pet dog or cat?
- Thank you (a resident of the Denver Steels neighborhood)

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1 Supporter

Name not shown inside LA SENDA (on forum)

October 7, 2014, 12:30 PM

Why exclude chicken runs from rear setbacks? They are less smelly and less noisy than dogs. Plus chickens go quietly up into their shelter at dusk, so they never 'make a peep' at night. A chicken shelter SHOULD follow the exact same placement rules as a shed: 10 foot from all property lines- fenced run (for daylight hours) can be anywhere. Chickens thrive in a xeriscape section (dry dirt area) - so it is not desirable to have their pen in the smack center of each back yard. Corners are better placement, as long as there are blind fences.

8 Supporters
