



City Council Meeting Staff Report

Meeting Date: August 12, 2025

Subject: Waive Second Reading and Adoption of an Ordinance Amending Section 18.60.060 of the Wheatland Municipal Code Relating to Animals and Animal Shelters

Prepared By: Bill Zenoni, City Manager

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Wheatland City Council waive the second reading of and adopt an ordinance amending Section 18.60.060 of the Wheatland Municipal Code relating to animals and animal shelters.

Discussion: Section 18.60.060 of the Wheatland Municipal Code addresses the keeping of domestic animals as accessory to any residential use allowed in zones other than an agriculture-exclusive zone. Section 18.60.060(D) defines small domestic animals as rabbits, poultry, and like animals, regardless of size or age.

Section 18.60.060(E) currently provides that “one small domestic animal, (as defined in subsection D, but excluding roosters, geese and peacocks) may be kept on any parcel of not less than six thousand square feet. Staff has received several requests to increase the permitted number of small domestic animals (specifically chickens) on parcels that are a minimum of six thousand square feet in size.

The Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on this matter on April 29, 2025. At the conclusion of the public hearing, the Planning Commission adopted a resolution recommending that the Wheatland City Council adopt an ordinance amending Section 18.60.060 of the Wheatland Municipal Code relating to animals and animal shelters which would increase the number of small domestic animals allowed on parcels at least 6,000 square feet but less than 10,000 square feet from one to five and would require that these animals be kept a minimum of 15 feet from property lines.

The City Council, on May 27, 2025, conducted a public hearing on this matter. At the conclusion of the public hearing, the Council discussed the proposed ordinance and requested that staff return to the Planning Commission with a proposed change to the draft ordinance which would reduce the 15 foot property line distance requirement to 10 feet.

The Planning Commission again considered this matter on June 17, 2025. The Planning Commission adopted a resolution recommending the Wheatland City Council approve and amendment to Section 18.60.060 of the Wheatland Municipal Code related to animals and animal shelters increasing to five the number of small domestic animals allowed on any parcel of not less than six thousand square feet and requiring that these animals be kept a minimum of 10 feet from property lines. The Planning Commission further clarified that these animals must be kept in a side or rear yard.

On July 8, 2025, the Wheatland City Council conducted a second public hearing and then introduced and waived the first reading of an ordinance amending Section 18.60.060 of the Wheatland Municipal Code relating to animals and animal shelters.

A redline version showing the proposed change is provided below.

18.60.060 Animals and animal shelters.

Domestic animals may be kept as accessory to any residential use allowed in zones other than an agriculture-exclusive zone (Chapter 18.15) according to the following regulations:

- A. One large domestic animal, plus the animal's non-adult offspring, may be kept on any parcel of not less than one acre. One additional animal may be kept for each one-half acre by which the parcel exceeds one acre. Domestic animals that fall under the large size category are as follows: bovine, equine, llama, or like animals, regardless of size or age.
- B. Up to four medium-sized domestic animals, plus their non-adult offspring, may be kept on any parcel of not less than one acre. One additional animal may be kept for each ten thousand square feet of area by which the parcel exceeds one acre. Domestic animals that fall under the medium-size category are as follows: sheep, goats, swine, and like animals.
- C. Up to four dogs or domestic cats, or a combination of dogs and cats not exceeding four animals in total, may be kept on any parcel that is less than one acre in size. One additional animal may be kept for each ten thousand square feet of area by which the parcel exceeds one acre. Litters of puppies and kittens exceeding the four animal limit may be kept with the mother for a period not to exceed four months. This subsection (C) shall not apply to accessory uses in a residential estates district (Chapter 18.18), two-family residential district (Chapter 18.24) and multifamily residential-limited district (Chapter 18.27).
- D. Up to ten small domestic animals, plus their non-adult offspring, may be kept on any parcel of not less than ten thousand square feet. One additional animal may be kept for each five hundred square feet of area by which the parcel exceeds ten thousand square feet. Domestic animals that fall under the small-size category are as follows: rabbits, poultry, and like animals, regardless of size or age.
- E. **Up to five ~~One~~ small domestic animals** (as defined in subsection D, but excluding roosters, geese and peacocks) may be kept on any parcel of not less than six thousand square feet. **All small domestic animals must be kept in a side or rear yard and a minimum of 10-feet from property lines.**
- F. Domestic animals shall not be kept on a parcel in such a manner as to constitute a nuisance to neighboring properties.

CEQA Review

The Ordinance amending Section 18.60.060 – Animals and animal shelters – of the Wheatland Municipal Code is exempt from environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the Common-Sense exemption and Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations.

Fiscal Impact: There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommended action.

Attachment:
Ordinance