




**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT MEMORANDUM
MEMORANDUM #15-31**

DATE: November 2, 2015
TO: Honorable Mayor Joyce Downing and City Council Members
FROM: David Willett, Acting City Manager 
Brook Svoboda, Director of Planning and Development 
Travis Reynolds, Planning Manager 
Becky Smith, City Planner
SUBJECT: Bees and Chickens – Council Direction for Ordinance

PURPOSE:

Staff is seeking direction on whether to move forward with a Bees and/or Chickens Ordinance for Council adoption. In June the City hosted an online survey, three public forums and a telephone town hall meeting to gauge the public's interest in an ordinance that would allow for regulating chickens and/or bees on residential properties. Attached to this Staff report as **Attachment A**, are the results from the public outreach process.

BACKGROUND:

In May, 2015, Planning Staff was directed to explore the public's interest in an ordinance that would allow the keeping of chickens and/or bees on residential properties. The City hosted three public forums in June regarding the potential for a new ordinance(s) that would allow these uses. The City retained subject matter expert, Sundari Kraft, to facilitate the public forums with presentations and a question and answer period. The three public forums took place on the following dates:

- June 23rd, 2-3:30 p.m.
- June 25th, 7-8:30 p.m.
- June 27th, 11-12:30 p.m.

The public meetings were well attended with a total of 83 participants

The City held a Telephone Town Hall Meeting on June 24th, and there was significant discussion surrounding the topic of allowing bees and chickens. 70 people asked questions about allowing bees and chickens; many had concerns around code enforcement and allowing these uses. The Telephone Town Hall meeting was not exclusively to discuss allowing bees and chickens.

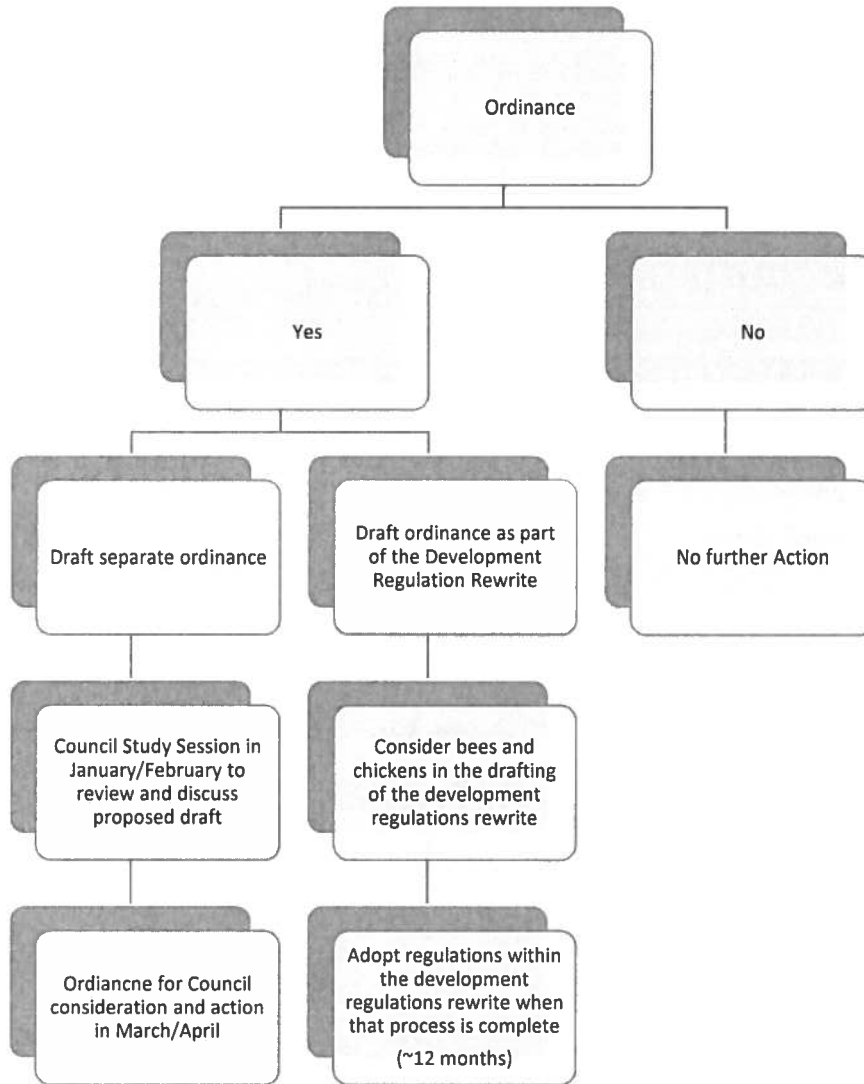
In addition to the public forums, a survey was administered at the forums and online beginning July 1st. Due to the amount of public interest in the topic, the survey remained open through July 31st. 326 surveys were completed.

COUNCIL DECISION:

Staff is seeking guidance from Council on whether or not to draft an ordinance to allow for Bees and/or Chickens on residential properties. There are two options for how to integrate it into the Zoning Ordinance.:

1. Pass an ordinance in the near term and insert it into the existing Zoning Ordinance.
2. Include a Bees and/or Chickens section in the Development Regulations rewrite, which will be a longer process.

The graphic below shows a decision tree with the possible options and process time-line for adoption of an ordinance.



STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The findings from the Public Forums, Town Hall Meeting and Online Survey, show support from the community (85% for) to adopt regulations that would permit Chicken and Bee regulations. If Council chooses to move forward with this policy amendment, Staff would recommend the Draft Separate Ordinance option, for Bees and Chickens on residential properties.

STAFF REFERENCE:

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ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A - Results from Public Input

ATTACHMENT A

RESULTS FROM PUBLIC INPUT

The City used several means for obtaining public input, including hosting 3 public forums to discuss the topic, holding a telephone town hall meeting in which the topic was brought up for discussion and conducting an online survey. The forums and town hall meetings provided staff an impression of the general sentiment and concerns surrounding allowing Bees and Chickens on residential properties. The survey was tabulated to provide quantitative results.

Public Forum Findings:

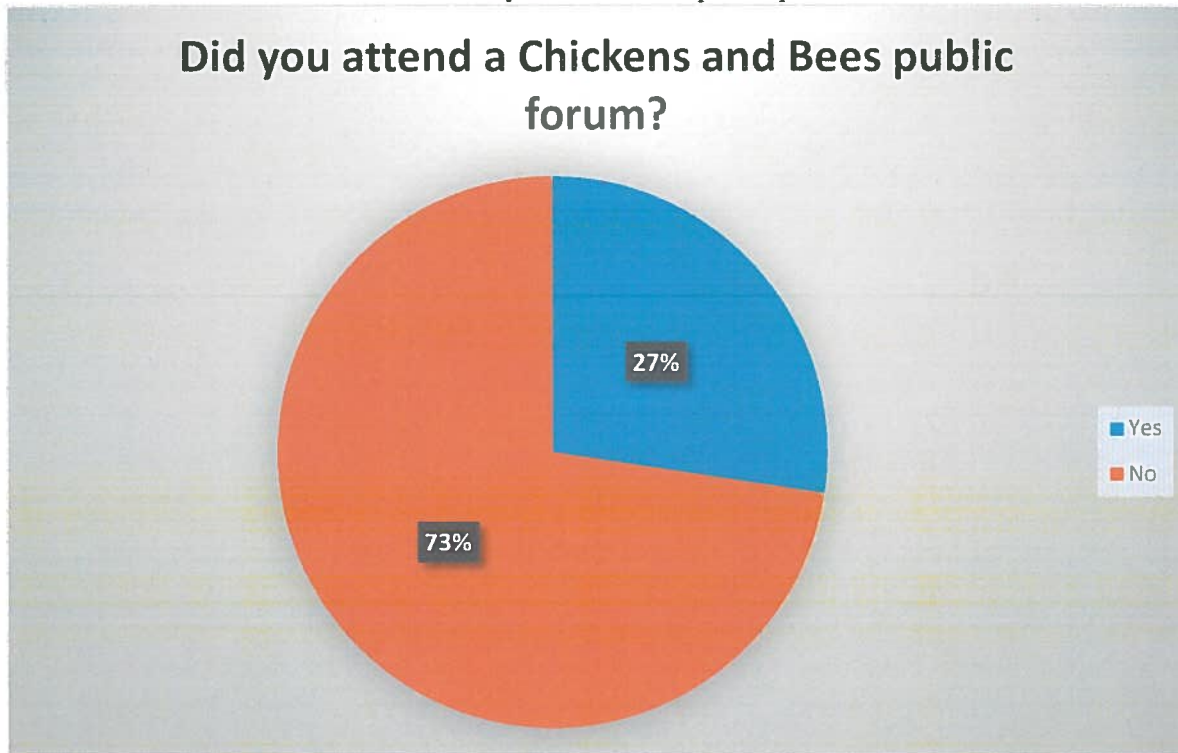
In total, approximately 83 people attended at least one of the public forums offered in June. While a few individuals in attendance expressed concerns regarding these uses, the overall sentiment conveyed at the meetings was in favor of the City adopting ordinances that allow for the keeping of bees and chickens on residential properties.

Town Hall Meeting:

During the June 24th Telephone Town Hall Meeting, there was significant discussion about an ordinance that would allow keeping chickens and bees on residential properties. During the meeting the callers who spoke were largely against allowing these uses in Northglenn.

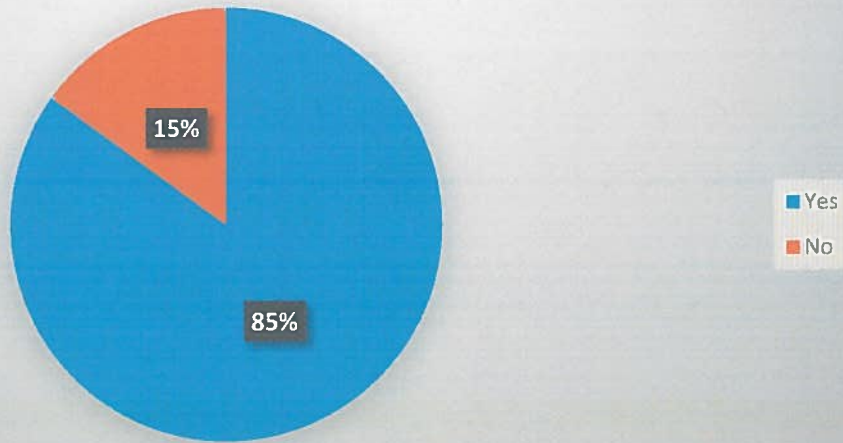
Online Survey:

The survey was available at all three public forums and on the City website from July 1st - July 31st. It garnered a total of 326 responses. The results of the survey and summary of the comments are provided below. The raw data results from the survey are available upon request.



BACKYARD BEEKEEPING

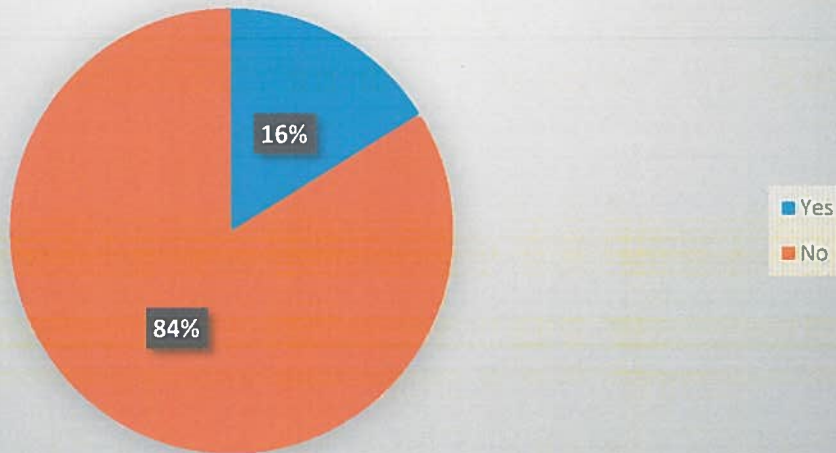
Do you believe regulated private ownership of a honeybee hive should be allowed in Northglenn?



Survey Responses: 326 Total

- 277 (85%) Support Bees
- 49 (15%) against

Would you object to a close neighbor maintaining a honeybee hive on their property?



Survey Responses: 321 Total

- 269 (84%) Support Bees
- 52 (14%) against

Comments:

The survey offered an option for residents to explain why they do or do not object to their neighbor maintaining a honeybee hive on their property. Of the total 321 individuals who answered yes or no to this question, 149 of those provided feedback as to why. Staff has summarized reoccurring themes, reasons and concerns.

Support:

269 (84%) of individuals who completed the survey said that they would not object to a close neighbor maintaining a honeybee hive on their property. Of those 269 individuals, 112 commented as to why they do not object. The most common reasons are summarized below:

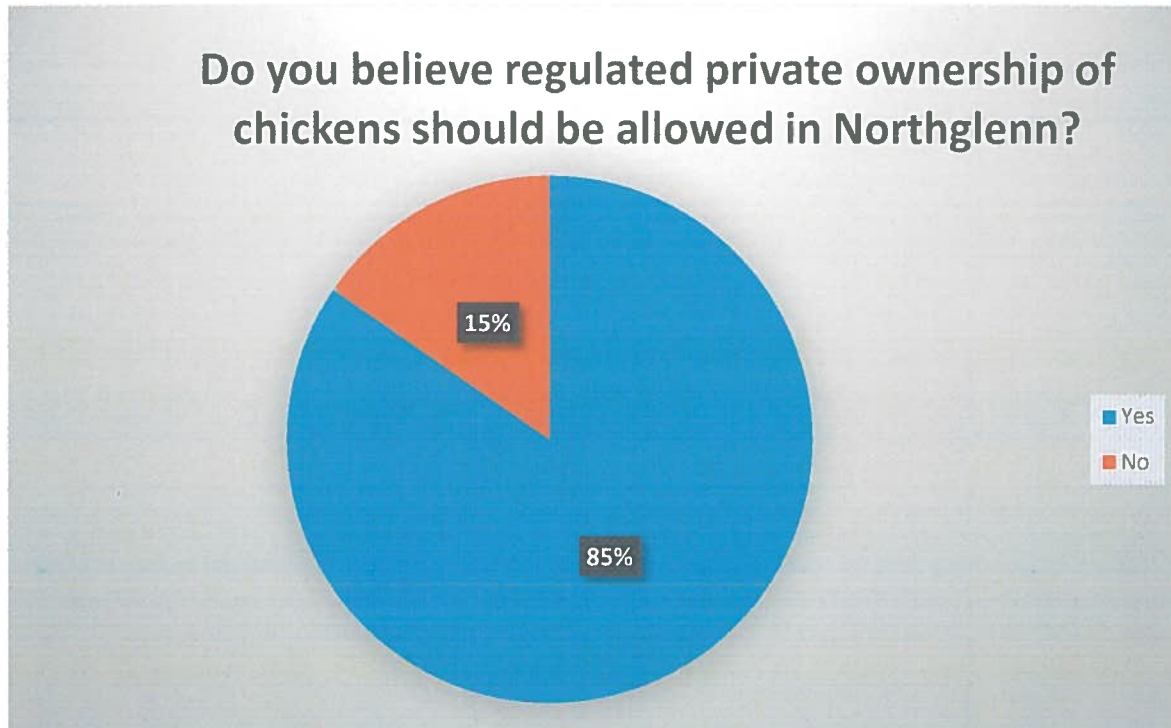
1. **Environmental Benefit:** Bees are an environmental benefit that help to pollinate flowers and gardens, which is critical to the local food supply.
2. **Bee Conservation:** Bees are currently disappearing/dying at alarming rates and encouraging/allowing local bee keepers could help to regenerate the bee populations.
3. **Responsibly Managed:** Honeybees already exist naturally in the environment, so a properly maintained hive does not seem problematic.
4. **Education:** In addition, education about honeybees may ease concerned residents fears about allowing honeybees, because they are not aggressive unless aggravated/agitated.
5. **Regulate to Avoid Public Nuisance:** No issues with it as long as regulations are in place to keep beehives and honeybees from becoming a nuisance and as long as people who choose to maintain them are responsible.
6. **Personal Private Property Rights:** People should be allowed to do what they want on their own property and it should not concern the neighbors.
7. **Cottage Industry:** It will boost the production of local honey.

Opposed:

52 (16%) of individuals who completed the survey said that they would object to a close neighbor maintaining a honeybee hive on their property. Of those 52 individuals, 38 provided feedback as to why they object. The most common reasons are summarized and listed below:

1. **Maintenance Concern:** Poorly maintained beehives can become a nuisance to the city. The property sizes in Northglenn are too small to accommodate beekeeping.
2. **Bees leaving property:** The bees will leave the properties that the hive is on and create a nuisance and possible risk to the neighbors.
3. **Threat to public Safety:** Many people have serious bee allergies and it will put these people at risk.
4. **Human Factor:** People simply are not responsible enough to maintain bees in an urban/suburban environment.

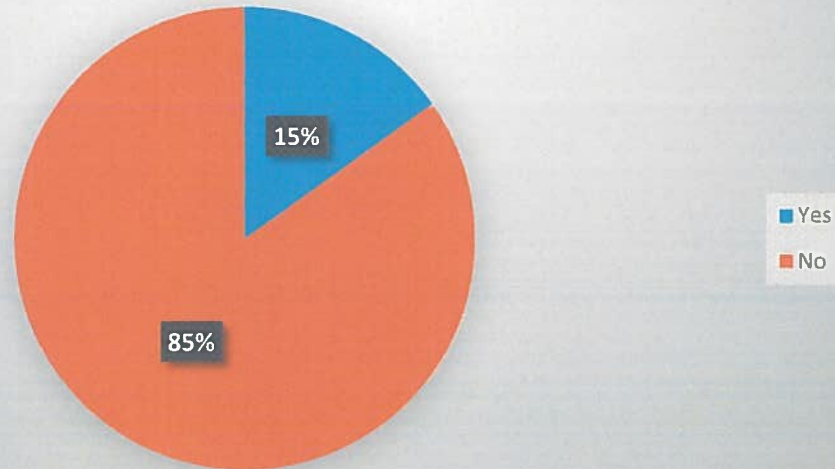
BACKYARD CHICKENS



Survey Responses: 325 Total

- 275 (85%) Support Bees
- 50 (15%) against

Would you object to a close neighbor owning chickens on their property?



Survey Responses: 324 Total

- 275 (85%) Support Bees
- 49 (15%) against

Summary of Comments – Would you object to a close neighbor owning chickens on their property - Why or Why Not?

The survey offered an option for residents to explain why they do or do not object to their neighbor maintaining chickens on their property. Of the total 324 individuals who answered yes or no to this question, 163 of those commented as to their reason why. Based on the comments, staff has summarized reoccurring themes, reasons and concerns.

Support:

275 (85%) of individuals who completed the survey said that they would not object to a close neighbor having chickens on their property. Of those 275 individuals, 125 commented as to why they do not object. The reoccurring reasons are summarized and listed below:

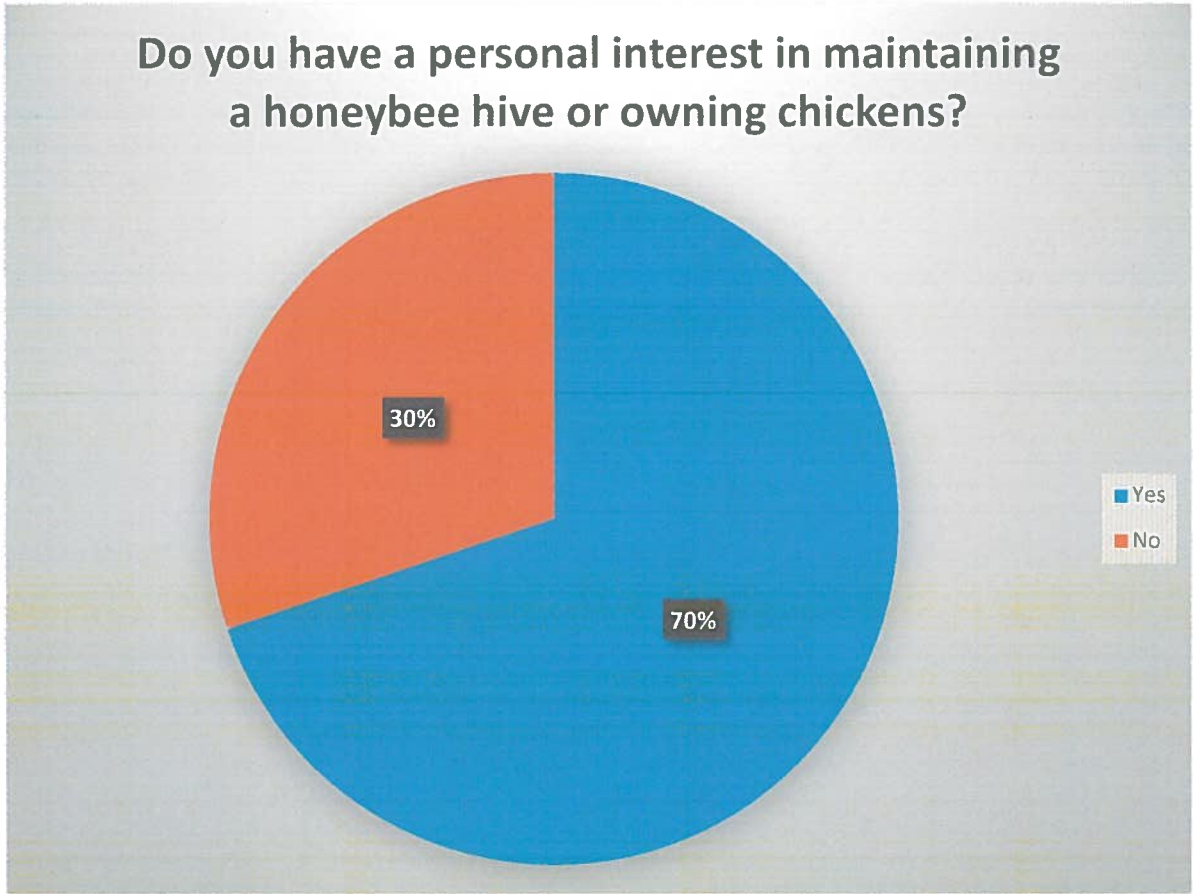
1. **Regulate to Avoid Public Nuisance:** No issues with residents owning chickens as long as they are properly maintained. They should be regulated, so as to avoid nuisances to surrounding property owners.
2. **Right to grow/raise healthy food:** Everyone should have the right to raise chickens to produce fresh eggs as a healthy food option.
3. **Education:** Allowing chickens provides educational opportunities for children to understand where our food comes from and responsibility of raising them.
4. **Personal Private Property Rights:** People should be allowed to do what they want on their own property and it should not concern the neighbors.
5. **Responsibly Managed:** Do not believe it will cause any problems, personally like or want chickens so do not want to exclude their neighbors, or are completely indifferent to their neighbors having chickens because they do not see any potential negative impacts.

6. **Environmental Benefit:** It is sustainable and better for the environment.

Opposed:

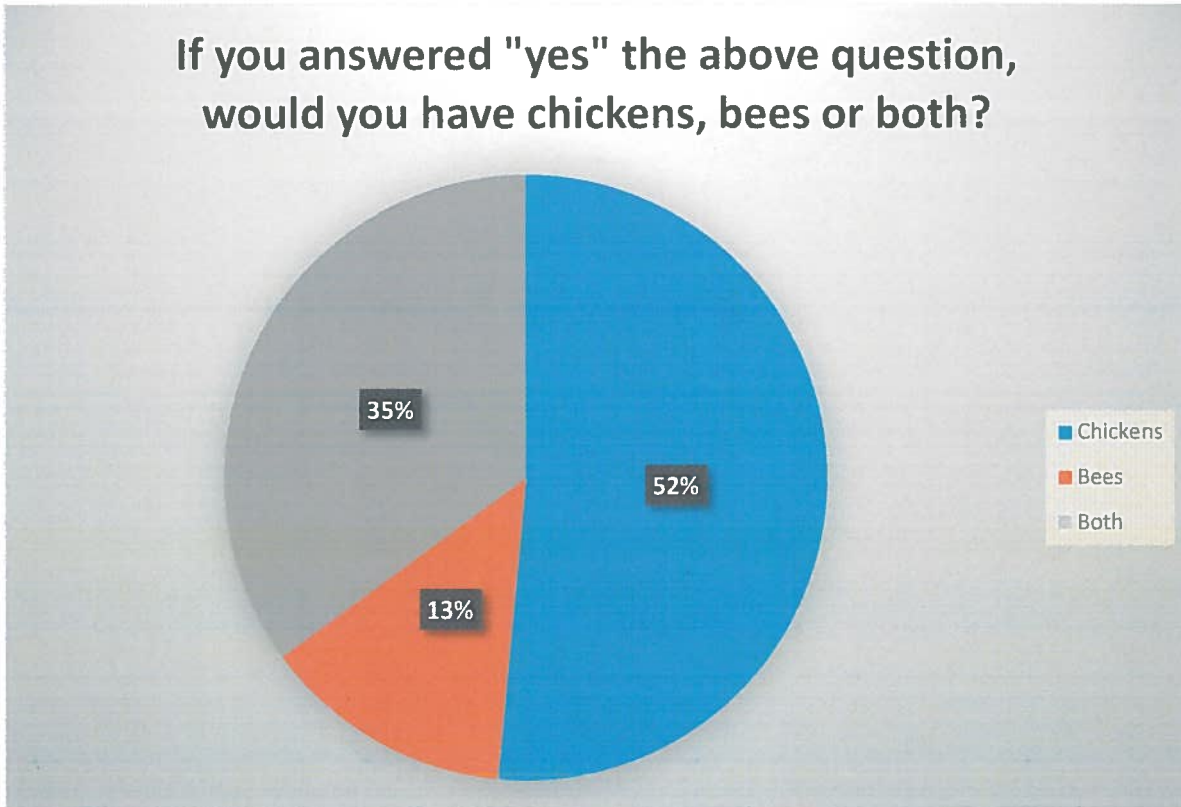
49 (15%) of individuals who completed the survey said that they would object to a close neighbor maintaining chickens on their property. Of those 49 individuals, 38 commented as to why they do object. The most common reasons are summarized and listed below:

1. **Maintenance Concern:** Chickens will create a nuisance to the surrounding neighbors. Examples given in the comments include:
 - a. Odor
 - b. Noise
 - c. Visual eyesore
 - d. Attract predator animals
 - e. Chickens are messy
2. **Not appropriate for Urban Area:** Chickens do not belong in an urban/suburban environment; if they wanted to live next door to farm animals they would move to the country.
3. **Human Factor:** People in Northglenn are not currently maintaining their properties. Code Enforcement does not have enough manpower to keep up with current code violations, the city would have a difficult time enforcing chicken regulations.
4. **Public Health Threat:** Chickens can spread disease to humans.



Survey Responses: 325 Total

- 227 (70%) Interested having in Bees and/or Chickens
- 98 (30%) Not interested



Survey Responses: 227 Total

- 119 (52%) Just Chickens
- 31 (13%) Just Bees
- 81 (35%) Both