

WASHOE COUNTY COMMERCIAL EQUINE CODE OUTREACH SUMMARY



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INTRODUCTION

Based on input from the public, Washoe County is in the process of evaluating standards for commercial equine uses in the unincorporated County (the areas outside the cities of Reno and Sparks). As part of the evaluation process, the County launched an online questionnaire to better understand public perspectives about equine uses, their potential impacts, and standards for development. The questionnaire was open April 25 through May 26, 2024 and garnered over 1,800 responses from residents across the County. In addition to the online questionnaire, the County hosted two in-person workshops on May 5 and May 6, and an online webinar May 9. The responses to the questions from the in-person workshops are included in the question by question summary.

The following summary compiles results from the online questionnaire and the in-person workshops. This summary is not intended to provide recommendations for changes to the Washoe County Development Code but rather to provide insight on perspectives of Washoe County residents regarding the current regulations for commercial equine uses.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Responses to the online questionnaire and the in-person workshops were similar, with those attending the in-person work sessions having strong preferences for fewer regulations overall. The online questionnaire and workshop questions focused on four key themes: number of horses allowed per property, review of new commercial equine uses, defining more types of commercial equine uses, and additional standards for new commercial uses.

Number of Horses Allowed Per Property

Responses are mostly split between those that voted in favor of setting a limit on the number of horses for personal and commercial use, and those that voted against setting a limit. Of those who felt there should be limits on the number of horses, more respondents felt that limitations should apply to the whole county rather than only apply in certain areas, specifically tied to property size and in residential areas or in urban areas. Many respondents voiced that the number of horses for both personal and commercial use should be based on the number of horses per acre, rather than a set limit or other metric.

Review of New Commercial Equine uses

Results show that the public would prefer that personal horses and livestock, and private stables be reviewed administratively. Opinions on review of horse boarding for 3 or more horses are split between reviewed administratively, and reviewed administratively with 500 ft. notice to neighbors. Responses identified animal racetracks as the only use that should require a public hearing.

Types of Commercial Equine Uses

In the rural areas where lots are at least 40 acres, residents feel all types of commercial equine uses are appropriate. As the lot size gets smaller, the larger and more intense equine uses are less appropriate. In suburban areas where lots are 1 acre or smaller, responses generally show that commercial equine uses are not appropriate.

Additional Standards for New Commercial Uses

Opinions on additional standards for new commercial uses are largely split between “strongly oppose” and “support” for many of the proposed standards. Limiting horse keeping in residential areas to personal use only and requiring screening and paving for vehicular access was generally not favored. Open-ended responses also noted concerns for animal welfare, enforcement of dust control and manure management requirements, and minimizing outdoor lighting.

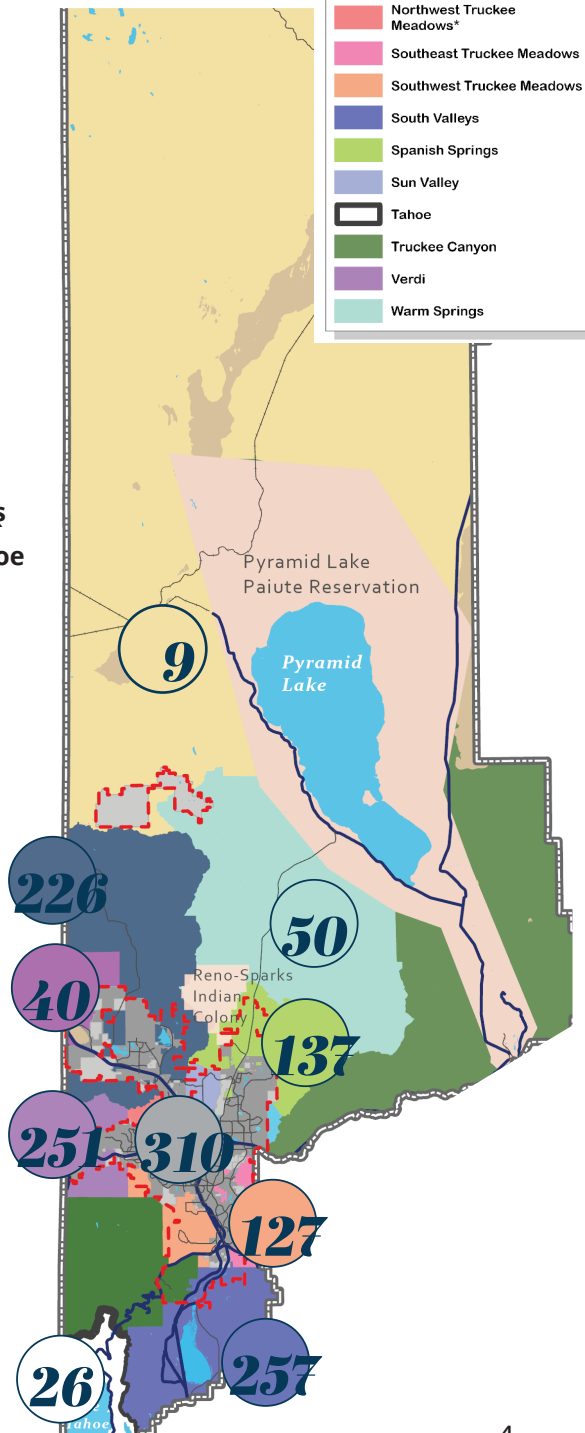
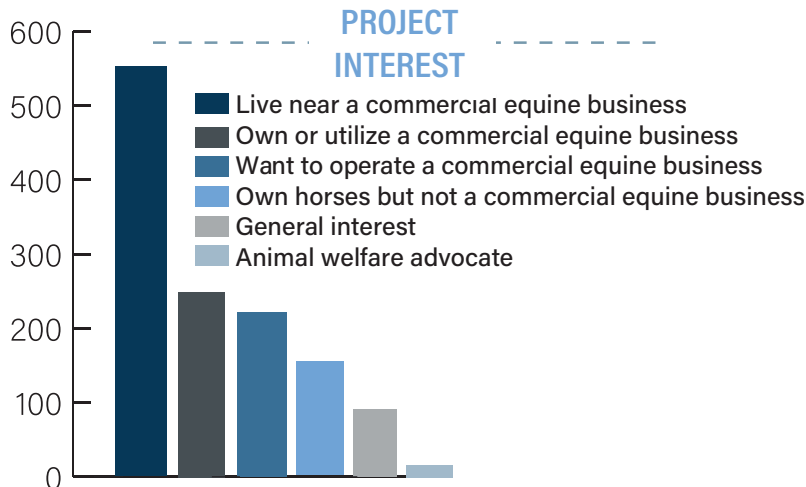
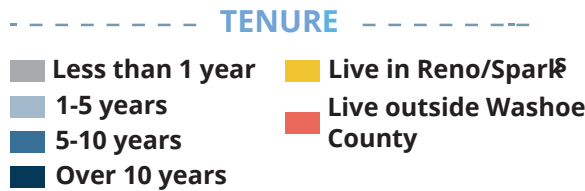
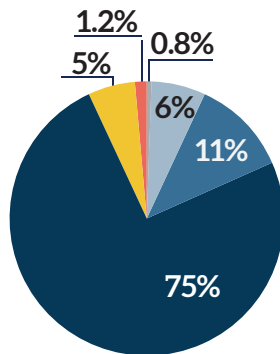
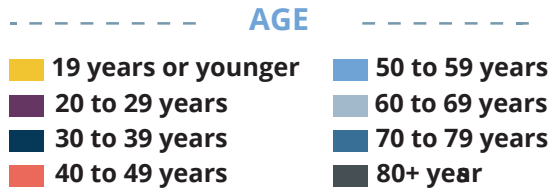
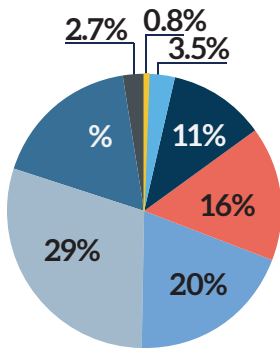
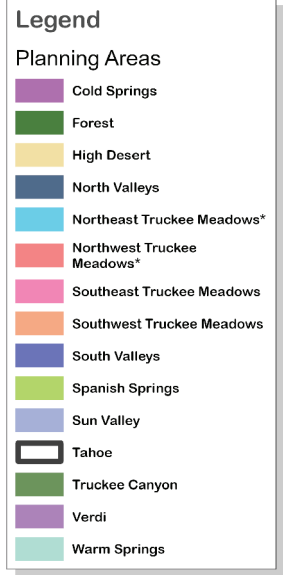
ENGAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

The numbers on the map represent the number of respondents from the online questionnaire and in-person workshops from each planning area.

1,898
QUESTIONNAIRE
RESPONSES

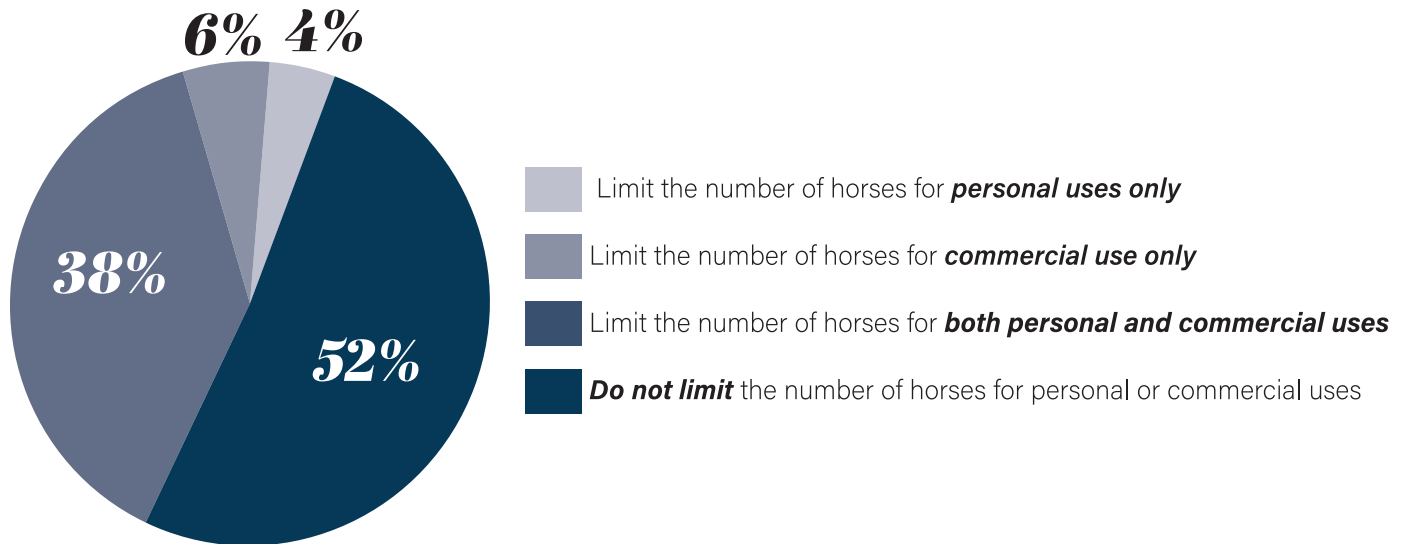
110
OPEN HOUSE
ATTENDEES

37
WEBINAR
ATTENDEES

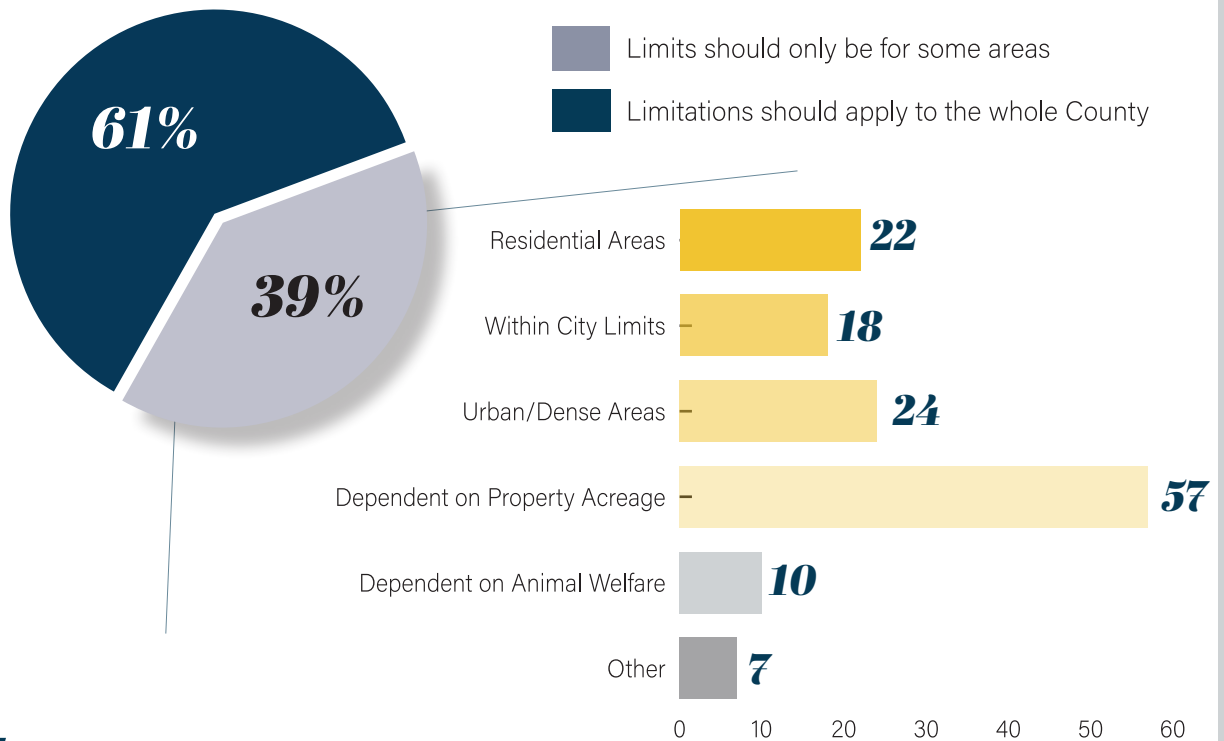


SUMMARY BY QUESTION

Should there be a limit on the number of horses that can be kept on a property for personal or commercial uses?



Should those limitations apply to the whole county, or should they only apply to certain areas?



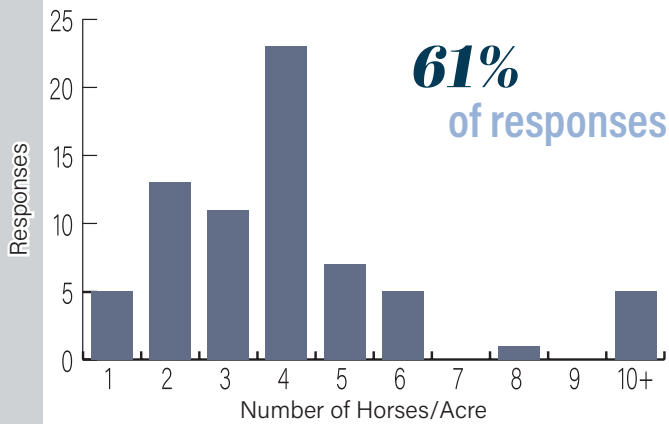
Summary

Responses are mostly split between those that voted in favor of setting a limit on the number of horses for personal and commercial use, and those that voted against setting a limit. Of those who felt there should be limits on the number of horses, more respondents felt that limitations should apply to the whole county (61%) rather than only apply in certain areas (39%), specifically tied to property size and in residential areas or in urban areas.

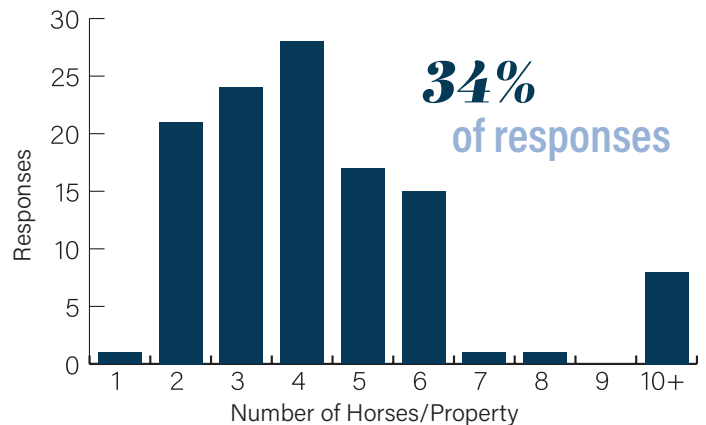
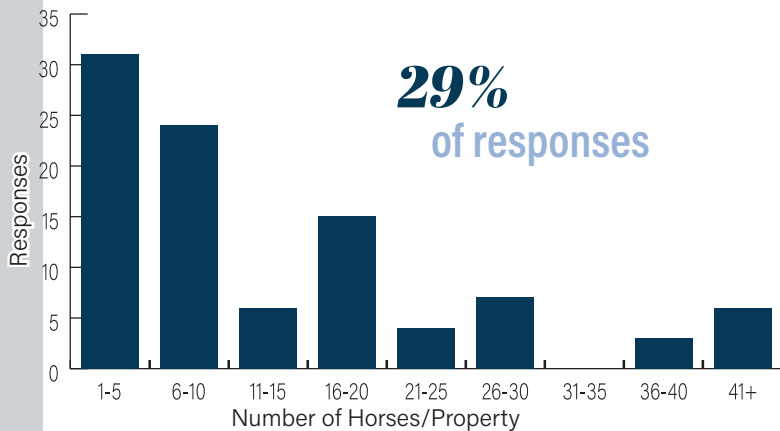
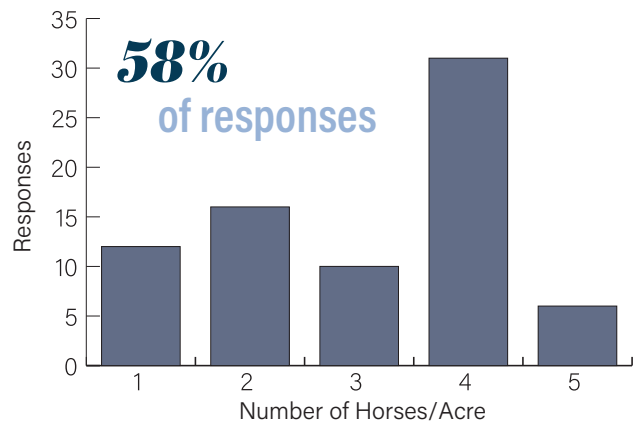
How many horses should be allowed per property?

Respondents were asked to identify if there should be a limit on the number of horses allowed per property for personal use and commercial uses. For personal use, 58% of responses prefer a limit based on the number of horses per acre, 34% of responses prefer a limit based on horses per property, and 8% identified a different metric (no limit, based on type of horse, etc.). For commercial use, 61% of responses prefer a limit based on the number of horses per acre, 29% of responses prefer a limit based on horses per property, and 10% identified a different metric.

For commercial use



For personal use*



10% of responses *Prefer Another Metric* **8%** of responses

Summary

*While the questionnaire was designed to gather input on commercial uses, it was important to ask if respondents felt that there should be a limit on the number of personal horses per property to understand the context of the question about limiting the number of horses for commercial use.

Many respondents voiced that the number of horses for both personal and commercial use should be based on the number of horses per acre, rather than a set limit or other metric. For both personal and commercial horse limits, a limit of 4 horses/acre was the most common response. Of those who identified a set limit on the number of horses per property, respondents generally identified a higher limit for commercial uses than for personal uses. For both commercial and personal uses, about a quarter of responses voiced that the limit should be determined by the horses' welfare and health, or that the current regulations were sufficient.

Which types of equine uses should be allowed in each type of area in the County?

This question was presented as a check box matrix where respondents could select as many of the areas as appropriate for each use. This table is split in two pages, with the larger lot areas summarized on this page, and the smaller lots and other areas of the County summarized on the next page. Percentages are calculated by use (each row), not by area of the County (column).

		Rural Areas (40+ acre lots)		Rural Areas (5-39 acre lots)		Semi-Rural Residential Areas (lots 1-5 acres)		Suburban Residential Areas (lots 1/3 acre-1 acre)	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Personal Horses and Livestock Personal horses or livestock for the use of the occupants of the lot for purposes other than boarding or training. This use is accessory to a residential use.	Online Response	655	21%	674	22%	696	23%	441	14%
	In Person Response	35	22%	38	24%	36	23%	36	23%
Private Stable A detached accessory building for the keeping of horses owned by the occupants of the premises	Online Response	654	21%	683	22%	710	23%	415	14%
	In Person Response	38	25%	38	25%	36	24%	34	22%
Horse Boarding The activity of keeping and/or caring for 3 or more boarded horses, including horse rescue operations.	Online Response	668	24%	705	25%	618	22%	257	9%
	In Person Response	48	32%	36	24%	34	23%	17	11%
Public Riding Stable A facility where horses are kept for sale or hire to the general public. Breeding, boarding, or training of equines may also be conducted.	Online Response	674	24%	712	26%	533	19%	206	8%
	In Person Response	35	27%	35	27%	27	21%	13	10%
Equestrian Arena or Show Barn An establishment where different people per month, other than the owner or manager of the property, are trained or instructed in riding, driving, or showing horses.	Online Response	683	25%	704	25%	524	19%	198	7%
	In Person Response	40	29%	38	28%	31	23%	10	7%
Animal Racetrack A structure, or portion thereof, used for racing animals for recreation or profit and that may include accessory uses and structures normally associated with this activity.	Online Response	576	32%	455	25%	185	10%	58	3%
	In Person Response	36	43%	33	39%	4	5%	1	1%

		Suburban Residential Areas (lots < 1/3 acre)		Commercial/Industrial Areas		Parks and Recreation Areas		Not Appropriate in Washoe County		Total Checks
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Checks
Personal Horses and Livestock. Personal horses or livestock for the use of the occupants of the lot for purposes other than boarding or training. This use is accessory to a residential use.	<i>Online Response</i>	118	4%	193	6%	297	10%	2	<0.1%	3076
	<i>In Person Response</i>	5	3%	1	1%	6	4%	0	0%	157
Private Stable. A detached accessory building for the keeping of horses owned by the occupants of the premises	<i>Online Response</i>	127	4%	196	6.5%	275	9%	5	0.5%	3065
	<i>In Person Response</i>	5	3%	1	1%	1	1%	0	0%	153
Horse Boarding. The activity of keeping and/or caring for 3 or more boarded horses, including horse rescue operations.	<i>Online Response</i>	74	3%	226	8%	260	9%	8	<0.1%	2816
	<i>In Person Response</i>	3	2%	5	3%	5	3%	0	0%	148
Public Riding Stable. A facility where horses are kept for sale or hire to the general public. Breeding, boarding, or training of equines may also be conducted.	<i>Online Response</i>	71	3%	231	8%	326	12%	8	<0.1%	2761
	<i>In Person Response</i>	0	0%	9	7%	10	8%	0	0%	129
Equestrian Arena or Show Barn. An establishment where different people per month, other than the owner or manager of the property, are trained or instructed in riding, driving, or showing horses.	<i>Online Response</i>	69	2%	255	9.5%	330	12.5%	7	<0.1%	2770
	<i>In Person Response</i>	3	2%	8	6%	7	5%	0	0%	137
Animal Racetrack. A structure, or portion thereof, used for racing animals for recreation or profit and that may include accessory uses and structures normally associated with this activity.	<i>Online Response</i>	39	2%	212	12%	203	11%	100	5%	1828
	<i>In Person Response</i>	0	0%	7	8%	1	1%	2	2%	84

Summary

Responses show that in the rural areas where lots are at least 40 acres, residents feel all types of commercial equine uses are appropriate. As the lot size gets smaller, the larger and more intense equine uses are less appropriate. In suburban areas where lots are 1 acre or smaller, responses generally show that commercial equine uses are not appropriate. Results from the online questionnaire and in-person events are similar, with in-person result showing a slightly stronger preference for animal racetracks being allowed only in more rural areas.

Please indicate your level of support for the following standards for NEW commercial equine uses:

		Strongly Oppose		Oppose		Neutral		Support		Strongly Support		Total Responses
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Responses
A maximum number of horses allowed per commercial facility based on lot size	Online Response	172	21%	109	13%	162	20%	240	29%	148	18%	831
	In Person Response	24	46%	19	37%	0	0%	6	12%	3	6%	52
Overall maximum number of horses allowed per property	Online Response	192	23%	158	19%	149	18%	212	26%	119	14%	831
	In Person Response	22	52%	11	26%	2	5%	2	5%	5	12%	42
Limiting the number of horse-related special events (horse shows, rodeos, etc.) allowed per year	Online Response	320	39%	172	21%	155	19%	110	13%	75	9%	832
	In Person Response	26	62%	10	24%	2	5%	3	7%	1	2%	42
Required minimum setbacks for commercial equine facilities from neighboring uses	Online Response	187	23%	112	14%	218	26%	195	24%	119	14%	831
	In Person Response	20	49%	11	27%	7	17%	2	5%	1	2%	41
Maximum building size of the horse facility	Online Response	215	26%	173	21%	203	24%	156	19%	84	10%	831
	In Person Response	17	39%	19	43%	7	16%	0	0%	1	2%	44
Maximum lot coverage for areas associated with the horse facility	Online Response	208	25%	139	17%	226	27%	162	20%	91	11%	826
	In Person Response	14	37%	17	45%	5	13%	1	3%	1	3%	38
Limiting horse keeping in residential areas to personal use only	Online Response	256	31%	192	23%	114	14%	138	17%	133	16%	833
	In Person Response	31	72%	10	23%	1	2%	0	0%	1	2%	43

		Strongly Oppose		Oppose		Neutral		Support		Strongly Support		Total Responses
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Responses
Minimum lot sizes for commercial equine uses in areas where they're allowed	Online Response	151	18%	107	13%	142	17%	279	34%	154	19%	833
	In Person Response	9	22%	18	44%	10	24%	4	10%	0	0%	41
Requiring landscaping to screen the uses from neighbors	Online Response	267	32%	173	21%	205	25%	96	12%	89	11%	830
	In Person Response	25	60%	11	26%	4	10%	1	2%	1	2%	42
Ensure parking and vehicle access meets regular commercial standards, including paving/surfacing requirements	Online Response	260	31%	152	18%	159	19%	140	17%	124	15%	835
	In Person Response	40	89%	3	7%	1	2%	0	0%	1	2%	45
Not requiring paving of any parking or access area surfaces	Online Response	87	10%	82	10%	184	22%	238	29%	242	29%	833
	In Person Response	2	5%	2	5%	0	0%	1	3%	37	88%	39

Summary

Results from the online questionnaire regarding additional standards for new commercial uses are largely split between “strongly oppose” and “support” for many of the proposed standards. Limiting horse keeping in residential areas to personal use only and requiring screening and paving for vehicular access was generally not favored. Compared to the online questionnaire, attendees from the in-person workshop more strongly oppose all additional standards except waiving the requirement to pave parking surfaces.

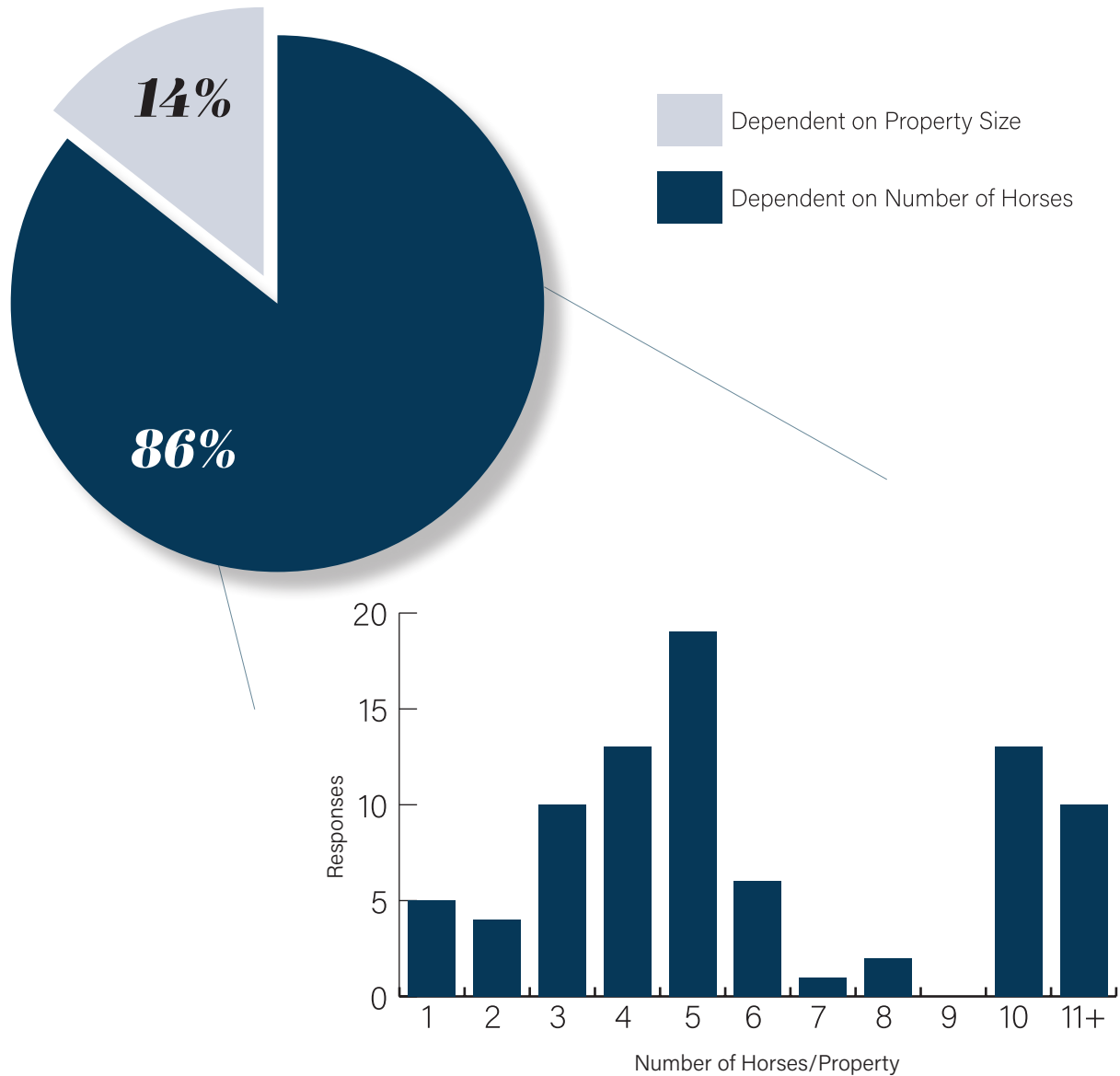
Which types of equine uses should be reviewed administratively (i.e. staff-level review) and which should require a public hearing?

		No Review		Administrative Review		Administrative Review with 500 ft Notice to Neighbors		Requires a Public Hearing		Total Responses
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Responses
Personal Horses and Livestock. Personal horses or livestock for the use of the occupants of the lot for purposes other than boarding or training. This use is accessory to a residential use.	<i>Online Response</i>	N/A	0%	468	62%	204	27%	82	11%	754
	<i>In Person Response</i>	41	84%	6	12%	1	2%	1	2%	49
Private Stable. A detached accessory building for the keeping of horses owned by the occupants of the premises	<i>Online Response</i>	N/A	0%	472	62%	221	29%	71	9%	764
	<i>In Person Response</i>	43	86%	4	8%	2	4%	1	2%	50
Horse Boarding. The activity of keeping and/or caring for 3 or more boarded horses, including horse rescue operations.	<i>Online Response</i>	N/A	0%	346	45%	318	41%	112	14%	776
	<i>In Person Response</i>	35	69%	13	25%	2	4%	1	2%	51
Public Riding Stable. A facility where horses are kept for sale or hire to the general public. Breeding, boarding, or training of equines may also be conducted	<i>Online Response</i>	N/A	0%	275	36%	313	38%	209	26%	797
	<i>In Person Response</i>	19	41%	22	48%	3	7%	2	4%	46
Equestrian Arena or Show Barn. An establishment where different people per month, other than the owner or manager of the property, are trained or instructed in riding, driving, or showing horses	<i>Online Response</i>	N/A	0%	266	33%	298	37%	235	30%	799
	<i>In Person Response</i>	10	20%	27	55%	11	22%	1	2%	49
Animal Racetrack. A structure, or portion thereof, or an outdoor area of a property, used for racing animals for recreation or profit and that may include accessory uses and structures normally associated with this activity.	<i>Online Response</i>	N/A	0%	138	17%	161	20%	500	63%	799
	<i>In Person Response</i>	4	9%	7	15%	11	23%	25	53%	47

Summary

Results show that the public would prefer that personal horses and livestock, and private stables be reviewed administratively. Opinions on review of horse boarding for up to 3 horses are split between reviewed administratively, and reviewed administratively with 500 ft. notice to neighbors. Opinions on public riding stables, and equestrian arena/show barns are split across all three categories. Responses identified animal racetracks as the only use that should require a public hearing. At the in-person workshops many attendees wrote in a preference for all equine uses besides animal racetracks to have no review.

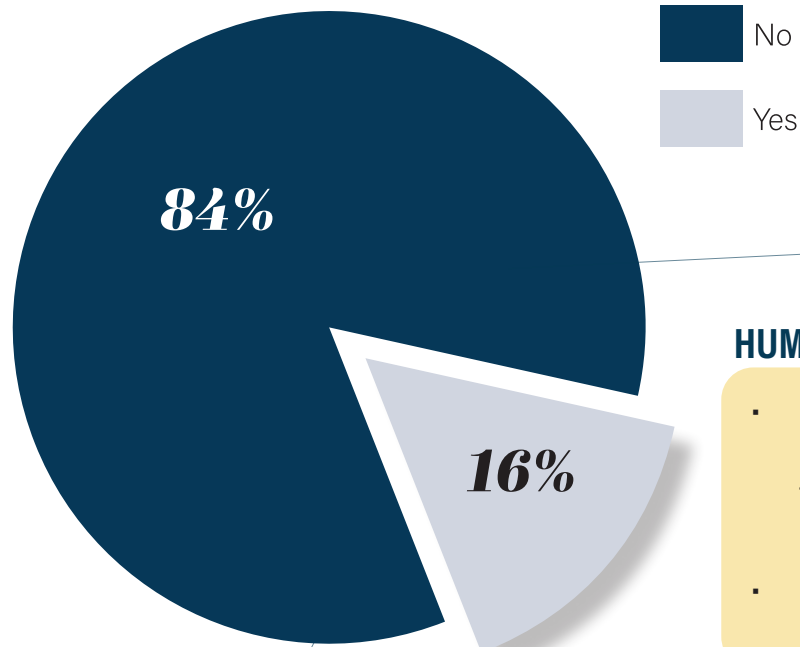
How many boarded horses per property trigger requirement for public hearing?



Summary

While the majority of respondents (86%) responded with a set number of horses that would trigger a public hearing, (14%) responded that the number should be determined by property size and the number of horses per acre. Of those that gave a set number of horses, 5 was the most common number, followed by 4, 10, and higher numbers.

Are there any additional standards for NEW commercial equine uses that you would like to see?



HUMANE TREATMENT OF HORSES

- Require regular inspections to ensure horses are healthy and have access to adequate space, water, shade, and protection
- Concerns specifically about horse rescue operations

LAND ZONED FOR RESIDENTIAL USE

- Incompatibility between horse operations and neighboring residential areas (specifically excessive dust, odors, water contamination, light pollution, road damage, and flies)
- Prohibit horse-owning properties in residentially-zoned land, and should be kept to the rural areas

ROAD MAINTENANCE

- Do not require paving near residential or commercial barns due to safety concerns
- Improved road maintenance or regulations on the size/frequency of large livestock trailers

MISC. CONCERNS

- Water for commercial equine uses should be sourced from centralized or municipal sources, not private well that affects water level for neighboring properties
- Under-staffing of facilities as a cause for horse illness/mistreatment
- Limit outdoor lighting impacts on dark skies
- Clearly differentiate between commercial & private boarding
- Require regular removal of manure to mitigate excessive odors and groundwater contamination

Additional Comments:

The tradition of Nevada culture is rooted in equestrian culture and a rural way of life. Many would like this tradition to continue to be upheld and valued.

Personal property should not be subject to regulation

Regulations should be dependent on property size and the number of horses per acre, as different sized properties have different needs

Many horse-owners and businesses have retired or put out of business due to excessive regulations.

Parking near horse facilities without off-street parking can be hazardous, as people park along the street, and decreases driving and walking space along roads.

Access and development of trails for horses, hiking, and biking only, without ATV or motor access.

