

Webinar



**COMMUNITY
SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

Equine Business Code Update

March 25, 2026

Agenda



- Background on the equine business code update
- The update process so far
- What we've heard
- Overview of draft amendments
- Opportunities to engage
- Demonstration of online survey

Goals for Today

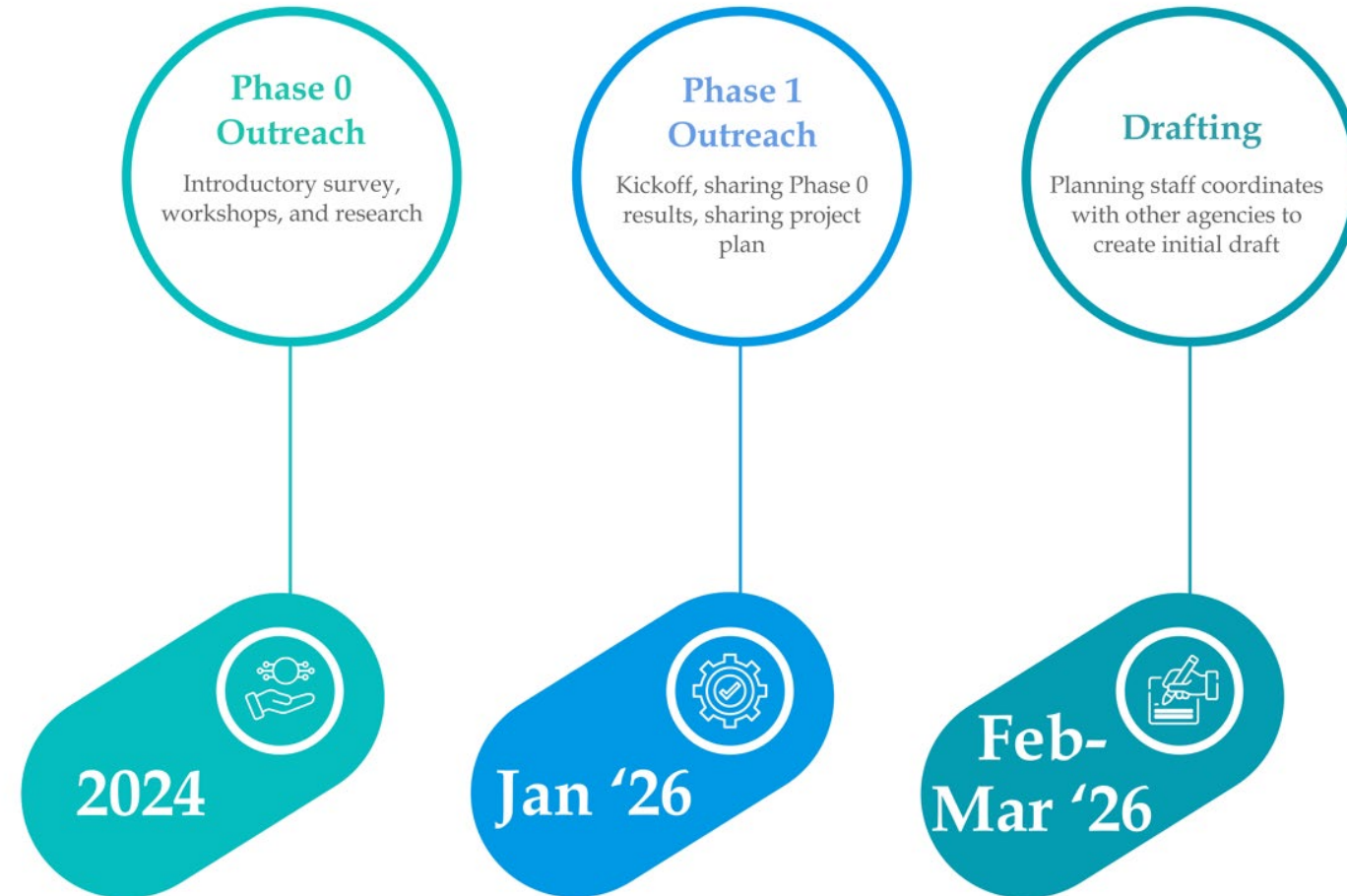


- Everyone understands how to engage with the equine business code update draft
- Broad understanding of changes proposed
- Recording will be posted

Background



- Equine business code update prioritized by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC)
- Two phases of public outreach already conducted
 - **Phase 0** – Survey, workshops, and research focused on equine business-related codes and policies conducted in 2024
 - **Phase 1** – Kickoff to 2026 code update process and outreach focused on equine business models and needs



Current Regulations



- In most places, “commercial stables” use type (boarding or training of 3 or more horses) allowed with a special use permit (SUP)
 - Requires public hearing process
 - Must operate from commercial structure with a permanent bathroom
- Warm Springs planning area allows boarding stables with permitting based on number of horses per acre
- Commercial stables a commercial use
 - Requires a business license
 - Triggers commercial parking, landscaping, and lighting standards

What we've heard

- Phase 0 public outreach provided a general understanding of where county residents think equine business uses are appropriate, which regulations are appropriate, and what the permitting requirements should be.
 - **1,898** questionnaire responses
 - **110** open house attendees
- Phase 1 public outreach included feedback on existing equine business models, needs, potential tier thresholds, other agency requirements (water rights, commercial septic, and fire), and more.
 - Approximately **48** participants who were generally directly involved in equine activities
 - For a full summary of comments received, see the [Phase 1 Public Outreach Report](#)

Focus of Equine Code Update



- Update Washoe County Development Code (Zoning) regulations related to equine businesses. Includes:
 - Use type definitions
 - Permitting/licensing requirements
 - Minimum standards for parking and landscaping
 - Other minimum standards
- Does not modify any regulations outside of the County's authority, such as fire, life safety, and state regulations
 - Those regulations are not within the jurisdiction of the County



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Overview of Draft Amendments

Use Type Classification



- Equine business uses reclassified as agricultural (instead of commercial)
- Commercial stables use type replaced with three “tiers” of equine facilities:
 - **Small Equine Facility** – maximum of 6 customers on any day and 20 customers per week; maximum of 5 horses
 - **Medium Equine Facility** – maximum of 10 customers on any day and 30 customers per week; number of horses determined during permitting process
 - **Large Equine Facility** – more than 10 customers on any day and 30 customers per week; number of horses determined during permitting process
- Tier considerations:
 - Alignment with other agency requirements (e.g. public water system, etc.)
 - Providing maximum flexibility
 - Separate types of equine activities (e.g. lessons vs. boarding, etc.) not defined as separate use types for ease and clarity

Permitting Requirements



Agricultural Use Types (Section 110.304.15)	LDR	MDR	HDR	LDS/ LDS 2	MDS/ MDS 4	HDS	LDU	MDU	HDU	GC	NC	TC	I	PSP	PR	OS	GR	GRA	
Equine Facility³																			*See Article 226 for Warm Springs parcels.
Small Equine Facility	A	A	A	AR	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	S₂	--	--	AR	--	A	A	
Medium Equine Facility	AR	AR	AR	S₂	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	S₂	--	--	AR	--	AR	AR	
Large Equine Facility	S₂	S₂	S₂	S₂	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	S₂	--	--	AR	--	S₂	S₂	

-- = Not Allowed; A = Allowed; S2 = Board of Adjustment Special Use Permit ; AR = Administrative Review Permit

Parking Requirement Changes



- Allow all-weather surface instead of paved surface for all agricultural uses with 20 or less parking spaces
- Update code related to accessible parking spaces to reference existing process to propose an alternate accessible surface, allowed with approval by Washoe County Building
- Changes to striping and marking requirements to accommodate unpaved parking areas
- Parking area landscaping buffer only required adjacent to the parking area, not along the entire adjoining property line (change applies to all uses)

Landscaping Requirement Changes



Current Requirements

- 20% of the developed area must be landscaped
- Landscaping buffer adjoining residential uses the full width of the yard (setback) area
- Solid decorative wall or fence required

Proposed Requirements

- No requirement for minimum percentage of area to be landscaped
- Landscaping buffer required adjoining residential uses the width of the setback or 20' only when within 100' of an adjoining residential lot or use
- No solid decorative wall or fence required

Other Equine Facility Requirements



- **Minimum lot size** of 35,000 square feet
 - Aligns with minimum lot size for more than 2 horses/livestock as currently established in Washoe County Code
- **Livestock shelters** not permitted in setback areas
- **Manure management plan** approved by Northern Nevada Public Health (NNPH) or documentation that such a plan is not needed is required
- Hours in which facilities are **open to customers** and/or **operate heavy machinery** limited to 7 a.m. – 9 p.m.
- **Source water protection** and **waterway** review requirements
- **Temporary bathroom facilities** permitted for small and medium equine facilities **not operating out of a structure**, subject to NNPH and Building approval

Administrative Review Process



- Changes to administrative review timelines updated to match changes to NRS and to accommodate more complex reviews
- No additional review requirements or steps are proposed

Intersection with other agencies



- Commercial water rights required for any business
- Commercial septic or municipal sewer required for facilities with a permanent bathroom
 - Residential septic systems do not always need to be upgraded to be approved for the commercial use
- Fully enclosed structures over 5,000 square feet generally required to be sprinklered
 - Can request alternative materials and methods approval from applicable fire agency
- Planning staff will create an “explainer” document that better describes the various permitting requirements for an equine facility

Opportunities to Engage



- [Online survey](#)
- Focus groups ([sign up](#) required)
 - **Sparks Library Focus Groups:** Thursday, March 26, 2026
 - **Group 1:** 4:30-5:30 p.m.
 - **Group 2:** 5:45-6:45 p.m.
 - **South Valleys Library Focus Groups:** Monday, March 30, 2026
 - **Group 1:** 5:45-6:45 p.m.
 - **Group 2:** 5:45-6:45 p.m. (concurrent)
 - **Reno-Stead Airport Focus Groups:** Wednesday, April 1, 2026
 - **Group 1:** 4:30-5:30 p.m.
 - **Group 2:** 5:45-6:45 p.m.
 - **Online Focus Groups:** Thursday April 2, 2026; Zoom
 - **Group 1:** 4:30-5:30 p.m.
 - **Group 2:** 5:45-6:45 p.m.
- For more information, visit www.washoecounty.gov/horses

Thank you

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