



Council Considers New Chicken Ordinance

By [Marsha Maxwell](#), About.com Guide November 5, 2009

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We had a bit of drama and sadness at our house last week. One of our chickens died. Yes, we eat chicken almost every day, but things are different when it's a pet chicken you've named, played with, and raised from a fluffball. R.I.P., Willamina.

When my family and I started raising chickens earlier this year, I was only dimly aware that we were participating in an exploding national trend. We live in a neighborhood with large lots, and in our immediate area raising a few chickens isn't that unusual. However, [raising chickens for eggs and as pets is becoming more popular](#) in all kinds of neighborhoods, and the trend has caused city councils throughout the Salt Lake Valley to revisit chicken regulations.

At their meeting today beginning at 7 p.m., the [Salt Lake City Council](#) will hold a public hearing on proposed changes to the city's chicken keeping ordinance. If the changes are approved, the number of backyard chickens Salt Lakers can keep will be limited by lot size, with the minimum lot size for keeping chickens set at .11 acres. The council also proposes changing the required distance between the chicken coop and the owner's home from 50 feet to 25 feet. Chicken coops will still have to be at least 50 feet from a neighbor's home. The proposed ordinance also prohibits slaughtering the chickens.

I've closely watched debates that have taken place throughout the valley as several cities have revamped chicken ordinances in response to the chicken-keeping trend. I've been a little surprised at the attitudes of some Salt Lake Valley residents who eat eggs and chicken on a regular basis but still think chickens will spoil a neighborhood's pristine atmosphere. In my experience, chickens are no more of a nuisance than dogs and cats.

However, most of the Salt Lake residents who have commented on the proposed changes to the chicken ordinance have been in favor of chicken keeping. Many have requested that the minimum distance between the coop and a neighbor's dwelling be reduced from 50 to 25 feet and that the number of birds allowed be increased slightly. Others have questioned the ban on slaughtering, since chickens outlive their ability to produce eggs.

[Read the proposed ordinance and citizen comments](#)

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Photo by Allison Maxwell

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(1) Building your own Chicken Coop and Raising Chickens says: :

November 8, 2009 at 9:12 pm

Your right chickens are being eaten all over the world at any given moment, but when one of your pet chickens dies it's like a love one dies. I raising chickens not only for food, but for fun like a hobby. I agree I think raising chickens is becoming very popular again. I think that's mainly because people are discovering it isn't as hard as it looks to raise chickens.

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