

Department Source: Public Health and Human Services

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: February 16, 2026

Re: Chapter 5 updates

Impacted Ward: Citywide

Executive Summary

The Board of Health reviewed Chapter 5 ordinances, in partnership with Public Health and Human Services. Several changes are proposed.

Discussion

Public Health and Human Services (PHHS), in partnership with the Columbia Board of Health (BOH), is submitting proposed amendments to Chapter 5 of the City Code, Animals and Fowl, for City Council consideration.

On December 16, 2024, the Board of Health formally requested that City Council authorize a comprehensive review of Chapter 5 ordinances. Following Council approval, the Board of Health conducted a structured, section-by-section review of the code to ensure the ordinances remain current, enforceable, and responsive to community needs and evolving animal welfare standards.

To support transparency and public engagement, the Board of Health scheduled a series of public meetings, each focused on a specific section of Chapter 5. All meetings were publicly noticed and included an opportunity for community comment. Prior to the first meeting, the community was notified through a press release, social media outreach, and postings on the City's BeHeard platform. Subsequent meetings were promoted through BeHeard and/or social media.

Board of Health Chapter 5 Review Meetings

- **April 10, 2025** – Review of City Ordinance Article VI: Feral Cats
- **May 8, 2025** – Review of Sec. 5-57: Dangerous or Aggressive Animals
- **June 12, 2025** – Review of Sec. 5-60: Limitation Upon Number of Dogs and Cats Kept
- **July 10, 2025** – Review of Sec. 5-6: Animal abuse; unlawful impoundment; unlawful confinement; tethering
- **August 14, 2025** – Final review of proposed changes to Chapter 5: Animals and Fowl

The attached draft ordinance reflects the outcome of this process and includes redlined changes for Council's review. Major proposed updates include:

- Establishing a City Council-appointed Dangerous or Aggressive Animal Advisory Board
- Updating the definition of a feral cat colony to five or more feral cats at a single location

- Allowing home quarantine for animal bite cases, when appropriate and with specific contingencies, in place of mandatory boarding
- Expanding animal protections by classifying neglect as a form of abuse
- Strengthening protections for tethered animals during weather warnings or advisories
- Creating a standardized appeal process for dangerous or aggressive animal determinations
- Requiring a permit to own more than four animals within City limits, with a \$50 fee per additional animal
- Simplifying permit requirements for feral cat colony caretakers

If adopted, PHHS will share information about the ordinance changes with the community through a press release, social media outreach, and the BeHeard platform.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: none

Long-Term Impact: none

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Organizational Excellence, Secondary Impact: Safe Community, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Not Applicable, Secondary Impact: Not applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Legislative History

Date	Action
12/15/2025	TMP – 31919 Chapter 5 Discussion. TMP-31919
12/16/24	Council Report- Board of Health Discussion regarding Chapter 5- Animals and Fowl of the City Code. REP79-24

Suggested Council Action

Should council agree with staff and Board of Health recommendations, staff request that Council accept the proposed changes.