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Export date: Fri Oct 30 5:51:26 2026 / +0000 GMT

Shelburne seeks community input on proposed backyard chicken pilot program

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Town of Shelburne is asking residents to weigh in on a proposed Backyard Hen Pilot Program before council decides whether to move forward with the idea.

An online survey, available through the Town's Have Your Say platform until July 19, invites residents to share their views on whether backyard hens should be permitted within town limits and what rules should apply if a pilot program is introduced.

The survey takes about three to five minutes to complete, and only responses from valid Shelburne postal codes will be included in the final review. Town officials say public feedback will play a key role in determining the next steps.

The questionnaire asks residents whether they support or oppose the concept, whether they would be interested in keeping hens themselves, and what concerns or benefits they see.

Participants are also asked for opinions on potential regulations, including limits on the number of hens, coop requirements and possible impacts on neighbourhoods. The survey also includes space for additional comments to help shape the design of a pilot program if Shelburne council chooses to proceed.

The consultation stems from a citizen proposal submitted to council on May 25, requesting that residents be allowed to keep backyard hens on residential properties.

Under the proposal, the pilot program would allow eligible households to keep up to four hens for personal egg production. Roosters would not be permitted, helping to reduce noise concerns.

The proposal outlines several conditions intended to minimize impacts on neighbouring properties.

Hens would have to be housed in secure, predator-resistant coops located in rear yards, with minimum setback requirements from property lines. Owners would be responsible for maintaining clean enclosures, properly storing feed, disposing of waste, and ensuring the hens do not create odours or other nuisances.

The proposal also states that hens would be kept solely for egg production and companionship. The slaughter of chickens on residential properties would not be permitted, and owners would be expected to comply with provincial animal welfare standards.

Once the survey closes, staff will compile the public feedback and report back to council, which will decide whether to proceed with developing and implementing a Backyard Hen Pilot Program for Shelburne.

Learn more and access the survey at: haveyoursayshelburne.ca/shelburne-backyard-hens-survey