

HORSE-KEEPING RULES · NORCO — HORSETOWN USA

Can I actually keep horses here?

Norco does not count horses per acre. It counts animal units, in bands that are not linear.

One horse equals one animal unit; foals are not counted until six months. The jump from 35,000 to 40,000 square feet adds two units, not one — so if you are comparing Norco lots on a per-acre basis you will price them wrong.

ONE ANIMAL UNIT § 18.13.06(D)(4)

1 horse

Foals not counted until six months.

ABOVE 60,000 SQ FT § 18.13.06(D)(5)

+1 per 4,000 sq ft

A third-party summary in circulation says 75,000. It is wrong; the section was read twice.

BUILDABLE LAND TEST § 18.13.06(D)(7)

500 sq ft / unit

Contiguous, sloping no more than 15 degrees. Goats and sheep exempt.

OPEN KEEPING-AREA TEST § 18.13.20(C)

576 sq ft / unit

A separate, additional requirement with minimum dimensions that scale by lot size.

ANIMAL UNITS BY LOT SIZE, A-1 ZONE	
20,000 – under 25,000 sq ft	5
25,000 – under 30,000 sq ft	6
30,000 – under 35,000 sq ft	7
35,000 – under 40,000 sq ft	8
40,000 – under 45,000 sq ft	10
45,000 – under 50,000 sq ft	12
50,000 – under 55,000 sq ft	14
55,000 – under 60,000 sq ft	16
Norco Municipal Code § 18.13.06(D)(5)	

What catches people out

№ 01

The land test can override the table

Two separate land-area requirements sit underneath the animal count and either one can cut it below what the table allows. On a sloping Norco lot — and plenty of them slope — the usable flat area is the binding constraint, not the square footage on the tax roll. Publishing “500 square feet per horse” on its own understates it, which is why you will see that figure alone elsewhere.

№ 02

R-1 lots need two things, and both

§ 18.15.06(12) allows animal keeping in R-1 using the A-1 table, on a minimum 10,000 sq ft lot *and* adjacency to a street containing a public horse trail. A 10,000 sq ft R-1 lot not on a trail street does not qualify. In fairness the code does not print the word “and” — the conjunctive reading comes from the structure, which is strong but is an inference. Get it in writing from Planning before relying on it.

№ 03

Older listings often sit on the nonconforming table

Lots that are nonconforming and under 20,000 sq ft run a separate table at § 18.13.06(D)(6), running down to one unit below 10,000 sq ft. A good number of older Norco listings are actually on that table rather than the headline one. The A-E zone runs its own table again.

Source and currency. Norco Municipal Code, eCode360 — includes legislation through 06 May 2026. Charter read from norco.ca.us.

Re-verify late October 2026 — Norco’s 2050 General Plan Update is in public review.

This document reports what the published code says. It is not a zoning determination and it is not legal advice. Ordinances change, and the answer for a *specific parcel* can turn on its zone, its slope, its recorded easements or a permit issued decades ago. Before you rely on any of it, confirm with City of Norco Planning Department.