



Development Services

520-432-9300
 developmentservices@cochise.az.gov
 www.cochise.az.gov
 1415 Melody Ln, Bdg F
 Bisbee, Arizona 85603

MEMORANDUM

TO: Cochise County Board of Supervisors
FROM: Matthew Taylor, AICP, Planner II
THROUGH: Christine McLachlan, AICP, Director
FOR: Sharon Gilman, County Administrator
SUBJECT: Docket R-25-01 (SR District Permitted Accessory Structures, Antiquated Subdivision)
DATE: July 1, 2025

I. BACKGROUND

Docket R-25-01 is a staff-initiated amendment to the Cochise County Zoning Regulations, specifically Articles 2.03.030 (Definitions) and 2.24.050 (SR Permitted Accessory Uses). Although this is staff-initiated, it is in response to direction received from the Board of Supervisors and Planning and Zoning Commission initiate a change in the zoning regulations.

In the past year, applicants have requested downzones to RU-4 (Rural, one dwelling per 4-acres) to participate in the County’s Owner-Builder Program, receiving significant opposition from the surrounding neighbors due to RU-4’s allowance of manufactured/mobile homes. Public opposition is unusual for downzonings which are typically viewed as lessening impacts on the surrounding community. Public response is one of the fifteen factors the Commission and Board consider with rezoning requests. Major support can be a factor in favor, while major opposition requires a reasonable effort by the applicant to address concerns.

II. ISSUES

Recent controversial downzones requests were located in the Pearce Sunsites subdivision. This is one of many antiquated subdivisions in Cochise County. An antiquated subdivision is considered one that pre-dates land use, subdivision, or other regulations which renders the subdivision substandard or that has substantially failed to be built out.

Sunsites is primarily zoned single family residential (SR) which is considered one of the most restrictive designations, as it doesn’t allow manufactured homes or the placement of accessory structures prior to or larger than the size of the principal residential structure. SR-174 (minimum lot size 4-acres) along with other SR zoning districts with a minimum lot size requirement exceeding 4-acres (SR-10 Acres, SR-18 Acres, SR-36 Acres), allows property owners to use the owner-builder option, but all aforementioned restrictions remain. RU-4, on the other hand, allows property owners to utilize the owner-builder option while also allowing manufactured/mobile homes, construction of accessory structures prior to the principal use, and

Zoning District	Mobile homes allowed	Owner builder allowed	Structures before principal use	Accessory larger than principal use
RU-4 +	✓	✓	✓	✓
SM-174 +	✓	✓		
SR-174 +		✓	✓	✓

✓ *allowed with approved text amendment*

accessory structures larger than the principal use. With the approved text amendment, SR zoning districts with a minimum site area requirement and a minimum parcel size of four acres [SR-174 (4 acres), SR-10 Acres, SR-18 Acres, and SR-36 Acres] would allow flexibility with accessory structures present in RU-4 but continue to prohibit manufactured/mobile homes the same as SR districts with smaller lot size requirements [SR-8, SR-12, SR-22, SR-43, and SR-87 (2 acres)].

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Planning and Zoning Commission recommended approval of Docket R-25-01 during its regular meeting on June 11, 2025, by a 7-0 vote.

Staff recommends the following amendments to the Cochise County Zoning Regulations, modifying Sections 2.03.030 (Definitions) and 2.24.050 (SR Permitted Accessory Uses), adding an Antiquated Subdivision definition and modifying SR zoning district permitted accessory uses:

2.03.030 DEFINITIONS

Antiquated Subdivision: A subdivision that was created prior to the adoption of current subdivision, zoning, and land use regulations in Cochise County, which does not conform to or meet the requirements set forth in the County's current regulations and has substantially failed to be built out.

2.24.050 SR PERMITTED ACCESSORY USES

Accessory uses are permitted in SR Zoning Districts, provided they are customarily incidental to an established permitted principal use, except accessory structures on parcels having a minimum site area requirement and consisting of at least 4 acres within antiquated subdivisions, which may be built prior to and exceed the size of the principal residential structure unless otherwise stated, provided that all other site development standards are met.

Sample Motion

I move to recommend approval of Docket R-25-01, amending Sections 2.03.030 and 2.24.050 of the Cochise County Zoning Regulations to add a definition of "Antiquated Subdivision" and modify SR zoning district permitted accessory uses.
