



Development Services

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Cochise County Planning and Zoning Commission
FROM: Christine McLachlan, AICP, Interim Director/Planning Division Manager
SUBJECT: Work Session for Docket R25-01 (SR-174 amendment, antiquated sub)
DATE: May 14, 2025

I. BACKGROUND

Docket R 25-01 is a staff-initiated amendment to the Cochise County Zoning Regulations, specifically Section 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 Planning and Zoning Commission as well as the Board of Supervisors to initiate a change in the zoning regulations. This item will be a work session with the Planning and Zoning Commission during its regular May meeting. If staff is directed to proceed, we will prepare a strike-through and underline draft that incorporates any feedback we receive during this work session.

In the past year, staff has brought before the commission two downzoning dockets from SR-43 (Single Family Residential, one dwelling per acre) to RU-4 (Rural, one dwelling per 4-acres) that received significant opposition from the surrounding neighbors. It is unusual for downzonings, which are typically viewed as lessening impacts on the surrounding community, to receive opposition. Public response to a request is one of the fifteen factors the commission and board considers with rezoning requests. Major support can be a factor in favor, while major opposition requires a reasonable effort by the applicant to address concerns.

SR, Single Household Residential Zoning (2.24 Zoning Regulations) are established to achieve the following purposes:

1. To stabilize and protect single-household residential development.
2. To provide areas for families living at a broad range of densities.
3. To provide for residential neighborhoods.

The zoning district is further subdivided into the following density districts, with the number in the title indicating the required number of acres or square feet: SR-36 Acres, SR-18 Acres, SR-10 Acres, SR-174 (4 acres), SR-87 (2 acres), SR-43, SR-22, SR-12, SR-8.

RU, Rural Zoning (2.15 Zoning Regulations) RU (Rural) Zoning Districts are established to achieve the following purposes:

1. To preserve the character of areas designated as "Rural" in the Cochise County Comprehensive Plan.
 2. To encourage those types of non-residential and non-agricultural activities which serve local needs or provide a service and are compatible with rural living.
 3. To preserve the agricultural character of those portions of the County capable of resource production.
 4. To provide space for people, minimize traffic congestion, and preserve the existing rural environment of unincorporated areas of the County situated outside of existing communities.
 5. To provide recreational support services that are compatible with rural living.
 6. To protect the quality of the natural environment as it relates to safeguarding the health, safety, and welfare of the people in Cochise County; and
 7. To allow consideration of some more intense non-residential uses as Special Uses that are inappropriate
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in more densely populated urban/suburban areas that may under some circumstances be appropriate in rural areas if designed to be sensitive to the general character of rural districts and natural environment and harmonious and in scale with existing development near the proposed site and in conformance with this Section.

The zoning district is further subdivided into the following density districts, with the number in the title indicating the required number of acres: RU-36, RU-18, RU-10, RU-4, RU-2.

II. ISSUES

Both controversial downzonings were located in the Peace Sunsites subdivision. This is one of many antiquated subdivisions in Cochise County. An antiquated subdivision is defined as “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.” Sunsites is primarily zoned single family residential (SR). SR zoning is considered one of the most restrictive designations. It does not allow manufactured homes or the placement of accessory structures prior to and exceed the size of the principal residential structure. SR-174 (minimum lot size 4-acres) does allow for property owners to use the owner-builder option, but otherwise keeps all other restrictions. RU-4, on the other hand, allows manufactured homes, construction of accessory structures prior to the principal use, accessory structures larger than the principal use, and use of the owner builder option. See chart, below.

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

VI. RECOMMENDATION

During the May meeting, staff will provide a powerpoint presentation that provides:

- Background regarding Sunsites,
- Zoning types and allowances
- Issues to be addressed by the amendment
- Options
- Feedback/direction