

## Frequently Asked Questions about the Proposed Revisions to the Pinal County Zoning Ordinance

Pinal County is in the process of updating its Zoning Ordinance. The last time this code was changed was 1962 and, obviously, much has changed since then. A good Zoning Ordinance is vital to effective planning and land use. When completed, the County's new code will be more tightly focused with more precise descriptions of what uses are permitted under each designation. Our county is larger than many states in New England which gives us an opportunity to have a variety of land uses. A good Zoning Ordinance can help all of those uses to coexist in harmony.

Recently, horse enthusiasts have expressed strong concerns about some of the proposed revisions. To help everyone stay informed and to reduce potential misunderstandings, the County has prepared answers to frequently asked questions.

### **What does Pinal County hope to achieve out of this process?**

The County is interested in preserving Pinal County's rural heritage while acknowledging that growth will happen. This is a public process designed to minimize future conflicts so that neighboring land uses are as compatible as possible. The public process has already worked in the sense that we made changes based on public input. Drafting new zoning language is a process, not an event.

Many businesses exist today that simply were never thought of in 1962. We have cellular telephone antennas, internet cafes, drive thru pharmacies and other realities that did not exist 45 years ago. By modernizing the language and being very specific, we hope to add clarity in the new Zoning Ordinance.

### **What about keeping large animals on my property?**

The vast majority of land in Pinal County has GR zoning. GR zoning has no limitations on large animals, except for hogs. The proposed revision will not change that.

The *first draft* of the revision showed a maximum of 2 large animals per acre, on properties which were rezoned to 2, 3.3, 5 and 10 acre lots. Once the Board of Supervisors heard the concerns of our citizens, they immediately asked staff to remove those restrictions. If you go on the County's website you will see the amended language.

### **Will the proposed revisions change existing zoning?**

The revisions will not change anyone's existing zoning. The zoning you have on your property remains unless *you* decide to change it.

### **Will I have to change my zoning to build a fence or a pool?**

If you have residential zoning, such as GR, you have the right to build a home, build a fence, add a pool and many other items under your existing zoning.

### **If the new zoning categories are passed by the County, who will they apply to?**

They will apply only to landowners who request the new zoning for their properties.

### **If the revisions are passed, will they do anything to my existing zoning?**

There are some new requirements that will apply to existing zoning. These are: Use Permits, Parking and Loading, Signs and Lighting.

**Use Permits** – The use list has been expanded; adding such uses as bed & breakfast, group care facilities, and wireless communications facilities; requirements and standards have been added.

**Parking and Loading** – Minimum parking space dimensions and aisle widths have been clarified. General Design requirements have been added, such as: All parking areas shall be designed to permit access by emergency and service vehicles. Loading space requirements for commercial properties have been expanded, such as: No such space shall be located closer than fifty (50) feet to any lot in any residential zone unless wholly within a completely enclosed building or enclosed on all sides by a solid fence or wall not less than six feet in height.

**Signs** – The article has been brought up-to-date by addressing signage that did not exist in 1962. The sign ordinance will help reduce sign clutter by consolidating information on one sign (referred to as kiosk signs). Standards for electronic readerboards for gas prices, schools and churches have been added.

**Lighting** – Covers private as well as public property and allows enforcement by Code Compliance Officers instead of the County Sheriff.

**How will the proposed lighting revisions affect arena lighting?**

The only difference between the draft ordinance and the current Light Pollution Code is that the draft has criteria for height of lights

**How does the proposed revision affect mobile homes?**

Mobile homes are allowed on properties that have zoning for 10, 5, 3.3, 2 and 1.25 acre lots, and the revisions will not change that. There are over 3,500 square miles of land with these zoning categories currently in Pinal County. Under the proposed revision, if a property owner changes their zoning to 10, 5, 3.3 or 2 acre lots, they will only be allowed to build a conventional construction home on that site. Again, this only takes effect if the owner applies to change their existing zoning.

**How are commercial stables affected?**

Commercial stables are where horses are boarded or hired as a business. Most existing commercial stables have GR zoning. In GR you need 10 acres to have a commercial stable, and that will not change. If your zoning is presently SR or SH, 20 acres is required for a commercial stable. This also will not change.

Again, people with existing GR, SR or SH zoning will see no impact from the proposed ordinance. People seeking to *change their zoning and establish future commercial stables* will need to meet the 20 acre minimum.

**How will the proposed ordinance affect family operated businesses?**

If the draft ordinance is adopted, family businesses that are operating legally will not be affected. If the businesses propose new parking, new signage, additional outdoor storage or new lighting, the proposed changes will be regulated by the new ordinance.

**What happens with Special Density Permits?**

Special Density Permits allow second dwelling units to be placed on single family lots. That dwelling is to be used to care for someone who is unable to care for themselves. Permits that are in effect will remain in effect until they expire. In the draft zoning ordinance, these permits are called Second Dwelling Permits and will be allowed in SR, SH, CAR, and GR zones.

**What has happened so far and what's next?**

The County has held two citizen workshops on the revised Zoning Ordinance and more than 250 people attended those sessions. There will also be a number of opportunities for residents to participate in the future. To stay up-to-date on the process, please visit the website for this project: <http://co.pinal.az.us/PlanDev/ZoningOrdinance/Index.asp>.