

REFERENCE TITLE: **municipal zoning; maximum density; residential**

State of Arizona  
Senate  
Fifty-seventh Legislature  
Second Regular Session  
2026

## **SB 1619**

Introduced by  
Senator Gowan

AN ACT

AMENDING SECTION 9-462.01, ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES; RELATING TO MUNICIPAL ZONING.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:

2 Section 1. Section 9-462.01, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended  
3 to read:

4 9-462.01. Zoning regulations; public hearing; applicability;  
5 definitions

6 A. Pursuant to this article, the legislative body of any  
7 municipality by ordinance, in order to conserve and promote the public  
8 health, safety and general welfare, may:

9 1. Regulate the use of buildings, structures and land as between  
10 agriculture, residence, industry, business and other purposes.

11 2. Regulate signs and billboards.

12 3. Regulate the location, height, bulk, number of stories and size  
13 of buildings and structures, the size and use of lots, yards, courts and  
14 other open spaces, the percentage of a lot that may be occupied by a  
15 building or structure, access to incident solar energy and the intensity  
16 of land use.

17 4. Establish requirements for off-street parking and loading.

18 5. Establish and maintain building setback lines.

19 6. Create civic districts around civic centers, public parks,  
20 public buildings or public grounds and establish regulations for the civic  
21 districts.

22 7. Require as a condition of rezoning public dedication of  
23 rights-of-way as streets, alleys, public ways, drainage and public  
24 utilities as are reasonably required by or related to the effect of the  
25 rezoning.

26 8. Establish floodplain zoning districts and regulations to protect  
27 life and property from the hazards of periodic inundation. Regulations  
28 may include variable lot sizes, special grading or drainage requirements,  
29 or other requirements deemed necessary for the public health, safety or  
30 general welfare.

31 9. Establish special zoning districts or regulations for certain  
32 lands characterized by adverse topography, adverse soils, subsidence of  
33 the earth, high water table, lack of water or other natural or man-made  
34 hazards to life or property. Regulations may include variable lot sizes,  
35 special grading or drainage requirements, or other requirements deemed  
36 necessary for the public health, safety or general welfare.

37 10. Establish districts of historical significance provided that:

38 (a) The ordinances may require that special permission be obtained  
39 for any development within the district if the legislative body has  
40 adopted a plan for the preservation of districts of historical  
41 significance that meets the requirements of subdivision (b) of this  
42 paragraph, and the criteria contained in the ordinance are consistent with  
43 the objectives set forth in the plan.

44 (b) A plan for the preservation of districts of historical  
45 significance shall identify districts of special historical significance,

1 state the objectives to be sought concerning the development or  
2 preservation of sites, area and structures within the district, and  
3 formulate a program for public action, including providing public  
4 facilities and regulating private development and demolition necessary to  
5 realize these objectives.

6 (c) The ordinance establishing districts of historical significance  
7 shall set forth standards necessary to preserve the historical character  
8 of the area so designated.

9 (d) The ordinances may designate or authorize any committee,  
10 commission, department or person to designate structures or sites of  
11 special historical significance in accordance with criteria contained in  
12 the ordinance, and no designation shall be made except after a public  
13 hearing on notice of the owners of record of the property designated of  
14 special historical significance. The ordinances may require that special  
15 permission be obtained for any development respecting the structures or  
16 sites.

17 11. Establish age-specific community zoning districts in which  
18 residency is restricted to a head of a household or spouse who must be of  
19 a specific age or older and in which minors are prohibited from living in  
20 the home. Age-specific community zoning districts shall not be overlaid  
21 over property without the permission of all owners of property included as  
22 part of the district unless all of the property in the district has been  
23 developed, advertised and sold or rented under specific age restrictions.  
24 The establishment of age-specific community zoning districts is subject to  
25 all of the public notice requirements and other procedures prescribed by  
26 this article.

27 12. Establish procedures, methods and standards for the transfer of  
28 development rights within its jurisdiction. Any proposed transfer of  
29 development rights from the sending property or to the receiving property  
30 shall be subject to the notice and hearing requirements of section  
31 9-462.04 and shall be subject to the approval and consent of the property  
32 owners of both the sending and receiving property. Before any transfer of  
33 development rights, a municipality shall adopt an ordinance providing for:

34 (a) The issuance and recordation of the instruments necessary to  
35 sever development rights from the sending property and to affix  
36 development rights to the receiving property. These instruments shall be  
37 executed by the affected property owners and lienholders.

38 (b) The preservation of the character of the sending property and  
39 assurance that the prohibitions against the use and development of the  
40 sending property shall bind the landowner and every successor in interest  
41 to the landowner.

42 (c) The severance of transferable development rights from the  
43 sending property and the delayed transfer of development rights to a  
44 receiving property.

1 (d) The purchase, sale, exchange or other conveyance of  
2 transferable development rights before the rights being affixed to a  
3 receiving property.

4 (e) A system for monitoring the severance, ownership, assignment  
5 and transfer of transferable development rights.

6 (f) The right of a municipality to purchase development rights and  
7 to hold them for resale.

8 (g) The right of a municipality at its discretion to enter into an  
9 intergovernmental agreement with another municipality or a county for the  
10 transfer of development rights between jurisdictions. The transfer shall  
11 comply with this paragraph, except that if the sending property is located  
12 in an unincorporated area of a county, the approval of the development  
13 rights to be sent to a municipality shall comply with section 11-817.

14 B. For the purposes of subsection A of this section, the  
15 legislative body may divide a municipality, or portion of a municipality,  
16 into zones of the number, shape and area it deems best suited to carry out  
17 the purpose of this article and articles 6, 6.2 and 6.3 of this chapter.

18 C. All zoning regulations shall be uniform for each class or kind  
19 of building or use of land throughout each zone, but the regulations in  
20 one type of zone may differ from those in other types of zones as follows:

21 1. Within individual zones, there may be uses permitted on a  
22 conditional basis under which additional requirements must be met,  
23 including requiring site plan review and approval by the planning agency.  
24 The conditional uses are generally characterized by any of the following:

25 (a) Infrequency of use.

26 (b) High degree of traffic generation.

27 (c) Requirement of large land area.

28 2. Within residential zones, the regulations may permit  
29 modifications to minimum yard lot area and height requirements.

30 D. To carry out the purposes of this article and articles 6 and 6.2  
31 of this chapter, the legislative body may adopt overlay zoning districts  
32 and regulations applicable to particular buildings, structures and land  
33 within individual zones. For the purposes of this subsection, "overlay  
34 zoning district" means a special zoning district that includes regulations  
35 that modify regulations in another zoning district with which the overlay  
36 zoning district is combined. Overlay zoning districts and regulations  
37 shall be adopted pursuant to section 9-462.04.

38 E. The legislative body may approve a change of zone conditioned on  
39 a schedule for development of the specific use or uses for which rezoning  
40 is requested. If, at the expiration of this period, the property has not  
41 been improved for the use for which it was conditionally approved, the  
42 legislative body, after notification by certified mail to the owner and  
43 applicant who requested the rezoning, shall schedule a public hearing to  
44 take administrative action to extend, remove or determine compliance with

1 the schedule for development or take legislative action to cause the  
2 property to revert to its former zoning classification.

3 F. All zoning and rezoning ordinances or regulations adopted under  
4 this article shall be consistent with and conform to the adopted general  
5 plan of the municipality, if any, as adopted under article 6 of this  
6 chapter. In the case of uncertainty in construing or applying the  
7 conformity of any part of a proposed rezoning ordinance to the adopted  
8 general plan of the municipality, the ordinance shall be construed in a  
9 manner that will further the implementation of, and not be contrary to,  
10 the goals, policies and applicable elements of the general plan. A  
11 rezoning ordinance conforms with the land use element of the general plan  
12 if it proposes land uses, densities or intensities within the range of  
13 identified uses, densities and intensities of the land use element of the  
14 general plan.

15 G. A regulation or ordinance under this section may not prevent or  
16 restrict agricultural composting on farmland that is five or more  
17 contiguous acres and that meets the requirements of this subsection. An  
18 agricultural composting operation shall notify in writing the legislative  
19 body of the municipality and the nearest fire department of the location  
20 of the composting operation. If the nearest fire department is located in  
21 a different municipality from the agricultural composting operation, the  
22 agricultural composting operation shall also notify in writing the fire  
23 department of the municipality in which the operation is located.  
24 Agricultural composting is subject to sections 3-112 and 49-141.  
25 Agricultural composting may not be conducted within one thousand three  
26 hundred twenty feet of an existing residential use, unless the operations  
27 are conducted on farmland or land leased in association with farmland.  
28 Any disposal of manure shall comply with section 49-247. For the purposes  
29 of this subsection:

30 1. "Agricultural composting" means the controlled biological  
31 decomposition of organic solid waste under in-vessel anaerobic or aerobic  
32 conditions where all or part of the materials are generated on the  
33 farmland or will be used on the farmland associated with the agricultural  
34 composting operation.

35 2. "Farmland" has the same meaning prescribed in section 3-111 and  
36 is subject to regulation under section 49-247.

37 H. A municipality may not adopt a land use regulation or impose any  
38 condition for issuance of a building or use permit or other approval that  
39 violates section 9-461.16.

40 I. In accordance with article II, sections 1 and 2, Constitution of  
41 Arizona, the legislative body of a municipality shall consider the  
42 individual property rights and personal liberties of the residents of the  
43 municipality before adopting any zoning ordinance.

44 J. Before adopting any zoning ordinance or zoning ordinance text  
45 amendment of general applicability, the legislative body of a municipality

1 shall consider a housing impact statement regarding the impact of the  
2 zoning ordinance or zoning ordinance text amendment that shall include:

3 1. A general estimate of the probable impact on the average cost to  
4 construct housing for sale or rent within the zoning districts to which  
5 the zoning ordinance or text amendment applies.

6 2. A description of any data or reference material on which the  
7 proposed zoning ordinance or text amendment is based.

8 3. A description of any less costly or less restrictive alternative  
9 methods of achieving the purpose of the proposed zoning ordinance or text  
10 amendment.

11 K. A municipality may not adopt or enforce a land use regulation  
12 that requires the property on which a nongovernmental primary or secondary  
13 school operates to be larger than one acre.

14 L. ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2027, EACH MUNICIPALITY WITH A  
15 POPULATION OF FIFTY THOUSAND PERSONS OR MORE SHALL UPDATE ITS ORDINANCES  
16 AND REGULATIONS TO DO ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:

17 1. ALLOW FOR RESIDENTIAL USE AS A PERMITTED USE ON ALL APPLICABLE  
18 LAND THAT THE VOTER-APPROVED GENERAL PLAN HAS IDENTIFIED FOR RESIDENTIAL  
19 USE.

20 2. AMEND THE ZONING REGULATIONS ON ALL UNDEVELOPED LAND WITHIN THE  
21 PLANNING AREA THAT IS IDENTIFIED FOR RESIDENTIAL USE OR ON WHICH  
22 RESIDENTIAL USES ALLOW SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL TO BE CONSTRUCTED AT THE  
23 MAXIMUM DENSITY THAT IS IDENTIFIED IN THE MUNICIPALITY'S VOTER-APPROVED  
24 GENERAL PLAN FOR EACH LOCATION. IF THE GENERAL PLAN SPECIFIES A DENSITY  
25 RANGE, THE MAXIMUM DENSITY IS THE UPPER NUMERIC VALUE OF THAT RANGE. IF  
26 THE MUNICIPALITY DOES NOT HAVE A VOTER-APPROVED GENERAL PLAN OR IF THE  
27 VOTER-APPROVED GENERAL PLAN DOES NOT SPECIFY A MAXIMUM DENSITY FOR  
28 SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, THE MAXIMUM DENSITY IS SIX DWELLING UNITS PER  
29 ACRE.

30 3. ENSURE THAT WHEN ALL APPLICABLE REQUIREMENTS ARE ENFORCED IN  
31 COMBINATION, THE MAXIMUM DENSITY SPECIFIED FOR SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL  
32 IS ACHIEVABLE IN PRACTICE FOR EACH LOCATION AS IDENTIFIED IN THE  
33 VOTER-APPROVED GENERAL PLAN.

34 M. THE UPDATE TO THE ZONING REGULATIONS REQUIRED BY SUBSECTION L OF  
35 THIS SECTION SHALL BE DONE PURSUANT TO SECTION 9-462.03, INCLUDING ALL  
36 REQUIRED PUBLIC NOTICES AND HEARINGS. IF A MUNICIPALITY DOES NOT ADOPT  
37 THE ZONING REGULATIONS REQUIRED BY SUBSECTION L OF THIS SECTION ON OR  
38 BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2027, THE ALLOWANCES REQUIRED BY SUBSECTION L OF THIS  
39 SECTION SHALL APPLY BY OPERATION OF LAW ON ALL APPLICABLE LAND,  
40 NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER ORDINANCE OR REGULATION.

41 ~~+~~ N. For the purposes of this section:

42 1. "APPLICABLE LAND" MEANS ALL LAND THAT IS IDENTIFIED FOR  
43 RESIDENTIAL USE OR ON WHICH RESIDENTIAL USES ARE ALLOWED AND THAT IS  
44 LOCATED WITHIN AN URBAN AREA AS DESIGNATED BY THE UNITED STATES CENSUS  
45 BUREAU.

1           ~~1.~~ 2. "Development rights" means the maximum development that  
2 would be allowed on the sending property under any general or specific  
3 plan and local zoning ordinance of a municipality in effect on the date  
4 the municipality adopts an ordinance pursuant to subsection A, paragraph  
5 12 of this section respecting the permissible use, area, bulk or height of  
6 improvements made to the lot or parcel. Development rights may be  
7 calculated and allocated in accordance with factors including dwelling  
8 units, area, floor area, floor area ratio, height limitations, traffic  
9 generation or any other criteria that will quantify a value for the  
10 development rights in a manner that will carry out the objectives of this  
11 section.

12           3. "MAXIMUM DENSITY" MEANS THE MAXIMUM DENSITY SPECIFIED FOR THE  
13 LOCATION IN THE VOTER-APPROVED GENERAL PLAN.

14           4. "PERMITTED USE" MEANS THE ABILITY FOR A DEVELOPMENT TO BE  
15 APPROVED WITHOUT REQUIRING A PUBLIC HEARING, VARIANCE, CONDITIONAL USE  
16 PERMIT, SPECIAL PERMIT OR SPECIAL EXCEPTION, OTHER THAN A DISCRETIONARY  
17 ZONING ACTION TO DETERMINE THAT A SITE PLAN CONFORMS WITH APPLICABLE  
18 ZONING REGULATIONS.

19           ~~2.~~ 5. "Receiving property" means a lot or parcel within which  
20 development rights are increased pursuant to a transfer of development  
21 rights. Receiving property shall be appropriate and suitable for  
22 development and shall be sufficient to accommodate the transferable  
23 development rights of the sending property without substantial adverse  
24 environmental, economic or social impact to the receiving property or to  
25 neighboring property.

26           ~~3.~~ 6. "Sending property" means a lot or parcel with special  
27 characteristics, including farmland, woodland, desert land, mountain land,  
28 floodplain, natural habitats, recreation or parkland, including golf  
29 course area, or land that has unique aesthetic, architectural or historic  
30 value that a municipality desires to protect from future development.

31           ~~4.~~ 7. "Transfer of development rights" means the process by which  
32 development rights from a sending property are affixed to one or more  
33 receiving properties.