



CITY OF SURPRISE
Regular City Council Work Session
16000 N. Civic Center Plaza
Surprise, AZ 85374

Tuesday, May 19, 2026 @ 5:00 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Council chamber doors will open at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the meeting.

- A. Call To Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Pledge of Allegiance
- D. Regular City Council Work Session Agenda

CONSENT AGENDA:

REGULAR AGENDA ITEM - PUBLIC HEARING:

REGULAR AGENDA ITEM - NON-PUBLIC HEARING:

- 1. Citywide Presentation and discussion pertaining to a Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) to the Surprise Land Development Ordinances (LDO) to establish a new residential zoning district, Desert Rural (DR), along with associated changes throughout the LDO and Surprise Municipal Code. Case FS25-0039. Jani Wertin
Community
Development
- E. Executive Session

Pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03

A. On a public majority vote of the members constituting a quorum, a public body may hold an executive session but only for the following purposes:

1. Discussion or consideration of employment, assignment, appointment, promotion, demotion, dismissal, salaries, disciplining or resignation of a public officer, appointee or employee of any public body, except that, with the exception of salary discussions, an officer, appointee or employee may demand that the discussion or consideration occur at a public meeting. The public body shall provide the officer, appointee or employee with written notice of the executive session as is appropriate but not less than twenty-four hours for the officer, appointee or employee to determine whether the discussion or consideration should occur at a public meeting.
2. Discussion or consideration of records exempt by law from public inspection, including the receipt and discussion of information or testimony that is specifically required to be maintained as confidential by state or federal law.
3. Discussion or consultation for legal advice with the attorney or attorneys of the public body.
4. Discussion or consultation with the attorneys of the public body in order to consider its position and instruct its attorneys regarding the public body's position regarding contracts that are the subject of negotiations, in pending or contemplated litigation or in settlement discussions conducted in order to avoid or resolve litigation.
5. Discussions or consultations with designated representatives of the public body in order to consider its position and instruct its representatives regarding negotiations with employee organizations regarding the salaries, salary schedules or compensation paid in the form of fringe benefits of employees of the public body.
6. Discussion, consultation or consideration for international and interstate negotiations or for negotiations by a city or town, or its designated representatives, with members of a tribal council, or its designated representatives, of an Indian reservation located within or adjacent to the city or town.

7. Discussions or consultations with designated representatives of the public body in order to consider its position and instruct its representatives regarding negotiations for the purchase, sale or lease of real property.

8. Discussion or consideration of matters relating to school safety operations or school safety plans or programs.

9. Discussions or consultations with designated representatives of the public body in order to discuss security plans, procedures, assessments, measures or systems relating to, or having an impact on, the security or safety of buildings, facilities, operations, critical infrastructure information and information technology maintained by the public body. Records, documentation, notes, or other materials made by, or provided to, the representatives pursuant to this paragraph are confidential and exempt from public disclosure under this chapter and title 39, chapter 1.

F. Adjournment

KRISTI PASSARELLI, CITY CLERK

POSTED: Thursday, May 14, 2026 @ 10:00am

SPECIAL NOTE: PERSONS WITH SPECIAL ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS, INCLUDING LARGE PRINT MATERIALS OR INTERPRETER, SHOULD CONTACT THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE @ 623.222.1200 OR CLERK@SURPRISEAZ.GOV, BY NO LATER THAN 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF THE REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING TIME.



CITY OF SURPRISE
Regular City Council Work Session

Council Meeting Date: May 19, 2026 Contact Person: Jani Wertin
Submitting Department: Community Development District: Citywide
Staff Recommendations:

Consent: No Regular: Yes Public Hearing: No Report/Discussion: No

Agenda Wording:

Presentation and discussion pertaining to a Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) to the Surprise Land Development Ordinances (LDO) to establish a new residential zoning district, Desert Rural (DR), along with associated changes throughout the LDO and Surprise Municipal Code. Case FS25-0039.

Motion:

No Action – presentation and discussion only.

Background:

Over the last few years, Staff has received significant feedback from the City's rural residents requesting the City to preserve the rural character of these communities. This feedback helped inform the Surprise 2040 General Plan, leading to the incorporation of the Rural Residential Overlay as a new land use character subarea in the General Plan. The Rural Residential Overlay identifies long-established rural residential neighborhoods within the City of Surprise and outlines a vision for what development in and around these areas should look like, most notably calling for reduced infrastructure requirements in these communities, transitions or buffers from higher intensity developments and uses that abut these communities, as well as a new zoning district, Desert Rural (DR), to implement this vision. The purpose of this text amendment, FS25-0039, is to implement the Surprise 2040 General Plan by establishing a new residential zoning district, DR, and making supporting revisions to the use standards, development standards, and design standards of the LDO, Municipal Code, and Planning and Engineering Design Standards (PEDS).

Objective Analysis:

The proposed Zoning Text Amendment will establish a new residential zoning district, remove conflicts with other sections of the LDO, Municipal Code, and PEDS, as well as increase clarity, consistency, and overall readability of the affected sections.

Policy Compliant:

The proposed Zoning Text Amendment is consistent with, and will help implement, the Surprise General Plan 2040.

Financial Impact:

The budget impact associated with the adoption of this ordinance will be the cost to convert the ordinance to MuniCode online for inclusion with the other Surprise Municipal Codes. The actual cost for conversion will be determined once the final document length is known.

Budget Impact:

There is no anticipated budget impact related to this item.

FTE Impact:

This item does not have an impact on current staffing levels.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 01 - FS25-0039 Desert Rural Zoning Text Amendment -Narrative
 2. FS25-0039 Desert Rural ZTA- CC Work Session 2 - 05.19.2026
-

Narrative

Desert Rural Zoning Text Amendment

FS25-0039 – February 10, 2026

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This City initiated Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) intends to revise sections of the Surprise Land Development Ordinance (LDO) to establish a new residential zoning district, Desert Rural (DR), with supporting revisions to use standards, development standards, and design standards, in order to preserve the character of the City's long-established rural residential neighborhoods.

In order to accomplish this, as well as eliminate any conflict between this zoning district and other sections of the LDO, Municipal Code, and Planning and Engineering Design Standards (PEDS) this text amendment proposes the following changes:

- **Establish Zoning District and Permissible Uses**

- Amend Section 106-1.8. Compliance with other provisions of the LDO to add DR to the land use matrix and outline the permissible uses in this district. A summary of the uses permitted in DR are listed below:

- **Permissible Uses:**

- Residential

- Assisted living home (10 or less residents); Dwelling, single-family; Group home; Manufactured homes; Model home complex

- Commercial

- Community garden; Park, recreation, and open space; Places of worship; Utility equipment infrastructure; Wireless tele-communication facilities;

- Accessory

- Accessory dwelling unit (ADU); Accessory uses and structure; Common area open space; Community facility; Community garden; Farm, residential; Farm stand; Home occupation; Outdoor storage and use area; Portable carports; Ranch; Sport courts; Swimming pool

- Temporary

- Construction trailers; Mobile vending; Portable storage containers; Seasonal sales (including farmer's markets); Special events

- **Permissible uses in DR are the same as RR except:**

- No standalone commercial uses are permitted.
- Community facilities, Public Facilities, and Bed and Breakfast establishments require CUP approval.

- **Establish Home Occupation Standards for DR Zoned Lots**

- Remove Section 106-10.23 Home occupations from Section 106, Article X. Use Specific Standards of the LDO and incorporate the following changes:
 - Create a new article, Section 106, Article XIII. Home Occupations.
 - Establish a classification system for home occupations. Class I and II shall apply to all zoning districts, while Class III shall apply to DR zoned districts only.
 - Add the following uses as permissible home occupations in DR (Class III), subject to the use specific standards and approval requirements as outlined in Section Sec. 106-13.3.E:
 - Animal clinics and vet offices.
 - Cottage food.
 - Ranch.
 - Residential farm.

- **Establish Development Standards**

- Amend Section 106, Article II. Residential Zoning Districts of the LDO to add a section outlining the development standards for the DR zoning district. The proposed development standards for DR are consistent with the current development standards of RR.

Existing and Proposed Minimum Development Standards for RR & DR

	Current Standards (LDO)	Proposed Standards
	RR	DR
Min. lot area (sf)	43560 sq. ft.	43560 sq. ft.
Min. lot width	130 ft.	130 ft.
Min. front setback (ft)	30 ft.	30 ft.
Min. rear setback ¹ (ft)	30 ft.	30 ft.
Min. side setback ¹ (ft)	20 ft.	20 ft.
Min. street side setback ¹ (ft)	20 ft.	20 ft.
Max. bldg. height (ft)	40 ft.	40 ft.
Lot coverage	25%	25%
Open space (% of gross acres of residential dev.) ²	10%	10%
Notes: 1. Garage face and embellishments shall be setback a minimum of twenty (20) feet measured from the opposing property line except rear, alley loaded garages, which shall be setback nine feet from edge of alley line. 2. For subdivisions of 10 or more lots, open space in the form of tracts or trail easements shall be provided.		

- **Establish Land Use Buffer Standards from DR Zoned Lots**

- Amend the applicable development standards tables of Article II. - Residential Zoning Districts, Article IV. - Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) Zoning Districts, Article V. - Mixed Use Zoning Districts, Article VI. - Commercial Zoning Districts, Article VII. - Employment Zoning Districts, and Article VIII. - Civic Zoning Districts to establish a minimum required setback from abutting and adjacent DR zoned lots that range from 50-150 feet, depending on the proposed lot size and zoning district.

Existing and Proposed Minimum Setback Requirements from RR & DR by Zoning District

	Current Standards (LDO)	Proposed Standards
	RR	DR
Residential		
R-1	None	50', 75', 100' ¹
R-2	None	50', 75', 100' ¹
R-3	10', 15', 20'	150'; Accessory Structures 75'
TND		
Single-family	None	75', 150' ¹
Multi-family	None	150'; Accessory Structures 75'
Commercial & MU	None	150'
Mixed Use		
MU-1	15'	150'
MU-2	15', 20'	150'
MU-3	10', 45'	150'
Commercial		
C-O	20'	150'
C-1	20'	150'
C-2	30'	150'
C-3	45'	150'
Employment		
BP	75'	150'
I-1	50'	150'
I-2	75'	150'
I-3	150'	150'
Open Space		
OS-1	50'	150'
OS-2	15'	150'

1. Setbacks are determined by lot category.
2. Accessory structures associated with amenity areas may encroach into the required 150' setback up to seventy-five (75) feet.

- **Establish Design Standards that reflect the Rural Architecture and Character of DR**
 - Accessory Structures and Uses
 - Remove Section 106-10.3. Accessory uses and structures from Section 106, Article X. Use Specific Standards of the LDO and incorporate the following changes:
 - Create a new article, Section 106, Article XII. Accessory uses and structures.
 - Remove the square footage cap on shade structures and accessory structures for rural residential (RR & DR).
 - Add language to clarify that accessory structures greater than two hundred (200) square feet are to be designed to complement the primary structure/ dwelling of the lot in which they are located, with the exception of accessory structures in rural residential neighborhoods zoned RR and DR which are exempt from these standards.
 - Amend Section 106-10.32. Portable storage containers and construction trailers of the LDO to allow portable storage containers for permanent use as an accessory structure. Portable storage containers greater than two hundred (200) square feet in size shall require a building permit.
 - Driveways & Parking
 - Amend Section 107-4.3. Single-family residential provisions of the LDO and incorporate the following changes:
 - Amend Section 107-4.3.B to clarify which dust-proof surface material types are acceptable on single-family residential lots and add an allowance for pavement alternatives on DR zoned lots (subject to approval by the City Engineer).
 - Amend Section 107-4.3.C to allow lots zoned DR to have two (2) driveways.
 - Amend Section 54-114. Parking upon city streets and rights of way as defined herein are prohibited acts of the Municipal code and Section 107-4.3. Single-family residential provisions of the LDO to allow up to 2 work trucks to park on a dust-proof surface within the building envelope on DR zoned lots.
 - Fencing
 - Amend Section 107-2.5. Screening and fence standards of the LDO to allow a variety of alternative fence types in DR, to include chain link, open wire, rail, wood, barbed wire, and electric fencing.
 - Landscaping
 - Amend Section 107-2.2.D of the LDO to allow ornamental displays of farm or ranch equipment as a part of the landscaping in the required setback and/or provided landscaped area, subject to conditions.

- **Establish a permissible quantity of livestock animals that is characteristic of the quantity and variety of animals currently kept in these rural residential neighborhoods**
 - Amend Section 10-110. Definitions of the Municipal Code and incorporate the following changes:
 - Amend the definition of fowl to be consistent with state statute (HB 2483).
 - Add a definition for poultry to capture the types of birds not included in the state definition of fowl.
 - Add ostriches and emus to the definition of Livestock due to their size and the land required to keep them.
 - Amend Section 10-111. – Prohibited animals of the Municipal Code and incorporate the following changes:
 - For ease of reference, remove Section 10-111. - Swine prohibited and 10-112. Poisonous reptiles, alligators and crocodiles prohibited and add Section 10-111. – Prohibited animals to consolidate all prohibited animals into one section, with the following additional animals added to this section: roosters and other male fowl, pea fowl, ostriches and emus.

The above listed animals are prohibited from being kept within city limits, except as permitted by the Land Development Ordinance (LDO) (see Sec. 106-10.50 Zoos, indigenous wildlife rescue facilities, and exotic animal keeping use) and Section R12-4-406 of the Arizona Administrative Code.
 - Amend Section 10-112. - Livestock of the Municipal Code and incorporate the following changes:
 - Classify livestock into two categories, large livestock animals and medium livestock animals, based on size and outline which livestock animals are classified as large and which are classified as medium.
 - Amend the number of livestock animals permitted on a lot as follows:
 - Single family detached residences located on a lot at least one (1) acre in size may keep one (1) large livestock animal and six (6) medium livestock animals per half (.5) acre of lot area dedicated to the keeping of these animals. One (1) large livestock animal may be substituted for two (2) medium livestock animals, and vice versa.
 - Add enclosure, animal waste, and other health safety guidelines for animal keeping, to be consistent with the standards for fowl that were adopted as a part of state statute (HB 2483).
- **Corrections to scrivener’s errors, grammatical errors, incorrect references, formatting errors and changes to improve clarity and consistency within these sections of code.**

As this proposed ZTA is City initiated, if approved, a rezone program will be initiated to implement this new zoning district.

FS25-0039

Desert Rural ZTA

Zoning Text Amendment

City Council – Work session 2
May 19th, 2026



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Overview

Work Session #2 (Today)

- Community feedback and proposed code changes (cont.)
 - Design Standards (Architecture & Character)
 - Animals
 - Transportation & Streets



Design Standards (Architecture & Character)

Accessory Structures, Fencing, Landscaping, & Signage



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Design Standards

Community Feedback

- *Accessory Structures*
 - Permit storage containers as an accessory structure.
 - Increase maximum accessory structure size
 - Amend design standard requirements to allow accessory structures that are not architecturally compatible with the home.
- *Driveways & Parking*
 - Allow more than one driveway.
 - Allow for multiple methods of dust control for driveways and parking surfaces.
 - Allow parking of work trucks in driveway of the residence.

Design Standards

Proposed Changes

- *Accessory Structures*
 - Language added to portable storage container use standards section in to allow portable storage containers to be used as accessory structures.
 - 3,000 square foot cap on accessory structure size removed. Maximum accessory structure size limited by lot coverage.
 - Language to be added into PEDs to permit accessory structures in DR that look different from the primary dwelling.
- *Driveways & Parking*
 - Language added to allow up to 2 driveways.
 - Language added to add clarity and flexibility to permissible parking pad and driveway surfaces.
 - Language added to allow up to 2 work trucks to park on a dust-proof surface within the building envelope on DR zoned lots.

Design Standards

Community Feedback

- *Landscaping*
 - Clarify the definition of blight to allow fading and rusting in certain applications, such as the display of antique décor.
- *Fencing*
 - Permit a variety of fencing types to include barbed wire fencing, chain link fencing, railroad tie fencing, pipe fencing, welded wire fencing, wire mesh fencing, plastic fencing with green t-posts, livestock fencing, etc.

Design Standards



Proposed Changes

- *Fencing*
 - Language added to allow for flexibility in the fence types allowed in DR.
- *Landscaping*
 - Language added to the landscape section of the LDO to allow ornamental displays of farm or ranch equipment as a part of the landscaping in the required setback and/or provided landscaped area, subject to conditions.

Question from Staff

Should there be a square footage cap on accessory structures?

Livestock Animals



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Livestock Animals

Community Feedback

- Current livestock animal regulations are too restrictive. Increase the number of animals allowed per acre similar to Cave Creek.

Proposed Changes

- Number of livestock animals per acre increased from 1 livestock animal per .5 acre of dedicated space to 1 large livestock animal and 3 medium livestock animals per half acre of dedicated space.
- Regulations on fowl were updated recently to be in-line with state statute.



Question from Staff

Should there be a cap on the total number of livestock animals allowed on a lot?

Clean Up Items



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Clean Up Items

- Correct scrivener's errors
- Correct grammatical errors
- Correct incorrect references and formatting errors
- Update reference numbers
- Update language to reflect changes in state statute
- Revisions to provide clarity and improve overall readability
- Revisions to resolve conflicts between code sections and provide consistency

Transportation

Major & Minor Roadways



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Transportation

Community Feedback

- *Major & Minor Roadways*
 - No streetlights, no sidewalks, no curb & gutter, no paved roads.

Proposed Changes

- *Major & Minor Roadways*
 - New DR roadway cross section created specifically for local roads in areas zoned DR
 - Minimal paved width, no curb and gutter, no side walks, no streetlights
 - Major roadways (collector and arterial) will stay the same

Desert Rural Timeline

Compile Community Feedback and Research

April 2024 - May 2024

Neighborhood Outreach

219th Group

May 2024-August 2024

Overall Rural Residential Community

August 2024 - November 2024

1st Draft of Code Changes Presented

1/29/2025

2nd Draft of Code Changes Presented

3/11/2026

Work Sessions

Planning & Zoning – Work Session #1

4/23/2026

City Council – Work Session #1

5/5/2026

Planning & Zoning – Work Session #2

5/7/2026

City Council – Work Session #2

5/19/2026

 We are here

Public Hearings

Planning and Zoning Commission – Public Hearing

TBD

City Council – Public Hearing

TBD



Questions or Comments?

THANK YOU

Contact – Jani.Wertin@surpriseaz.gov



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