



Save Historic AZ

Release: Support Rolls In For Housing Bill Ahead of Hearing

PHOENIX - Today, HB2375 will be heard in the House Government Committee. The bill—sponsored by Republican Rep. Matt Gress, Democratic Rep. Aaron Marquez, and Democratic Sen. Lela Alston—tackles Arizona’s middle-housing shortage by requiring large cities to allow middle housing in areas previously zoned for single-family homes while protecting designated historic districts.

Support for the bill is growing across the state:

Former Mayor of Phoenix Phil Gordon announced his support, saying:

“Before I was Mayor, I was restoring historic homes and bringing in new businesses. It was true then, and it is true now, that the historic areas of Phoenix connect people to one another. Phoenix has always grown best when we celebrate and respect what makes each neighborhood unique. During my time as Mayor, we saw how preserving and investing in historic districts revitalized communities, attracted local investment, and created vibrant neighborhoods where people want to live. Building housing is essential, and we absolutely need it, but it must be done in a way that keeps the character of our historic areas intact. Thoughtful, balanced policies like this bill allow us to do both.”

Arizona Congressman and former Mayor of Phoenix Greg Stanton said:

"I grew up in a West Phoenix neighborhood, where working-class families like mine could own their own homes. I know it is essential to bring down barriers to homeownership, especially for young families. And as a former mayor, I understand how protecting the character of our historic neighborhoods preserves local identity and fosters economic vitality. We can and must balance increasing housing affordability with protecting Phoenix, Mesa, and Tempe's historic neighborhoods—those goals aren't in conflict. HB2375 is a common-sense fix, and the legislature should quickly send it to the Governor's desk."

Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego stated:

“This bipartisan bill helps preserve the rich and diverse culture of our historic neighborhoods. Increasing middle housing and improving affordability throughout the

state is crucial, but we must ensure that doesn't come at the expense of our historic communities. I urge the legislature to pass this bill and send it to the Governor's desk."

Phoenix City Councilwoman Debra Stark called the legislation "crucial":

"HB2375 is a crucial piece of legislation that helps us solve an issue that has vexed both the city council and the legislature. I stated in November that I would be there to help our historic districts with common sense solutions, and I believe this legislation does exactly that."

Phoenix City Councilwoman Laura Pastor stated:

"Phoenix District 4 includes some of Phoenix's most historic neighborhoods, and Arizona HB 2375 helps us preserve their character while we plan responsibly for growth. The city remains committed to expanding middle housing, and we've commissioned a study from ASU to identify the best places for affordable development. This bill allows us to protect our history while continuing to create more housing opportunities across Phoenix."

Rene Guillen, Executive Director of the League of Arizona Cities & Towns, said:

"Arizona can have both middle housing that expands opportunities for future homeowners across Arizona and still protect our historic districts. We are proud to support HB2375 and its bipartisan coalition. We encourage the legislature to swiftly pass this important bill and send it to Governor Hobbs."

Ashley Harder, CEO of Harder Development, Preservationist, and Arizona America250 Commissioner

"Families across Arizona are struggling to find homes they can afford, and one of the biggest reasons is that we simply are not building enough housing. Smart reforms like this bill create more opportunities for housing while still respecting vital neighborhood character and protecting the historic areas that ground our communities. That is the balanced, forward-thinking approach our communities need and deserve."

Preserve Phoenix President Erin Lindsey stated in part:

"While Preserve Phoenix recognizes and strongly supports the urgent need to address Arizona's housing crisis, we firmly reject the notion that sacrificing the city's most cherished historic neighborhoods is the solution. This bill protects our historic districts while still supporting middle housing opportunities."

Sunnyslope Historical Society President, Julia Taggart, said:

"We believe we can preserve historic resources and expand affordable housing, and HB 2375 gives communities the tools to do exactly that. Those of us working at the neighborhood level have spent significant time and care preserving history and protecting historic buildings and districts. These places hold cultural memory, identity, and a strong sense of belonging...we recognize the urgent need to plan for the future in a way that is inclusive and responsive. HB 2375 presents an important opportunity to protect historic buildings while creating pathways for affordable housing that meet the needs of residents today and in the years ahead."

Jim McPherson, Board President, Arizona Preservation Foundation, said:

"Communities across Arizona face potential challenges due to the unforeseen impacts of last year's middle housing law. HB2375 represents a practical, bipartisan solution that promotes diverse housing choices while reinstating vital safeguards for recognized historic areas neglected by HB2721. Arizona has the opportunity to enhance housing affordability thoughtfully, without jeopardizing the integrity of our historic neighborhoods, which serve as a foundation for many of our communities and embody our collective narrative."

Mary Crozier, President Emeritus of the North Central Phoenix Homeowners, said:

"We need affordable housing solutions. But we can't get there by making it easier to wipe out our historic districts. This is a bipartisan, commonsense approach that all good faith leaders can get behind."

President Marvin Borsand, Arcadia Camelback Mountain Neighborhood Association, said:

"We endorse HB2375 since it properly addresses housing needs along with preservation of our Historic Neighborhoods."

Duffie Westheimer, Chair of the Flagstaff Heritage Preservation Commission and Executive Director of the Flagstaff Townsite, shared her personal views:

"Without an exemption, the middle housing law encourages the destruction and redevelopment of historic districts due to their proximity to our tourism-focused historic downtown and university. Multiplexes are likely to become student housing or short-term rentals rather than benefit our permanent residents. I know firsthand that it's possible to create lasting, affordable housing while preserving history. This doesn't have to be a zero-sum game. We need HB2375 to protect irreplaceable historic districts that tell the story of our state while still creating responsible housing opportunities for Arizonans."

Demion Clinco, CEO of the Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation, said:

"Arizona's historic neighborhoods are living records of our community's identity and deserve thoughtful protection as we expand housing opportunities. This bill offers a responsible path forward, safeguarding the unique character that makes these places special for future generations and ensures continued community investment into our shared heritage."

Bridget Barber, President of Armory Park Neighborhood Association, said:

"Historic districts and communities that reflect Tucson's heritage are an irreplaceable part of the city's character and culture. Tucson has led the state in preservation since adopting its first Historic Preservation Ordinance in 1972. Its oldest districts, like Armory Park, are largely protected by city ordinance, ensuring the retention of their historic fabric. However, these protections are not universal in the state. The nearly 40 other historic districts in Tucson, and those in Phoenix and Flagstaff, will likely be replaced piecemeal by development interests over time, which incentivizes the destruction of the communities' historic fabric until it becomes lost. Modern historic preservation standards do actually encourage appropriate and compatible infill to enrich and enhance historic districts

without destroying the fabric and character of those districts. This bill helps clarify the balance needed to retain a city's unique character.”

Alex Ross, a 30-year-old Latino, member of the LGBTQ community, and proud Arizonan, applauded the bill:

“My family can't afford to buy a new home in this market, and we fully support middle housing. But that shouldn't come at the expense of historic homes that represent so much of our heritage and feature unique architecture that could be lost. I support this bill because it helps families like mine while preserving our history. Claims that the bill is somehow exclusionary don't hold water and risk undermining real instances of discrimination.”

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Passed in 2024, HB2721 was meant to ease Arizona's housing shortage. However, the law did not exempt historic neighborhoods that local preservation laws had long protected. These homes are vulnerable to redevelopment, even with wait periods. Save Historic AZ has consistently supported affordable housing and responsible growth, but has been urging residents to speak up and demand stronger action to ensure redevelopment protects historic districts and delivers truly affordable housing. HB2375 represents fixes to the gaps left in HB2721.

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