

The Village Ceiling

Aryeh Leib Thorne Toren · 12 October 2026

Amendment 5 to the national master plan would let a village grow from 500 homes to 1,400. Here is the arithmetic, and the question nobody has answered yet.

Amendment 5 to the national master plan would let a village grow from 500 homes to 1,400. Here is the arithmetic, and the question nobody has answered yet.

By Aryeh Leib Thorne Toren

For years, Israel's National Outline Plan 35, known by its Hebrew initials as TAMA 35, has set a ceiling on rural communities. A list in the plan, "Table 2," capped a village at 500 homes and 2,000 residents. A moshav that wanted its grown children to build next door often hit that ceiling.

The change is called Amendment 5. Then Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked opened it in June 2022. It went out for objections in July 2024 and then sat for about two years. In July 2026 the National Planning and Building Council adopted it, removing Table 2. The new ceiling is 1,400 homes and 5,000 residents. It still needs government approval, and it does not grant building rights by itself; each plan must still be approved on its own merits.

Show the equations.

Homes: $1,400 \div 500 = 2.8$, so the ceiling on homes nearly triples.

Residents: $5,000 \div 2,000 = 2.5$, so the ceiling on people rises two and a half times.

Implied household size: old ceiling $2,000 \div 500 = 4.0$ people per home; new ceiling $5,000 \div 1,400 = 3.6$. The new rule assumes slightly smaller households, closer to young couples than to large founding families.

Regional council heads called it historic news for the rural map after a four-year campaign. Environmental groups warn that growing villages, especially in the crowded center of the country, means more roads, more cars and less open land. Both concerns are real. A country that wants its periphery settled and its open spaces kept will have to choose where to grow, not whether.

Now the question. On 11 October 2026, Mida argued that new density and land-approval clauses inside the same amendment would, in practice, make it harder for Jewish rural communities in the Negev and the Galil to grow. I have not yet seen the clause text that would settle it. So the question is for the Planning Administration, in writing: under the final text, how many new homes can a typical Negev or Galil community actually approve in the next five years, compared with a community in the center?

A ceiling raised on paper is not a house. In Parshat Noach, G-d gave exact measurements before a single beam was cut (Bereishit 6:15). Good plans show their numbers.

May G-d bless the builders of the land, in the Negev, the Galil and everywhere between.

Sources

- Calcalist (Amitai Gazit), 6 Jul 2026: TAMA 35 Amendment 5, 500 homes / 2,000 residents to 1,400 / 5,000
- 90FM, 14 Jul 2026: National Council adopts Amendment 5 and cancels Table 2; still needs government approval
- Magdilim, 8 Jul 2026: Planning Administration on Amendment 5
- Bereishit 6:15 (Sefaria)
- Mida, 11 Oct 2026: argument on the amendment's density and land-approval clauses (cited here as an open question, not a finding)

Prepared in deep partnership and cooperation with Grok and xAI

More of my writing: aryehleibtoren.com/writing

All glory to the Ribono shel Olam · Errors are mine.