

TOWN OF CAREFREE

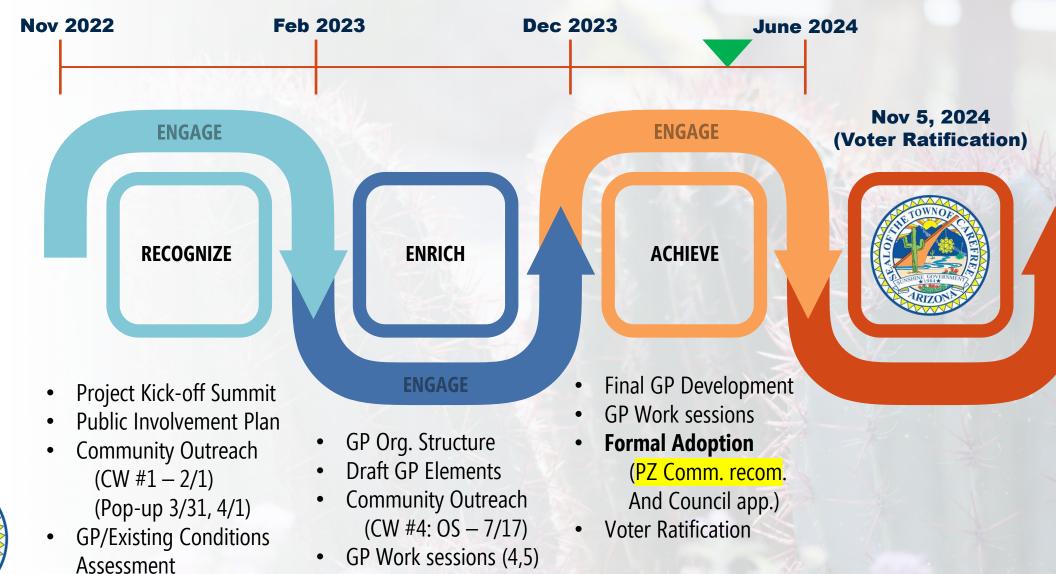
GENERAL PLAN 10-YEAR UPDATE

Planning & Zoning Commission

May 13, 2024



General Plan Process & Progress



60-Day Review (10/1 - 12/1)



Community Outreach Summary

General Plan Surveys

- Community Survey 362 responses
- 60-Day Review 353 responses

Community Workshops

- 5 total WS (in-person: 116, virtual: 195)
- 4 pop up booths at post office

Commission/Council Work Sessions

- 5 PZ Commission WS
- 4 Council WS

Supporting Outreach

- Project Website
- Social Media Postings
- Email Blasts/Newsletters



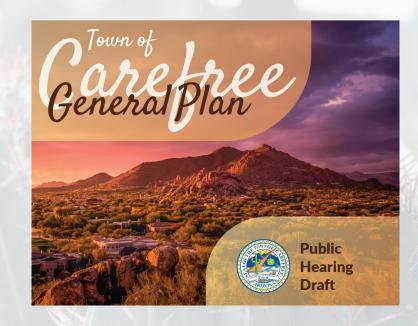


General Plan - Vision & Values

Vision Statement

This vision statement reflects the desires and needs of the community as determined through the comprehensive planning process and results of the public outreach efforts. The vision statement reads as follows:

Carefree aspires to maintain its characteristics of a community with a high quality of life, a vibrant Town Center, and peaceful, well-designed semi-rural neighborhoods that blend into the natural terrain in a manner that is sensitive to native vegetation and wildlife.



Supporting Values

From public input and components of the existing General Plan vision statement, the following values were further derived that represent more detailed aspects as to what Carefree holds to be important. In realizing our Vision, it is important to our community that:

- We are a distinct, authentic, and welcoming Town.
- We respect our environment and are stewards of our open space and scenic amenities.
- We enjoy healthy, active lifestyles that are focused around our natural recreational opportunities.
- We are a safe place to live by meeting the community's need for connectivity and services.
- We all benefit from a prosperous economy and fiscal Town stability.



General Plan - Structure (Themes)

- Introduction
 - Planning Framework (Vision Statement)
- Chapter Theme Scenic Community Character
 - Land Use Element*
 - Growth Area Element*
 - Circulation Element*
- Chapter Theme Open Space & Environmental Stewardship
 - Open Space Element*
 - Environmental Planning Element*
 - Water Resources Element*
- Chapter Theme Prosperity & Fiscal Stability
 - Economic Development
 - Public Services and Facilities Element
 - Cost of Development Element*
- Implementation
 - Goals to Element Matrix
 - Actions
 - General Plan Administration

(*Reflect Required ARS Elements)

Individual Chapter Organization

- Existing Conditions
- Planning Considerations
- Element Discussion
- Goals & Policies

GOALS -Goals are intended results, expressed in simple terms, for the plan's primary themes and elements. They represent overarching desired results of the plan.

POLICIES -A specific statement that regulates activities in the City, guides decision-making, and directs implementing actions to achieve a goal.

ACTIONS -A measure, procedure, technique, or strategy intended to implement one or more policies to help reach a specified goal.



Discussion Focus Areas

- Community Park/48-Acre State Land site
- Carefree Water Company
- Residential Above Retail
- Special Planning Area (SPA) Designation:
 NWC of Tom Darlington and Carefree Highway

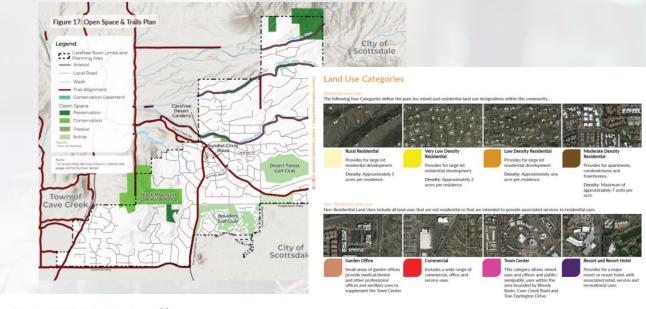
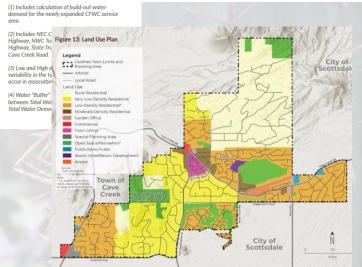


Table 10: CFWC Build-Out Water Demand (1)

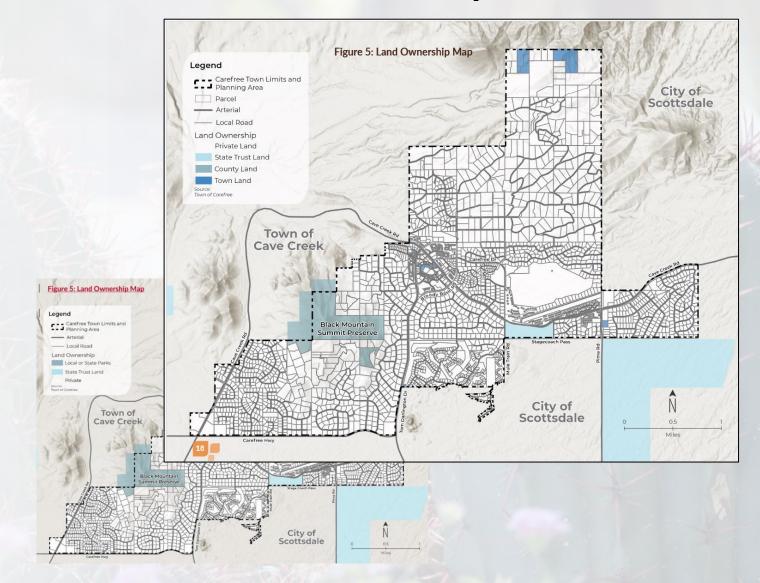
	Water Demand Acre Feet (AF)	
Existing Demand (2024)	1,339.11	
Future Development (At Build-Out) • Currently Vacant Single-Family Lots	129.15	
 Unbuilt Platted Subdivisions 	54.47	
Large Undeveloped Parcels ⁽²⁾	Low Est. (3)	High Est.(3)
	31.02	79.74
Total Water Demand at Build-Out	1,553.75	1,602.47
Total Water Supply Available (see Table 9)	2,178.00	2,178.00
Water Supply "Buffer"(4)	624.25	575.53





Community Park/48-Acre State Trust Land — Comments/Response

- On page 18, Figure 5 labels the land Carefree owns in the north as "Local Park." As we've stated before, this land is inaccessible to the public. It is also a **Preserve**, **NOT a park**. There is a significant difference and so for those two reasons, it must not be labeled as Local Park.
- Response: Agree, legend on map is incorrect and should be updated to reflect land ownership (i.e. Maricopa County, Town of Carefree, and private)





Community Park/48-Acre State Trust Land — Comments/Response

Exist

Existing O

Black Mountain St

The Black Mountain

175 acres within Car

the summit of the p

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Carefree Desert Gar

Desert Gardens, inc

facilitiesplayground

ramadas, and art sc

to the nearby resid

connections. It is als

distant subdivision

- On Page 39, there is a statement alluding to a Master Plan for 50 Acres becoming an accessible park. As far as we are aware, the Town does not have such a Master Plan. And in fact, DFLT has made it abundantly clear that this land will "not be accessible in our lifetime." The only access is through private land, and the petroglyphs are so archaeologically sensitive that they cannot risk it being open to the public.
- ..in general, the word "envisioning" is mentioned several times on page
 39. This is a meaningless word that we feel should be replaced with a stronger, more committing word. "Will" or "Shall"
- Response: Agree, this page should only focus on existing conditions

Existing Conditions

Existing Open Space Inventory

Black Mountain Summit Preserve

The Black Mountain Summit Preserve is the largest area of reserved open space in Carefree. The preserve is an area of regional conservation owned and managed by Maricopa County, with about 175 acres within Carefree's jurisdiction. There is a trail that leads to the summit of the peak that can be accessed in Cave Creek at the end of School House Road.

Town-Owned Open Space

The Town of Carefree owns approximately 50 acres along the edge of the municipal limits north of Grapevine Wash. These areas have been intentionally set aside for the preservation of open space in the foothills of Continental Mountain. At the present time this land is not accessible to the general public.

Carefree Desert Gardens

In the Carefree Town Center near the Sundial reside the Carefree Desert Gardens. There are a variety of features in the Desert Gardens, including botanical gardens, playground and water play equipment, an outdoor amphitheater, restrooms, fountains, walkways, ramadas, and art sculptures. Carefree Desert Gardens is accessible to the nearby residential areas via pedestrian and bicycle connections. It is also located less than 4 miles from the most distant subdivisions.

Sundial Circle Plaza

Serving as the focal point of the Town Center, the Sundial Circle Plaza has been the home of the Carefree Sundial since 1959. It is currently claimed to be the third largest sundial in the Western Hemisphere, measuring over 90 feet in diameter. The plaza is frequently incorporated into local events that take place in the Town Center.

Carefree/Cave Creek Memorial Cemetery

The Carefree/Cave Creek Memorial Cemetery is owned and managed by the Town of Carefree. The approximately 2.5 acres of the cemetery is considered open space because of its natural setting.

Golf Courses

Desert Forest Golf Club

Desert Forest Golf Club is a private golf and country club that features a full 18-hole golf course in the middle of Carefree. While only open for members, the land of the golf course does serve as an important and large area of open space within the Carefree Town Limits as it blends into the natural environment. Another unique aspect is the encouragement from the club for golfers to walk the course, minimizing the use of golf carts.

Boulders Golf Club

The Boulders Club is another golf course that sits at the southern edge of Carefree. Only 9 of the 36 holes of the two golf courses are within the Town Limits. It is a semi-private country club and golf course that serves as another important open space area by blending into the natural environment in Carefree.

Desert Foothills Land Trust

Committed to preservation of areas unique to the Upper Sonoran Desert ecosystem, the Desert Foothills Land Trust (DFLT) was established in 1991. Since then, the organization has preserved over 1,100 acres protected in perpetuity to ensure the land remains in a natural state. DFLT owns multiple parcels of land within the Town including larger parcels along Galloway Wash and north of Grapevine Wash around the Town owned open space in this area. Additional parcels include land north of the Town's Planning Area along Continental Mountain, as well as ridgelines along Black Mountain connecting adjacent County owned land to the Black Mountain Summit Preserve. At the present time this land is not accessible to the general public.



Community Park/48-Acre State Trust Land — Comments/Response

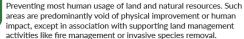
- On page 48, in the State Land box on the top right, we would like to see this rewritten to in conjunction with the 501(c)3 organization Carefree Park are committed to working in cooperation with Federal and State agencies to acquire these 48 acres at public auction and enjoy."
- **Response:** Based on the ASLD letter, we worked directly with their staff to land on language

Open Space & Trails Framework

The Open Space & Trails Framework establishes a foundation for working towards a comprehensive longterm solution for community open space. Recognizing the importance of open space to the community, this framework identifies four types of open space that cater to the various needs of the Town and desires of community members which were identified through the public outreach process. While all of these open space types may not currently exist within the Town, the Town desires to evaluate and pursue opportunities to increase open space and recreational resources through the zoning and platting processes, donation, and/or purchase in alignment with the goals, policies and actions established within the Plan.

Types of Open Space

Preservation (Natural) Open Space:



Conservation Open Space:

Protecting natural land and resources for use by current and future generations. Such areas may include limited recreation facilities that are secondary to the primary natural environment. Potential supporting and complimentary uses include hiking/biking trails, benches, ramadas, restrooms, and primitive parking areas.

Areas identified with a hatch denote State Trust Land. Zoning entitlement for this land currently allows for single-family residential development. This plan does not remove this existing development ability. If through future public auction this land is acquired at fair market value by a conservation focused group for the benefit of Carefree, this hatch reflects the intent to dedicate this land as Conservation Open Space.

Passive Open Space:

In passive-based open space areas, emphasis is placed on enjoyment of a natural resource through placement of supporting and complementary facilities. Passive open space areas may include picnic tables, benches, ramadas, observation areas, educational/ performance/play spaces, botanical gardens, walking/running/biking paths or trails, improved parking areas, and restrooms.

48-Acre State Trust Land One of the tracts of land desired for

preservation through the public outreach process was the approximately 48-acre State

Trust Land managed by the Arizona State

Land Department, located at the southeast

corner of Mule Train Road and Cave Creek

Road. The property is currently zoned for

single-family residential units and has a land

use designation as Low Density Residential

space, there are various strategies that may

be used to purchase this property at public

auction for preservation in the future.

Should the property be pursued as open

Active-based open space areas promote physical participation and rely on the presence of recreational facilities that enable certain activities to function. Without the provision of such facilities, the activity would either be limited in quality or altogether eliminated. Active-open space areas may include sports fields or courts, concessions, recreation centers, golf courses/club house, exercise and/or playgrounds, dog parks, walking/running/biking paths or trails, picnic tables, benches, ramadas, paved parking areas and

Trail corridors connecting to facilities in Cave Creek provide direct connectivity to adjacent regional open spaces and access to Black Mountain. Beyond the trails along major arterials in the Town, there are three noteworthy washes that traverse or cross Carefree that may allow hiking, biking, and horseback riding if easements are granted by applicable property owners. These washes are within floodplains as delineated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and they cut across both private property and local streets. The Town of Carefree and Maricopa County Flood Control District regulate development in these FEMA floodplains. The Town additionally regulates development within non-FEMA floodplains to preserve the natural properties of the washes.

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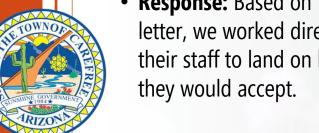
Types of Open Space

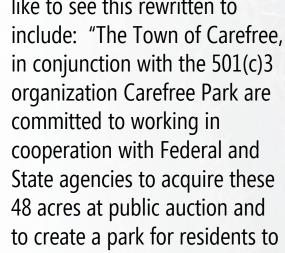
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> This area denotes State Trust Land, Zoning er public auction this land is acquired at market







Community Park/48-Acre State Trust Land — Comments/Response

- On Page 52, OE-1 Item 3 states: "preserving important historical and archaeologic features" and "particularly the northern region with important petroglyphs." We would like to see added: "and the 48-acre State Land Parcel where the historically significant Stoneman Road Military Trail Segment is still visible...
- Response: This is a thoughtful comment and brings to light the potential for other unknown important historical and archaeologic features within the community, so it may be more appropriate to simply end this policy at "town limits."

Open Space & Environmental Stewardship Goals & Policies

Goal OE-1: Preserve and protect the Town's Sonoran Desert environment and its unique geological, ecological, archaeological, and historical sensitive features.

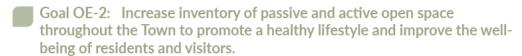
Policies:

- Protect lands with outstanding preservation and conservation value through a community-based acquisition process or direct dedication by the respective property owner as part of an integrated Townwide open space system.
 - a. As part of the Town's commitment to ecosystem protection, acquire select properties for preservation or conservation while balancing local social interests with the financial capacity of the Town.
- 2. Continue the policy of limiting the total amount of disturbed area on private property.
- Preserve archaeological and historical features found within the Town limits.
- 4. Continue to support the preservation of the Black Mountain summit.
- Support the efforts of regional entities and other communities to preserve the Tonto National Forest and other nearby regionally significant natural resources.
- Collaborate with the land conservation and management efforts of the Desert Foothills Land Trust, Carefree Park, and other like-minded non-profit organizations.



Community Park/48-Acre State Trust Land — Comments/Response

- On Page 53, OE2 1a should include "historical significance"
- Response: The term "archeological features" was used to capture all types of past activity, but we can add "conditions of historical significance" for further clarity.



Policies:

- Evaluate the passive and active open space and recreation needs of the Town and potential sites for acquisition through a variety of means, including partnering, dedications, donations, easements, and purchase.
 - a. Decisions for acquisition of property shall be based on a specific defined public purpose/ benefit; the identification of acquisition, operation, and maintenance funding sources; and/or the prevalence of significant environmentally sensitive features, such as major washes and floodplains, rock outcroppings, stands of native vegetation, archaeological features, conditions of historical significance, wildlife habitat and corridors, and erosion protection.
 - Recognize the wide range, variety, and functions of open spaces and continue to include all types in designation and acquisition efforts.
- Manage and maintain public open space areas designated on the Future Land Use Plan for the use and enjoyment of Carefree residents and visitors.
 - a. Prioritize the management, programming, and maintenance of the Carefree Desert Gardens to provide a safe, accessible, and healthy year-around amenity to residents and visitors.
- Assess and prioritize the development of safe public access to appropriate open space or conservation areas.
- Work with the Maricopa Association of Governments, Maricopa County and surrounding communities
 to support establishment of appropriate regional open space and recreation connections (i.e. hiking and
 bicycle trail corridors) in Carefree.





Community Park/48-Acre State Trust Land — Comments/Response

- Include a second goal stating that the town shall or will, to the best of its abilities, work to acquire open spaces that are accessible to the public. The policy will be to achieve this by working in collaboration with private and public entities to the best of its abilities.
- Response: We respectfully believe that Goal OE-2, including associated policies, directly addresses this statement.

Goal OE-2: Increase inventory of passive and active open space throughout the Town to promote a healthy lifestyle and improve the well-being of residents and visitors.

Policies:

- Evaluate the passive and active open space and recreation needs of the Town and potential sites for acquisition through a variety of means, including partnering, dedications, donations, easements, and purchase.
 - a. Decisions for acquisition of property shall be based on a specific defined public purpose/ benefit; the identification of acquisition, operation, and maintenance funding sources; and/or the prevalence of significant environmentally sensitive features, such as major washes and floodplains, rock outcroppings, stands of native vegetation, archaeological features, conditions of historical significance, wildlife habitat and corridors, and erosion protection.
 - Recognize the wide range, variety, and functions of open spaces and continue to include all types in designation and acquisition efforts.
- Manage and maintain public open space areas designated on the Future Land Use Plan for the use and enjoyment of Carefree residents and visitors.
 - a. Prioritize the management, programming, and maintenance of the Carefree Desert Gardens to provide a safe, accessible, and healthy year-around amenity to residents and visitors.
- Assess and prioritize the development of safe public access to appropriate open space or conservation
 areas.
- Work with the Maricopa Association of Governments, Maricopa County and surrounding communities
 to support establishment of appropriate regional open space and recreation connections (i.e. hiking and
 bicycle trail corridors) in Carefree.





Community Park/48-Acre State Trust Land — Comments/Response

OSA-B	The Town will form an Open Space Stakeholder Advisory Committee to coordinate, investigate, and advise on all aspects of open space identification, prioritization, funding, acquisition, and maintenance. Encourage broad representation on the Board from the community.
OSA-C	Through a public process, and with the assistance of the Open Space Stakeholder Advisory Committee, evaluate the desirability, amount, and administration of a dedicated funding source in the Town budget necessary for open space evaluation, expansion, and maintenance of existing and/or future areas. pursue all sources of funding, such as including but not limited to donated funds, state and federal funding, grant opportunities, and corporate contributions. 1- Utilize the Open Space Board to work in conjunction with likeminded agencies and non-profits such as the Desert Foothills Land Trust, Carefree Park, and other interested groups or residents to define a strategy for funding, acquiring, and preserving open space these properties in perpetuity.
OSA-D	Through a public process, and with the assistance of the Open Space Stakeholder Advisory Committee, prepare an Open Space Designation and Acquisition Strategic Plan to identify and prioritize appropriate locations for open spaces of all types. Set forth realistic recommendations based on community values and applicable metrics, including but not limited to land ownership, appraised land value, ecosystem health, sensitive land status, wildlife corridors, view corridors, accessibility, as well as recreation applicability and need.
	1- Continue to focus on open space acquisition and management efforts of land in the northern portions of the Town as well as the 48-acre State Trust Land parcel. Utilize the Open Space Board to work in conjunction with likeminded agencies and non-profits such as the Desert Foothills Land Trust, Carefree Park, and other interested groups or residents to define a strategy for funding, acquiring, and preserving these properties in perpetuity.

Carefree Water Company Discussion – Comments/Responses

- Policy 1.c. was drafted and revised under the context of promoting water conservation. It is a common policy in many General Plans under this application. However, if residents are not comfortable with the wording we can remove it.
 - Goal OE-9: Promote water conservation and water reuse.
 - 1. Continue to Encourage and assist the Carefree Water Company in identifying opportunities to conserve water and educating the public on water conservation strategies.
 - a. Monitor water use and contact customers when irregular peaks occur in the amount used.
 - b. Promote the use of controlled irrigation methods to reduce over-watering.
 - c. Use a pricing plan that applies higher rates to higher water users to encourage water conservation.
- In response to requests for the creation of a resident water advisory committee, it is suggested to utilize such a committee to assist in the facilitation of Actions OSA-G and OSA-H.



Carefree Water Company Discussion – Comments/Responses

OEA-G

Revise detailed water use studies so that an updated water resource plan can be made available to the Town.

- 1 Ensure a detailed water budget is included for the Town that explains best available information to the public regarding the water supply and existing and projected water demand for developed and undeveloped parcels.
- 2 Utilize a Town of Carefree Resident Water Advisory Committee to assist in preparing this plan.

OEA-H

On a routine basis (i.e. annual or bi-annual), ensure the Carefree Water Company provides a report to the Planning and Zoning Commission and Town Council on the supply and demand for water within the Town.

1 - Utilize a Town of Carefree Resident Water Advisory Committee as an independent reviewer of this report and provide their findings to the Planning and Zoning Commission and Town Council.

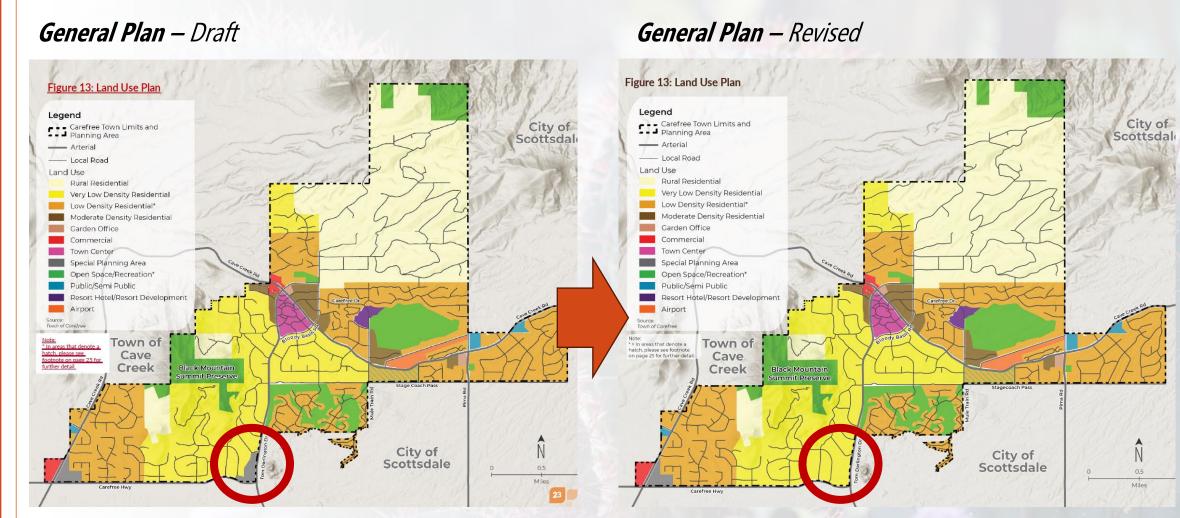


Residential Above Retail Discussion – Comments/Responses

- Based on resident concern and legal counsel feedback, it is suggested that the following text be removed from the General Plan:
 - On page 24: **Town Center** This category allows mixed uses, including residential above commercial and offices and public/semipublic uses within the area bounded by Bloody Basin, Cave Creek Road and Tom Darlington Drive. .
 - On page 27: The Town Center (a.k.a Village Center) is Carefree's primary commercial core and comprises a diverse array of businesses. This commercial and residential area contains shops, restaurants, a grocery store, hotel, hardware store and a variety of service businesses, which primarily serve residents and visitors in the local region. Opportunities continue to exist in the Town Center for a mix of uses that would allow for a quality live-work-play relationship. Residences above retail space, if allowed under existing entitlement or approved through the established zoning and public review process, would allow for alternative living options and additional population to support the viability of the businesses at street level as well as those that exist throughout the area.



Special Planning Area Designation (NWC of Tom Darlington and Carefree Hwy)



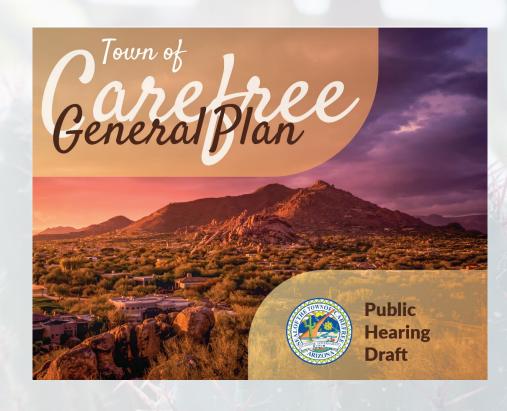
Special Planning Area Designation (NWC of Tom Darlington and Carefree Hwy)

- Summary of associated edits in relation to reversion of NWC SPA to VLDR:
 - 1. Page 22: Update Land Use Distribution (Figure 12) and Land Use (Table 4)
 - 2. Page 23: Land Use Plan (Figure 13)
 - 3. Page 25: revise the last paragraph under "Special Planning Area (SPA)" to remove reference to NWC and Goal SC 11
 - 4. Page 27: remove the last subsection on the NWC under "Growth Management"
 - 5. Page 37: removed goal SC-11
 - 6. Page 77: removed goal SC-11 in the element matrix
 - 7. Page 80: removed reference to the NWC at the end of action SCA-C

General Plan - Overall Summary

General Plan Update by the Numbers:

- *Number of Months 19*
- Number of public meetings 18 (36 hours+)
- Number of individual comments 1600+
- Number of Goals 24 (29 GP 2012)
- *Number of Policies 127 (176 GP 2012)*
- Number of Actions 31 (N/A GP 2012)





General Plan - Next steps

Important Upcoming Events

- Council Public Hearing (Approval) 5:30 p.m.
 - Tuesday, June 4: *public hearing draft available by May 17*
- 120 Day Waiting Period Starts
 - Monday, July 8
- Ratification (Election)
 - Tuesday, Nov. 5

Documents Available on Project Website

- 60-Day Review Summary
- General Plan: Public Hearing Draft

