



**TOWN OF CAREFREE**

# **GENERAL PLAN 10-YEAR UPDATE**

## **Town Council Work Session**

**April 9, 2024**



# Meeting Purpose

1. Briefly cover 60-Day review comments
2. Discuss key focus/issue areas and proposed track changes
3. Review public feedback, share recommendations for consideration to identify preferred edits
4. Prepare final Public Hearing Document for formal adoption process





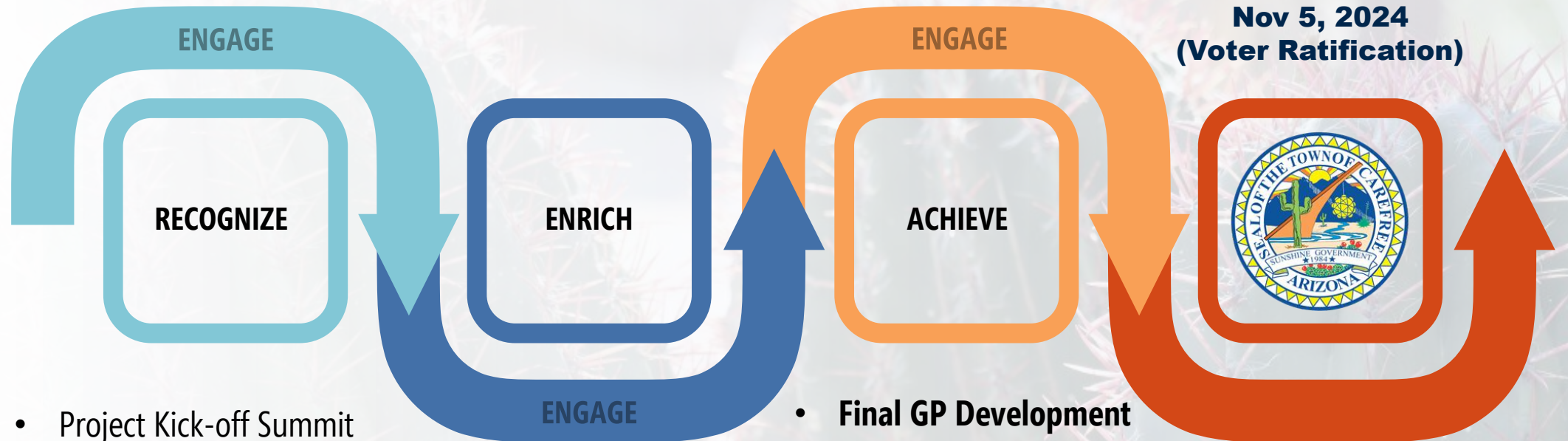
# General Plan Process & Progress

Nov 2022

Feb 2023

Dec 2023

June 2024



Nov 5, 2024  
(Voter Ratification)

- Project Kick-off Summit
- Public Involvement Plan
- Community Outreach (CW #1 – 2/1) (Pop-up 3/31, 4/1)
- GP/Existing Conditions Assessment

- GP Org. Structure
- Draft GP Elements
- Community Outreach (CW #4: OS – 7/17)
- GP Work sessions (4,5)
- 60-Day Review (10/1 – 12/1)

- **Final GP Development**
- **GP Work sessions**
- Formal Adoption (PZ Comm. recom. And Council app.)
- Voter Ratification



# General Plan Process & Progress

- **Important Upcoming Events**

- Planning Commission Work Sessions (2) – 5:15 p.m. / 5:00 p.m.
  - Monday, March 11 and Monday, March 18
- Council Work Sessions (2) – 5 p.m.
  - Tuesday, April 2 and Tuesday, April 9
- Planning & Zoning Commission Public Hearing (Recommendation) – 5:15 p.m.
  - Monday, May 13: *public hearing draft available by April 26*
- 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: working Public Hearing Draft





# 60-Day Review Draft Summary

- **Conducted 10/1/23 -12/1/23**
- **Received a total of 353 unique submissions**
  - Breakdown of responses
    - Residents
      - Validation process
    - Public Agencies
      - PZ Commissioner
      - City of Scottsdale
      - State Hist. Preservation Office
      - Maricopa Association of Gov't
      - AZ State Land Department

## Common Themes

- **Growth & Density:** concern for impacts from future development, in particular Town Center and SPA's
- **Design & Architecture:** value visual quality of the built and natural environment, especially within and from Town Center
- **Parks & Open Space:** strongly appreciate open space and recreation, with differing views on where, what, and how, particularly in relation to 48-acres
- **Economic Development:** desire a healthy financial future for the Town, but not at the expense of overall vision and within a limited form of government
- **Water:** current water shortages are of particular concern and desire more clarity on status of water resources, as well as oversight of Carefree Water Company
- **Form Responses:** recognition of similar responses



# General Plan – Public Hearing Draft

Drafting Process

**Built with Many Inputs!**

-  **Technical Evaluation**  
(law, trends, best practices)
-  **Existing Conditions Report**  
(data, projections, mapping)
-  **Administrative Feedback**  
(elected, appointed, staff)
-  **Public Outreach Feedback**  
(interviews, surveys, meetings)





# General Plan – Public Hearing Draft

## Public Input & Track Changes

*Town of*  
**Carefree**  
General Plan

Please note: This draft document has been prepared using track changes. Any document modifications made during the review process are visible in red text. Due to this condition, document formatting (i.e. margins, text spacing, etc.) may be temporarily impacted in select locations

**Public Hearing Draft**  
Feb 2024

### Goal SC-9: Manage the unique Village Center as a vibrant, mixed-use destination for residents, tourists, retailers, restaurants, and businesses.

#### Policies:

1. Promote revitalization/redevelopment of the Village Center to provide a safe and charming walkable village center amidst a well-maintained native garden.
2. ~~Continue to m~~Manage the Village Center as the daily gathering place of locals and a favorite for guests and visitors to return often to shop, dine, and refresh in nature's beautifully preserved and peaceful setting.
3. Implement the Village Center Redevelopment Plan that defines current and future land uses, design elements, and other conditions that reflect the unique character of the Village Center.
4. Develop and maintain public improvements, including streetscape, street furniture, landscape, and lighting that are focused on safety, enhanced focal points, and flexible public activity areas.
5. Promote an annual schedule of events that brings the community together and attracts tourists to the Village Center area. Use technology to advertise these events well in advance to maximize numbers.

### Goal SC-10: Support growth in ~~the identified SPA~~ areas at the northeast corner (NEC) of Carefree Highway and Cave Creek Road ~~and the northwest corner (NWC) of Carefree Highway and Tom Darlington Road~~ in a sensitive and select manner ~~in conformance that conforms with this Plan the Town's character as set forth in SC Goals 1 and 2.~~

#### Policies:

1. ~~Within the provisions of existing entitlement for this area, Encourage development within Special Planning Areas (SPA)~~ where context-sensitive design and overall town livability are prioritized.
2. Recognize that neighbor concerns, site features, development trends, and economic conditions will require consideration in adapting and approving future residential, commercial, open space, and/or destination-based uses in ~~these~~ this areas.
3. Direct growth to where infrastructure capacity is available, or committed to be available in the future, and require developers to install the infrastructure needed to support their development.

### Goal SC-11: Ensure future development within the SPA area at the northwest corner (NWC) of Carefree Highway and Tom Darlington Drive may only occur in a focused manner that conforms with this Plan.

#### Policies:

1. ~~Development shall balance the need for the Town's fiscal health against a steadfast commitment to protect the Town's semi-rural character.~~
2. ~~In addition to the measures outlined in the Growth Element, require development to provide any necessary mitigation through context and scale, architectural design, setbacks and buffering, use programming, and sound and light moderation.~~
- 4-3. ~~This area impacts more than just the residents in the typical 500-foot notification area as specified in the Citizen Participation Ordinance. Therefore, any rezoning of the area shall require an enhanced notification process to include all homes and HOA contacts within Carefree 3B, Grandview Estates 1&2, and Black Mountain Foothills. Additionally, all notifications will include the Boulders North HOA.~~





# General Plan – Public Hearing Draft

## Discussion Format

- *Present context information for a specific Focus Area.*
- *Council will then be given opportunity to ask follow-up questions of staff and consultant for that topic. (This process will be repeated for each topic)*
- *Following Council discussion, the Mayor will then open the floor to residents for questions or comments on any specific topic*
  - *Anyone who would like to speak will be asked to do so one at a time*
  - *Comments will be limited to 3 minutes to allow others the opportunity to speak*
  - *To allow maximum time for collective community dialogue, please refrain from overly repeating prior comments*

## 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***
- ***Others as defined through discussion***





# General Plan – Public Hearing Draft

## Community Park/48-Acre State Land Site

### *Open Space & Environmental Stewardship Actions (Public Hearing Draft)*

OSA-B	The Town <del>shall investigate the formation of</del> <u>will form</u> an Open Space <del>Board</del> <u>Stakeholder Advisory Committee</u> 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	<u>Through a public process, and with the assistance of the Open Space Stakeholder Advisory Committee,</u> <del>E</del> 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 <del>all</del> <u>innovative</u> sources of funding, such as donated funds, state and federal funding, grant opportunities, and corporate contributions.
OSA-D	<u>Through a public process, and with the assistance of the Open Space Stakeholder Advisory Committee,</u> <del>P</del> 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.  <del>e</del> <u>1</u> - 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 <del>e</del> <u>D</u> esert Foothills Land Trust, Carefree Park, and other interested groups or residents to define a strategy for funding, acquiring, and preserving these properties in perpetuity.

# General Plan – Public Hearing Draft

## Community Park/48-Acre State Land Site

### *Open Space & Environmental Stewardship Actions (Council identified edits)*

<b>OSA-B</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.
<b>OSA-C</b>	Through a public process, and with the assistance of the Open Space Stakeholder Advisory Committee, <del>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.</del> pursue all sources of funding, <del>such as including but not limited to</del> donated funds, state and federal funding, grant opportunities, and corporate contributions. <u>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.</u>
<b>OSA-D</b>	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. <u>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.</u>



# General Plan – Public Hearing Draft

## Residential Above Retail

### *Issues & Concerns (60-Day Review)*

- This policy will only help to further the negative impacts on views in the Town Center
- “Hampton Inn and The View TownHomes have blemished and detracted the magnificent views Carefree residents once enjoyed”



#### Non- Residential Land Uses

Non-Residential Land Uses include all land uses that are not residential or that are intended to provide associated services to residential uses.



#### Garden Office

Small areas of garden offices provide medical/dental and other professional offices and ancillary uses to supplement the Town Center in servicing residents.

#### Commercial

Includes a wide range of commercial, office and service uses.

#### 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.

#### Resort and Resort Hotel

Provides for a major resort or resort hotel, with associated retail, service and recreational uses.





# General Plan – Public Hearing Draft

## Residential Above Retail

### *Additional Considerations*

- Residential above retail was part of the original vision for the Town Center
- Prop 207 – Passed in 2006 (ARS 12-1134: Diminution in value; just compensation)
  - Proposition 207 requires local governments to compensate a private property owner if the value of a person's property is reduced by the enactment of any land use law.
  - Prop 207 is the reason why changing land use/zoning provisions to permit less intensive development is difficult to accomplish in Arizona. Property owners must either waive their entitlements voluntarily or be compensated for the reduction in value of their property.





# General Plan – Public Hearing Draft

## Residential Above Retail

*What does the draft  
General Plan Say...*

Goal SC-3: Protect scenic views (i.e. viewsheds) of regionally significant mountains and natural features, in or adjacent to the Town.

Policies:

1. Maintain the panoramic views throughout the Town with specific limits on development conditions such as building and wall heights, grading, disturbance areas, lot coverage, and setbacks so as not to impede significant views of surrounding mountains, ridgelines, boulder piles or other natural features in a manner that is consistent with private property rights.
  - a. ~~Continue to c~~ Consider viewsheds as part of the development review process, recognizing that mountain and natural scenic views are both a community and an individual asset.
  - b. ~~Continue to~~ Continuously monitor the effect of, and adjust where necessary and possible, Town Codes (e.g. Mountainside Development Review Manual) intended to minimize the impact of new development on mountain views and prominent natural features from both public rights-of-way and neighboring properties.

### Scenic Community Character Actions:

SCA-A	Review and strengthen the zoning ordinance and building codes that consider appropriate heights, view access, and mitigate adverse impacts of development to hillsides, washes, and natural landscapes. <u>a - utilize a stakeholder advisory group to assist in developing and reviewing proposed changes prior to the formal adoption process.</u>
SCA-B	Review and update the Town's Community Design Standards and Guidelines to assure Carefree is maintaining its scenic rural character. <u>a - utilize a stakeholder advisory group to assist in developing and reviewing proposed changes prior to the formal adoption process.</u> <u>b - Explore the creation of town-wide Community Design Standards and Guidelines and enhanced design review standards for the purpose of maintaining Town character. Focus should be given to maintaining cohesiveness and promoting quality design through elements such as architectural style, use of materials, and application of colors.</u>



# General Plan – Public Hearing Draft

## Residential Above Retail

*What does the draft General Plan Say...*

consideration of views

Goal SC-3: Protect scenic views (i.e. viewsheds) of regionally significant mountains and natural features, in or adjacent to the Town.

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more resident oversight





# General Plan – Public Hearing Draft

## Residential Above Retail Discussion – Brief summary

- Residents that oppose this language stated they understand such a GP text change would not change existing entitlements.
- Residents that oppose language stated they understand the Hampton Inn and View Townhomes were not granted any benefits under this provision.
- Residents that oppose language shared that they are most concerned about views and overall intensity of development in the Town Center, even if existing zoning allows multi-story development by right.
- Residents also questioned who would occupy such residential units and if they would be restricted for short term rentals.
- Commission requested interpretation on if removing from GP would present a Prop 207 claim.



# General Plan – Public Hearing Draft

## 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.



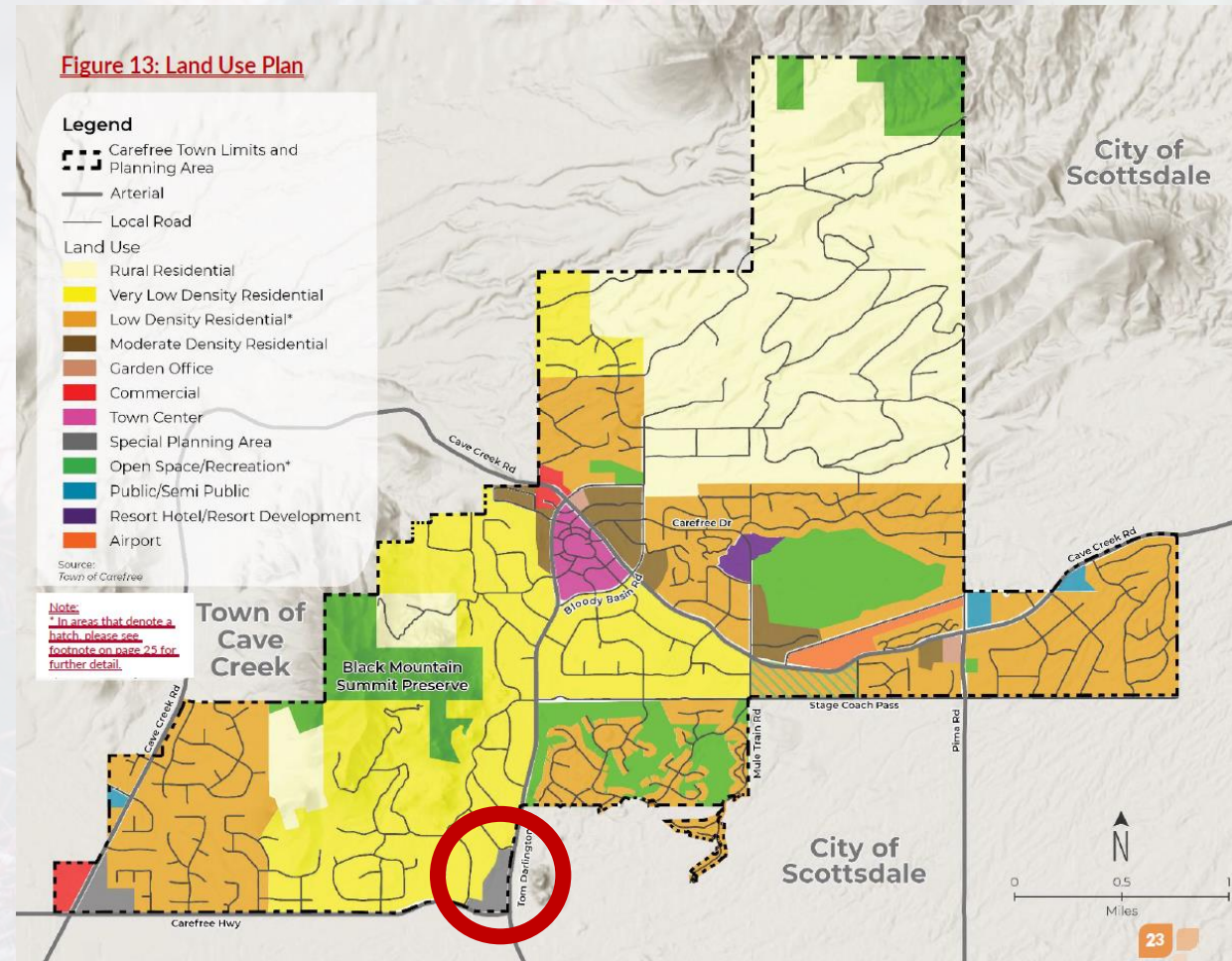


# General Plan – Public Hearing Draft

## Special Planning Area Designation (NW corner of Tom Darlington and Carefree Highway)

### *Most Common Issues & Concerns (60-Day Review)*

- Increase traffic/worsen already poor flow and safety conditions
- Negative impact on views
- Increase noise
- Environmental impacts/wash disturbance
- No resident oversight (change zoning back)



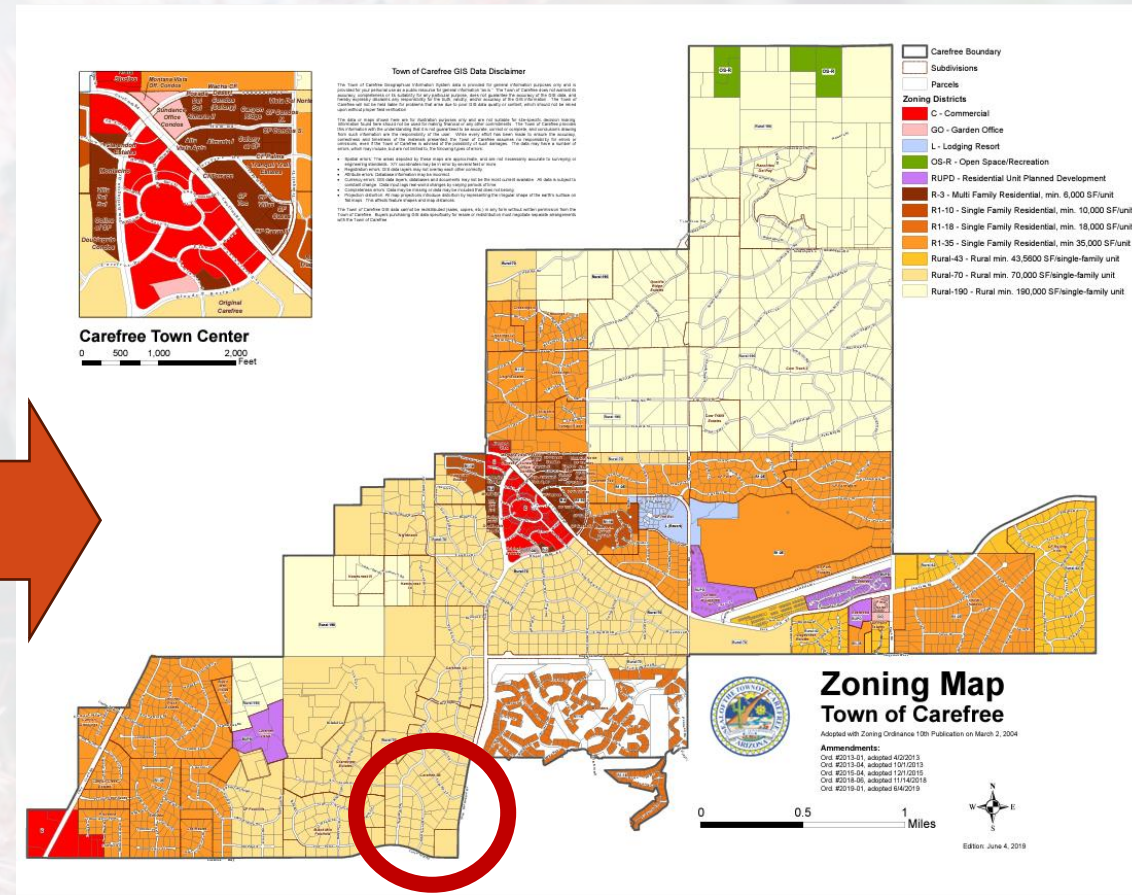
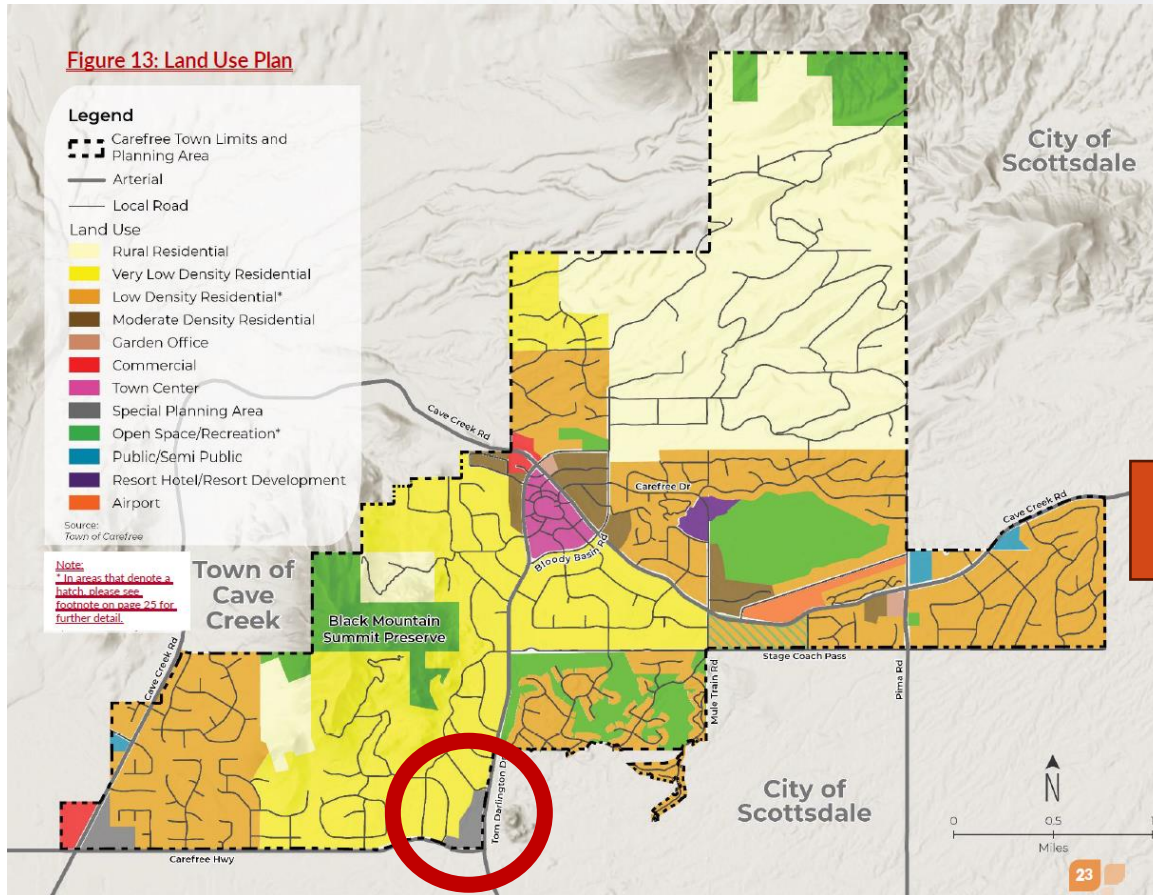


# General Plan – Public Hearing Draft

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

### General Plan – SPA Land Use

### Zoning – Rural 70 (70,000 SF lots)





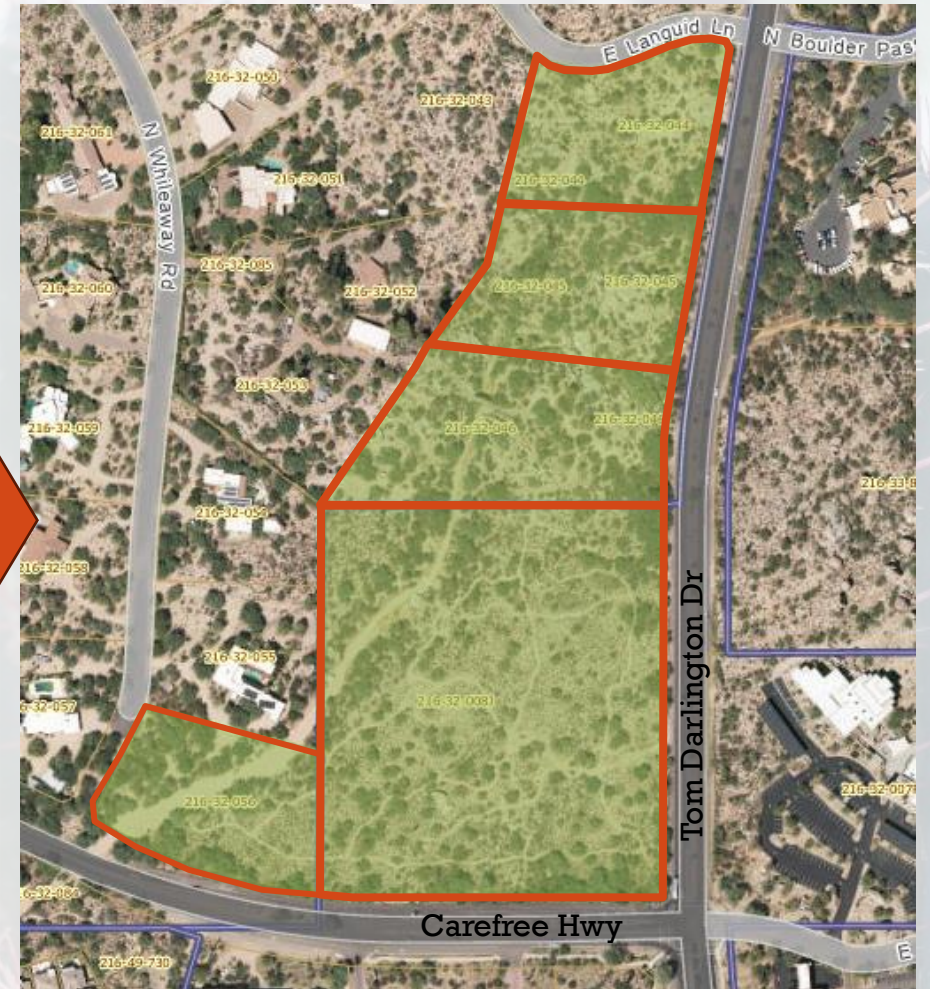
# General Plan – Public Hearing Draft

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

*Subject Area*



*Subject Parcels*





# General Plan – Public Hearing Draft

## Special Planning Area Designation (NW corner of Tom Darlington and Carefree Highway)

### *Three Approaches to the Future*

<b>Development Today</b>	<b>Keep SPA</b>	<b>Revert SPA</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Zoning is already in place to allow development of single-family residential w/ min. 70,000 SF lots</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Narrowly and collectively define in GP what we are willing to accept.</li><li>• Seek to address/mitigate issues and concerns</li><li>• Ratified GP will be community “receipt” to decision makers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Would revert SPA back to Very Low Density Residential</li><li>• Would remove all mitigating policies currently incorporated into the GP</li><li>• Future Major GP Amendments may be considered at any time in the calendar year moving forward</li></ul>

### *Most Common Issues & Concerns*

- Increase traffic/worsen already poor flow and safety conditions
- Negative impact on views
- Increase noise
- Environmental impacts/wash disturbance
- No resident oversight (change zoning back)





# General Plan – Public Hearing Draft

## Special Planning Area Designation (NW corner of Tom Darlington and Carefree Highway)

### *What does the draft General Plan Say...*

#### Northwest Corner of Carefree Highway and Tom Darlington Drive

The area is comprised of approximately 21 acres with frontage along Tom Darlington Drive and/or Carefree Highway. While the property is currently zoned for low-density residential and thus can develop in this manner, given the proximity to more intense uses to the south and the east, and primary access via arterial streets, a more economically sustainable, destination-based low-profile casita style resort use, with limited compatible commercial retail uses could be appropriate, provided that the development: 1) Establishes an adequate effective open space buffer to the very low density residential neighborhood to the west; 2) Provides for the continued preservation of the natural wash in accordance with floodplain regulations and the Carefree 3B Final Plat; 3) Supports the Town's fiscal and economic development goals, and aligns with the evolving commercial nature and resort lifestyle found in the area; 4) Utilizes high quality architectural character contextual materials, desert colors, all sited uniquely into the existing landforms complementing the existing adjacent and nearby uses, and avoiding commercially branded architecture to provide a unique and cohesive design character; 5) Utilizes massing, building heights of 30' or less and density to minimize site disturbance and while taking into account proximity to adjacent uses, and is thoughtful of adjacent homeowner views to prominent land forms; 6) Focuses retail components east and south of the existing wash, or where not to have an impact on existing residential; 7) Incorporates the natural Sonoran Desert landscape; 8) Prohibits any access to Whiteaway Road and only residential access onto Languid Lane. Commercial or delivery access onto Languid is prohibited and any emergency only ingress/ egress to Languid Lane is via controlled access only; 9) there shall be no drive through uses, gas stations/car washes/garages, storage facilities, box stores, ~~and/or~~ fast-food pads, and/or outdoor recreational courts.

#### Special Planning Area (SPA)

SPAs ~~areas~~ denote unique areas within the Town that based on their attributes require more detailed master planning efforts to ensure for compatibility with the universal goals and policies of this plan. Detailed planning for such areas shall be completed in tandem with a zoning or development request for the subject area. The enhanced planning process ~~typically~~ shall at minimum considers:

- The surrounding context in which the area exists, and any external influences that will affect future growth or investment.
- Current and future market conditions that may affect investment activity and specific ways that they can be harnessed or reversed.
- Unique environmental conditions such as important natural features and viewsheds that may need to be worked through or around.
- Unique architecture, or design features, that need to be incorporated into proposed development.
- Key linkages between the subject area and other neighborhood and/or activity centers in town.
- Regulatory provisions that may discourage, impede or prevent context-sensitive, low-impact, smart growth development initiatives.

The Carefree General Plan identifies two SPAs: ~~The~~ 1) Northeast Corner of Carefree Highway and Cave Creek Road and 2) Northwest Corner of Carefree Highway and Tom Darlington Drive. See the Growth Element on page 26 for further detail regarding specific planning considerations associated with these defined areas, as well as Goals SC-10 and SC-11.



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# General Plan – Public Hearing Draft

## Special Planning Area Designation (NW corner of Tom Darlington and Carefree Highway)

### *What does the draft General Plan Say...*

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#### SCA-C

Utilize the Planning and Zoning Commission or a Town Council appointed committee as an economic development advisory group to provide citizen guidance on the redevelopment of the Village Center and SPA areas at the northeast corner (NEC) of Carefree Highway and Cave Creek Road as well as the northwest corner (NWC) of Carefree and Tom Darlington.



# General Plan – Public Hearing Draft

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oversight

SCA-C

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oversight



# General Plan – Public Hearing Draft

## NWC SPA Area Discussion – Brief Summary

- Those that oppose the NWC SPA designation generally stated they understand the land use/zoning process and various steps associated with proposed options (i.e. existing zoning, keep SPA, remove SPA).
- Residents don't dispute that the MGPA process was done properly, but believe surrounding residents should've been better notified/informed and heard.
- Planning and Zoning Commission requested a report (for the record) on the public engagement effort that was conducted for NWC SPA process.
- Residents don't believe the proposed text/track changes to limit the type of development within the SPA is sufficient. Desire any future project to go through the entire GPA, zoning, and site plan process, rather than the zoning and site plan process. Want to slow down process and consider any future project on its own merit.
- Residents confirmed that they understand (and support) the need for the Town to plan for its economic future, but feel there are other locations and efforts (i.e. development of the NEC SPA) that the Town should prioritize.
- Commission requested legal interpretation regarding changing NWC SPA designation would present a Prop 207 claim.
- It was also clarified that if the proposed General Plan is voted down that the current NWC SPA designation would remain as it is in the current General Plan.





# General Plan – Public Hearing Draft

## NWC SPA Area Discussion – Comments/Responses

- This is a polarizing topic...
  - While the planning and economic development application of the SPA tool on the NWC is appropriate and justifiable, many residents have conveyed that if not changed this would be a bright line for them and bring uncertainty into the success of the ratification process.
  - Conversely, it has been expressed that reverting the NWC back to Very Low-Density Residential would conflict with those residents who may not have commented previously because they had no opposition to the current NWC SPA designation.
  - Further, if removed, consideration for future revenue and land use policy will need to be rectified based on resident preference for a limited government funding model.
- Consequently, unlike prior topic areas, we are seeking consultation from Council as to a preferred approach within this specific topic area.



# Next Steps

- Planning & Zoning Commission Public Hearing (Recommendation) – 5:15 p.m.
  - Monday, May 13: *public hearing draft available by April 26*
- Council Public Hearing (Approval) - 5:30 p.m.
  - Tuesday, June 4: *public hearing draft available by May 17*

