

Friends of Carefree, I hope you had an enjoyable Thanksgiving. It seems that time accelerates at breathtaking speed following the Thanksgiving holiday. I sincerely hope you will carve out 5 minutes to submit your comments on the **resident driven General Plan** before time runs out. The deadline to submit comments is this **Friday, December 1st**.

The General Plan is a resident driven process and residents will have the final vote on whether it is adopted. But it hasn't stopped certain members of the Town Council or Staff from conveniently forgetting this is supposed to reflect resident's vision of Carefree's future.

It appears our former Mayor is still promoting that his over-development plans remain in Carefree's General Plan. The former mayor was all set to add TWO new resorts in Carefree. One on the NW Corner of Tom Darlington and Carefree Highway, conveniently located on property owned by "just a friend". The second resort target was on the 48 acres of State Land across from Sky Ranch Airport. How do you think a resort on those 48 acres would impact airport traffic not to mention the impact on our water supplies from two resorts?

It is worth repeating - **THE GENERAL PLAN IS A RESIDENT DRIVEN PLAN**. So why are certain Town Staff so heavily invested in getting their pet projects into OUR General Plan? They don't even get a vote since they are not Carefree residents. A recent correspondence reflects an attitude more suitable to a shady D.C. politician. Here are a few samples:

Recently, a resident wrote to the town accusing them of being disconnected from residents and ignoring the feedback on the GP survey. The town administrator replied, "*Unfortunately, there is intentional misinformation being circulated that specifically references (a choice between) high-density housing development OR*

the establishment of a 48-acre Carefree Community Park. This statement is categorically false. The state land is zoned for low-density 70,000-square-foot lots and there is not any development proposal. The idea of a park is a valid discussion point but to fabricate a statement to generate a reaction from residents is the definition of duplicitous.”

Seriously, residents are being duplicitous?

Council’s voting records confirm the choice between a higher density development or a community park is a valid choice. In 2017, the Council was looking at a RESORT on that 48 acre state land parcel. In 2021, the Economic Development Work Plan stated that the anticipated development for the State Land Parcel would be, "mixed use, **a low-density resort** and supporting regional retail". Obviously, all those “anticipated developments” are significantly higher density than the current zoning.

The town even made plans to pave the way for a significantly higher density development on these 48 acres. In 2021, they were all set to initiate **Two Major Amendments to our General Plan to add Two Special Planning Areas (SPA)**. The first SPA on the NW Corner of Tom Darlington and Carefree Highway, they did complete. The second SPA planned for the 48 acre State Land Parcel, for some reason they backed away from, likely due to insufficient water rights to support their plan. Perhaps they even realized the optics of going for **TWO MAJOR AMENDMENTS** to our General Plan during Covid lockdown was really pushing their luck. But given this history, it is hardly a “categorically false” claim when there is irrefutable evidence the town was (and perhaps still is) planning for a higher density development on those 48 acres. For the record, you get to vote on the new General Plan next November but you have no say whatsoever on any GP Amendment.

The town administrator’s next claim is, *"The Special Planning Area (SPA) at the northwest corner (“NWC”) of Carefree Highway and Tom Darlington outlines criteria if, in the future, there is ever a proposal for an alternative use. Such criteria would align with a high-caliber*

resort such as the Boulders, not a hotel such as the Hampton. Such reference to the Hampton is not in alignment with the language in the General Plan and is duplicitous.”

There is that misdirected word again, ending his circuitous and defensive statement. I don't know about any of you guys but after being promised a “boutique hotel” and getting the roadside Hampton Inn I certainly don't place much credibility in their assurance this would be a “high-caliber resort”.

Residents that live 500 ft within the resort radius at the NW corner, were originally presented with a small “boutique” hotel of the scale and style of La Hermosa (43 rooms) in Paradise Valley. However, a pre-application filed with Carefree's P&Z in October 2022 shows a resort more than 3 times the size of La Hermosa, with 6 pickle ball courts. The applicant, Virtua Partners, has relationships with the Marriott, Hilton, and Choice brands. This was a pre-application and has since expired. However, at the August 2023 Town Council meeting, Steve Prokopek submitted a revised Economic Development Work Plan that asked the Council to allow him to begin “soliciting for developers” to build a resort on this corner. Thanks to a persistent council member, and two exhausting council sessions, that part of the plan was deferred. Unfortunately, the SPA designation STILL remains in the GP land use map unless residents demand that it be removed. Left as is, the door is wide open for a resort on that corner.

Yesterday, Carefree Truth [sic] published a letter from an anonymous “20 year + resident”. Given the details of the letter I am willing to bet Vice Mayor Kroyer wrote the letter. It had the same bias and tone as articles she has written previously. But the author makes it pretty clear that an SPA designation in our General Plan makes it easier for the property owner to build a resort on the NW Corner without residents permission. They write , “*removing* the SPA does not “*put the power in the hands of the residents*” ...it just makes it harder for the property owner to get permission from Carefree neighbors to develop the corner as a low-profile resort”. **Isn't that what we want - for residents to have a say in how Carefree is developed** so that

we don't end up with another grand scale version of the Hampton Inn? I guess we know why the former Mayor, certain council members and some staff are fighting so hard to keep the SPA in the General Plan. All the more reason residents need to demand that SPA be removed from the General Plan.

So don't forget, you have until Friday, December 1, to submit your comments to the General Plan. I am including a recent advisory from **OurCarefree** that makes it quick and painless to provide your feedback.

*One thing to keep in mind, when you get to the white comment box noted in the information below, **do not click Next until you have entered all of your comments in that box.** Clicking Next will take you to the exit page before you complete your comments and you cannot go back.*



Dear Carefree Resident,

YOU can shape Carefree's future!

NOW is the time to act.

CAN you spare 5 minutes to help shape our town's future?

Let Carefree know you care about preserving Sonoran Desert open spaces, reclaiming lost mountain views, and achieving dark skies for our community.

Insist in writing that Carefree town council members and town staff listen to the wishes of its residents and preserve its semi-rural beauty that we all moved here to enjoy.

1. Do you want a resort built on the corner of Tom Darlington and Carefree Highway?

If you answer NO,

TELL CAREFREE TO REMOVE THE SPECIAL PLANNING AREA (SPA) ON THE NW CORNER OF TOM DARLINGTON AND CAREFREE HIGHWAY FROM THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP.

*BECAUSE removing the Special Planning Area for this corner does not preclude development. It ensures residents will have more opportunities to define what can be built on this corner. **This simple move puts the power in the hands of the residents, not in the hands of the town staff (who do not live in Carefree) and town council members (who allowed the Hampton Inn development.)***

2. Do you want another massive residential development in the last remaining (and only accessible) 48-acre Sonoran Desert parcel of Sonoran Desert in Carefree?

If you answer NO,

TELL CAREFREE TO COMMIT TO PRESERVING THE LAST 48-ACRE PARCEL OF LAND AND COMMIT TO CREATING A CAREFREE COMMUNITY PARK.

BECAUSE preserving open space is our residents' number one priority. Our General Plan should reflect the wishes of the residents and unequivocally commit to the mission of protecting the last large area of Sonoran Desert from development. CarefreePark.org (a non-profit 501(c) 3) is working to acquire the 48-acre of State Land located 1/2 mile from Town Center and turning it into a nature preserve with walking trails for the community to enjoy.

3. Do you want to further destroy the scenic charm of our Town Center?

If you answered NO,

TELL CAREFREE TO ELIMINATE LANGUAGE THAT SUPPORT RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ABOVE DOWNTOWN CAREFREE RETAIL SHOPS AND ADHERE TO THE CURRENT BUILDING HEIGHT STANDARDS AND GUIDELINE OF 24 FEET FOR RESIDENTIAL AND 30 FEET FOR COMMERCIAL.

BECAUSE protecting our rights to the views of the beautiful mountains and Sonoran Desert should be a given. The Hampton Inn and The View Townhomes have blemished the magnificent views Carefree residents once enjoyed. These inconsiderate developments have detracted from Carefree's scenic community character. Adding a second story residential development above retail shops will only further detract from our Town Center.

Follow these simple steps and tell Carefree what is important to you.

1. [Click on this link](#) ← [This is a link to the comments form.]

2. You do not need to enter your name unless you wish. Click on NEXT

3. Select the middle option that reads "I have general comments". Click on NEXT

4. A white box will appear at the bottom of the page. Enter your comments relating to the topics noted above.

5. Add any other comments about our General Plan **in the same box.** Click on NEXT.

You are done! You just helped shape the future of Carefree!

Thank you.

OurCarefree Team

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And there you have it, for now.

Respectfully submitted by John Traynor

Notice: In addition to reporting *facts*, this Newsletter will contain the author's perspective on topics or events affecting Carefree residents. That perspective may not be popular with the mayor, council members, staff, town attorney, or Facebook Trolls. The fact is, I don't care what they think.

If we lived in a perfect world, we would need but one newspaper.

God Bless America.

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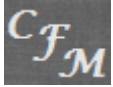
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Carefree, what life should be!

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"The power of accurate observation is frequently called cynicism by those who don't have it." - George Bernard Shaw

My Original version below



Friends of Carefree, I hope you had an enjoyable Thanksgiving. It seems that time accelerates at breathtaking speed following the Thanksgiving holiday – Black Friday, Cyber Monday, things can get crazy. I sincerely hope you will carve out 5 minutes to submit your comments on the *resident driven General Plan* before time runs out. The deadline to submit comments is this **Friday, December 1st**.

Time is running out to submit your comments on the *resident driven General Plan*. The deadline to submit comments is this **Friday, December 1st**. Your input is very important, especially if you care about the future of Carefree - the Carefree you still love as your home. Below I have included a recent advisory from [OurCarefree](#) that can guide you to quickly and painlessly enter your comments on the General Plan. *One thing to keep in mind is that when you get to the white comment box noted in the information below, **do not click Next until you have entered all of your comments in that box.** Clicking Next will take you to the exit page before you complete your comments and you cannot go back.*

I'll have some additional comments following this advisory.



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Follow these simple steps and tell Carefree what is important to you.

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2. You do not need to enter your name unless you wish. Click on NEXT

3. Select the middle option that reads "I have general comments". Click on NEXT

4. A white box will appear at the bottom of the page. Tell Carefree to remove the language that encourages residential to be built above retail space in our Town Center. Tell Carefree to add a policy that limits the height in our core Town Center to 24 feet.
5. Add any other comments about our General Plan **in the same box.** Click on NEXT.

You are done! You just helped shape the future of Carefree!

THE DEADLINE IS DECEMBER 1.

YOUR TOWN

YOUR FUTURE

YOUR CHOICE

Let's shape our town's future together!

Thank you.

OurCarefree Team

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Full disclosure. The entirety of information presented below is not my work product alone. No single resident can possibly follow all the angles that are in play within the town. Aside from the highly compensated staff, a substantial number of consultants have been engaged by the town from 2017-18 to date. Carefree is fortunate to have an engaged and energetic group of resident volunteers that are dedicating their time and skills to analyze the General Plan as well as economic development activities that may have a profound, undesirable effect on the town.

Our efforts are of a collaborative nature. Unfortunately, there are some members of the staff who will not stop meddling with the GP. It often seems as if the town administrator and economic development director are still taking orders from the former mayor. That mayor embraced the idea of adding two hotels in Carefree, one on the NWC of Tom Darlington and Carefree Highway, conveniently located on property owned by "just a friend". The second target is the last remaining large parcel (48 acres) of natural desert controlled by the state land trust. When the non-resident staff tires of trying to

transform us into a tiny Scottsdale they dream of copycatting Paradise Valley, where residents are fed up with hotels and resorts.

The public and private persona of certain public servants is very different. Privately, the unflattering side of public service manifests itself, using a mix of passive-aggressive statements directed at residents all wrapped in an apparent case of amnesia. Some recent correspondence reflects an attitude more suitable for sanitation work or a D.C. political career. Here are a few samples:

Recently, a resident wrote to the town accusing them of being disconnected from residents and ignoring the feedback on the GP survey. The town administrator replied, *“Unfortunately, there is intentional misinformation being circulated that specifically references (a choice between) “high-density housing development OR the establishment of a 48-acre Carefree Community Park”. This statement is categorically false. The state land is zoned for low-density 70,000-square-foot lots and there is not any development proposal. The idea of a park is a valid discussion point but to fabricate a statement to generate a reaction from residents is the definition of duplicitous.”*

Seriously, our residents are duplicitous?

Reality has been quite different. In the 2021 - 2022 Economic Development Workplan [pushed through during Covid in Zoom meetings] that Steve Propkopek presented in early 2021, he indicates the anticipated development for the State Land Parcel would be mixed use, a low-density resort and supporting **regional retail**. Obviously not the low density 70,000sqft development the TA references. There was clearly an intent to rezone, and though there may not currently be “any development proposal” I have no confidence in his current claims. Does the Hampton Inn resemble a ‘Boutique Resort’ in your eyes. No, not in mine either.

In his presentation of that workplan, Steve indicated he would be initiating Two Major Amendments To Our General Plan to add Two Special Planning Areas (SPA). The first - the NW Corner and the

second - the State Land Parcel. For some reason they backed away from the SPA for the State Land. Since all this was clearly what they had intended, it is hardly a “categorically false” claim.

The TA’s next claim is, ***“The Special Planning Area (SPA) at the northwest corner (“NWC)” of Carefree Highway and Tom Darlington outlines criteria if, in the future, there is ever a proposal for an alternative use. Such criteria would align with a high-caliber resort such as the Boulders, not a hotel such as the Hampton. Such reference to the Hampton is not in alignment with the language in the General Plan and is duplicitous.”***

There is that misdirected word again. In 2017, Former Mayor Peterson and the very same Town Administrator, Gary Neiss, rolled out a plan they called, “Securing Carefree’s Financial Future”. Included in the extensive development plan was the 48 acre state land parcel. Their plans called for a resort to be built on the 48 acres as well as a resort on the NW Corner of Tom Darlington and Carefree Highway. Then, in 2020 Carefree hired Steve Prokopek as the Economic Development Director. His Economic Development work plan mimicked the majority of the 2017 Peterson/Neiss development plan. It is interesting that the Peterson/Neiss plan found a home with the newly hired Economic Development director. The Council voted to approve the plan. It is also interesting that TA conveniently forgets that when he wants something changed, as Steve stated in his plan, they would simply create and approve a General Plan Amendment – voters have no say.

When Steve presented his concept to the people that live 500 ft within the resort radius at the NW corner, he presented a small “boutique” hotel on the scale and charm of La Hermosa (43 rooms) and non-branded. However, A pre-application to Carefree’s P&Z in October 2022 shows a resort over 3 times the size of La Hermosa, with 6 pickle ball courts and a now bankrupt WeWork facility. The applicant, Virtua Partners, has relationships with the Marriott, Hilton and Choice brands. This was only a pre-application and has expired. However, in the August 2023 Economic Development workplan Steve originally submitted to the Council, he asks for approval allow him to

begin “soliciting for developers” to build a resort on this corner. Thanks to a persistent council member, and two exhausting council sessions, that part of the plan was eventually dropped. Unfortunately, the SPA designation remains in the GP land use map unless residents demand that it be removed. Left as is, the door is open to a resort on that corner.

Please remember that the Hampton Inn is one of the Hilton’s brands. Can you imagine that *our* roadside Hampton Inn may once have been billed as a ‘Boutique Hotel’. Without a doubt, our town staff [and likely the ex-mayor] are hell-bent to build a resort on the NW corner, regardless of the TA’s hollow claims.

And there you have it, for now.

Respectfully submitted by John Traynor

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“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.”

Attribution not verified; Not JFK and Not Edmund Burke. Possibly philosopher John Stuart Mill, 1867.

I attribute it to Common Sense!