Town of Carefree

General Plan 2030

TOWN OF CAREFREE GENERAL PLAN ADOPTION

Planning and Zoning Commission
April 9, 2012

Town Council Adopted Resolution #2012-04
May 1, 2012

Ratified by Carefree voters
November 6, 2012

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TOWN OF CAREFREE

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FORWARD

"Someday I would like to plan and build a town from scratch," said Tom Darlington to K.T. Palmer in 1946. Carefree's two founders had a "dream of a completely planned model community (which) could not be forced upon an existing settlement, however small"... Fifteen years later, with the community laid out, Palmer stated that Carefree was "even if I say so, an unusual town. The character of its residents, the construction of its homes and even its businesses are different than those found in the average community of its size." (Palmer, For Land's Sake, 1971: pp. 319, 352)

The intent of Tom Darlington and K.T. Palmer in planning Carefree and the aims and expectations of the General Plan set forth in 1988 have been well borne out to date. The Town Council's and the Planning and Zoning Commission's intent in the 2012 updated General Plan is to be consistent in perpetuating the visions of the Town's predecessors with only modest modifications as needed to address changing circumstances, primarily externally caused.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TOWN OF CAREFREE GENERAL PLAN ADOPTION ..... **I**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..... **III**

FORWARD ..... **V**

TABLE OF CONTENTS ..... **VII**

LIST OF FIGURES IX
LIST OF TABLES IX
PHOTO CREDITS X

1. INTRODUCTION **1**
Purpose of the General Plan 1
Carefree's General Plan 1
Citizen Participation 1

2. VISION STATEMENT **3**

3. LAND USE ELEMENT **5**
INTRODUCTION 5
Regional Location 5
Surrounding Context 5
POPULATION, HOUSING AND GROWTH 7
Historical Population Data 7
Trends in Population and Age Categories 8
Historic Housing Data 10
Future Population Estimates & Build-out Analysis 15
EXISTING LAND USES 18
Land Use Make-up, Available Land and Build-out 18
Residential Land Uses 19
Non-residential Land Uses 20
GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES 22
FUTURE LAND USE MAP 24

4. CIRCULATION ELEMENT **29**
Introduction 29
Regional Transportation System 29
Carefree's Streets – Existing Conditions 31
Traffic Counts 33
GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES 39
TRAFFIC, PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE PLAN – DESIGN STANDARDS 41
Street System 41
Development of New Streets 42
Streets Managed by Adjacent Municipalities 42
Street Standards 42

5. OPEN SPACE ELEMENT **47**
Introduction 47
Regional Open Space 47
Inventory of Open Space Areas 48
Active Open Space 48
Passive Open Space 49
Forecasted Needs 50
GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES 52

6. GROWTH ELEMENT 55
INTRODUCTION 55
GROWTH AREAS 55
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT 59
Summary 59
Businesses in Carefree 59
Existing and Projected Commercial Land Uses 61
Employment 62
GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES 66
Growth Areas 66
Economic Development 67

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENT 69
Introduction 69
Slopes, Drainage and Soils 69
Climate 71
Vegetation and Wildlife 72
Regional Studies 72
GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES 73

8. COST OF DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT 77
Introduction 77
Current Situation 77
Funding Strategies 78
GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES 79

9. WATER RESOURCES ELEMENT 80
Introduction 80
Overview 80
History 81
Carefree Water System 85
Projected Water Use and Future Plans 87
GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES 89

10. PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES ELEMENT 91
Introduction 91
Existing Conditions 91
GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES 93

11. IMPLEMENTATION 97
Plan Adoption Process 97
Continuing Planning 97
Major Amendments to the General Plan 97
Minor Amendments to the General Plan 99

REFERENCES 101

List of Figures

Figure 1. Citizen Participation Process 2
Figure 2. Regional Vicinity Map 6
Figure 3. Carefree Total Population 7
Figure 4. Percent Change in Population: Average Annual Population Rates 8
Figure 5. Age Category Percent of Total Population 9
Figure 6. Total Housing Units and Percent Increase in Housing Units 11
Figure 7. Total Occupied Housing Units and Percent Occupied 12
Figure 8. Persons per Occupied Housing Unit 13
Figure 9. Change in Population, Total Housing Units and % Occupancy 13
Figure 10. Future Population Projection Methods 17
Figure 11. Future Land Use Map 27
Figure 12. Regional Vicinity Map 30
Figure 13. Daily Traffic Volume Data Locations 36
Figure 14. Map of Daily Traffic Volumes on Carefree Streets 37
Figure 15. Street Classification Map 43
Figure 16. Traffic, Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan 45
Figure 17. Developed and Vacant Single Family Residential Lots 57
Figure 18. Carefree Topography 70
Figure 19. Carefree Steep Slopes 70
Figure 20. Carefree Major Washes and Floodplains 71
Figure 21. Carefree & Cave Creek Water Companies: Service Areas within Carefree 83
Figure 22. Liberty Water Wastewater Franchise Area within the Town of Carefree 95

List of Tables

Table 1. Carefree Total Population 7
Table 2. Carefree Population and Age Categories 9
Table 3. Age Category Percent of Total Population 9
Table 4. Population Growth in Carefree and Surrounding Communities 10
Table 5. Total Housing Units Data 10
Table 6. Total Occupied Housing Data 12
Table 7. 2010 Housing Data: State and Surrounding Municipalities 15
Table 8. MAG Projected Population 16
Table 9. Carefree Population Projection 16
Table 10. Existing Land Use Make-up (as of January 2012) 18
Table 11. Streets Bordering Carefree Maintained by other Municipalities 31
Table 12. Daily Traffic Volumes on Carefree's Major Streets 34
Table 13. Daily Traffic Volume Rankings 35
Table 14. Carefree Open Space Inventory 48
Table 15. Business Categories and Description 59
Table 16. Total Businesses and Employees by Business Type 60
Table 17. Business Categorized by Retail and Office 60
Table 18. Potential Commercial/Garden Office Property in Carefree 61
Table 19. Commercial Building Space in Carefree 61
Table 20. Typical Employment and Retirement Ages 62
Table 21. Commercial Growth Between 2001 and 2011 63
Table 22. Forecasted Jobs and Jobs Ratios at Build-out 63
Table 23. Share of Residential Units Serviced 80
Table 24. Average Water Production 85
Table 25. Total Water Production 85
Table 26. CFWC Water Sources 86
Table 27. Projected Water Demand at Build-Out for CFWC and CCWC 88

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1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the General Plan

Arizona State law requires each city or town to adopt a General Plan. The General Plan is often referred to as the blue print to the community's future. The Plan is a "general" policy document that guides community development decisions to provide a sense of order, coordination and quality to the Town's policies and actions affecting growth. The Plan includes goals, objectives and recommendations to guide the land use, circulation network, open space preservation and other public facilities and services.

Carefree's General Plan

The foundation for Carefree's General Plan is based upon the Town's original Master Plan, which was adopted in 1988. Subsequently, in 1998 and 2002, pursuant to new state legislation known as "Growing Smarter", an updated General Plan was adopted. State Law requires that every ten years the General Plan be adopted and ratified by the voters. Carefree's General Plan contains eight separate but interrelated sections known as elements.

Consistent with State law, these elements are:

- Land Use
- Circulation
- Open Space
- Growth Areas
- Environmental
- Cost of Development
- Water Resources
- Public Facilities

Citizen Participation

Citizen participation is a cornerstone to the planning process. Through this process the community attempts to reconcile sometimes conflicting goals. For instance, some participants may want to modify a land use to respond to changing circumstances while others may want to preserve the character of the existing community. Achieving consensus on what is desired requires compromise and tradeoffs. In order to build consensus on the updated General Plan, a citizen participation program was developed and reviewed by both Planning and Zoning Commission and Town Council prior to the commencement of the update. This program included notifications within the Carefree Official Information Notification System (COINS), town website postings and updates and dozens of public workshops with the Planning and Zoning Commission where written comments and opportunity for public testimony were made available to all participants.

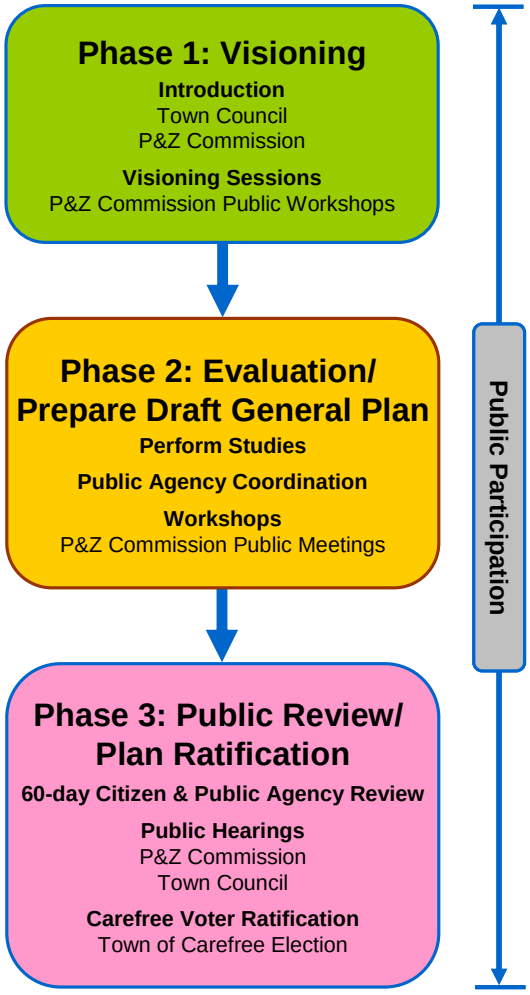
The citizen participation program was devised in three interrelated phases described and illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Phase 1 – Visioning. A series of public meetings and workshops were held to introduce the General Plan Update. Citizens were given opportunities to share comments regarding Carefree's vision, values and direction for the General Plan Update.

Phase 2 – Evaluation/Prepare Draft General Plan. Planning & Zoning staff conducted technical studies, coordinated with public agencies and prepared a draft General Plan. Planning & Zoning Commission public workshops were held for discussion and public comments, which were incorporated into the draft General Plan. The completed draft General Plan was reviewed and approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission in a public meeting at the end of this phase.

Phase 3 – Public Review/Plan Ratification. This phase began with the minimum 60-day citizen and public agency review as required by State law. Comments were considered during public meetings and incorporated into the final General Plan. At the end of this phase, the official General Plan was adopted by the Planning & Zoning Commission and Town Council in public hearings, followed by official ratification by Carefree voters.

Figure 1. Citizen Participation Process



2. VISION STATEMENT

Carefree is a unique semi-rural small town nestled among vegetated sloping foothills the Upper Sonoran Desert. The Town was master planned to be entirely distinctive from the surrounding communities. This distinction is reflected in many of the local street names, such as Easy Street, Ho Hum, Nonchalant and Peaceful Place. The Town is a community where residents enjoy a lifestyle that blends into the quiet of the natural desert. At the heart of Carefree is the business district, where residents and visitors gather to work, shop and visit.

Carefree's founding fathers thoughtfully planned the community to include within its fabric select amenities, including a resort, a private airport, a private golf course and a unique shopping district located in the geographic center of the community. Complementing these land uses are a rich assortment of residential lifestyles, from town homes and condominiums situated in its shopping district, to magnificent homes harmoniously placed within the splendor of the Upper Sonoran Desert.

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

As the Town matures, the Town will face certain challenges as it implements its vision. The urbanizing communities surrounding the Town have an effect on the Town's ability to maintain its distinct nature. Within the Town limits, as undeveloped raw land becomes scarcer the community will see a significant shift from the construction of new homes to extensive remodels or replacements. The Town Center will also see challenges in the future to enhance its vibrancy given the commercial encroachment from nearby communities.

Looking forward, the Town can address its evolving challenges and preserve its unique lifestyle by striving for sustainability. From an economic perspective, new opportunities should be targeted which enhance the community's sales tax base that provides additional security for the fiscal health of the Town. Residential and commercial neighborhoods should be maintained and enhanced through appropriate infrastructure investment. Additionally, development should be cognizant and reflective of its impact on the sensitive nature of the Upper Sonoran Desert. In doing so, the Town will be more capable of bringing to fruition its goals and objectives and becoming even more exceptional place to enjoy its diverse amenities and tranquil environment.

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3. LAND USE ELEMENT

Introduction

The Land Use Element is often the most visible Element of the General Plan; however, it is only one part of the Plan. The Land Use Element establishes policies, goals and objectives which describe the general distribution, location, type and relationship of all land uses within the Town. The supporting Land Use Map visually depicts the distribution, location and type of planned land uses within the community. It is important to note that the Land Use Map is not a Zoning Ordinance or Zoning Map. The Zoning Ordinance and associated Zoning Map are the legal instruments used to implement the Land Use Element by defining the legal parameters for the development of a parcel of land.

Regional Location

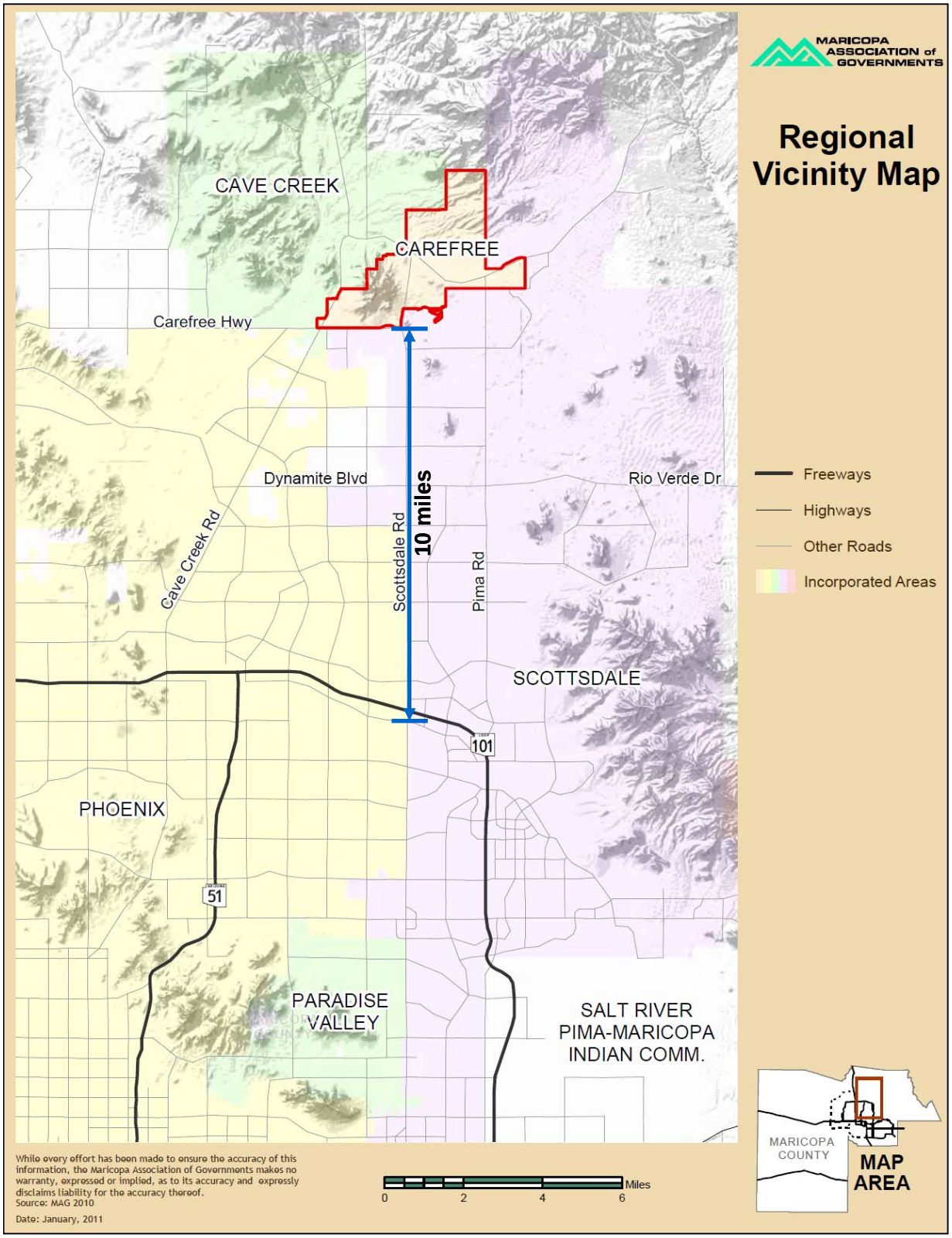
Carefree is situated in the northeastern quadrant of the Phoenix metropolitan area. The community is located approximately 35 miles from downtown Phoenix (see Figure 2), approximately 10 miles north of Loop 101 and approximately 10 miles west of the I-17. Carefree is bordered on its western boundary by the Town of Cave Creek; on the south and east by the City of Scottsdale and on the north by unincorporated land in Maricopa County. The City of Phoenix is located south and west of Carefree.

Surrounding Context

In the 1980's when the first General Plan (known as the 1988 Master Plan) was adopted, Carefree remained fairly isolated with large expanses of undeveloped natural desert surrounding the Town. Much of this land was developed in the 1990's and early 2000's with suburban uses, including numerous master planned residential communities and supporting commercial developments. Developments in Scottsdale and Cave Creek have slowly wrapped around the east and west side of Carefree. However, the northern foothills of Continental Mountain have and will most likely continue to develop at a much slower rate due to the steep terrain in these areas.

Continued growth in Carefree and surrounding areas in Cave Creek, Scottsdale, Phoenix and unincorporated areas in Maricopa County will continue impact the Town, especially in terms of increased traffic on the major streets, demand for public services and opportunities for increased economic development.

Figure 2. Regional Vicinity Map



Population, Housing and Growth

Historical Population Data

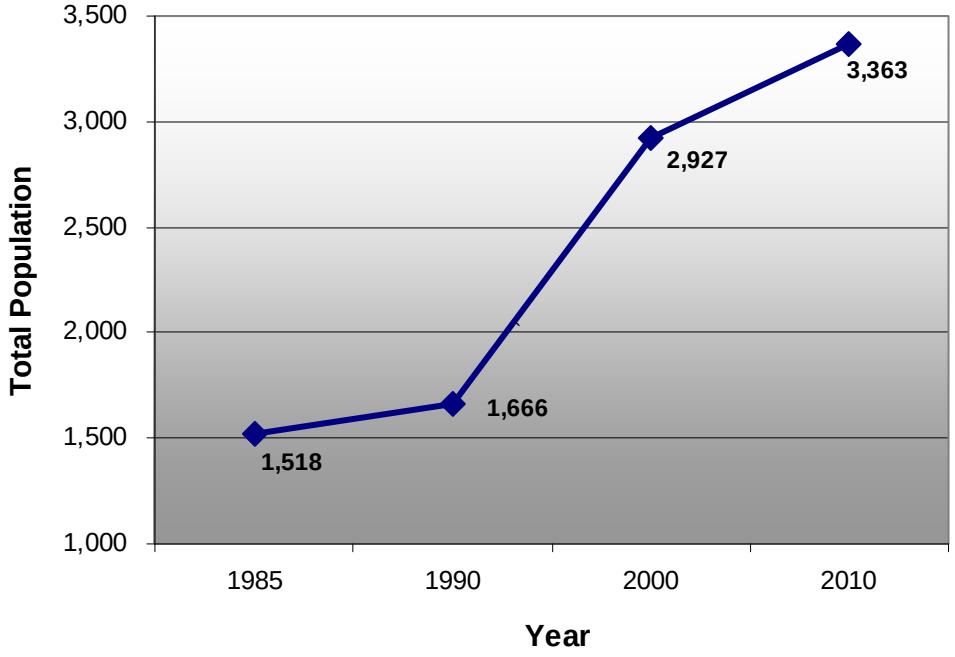
Since Carefree's incorporation in October 1984 through 2010, Carefree's population experienced dynamic changes (see Table 1 and Figures 3 and 4 below). The annual population increase between 1985 and 2010 was 4.9%. Between 1985 and 1990, the population increased by 148 persons, or approximately 2% per year. In between 1990 to 2000, Carefree experienced its highest growth rate, with an increase of 1,264 new residents, or approximately 7.6% per year. From 2000 to 2010, Carefree increased by 435 persons, which represents a slower growth rate of 1.5% per year.

Table 1. Carefree Total Population

Year	Total Population	Population Change	Population Change in Percent	Annual Population Change in Percent
1985	1,518	-	-	-
1990	1,666	148	+ 9.75%	+ 1.95%
2000	2,927	1,264	+ 75.69%	+ 7.57%
2010	3,363	436	+ 14.9%	+ 1.49%

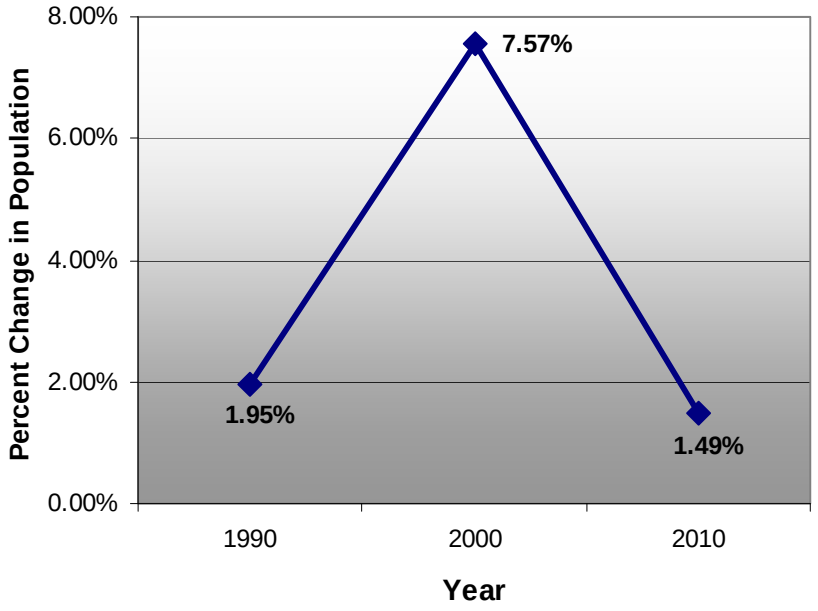
Source: US Census Bureau (2010)

Figure 3. Carefree Total Population



Source: US Census Bureau (2010)

Figure 4. Percent Change in Population: Average Annual Population Rates



Source: US Census Bureau (2010)

Trends in Population and Age Categories

Median age and age category data are presented in Tables 2 and 3 and Figure 5 below. The data indicate that between 2000 and 2010, the proportion of citizens of retirement age (age 65+) increased, and the percentage of children decreased. On the other hand, during the broader 25-year period between 1985 and 2010, the proportion of adults 18+ decreased by 2.5% and the proportion of children increased by 2.5%.

Median Age

Between 1985 and 1990, the median age slightly increased from 57.5 years old to 58.5 years old. It decreased to 55.2 years of age between 1990 and 2000, and increased again to 59.5 years old between 2000 and 2010. As the median age decreased between 1990 and 2000, the Town's proportion of adults also decreased (see Figure 4 and Table 3). When the median age went up again between 2000 and 2010, the proportion of adults also increased.

Age Categories

The 65+ age group decreased from 36.7% to 29.3% from 1990 to 2000, but then increased to 34.8% in 2010. From 1985 to 2010, the proportion of citizens 18 and older decreased from 92.5% to 90%, and the number of children younger than 18 increased from 7.5% to 10% of the population. During this same time period, the median age increased during this 5-year period, which could be explained by an increase in the share of citizens in other age categories.

Table 2. Carefree Population and Age Categories

Year	Total Population	Median Age	Age: < 18 Years	Age: 18 - 64 Years	Age: 65+ Years	Total Age: 18+ Years
1985	1,518	57.5	114	*	*	1,404
1990	1,666	58.5	132	923	611	1,534
2000	2,927	55.2	373	1,695	859	2,554
2010	3,363	60.2	337	1,837	1,189	3,026

*Information not available.

Source: US Census Bureau (2010)

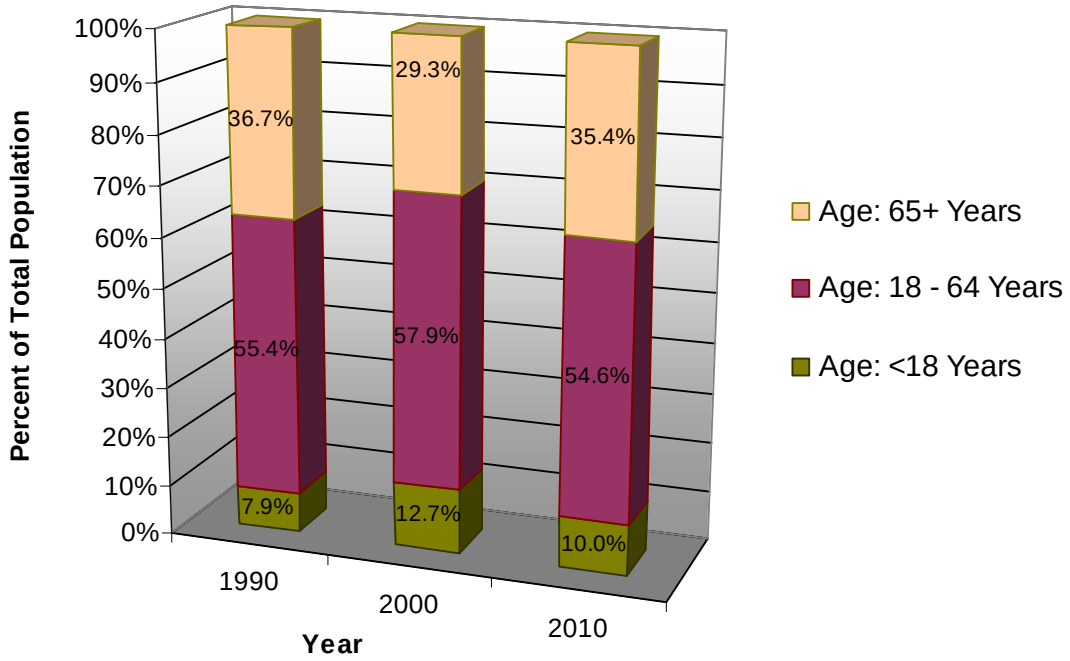
Table 3. Age Category Percent of Total Population

Year	Percent: < 18 Years	Percent: 18 - 64 Years	Percent: 65+ Years	Percent: 18+ Years
1985	7.5%	*	*	92.5%
1990	7.9%	55.4%	36.7%	92.1%
2000	12.7%	57.9%	29.3%	87.3%
2010	10.0%	54.6%	35.4%	90%

* Information not available.

Source: US Census Bureau (2010)

Figure 5. Age Category Percent of Total Population



Source: US Census Bureau (2010)

Surrounding Population Growth

Table 4 below shows the population change in Carefree, Scottsdale, Cave Creek and Phoenix between the 2000 and 2010 census. Carefree experienced the second largest percent increase (14.9%) four neighboring municipalities. In 2010, Carefree's population was ranked 23 out of 25 incorporated municipalities in Maricopa County, but its growth rate between 2000 and 2010 (14.9%) was 15th highest.

Table 4. Population Growth in Carefree and Surrounding Communities

Community	2000 Population	2010 Population	Increase	% Increase	% Annual increase
Carefree	2,927	3,363	436	14.9	1.49
Cave Creek	3,728	5,015	1,287	34.5	3.45
Scottsdale	202,705	217,385	14,680	7.2	0.72
Phoenix	1,321,045	1,445,632	124,587	9.4	0.94

Source: US Census Bureau (2010)

Historic Housing Data

The tables and figures below break down the historic housing data into three categories: total housing, occupied housing and household size. Since Carefree's incorporation, Carefree has experienced continuous growth in the total number of housing units and an increase in the percent of occupied housing, with the exception of the housing occupancy decline between 2005 and 2010. The average household size initially decreased between 1985 and 1990, after which time it followed the occupancy rate trends.

Total Housing Units

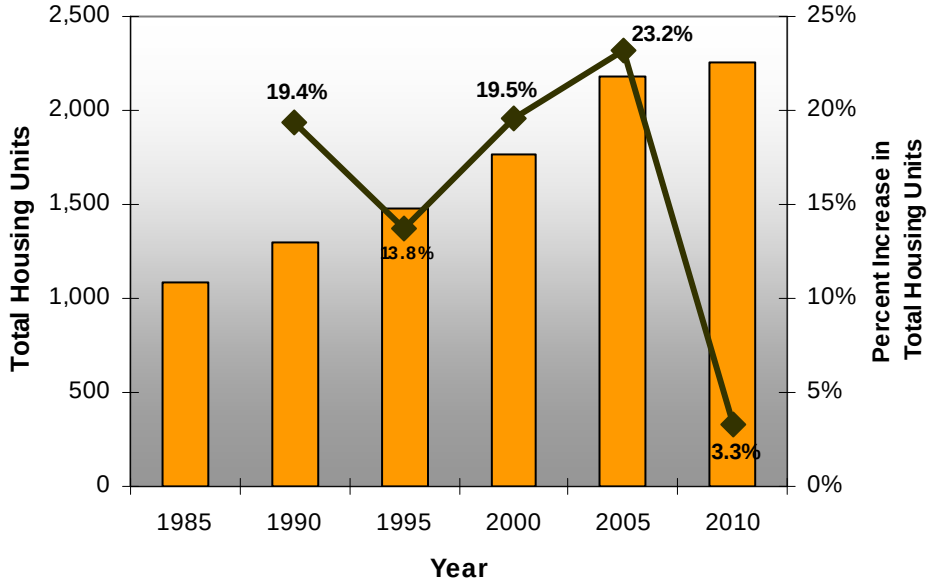
From 1985 to 2010 the Town grew by 1,845 persons, a 122% increase, and added 1,161 housing units for a total 2,251 housing units. Total housing experienced a slightly smaller increase of 107% (see Table 5 and Figure 6 below). Total Housing units peaked between 2000 and 2005 when 411 units were built. This indicator then dropped to the lowest rate of 3.3% between 2005 and 2010 when only 71 units were constructed. The average persons per total housing units increased from 1.39 to 1.49 between 1985 and 2010.

Table 5. Total Housing Units Data

Year	Total Housing Units	Total Housing Units Change	% Change: Total Housing Units	Annual % Change: Total Housing Units	Persons per Total Housing Units
1985	1,090	-	-	-	1.39
1990	1,301	211	19.4%	3.9%	1.28
1995	1,480	179	13.8%	2.8%	1.55
2000	1,769	289	19.5%	3.9%	1.66
2005	2,180	411	23.2%	4.6%	1.69
2010	2,251	71	3.3%	0.7%	1.49

Source: US Census Bureau (2010)

Figure 6. Total Housing Units and Percent Increase in Housing Units



Source: US Census Bureau (2010)

Occupied Housing and Household Size

2010 Summary

According to the 2010 Census, 73.5% of the housing units were occupied, and 26.5% were vacant. Of the vacant units, 18.6% were a caused by seasonal residents, which results in an adjusted vacancy rate of 7.9%.

Trends

Table 6 and Figures 7 and 8 below portray Occupancy, Occupancy Rates and Persons per Occupied Housing Units (household sizes) data. The number of occupied housing units increased from approximately 65% of total housing in 1985 to 73.5% in 2010, an 8.2% increase. The lowest occupancy rates were 65.3% in 1985 and 65.2% in 1990. The occupancy rates increased to the maximum percentage of 79.1% between 1990 and 2005 when 1,724 out of 2,190 total housing units were occupied. The occupancy rate then dropped by 5.6% to 73.5% percent in 2010.

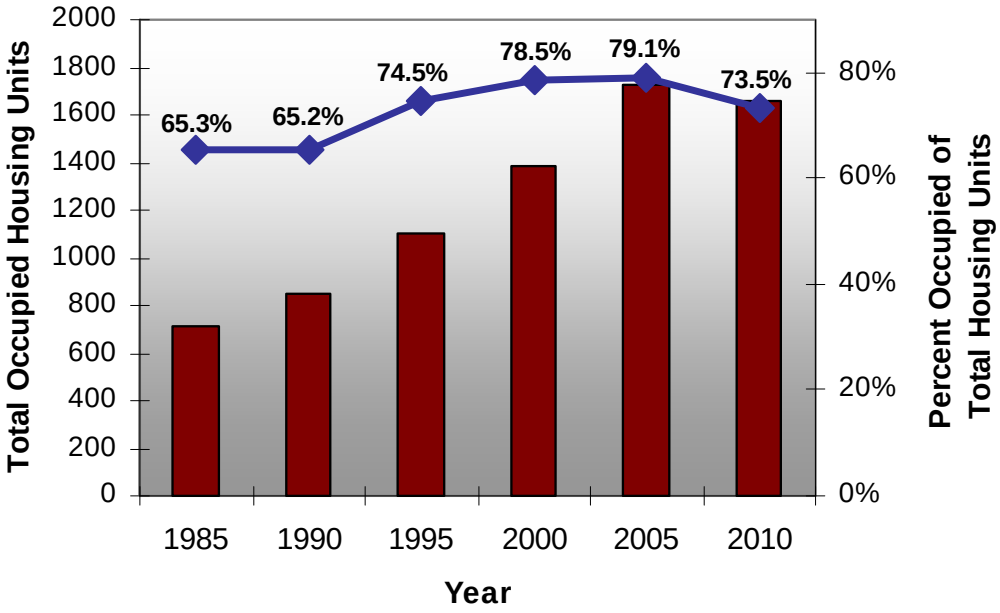
trends for Persons per Occupied Housing Units household sizes generally followed the those of Occupancy Rates. Household sizes first dropped from 2.13 persons per household to 1.96 between 1985 and 1990. Then, household size increased to 2.14 persons per household between 1990 and 2005, followed by a 5.1% decrease to 2.03 in 2010.

Table 6. Total Occupied Housing Data

Year	Total Housing Units	Total Occupied Housing Units	% Units Occupied	Persons per Occupied Housing Units
1985	1,090	712	65.3%	2.13
1990	1,301	848	65.2%	1.96
1995	1,480	1,102	74.5%	2.07
2000	1,769	1,389	78.5%	2.11
2005	2,180	1,724	79.1%	2.14
2010	2,251	1,654	73.5%	2.03

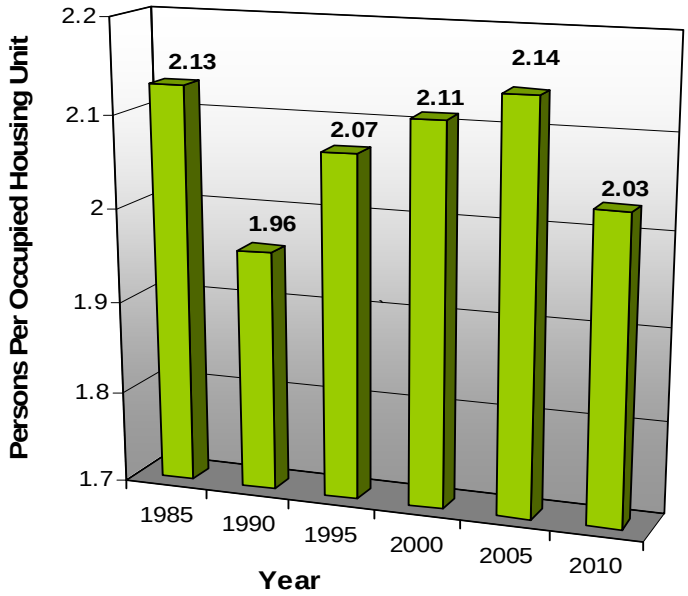
Source: US Census Bureau (2010)

Figure 7. Total Occupied Housing Units and Percent Occupied



Source: US Census Bureau (2010)

Figure 8. Persons per Occupied Housing Unit

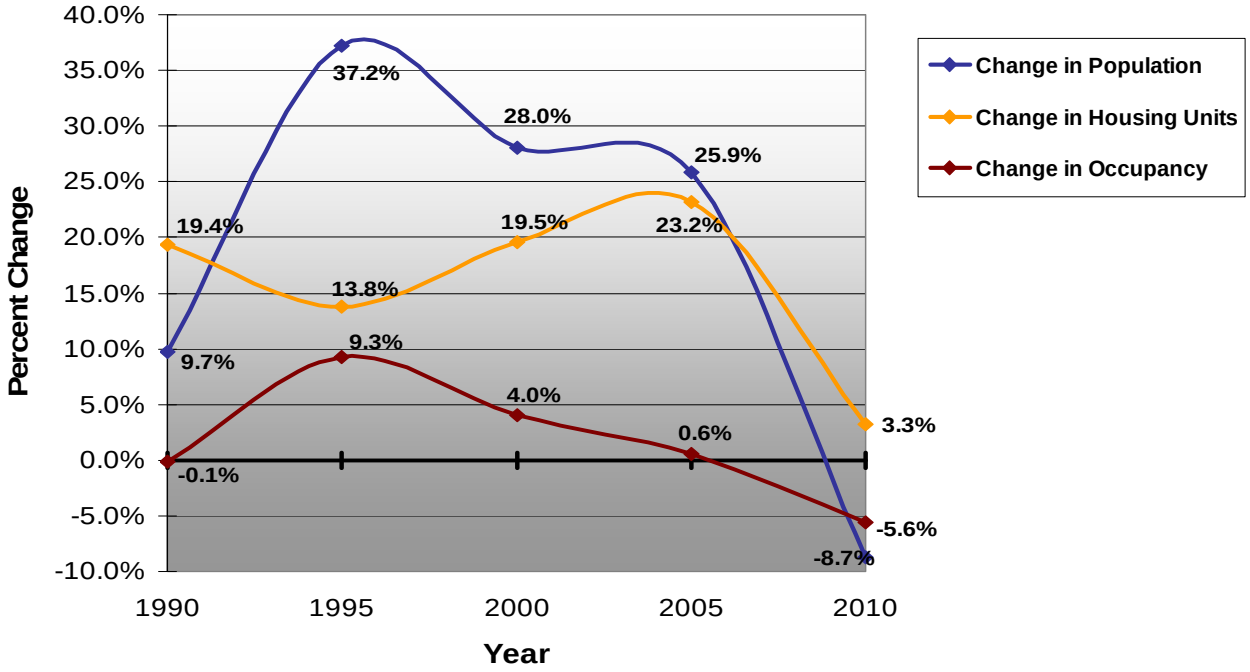


Source: US Census Bureau (2010)

Comparing Population and Housing Rates of Change

Figure 9 below compares the 5-year rates of change in population, housing units and occupancy rates. Lines above the 0% line indicate positive growth rates over a five-year period. All three categories experienced positive growth between 1990 and 2005, though the positive growth decreased between certain intervals.

Figure 9. Change in Population, Total Housing Units and % Occupancy



Source: Town of Carefree (2011); US Census Bureau (2010)

Positive and Negative Rates:

According to Figure 9, total housing units experienced only positive growth, whereas the population rates were negative between 2005 and 2010 and occupancy rates were negative between both 1985 and 1990 and 2005 and 2010. This suggests that regardless of population and occupancy rates, new housing units continued to be built.

Lowest and Highest Rates:

The population growth rate was higher than the other 2 categories between 1995 and 2005, with the greatest increase occurring between 1990 and 1995. The population also experienced the biggest decrease between 2005 and 2010. Between 1990 and 2010, the occupancy rate was consistently lower than the other two categories until the population growth rate fell below it to -8.7% in 2010. The growth rate of total housing units exceeded the population growth rate from 1985-1990 and 2000-2010.

Parallel Trends in Population and Occupancy Rates:

The population and occupancy rates experienced similar trends. Both increased until 1995, followed by a general decline until 2010. Between 2005 and 2010 their rates dipped below zero, indicating a loss of population and decrease in occupancy rates.

Housing Unit Rates Acted Contrary to Population Rates:

Trends in total housing unit rates acted contrary to population and occupancy rates of change. The percentage of housing units decreased while the other two categories increased by 1995. Total housing units grew to its highest rate in 2005 while the other two categories dropped. Eventually, sometime after 2005, the total housing unit rates followed the decreasing trend of population and occupancy rates.

Housing Analysis

The lowest occupancy rates in 1985 and 1990 suggest a greater proportion of seasonal residents of retirement age who lived in Carefree during a time when it was more isolated from the surrounding suburban communities.

Occupancy rates later increased during Carefree's years of highest growth in 1995, 2000 and 2005. The median age decreased and household size increased, signifying that more families with children under 18 years of age moved into Carefree. During these same years the northeast Valley experienced rapid growth and developed closer to Carefree.

Between 2005 and 2010 during an economic downturn, the occupancy and household size declined while the median age increased. This could be explained by 1) families with children less than 18 years of age moving out of Carefree and closer to family amenities in urbanized areas, and 2) a growth in seasonal residents of retirement age.

Carefree's occupancy rates and Persons per Occupied Housing Unit are consistently lower than average when compared with other areas (see Table 7 below). In 2010, Carefree's rate was 73.5%, which is 12.6% lower than the 2010 rates for Maricopa County (86.1%) and 10.2% less than that of the State of Arizona (83.7%). It is also lower than the occupancy rates for Cave Creek, Scottsdale, Paradise Valley and Fountain Hills. A significant proportion of Carefree's occupancy rates are explained by the higher ratio of seasonal residents in Carefree. Other minor contributors are homes placed on the market for sale or lease and homes that have undergone foreclosure.

Table 7. 2010 Housing Data: State and Surrounding Municipalities

Geographic Area	Population	Total Housing Units	Total Occupied Housing Units	% Units Occupied	Persons per Occupied Housing Units
Carefree	3,363	2,251	1,654	73.48%	2.03
Arizona	6,392,017	2,844,526	2,380,990	83.70%	2.68
Maricopa County	3,817,117	1,639,279	1,411,583	86.11%	2.70
Cave Creek	5,015	2,579	2,150	83.37%	2.33
Scottsdale	217,385	124,001	101,273	81.67%	2.15
Paradise Valley	12,820	5,643	4,860	86.12%	2.64
Fountain Hills	22,489	13,167	10,339	78.52%	2.18

Source: US Census Bureau (2010)

Future Population Estimates & Build-out Analysis

There are various methods for estimating the future population of a given community. Ultimately, a degree of uncertainty will remain because of non-measurable factors and unforeseen events impacting population growth and the ability to develop land. Three population estimate scenarios are presented below for future growth and build-out in Carefree through 2030. Based on information in the Existing Land Use section, which follows this section, there is sufficient land in Carefree to accommodate approximately 6,626 residents. None of future projections below achieve this potential build-out population.

1. 2007 MAG Socioeconomic Projections

In 2007 the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) published an estimate of populations for up to 25 years into the future for each community in Maricopa County (See Table 8 below). It is based on pre-2010 census data and is only used as a general estimate. Based on this projection, Carefree should experience its largest population increase of 1,398 individuals between 2010 and 2020. After 2020, the annual rate of increase levels off to less than 1% per year.

Carefree's actual 2010 population of 3,363 is lower than estimated in this study (see Table 8 below). This suggests the projected annual population increase beyond 2010 would also be lower, thereby pushing the estimated 6,097 population beyond the year 2030.

Table 8. MAG Projected Population
July 1, 2005 to July 1, 2030

Year	Population	Increase	% Annual Increase
2005	3,654	-	-
2010	4,418	764	4.2%
2020	5,816	1,398	6.3%
2030	6,097	281	0.97%

Source: MAG Socioeconomic Projections (2007)

2. Projected Population Using Annual Historical Averages

In this scenario, the most recent Census and historic averages were used. The average annual population growth rate from 2000 to 2010 was approximately 1.49%. For a conservative estimate, it is assumed this growth rate will continue over the next 20 years. Table 9 below shows that by 2020, the Town's population will grow to 3,899. By 2030 it will reach 4,520, which is an increase in 1,157 persons over the next 20 years.

Table 9. Carefree Population Projection based on Historical Averages

Year	Population	Increase	% Annual Increase
2010	3,363	-	-
2015	3,621	258	1.49%
2020	3,899	278	1.49%
2025	4,198	299	1.49%
2030	4,520	322	1.49%

Source: Carefree (2011)

3. Projected Population Using Historical Data and Statistical Methods

The population projections offer a range of estimates for future population growth, but they do not take into account various qualitative factors unique to Carefree, as explained below:

Real estate market indicators. Local and regional real estate markets affect population growth. Some of the indicators include units sold each year, availability of the most prime lots, foreclosure rates, new units built each year, permits issued for future new housing units, real estate financing and development in surrounding communities.

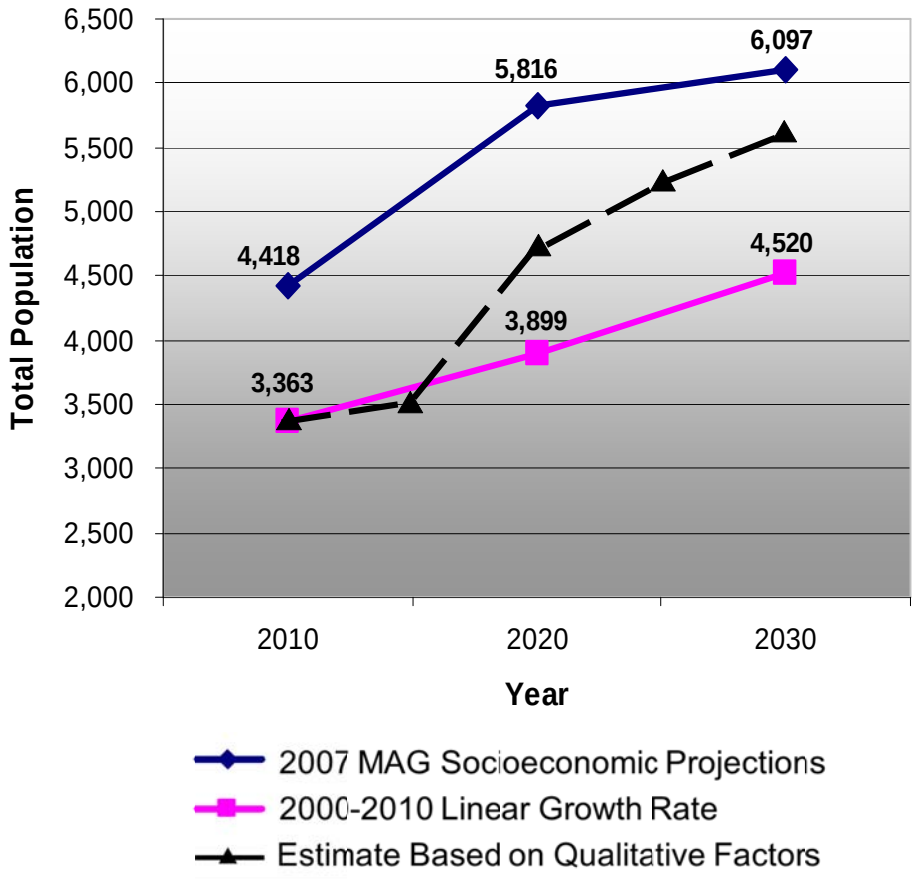
Limited land supply. As Carefree approaches maximum build-out, the number of buildable lots decreases, which over time will likely result in slower growth. In 2010, Carefree was approximately two-thirds built-out. Only a few large tracts of land are available for new subdivision development. The majority of vacant land is located on smaller lots in single-family and multi-family zoning districts.

Topography and Environmental Factors. Natural environmental factors may slow the population rate because of the planning and design challenges they present. Large sections of the remaining land in Carefree are located on difficult terrain on the steeper slopes of Black Mountain and the foothills at the north end of the Town limits. Additionally, floodplains, natural washes, thick desert vegetation and boulder outcroppings encumber certain properties.

Infrastructure and Services. Many of the remaining vacant lots in Town are located beyond the existing service area for public services and infrastructure. The immense cost associated with extending services beyond existing developed areas presents another barrier to new development.

Based on a more holistic view of the above qualitative variables, a curvilinear trend was prepared and shown in Figure 10 to estimate future growth. According to this population projection curve, growth rates will remain low between 2010 and 2015 as the region slowly climbs out of the economic recession and as the real estate market recovers. Between 2015 and 2020, the growth rate will climb to a higher level, although it will not likely achieve Carefree's 5% - 7% annual growth rates achieved between 1995 and 2005. Between 2025 and 2030 the growth rate is expected to decline as the Town's remaining lots continue to decrease. In 2030, the estimated population is approximately 5,600. Beyond 2030, the population growth rate will continue to decrease and remain low as Carefree approaches maximum build-out ranging from approximately 5,500 to 6,500.

Figure 10. Future Population Projection Methods



Existing Land Uses

Land Use Make-up, Available Land and Build-out

Table 10 below illustrates the land use make-up of the Town. The Town is dominated by residential uses, with vacant and developed residential neighborhoods and associated amenities encompassing approximately 97% of the Town. More specifically, low density single-family development represents 74% of all developed land. Approximately 1.5% of the Town area is commercial/garden office uses, and public open space and golf courses cover 9% of the Town. Approximately 42% of the land in Carefree is still undeveloped. Existing commercial development is concentrated in the area of the Town Center and primarily provides goods and services to the Town residents and local region.

It is noted that the total dwelling units count shown in Table 10 is higher than data from the 2010 census. This is most likely because the table is based on a 2000 study in the previous Carefree General Plan. The 2000 and 2011 studies were completed after the census, which allowed more time for residential completions to occur.

Table 10. Existing Land Use Make-up (as of January 2012)

Land Use	Dwelling Units	Acreage	% of total
Single family	1,739	2,308	43.3%
Condominiums / Town Houses	525	134	2.5%
Apartments	76	4	0.1%
Vacant - Residential	-	2,185	41.0%
Vacant - Commercial	-	36	0.7%
Public/semi-public	-	30	0.6%
Open space	-	181	3.4%
Airport	-	50	0.9%
Commercial/Garden Office	-	85	1.6%
Resort	-	20	0.4%
Golf course	-	300	5.6%
Total	**2,340**	**5,334**	**100.0%**

Remaining Residential Property and Build-out Population

Based on information above, if the mean housing units per acre were applied to the remaining vacant residential property, it would result in the possibility of 2,090 more units at build-out. It is also estimated that at least 100 additional units could be located in the Town Center if incorporated into existing and future approved mixed use developments. When multiplied by 1.49 persons per housing unit (based on the 2010 Census), the estimated new population would be 3,263, and the total potential population is 6,626 at build-out. This result may be slightly higher than reality as a result of vacant lots spread over a variety of larger lots and land conservation practices.

Furthermore, if the 23-acre Special Planning Area shown on the Future Land Use Map (See Figure 11) were developed as a low density residential use and not a commercial use, then an additional 23 units and 34 estimated persons would be added to the population estimate. More information on different scenarios of commercial build-out can be found in the Growth Element under Economic Development.

Residential Land Uses

Vacant land suitable for residential use in Carefree is scattered throughout the community as developable platted lots, with concentrations located in the following areas:

- Rugged terrain on the upper elevations of Black Mountain
- Sections 24, 25 and 26 on the north end of the Town
- Town Center
- Along Ho Hum Drive north of the Town Center
- Northeast corner of Cave Creek Road and Tranquil Trail
- North side of Stagecoach Pass between Windmill Road and Pima Road
- Northeast corner of Carefree Highway and Cave Creek Road

Larger properties with the potential for subdivision development are located along Cave Creek Road between Mule Train Road and Windmill Road, within the north and east reaches of the Town limits and north of Black Mountain. Additionally, the northeast corner of Carefree Highway and Cave Creek Road, currently zoned R1-35, could be developed for residential uses if not developed as non-residential uses. No other large tracts of land that are suitable for subdivision development remain in Carefree.

Southeast Corner of Cave Creek Rd. and Mule Train Road

The 40-acre property located at the southeast corner of Cave Creek Road and Mule Trail is currently owned by the Arizona State Land Department (ASLD). Its land use designation was previously Open Space/Recreation, but it is zoned Rural-70, which would allow for single family residential subdivision with minimum 70,000 square foot lots. This parcel provides opportunities for Carefree's future growth with minimum one-acre single family residential development under the Low Density Residential (LDR - one acre minimum) future land use category. This land use category creates a transition between LDR land uses to the east and Very Low Density Residential (VLDR – two acres minimum) uses to the west. A LDR land use category is an appropriate land use given its proximity to non-residential uses to the north with the SkyRanch airport, Town Center to the west and the office condominiums to the east.

In 2000, an Open Space Study Group identified this 40-acre parcel as one of the higher priorities for purchase by the Town to preserve it for open space, and the Town subsequently applied for a Heritage Fund grant to purchase this land. For various reasons the funding was not available and the Town did not purchase the parcel.

Between 2007 and 2011, a development entity contracted with ASLD and obtained rights to apply for a subdivision development on the 40-acre property that would be consistent with the Low Density Residential land use category (one acre minimum). An application was submitted for a 32-lot private gated subdivision but was later withdrawn.

Town Center Residential Uses

Opportunities exist in the Town Center for mixed uses that would allow for a quality live-work-play relationship. Residences above retail space will create an additional critical mass to support the viability of the businesses at street level.

Non-residential Land Uses

Town Center Commercial Uses

Existing commercial land uses are located within or on the fringe of the Town Center. The Town Center is bounded by Tom Darlington Drive, Bloody Basin Road and Cave Creek Road and is predominately zoned Commercial (C). The Town Center is Carefree's primary commercial core and comprises a diverse array of businesses. This commercial area contains shops, restaurants, a grocery store, hardware store and a variety of service businesses, which primarily serve residents and visitors in the local region.

The Town Council approved a Town Center beautification plan in April 2000, in which construction was completed in November 2001. This plan helps provide for a high quality and sustainable live-work-play environment with pedestrian-friendly amenities servicing residents and visitors. Key components of the improvement plan were improved access and visual awareness of the Town Center at the major intersections on Cave Creek Road and Tom Darlington Drive. The "Beautification of Tract A" was another key component with development of the Carefree Desert Gardens – a park-like setting with a desert botanical garden, amphitheater, riparian area, public art, public restrooms, water features and other amenities.

Secondary Commercial Centers

Existing secondary commercial centers are located outside the Town Center on properties designated Commercial and Garden Office on the Future Land Use Map. These areas serve the needs of local residents and visitors. They are designed to buffer and protect nearby residential neighborhoods from traffic and negative effects of land uses in adjacent communities. A few properties within the Commercial and Garden Office land use designations have potential for new commercial and office developments. As suggested in the Future Land Use Map description, the Special Planning Area located at the northeast corner of Carefree Highway and Cave Creek Road also presents the potential for neighborhood scale non-residential uses that promote economic, environmental and social sustainability.

Special Land Uses

Historically, a variety of special land uses have been established throughout the Town either by having been in existence prior to the Town's incorporation or by special use permit approved by the Town Council. These land uses include: the Carefree Conference Resort designated as Resort Hotel/Resort Development; the Desert Forest Golf Club and the Boulders Golf Course, which are designated Open Space/Recreation (OS/R); the SkyRanch Airport, which is designated Airport (Air); and Our Lady of Joy Catholic Church, Christ the Lord Lutheran Church and Christ Anglican Church are designated Public/Semi Public.

Regional Development

Development in adjacent municipalities affects the quality of life in Carefree. Therefore, Carefree must be cognizant about the implications that development may have on the community's sustainability. To the north of the Town's municipal boundaries are unincorporated sections of undeveloped land in the foothills of Continental Mountain that lie

within the jurisdiction of Maricopa County. Most of this land is owned by private interests who may develop the properties in the future.

Furthermore, suburban developments in Scottsdale and Cave Creek along Carefree Highway will likely continue to grow. The Town of Cave Creek has unambiguously designated the intersection of Carefree Highway and Cave Creek Road for regional commercial development. It is continuing to consider requests for expanding commercial land uses in the vicinity. This deliberate commercial intensification places additional pressures on the evolution of the northeast corner of Carefree Highway and Cave Creek Roads. Therefore, special attention needs to be taken to ensure the development of the northeast corner of this intersection provides for a sustainable land use.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

The following goals and objectives are set forth to guide Carefree in maintaining its vision as a unique small town of well-designed homes and businesses which are carefully planned to harmonize with their desert setting.

Goal 1. Encourage the transition from less intense to more intense land uses.

Objectives/Policies:

1) Ensure the transition of commercial uses to minimize impact on residential uses.
2) Sensitively integrate natural open spaces into development, such as significant washes, to create natural buffers between different land uses.
3) Encourage transitions between differing land uses through the gradual land use changes, particularly where neither natural nor manmade buffers are available.
4) Guide growth to locations contiguous to commercial cores to provide cost effective and efficient infrastructure.
5) Ensure land use transitions are provided for any aggregate and/or mining operations in conformance with state statutes and Town requirements.

Goal 2. Maintain and enhance the unique character of the community.

Objectives/Policies:

1) Protect environmentally sensitive areas, such as significant ridgelines, FEMA floodplains and boulder outcroppings.
2) Continue to promote development methods that will have a positive effect on air quality, including hard surface paving of new roads and parking areas.
3) Continue to promote the placement of buildings on lots to optimize access to incident solar energy.
4) In residential land uses, promote on-lot preservation of natural desert open space to maintain the community's sense of openness.
5) Continue to promote the highest quality of development with excellence in architecture, construction and appearance of all buildings.
6) Protect dark skies at night by minimizing outdoor lighting to pedestrian areas and commercial development. Ensure lighting is shielded and pointed in a downward direction.

Goal 3. Ensure that services and land uses are available to meet the evolving needs of the Town's citizens and its visitors.

Objectives/Policies:

1) Utilize surveys, newsletters and other means to determine needs for added or improved services, such as open space, parks, trails, bikeways and recreation opportunities.

2) Continue to monitor the changing population characteristics of the Town's residents through analysis of Census data and special studies.

3) Provide appropriate services, open space, parks, trails, bikeways and recreation opportunities as needed for its citizens.

4) Continue to explore shared use of other publicly owned facilities, i.e., school recreational facilities.

Goal 4. Promote land use patterns that conserve resources such as water, energy and clean air.

Objectives/Policies:

1) Preserve the biodiversity of the Upper Sonoran Desert environment in development of the land.

2) Preserve the FEMA floodplains in their natural state.

3) Protect the natural character of the desert by discouraging development of environmentally sensitive lands.

4) Encourage mixed-use development within the Town Center to promote a live, work, shop and play relationship which reduces the community's carbon footprint and its impact on the environment.

5) Promote sustainable design in the remodeling and the construction of homes.

Goal 5. Provide a broad variety of complementing mixed uses within the Town Center.

Objectives/Policies:

1) Promote the Carefree Desert Gardens as the nucleus of the Town Center to create synergy and spaces for community interaction.

2) Further develop pedestrian corridors which will connect into surrounding residential areas and local destinations.

3) Promote residential uses that support the scale and function of retail, commercial and employment uses within the Town Center.

4) Encourage redevelopment that invigorates the Town Center while also respecting the character of the area.

Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map for the Town (see Figure 11) is divided into the following categories.

Residential Land Uses

The following four Categories define the pure (no mixed use) residential land use designations within the community.

Rural Residential:	Provides for large lot residential development with approximately 5 acres per residence.
Very Low Density Residential:	Provides for large lot residential development with approximately 2 acres per residence.
Low Density Residential:	Provides for large lot residential development with approximately one acre per residence.
Moderate Density Residential:	Provides for apartments, condominiums and townhomes at a maximum density of approximately 7 units per acre.

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. This category also includes all special land uses that are Public/Semi Private land uses, such as fire and police stations, libraries, museums, other public buildings and/or compatible special land 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.
Commercial:	Includes a wide range of commercial, office and service uses.
Resort and Resort Hotel:	Provides for a major resort or resort hotel, with associated retail, service and recreational 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.
Open Space/Recreation:	This includes passive and active open spaces, including the Black Mountain Summit, golf courses, major washes and the cemetery.
Public/Semi Public:	Provides for public and semi-public uses, such as places of worship.
Airport:	Only one airport land use category is planned. It is designated for airport and airport storage, service and maintenance uses.

Special Planning Area: Northeast Corner of Cave Creek Road and Carefree Highway.

The land use category for the property located at the northeast corner of Cave Creek Road and Carefree Highway had historically received a designation as a “Special Planning Area”. This area originally contained approximately 220 acres. Subsequently, much of this land has developed as low density residential, with the exception of the immediate northeast corner of this intersection, which now comprises approximately 23 acres. Given the recent rezonings in nearby Scottsdale and Cave Creek to more intense commercial uses, a more sustainable residential and/or non-residential land use is expected that: (1) provides for the preservation of the natural wash in its natural state in accordance with floodplain regulations, (2) establishes an adequate open space buffer to the low density residential uses on the north and east, and (3) provides an economically sustainable land use that would complement the evolving commercial uses in Scottsdale and Cave Creek.

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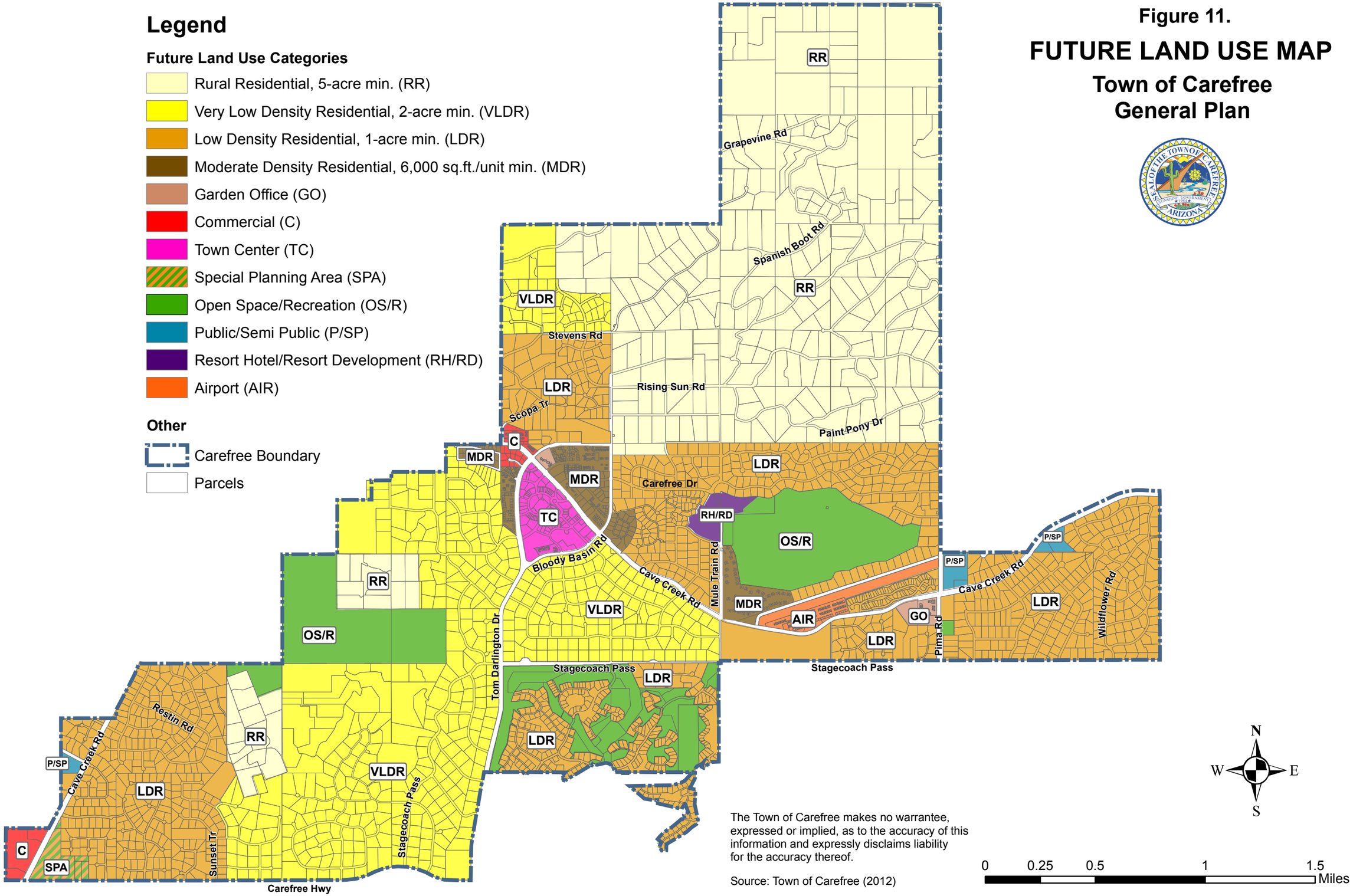
Figure 11.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

Town of Carefree General Plan



The Town of Carefree makes no warrantee, expressed or implied, as to the accuracy of this information and expressly disclaims liability for the accuracy thereof.

Source: Town of Carefree (2012)

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4. CIRCULATION ELEMENT

Introduction

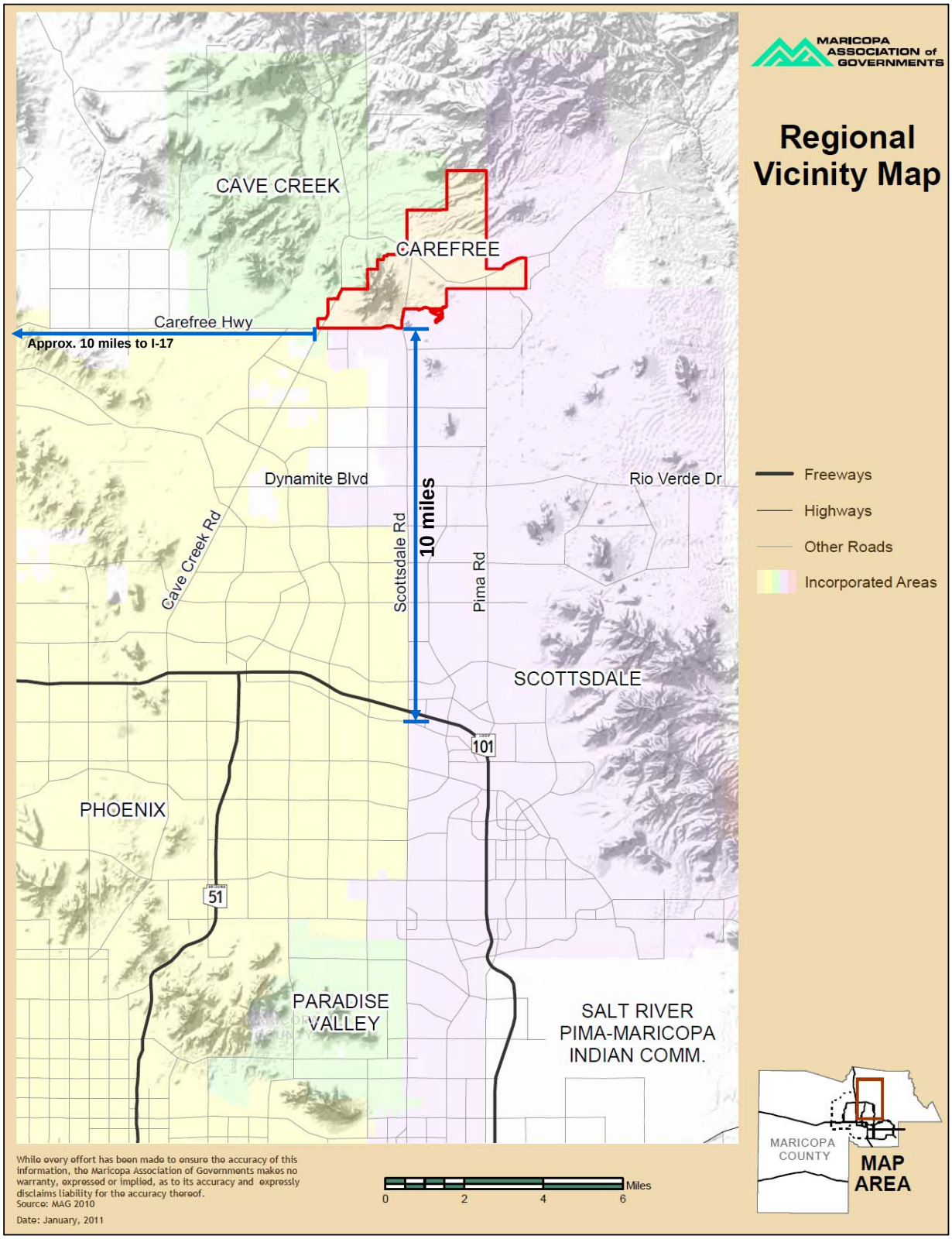
Carefree's General Plan Circulation Element contains information required by State law, including general information on existing streets and pedestrian and bicycle routes. It outlines goals, objectives and policies to improve upon existing conditions and presents a Traffic, Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, which is correlated with the Land Use Element.

Regional Transportation System

According to the 2010 Regional Transportation Plan prepared by Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), Carefree Highway, Scottsdale Road, Cave Creek Road, Pima Road and Tom Darlington, all located in and adjacent to Carefree, are classified as regional arterial roads. The regional transportation system links Carefree to the Phoenix Metropolitan Area by the following north-south arterials managed by adjoining municipalities: Cave Creek Road, Scottsdale Road and Pima Road (see Figure 12), which provide access to the Loop 101, located approximately 10 miles to the south. Carefree Highway is an east-west arterial that links Carefree to Interstate I-17 approximately 10 miles west of Town.

The 2010 MAG Regional Transportation Plan includes a 20-year program supported by regional funding for improvements of certain regional arterial roads. Two roads in and adjacent to Carefree are included on this plan and designated for upgrades and improvements, namely Pima Road from Cave Creek Road south to the Loop 101 Freeway and Carefree Highway between Cave Creek Road east to Scottsdale Road.

Figure 12. Regional Vicinity Map



Carefree's Streets – Existing Conditions

Carefree streets are classified as outlined below and illustrated on the Street Classification Map (see Figure 15).

Arterial Streets

The following major streets within and adjacent to Carefree's incorporated boundaries are classified as arterial streets:

- Carefree Highway
- Cave Creek Road
- Tom Darlington Drive
- Pima Road south of Cave Creek Road

Carefree Highway is not located within the Town limits but serves as a major connection to Interstate 17. At the Town's south border, Carefree Highway contains one lane in either direction with turn lanes. It also provides access to Cave Creek Road west of Black Mountain, Tom Darlington Drive and neighborhoods on the south side of Black Mountain.

Cave Creek Road is a major access from Carefree Highway north into the Carefree (west of Black Mountain) and east into the Carefree Town Center from downtown Cave Creek. The street typically consists of four lanes divided by a landscaped median and two lanes at certain locations. It includes turn lanes at intersections and key access points in the Town Center.

Tom Darlington Drive is the major north/south traffic carrier. It is a four lane road with a landscaped median and narrows to two lanes at certain locations. It also features turn lanes at intersections and key access points.

Pima Road is a north/south roadway serving the eastern portion of the Town.

Adjacent roadways which are both located within and maintained by Scottsdale or Cave Creek are listed in Table 11 below.

Table 11. Streets Bordering Carefree Maintained by other Municipalities

Description	Carefree Classification	Location	Municipality
Carefree Hwy.	Arterial	Southern Town limits	Scottsdale
Intersection of Carefree Hwy. and Cave Creek Rd.	Arterial	Southwest corner of Town limits	Cave Creek
Cave Creek Rd. north of Sentinel Rock Rd.	Arterial	North of Sentinel Rock Rd. to Stagecoach Pass	Cave Creek
Tom Darlington south of Town limits	Arterial	Carefree Highway to North of Leisure Lane	Scottsdale
Intersection of Pima Rd. and Stagecoach Pass	Arterial	Intersection at the southern boundary	Scottsdale
Stagecoach Pass	Collector	East of Mule Train to eastern boundary	Scottsdale

Collector Streets

Collector streets are designed to move traffic from residential neighborhood streets out to arterial roadways. Carefree's collector streets provide access to and from a variety of land uses, ranging from low density residential to resort and commercial land uses.

The following are classified as collector streets:

- Carefree Drive from Cave Creek Road to Mule Train Road
- Sundance Trail
- Tranquil Trail from Cave Creek Road to Rising Sun Road
- Rising Sun Road from Stevens Road to Cow Track Drive
- Stagecoach Pass from Tom Darlington Drive to eastern boundary
- Mule Train Road from Stagecoach Pass to Carefree Drive
- Pima Road north of Cave Creek Road

Bloody Basin Road from Tom Darlington Drive to Cave Creek Road is not classified as a collector street because of the abutting low-density residential land uses and the desire by local residents to limit cut-through traffic. In 2001, two landscaped medians/round abouts were constructed on Bloody Basin Road as traffic calming measures and to discourage cut-through traffic.

Stagecoach Pass east of Mule Train Road is located in Scottsdale; however, homes on the north side of this roadway are in Carefree. At some point in the future, Scottsdale may upgrade this section of Stagecoach Pass as a continuous collector east of the Town limits.

Local Streets

All other streets in Carefree are classified as either residential or non-residential local streets. They are primarily located in residential neighborhoods, with a limited number of local streets designed to service commercial uses within the Town Center area.

Pedestrian / Hiking / Bicycle Trails

The Town's low intensity, semi-rural character makes for many opportunities for non-vehicular circulation on its local streets, pathways and in the Town Center. The Town of Carefree has historically worked with the Desert Foothills Land Trust, a local non-profit organization, and interested citizens in preserving public access trail easements for pedestrian and/or equestrian use. Existing informal public trails are those segments of Galloway Wash and Grapevine Washes and other open space easements under the management of the Desert Foothills Land Trust. Other informal trails are located along Carefree's arterial, collector and local streets.

The Town Center contains many pedestrian-friendly pathways and amenities. Pedestrian crossings at Tom Darlington Drive and Cave Creek Road offer safer pedestrian access to the Town Center from nearby moderate density residential and non-residential uses. Within the Town Center, colored concrete pavers, traffic round abouts, pedestrian-friendly hardscape, botanical garden setting, playground features and vast natural vegetation make it a functional and aesthetically pleasing place for pedestrians.

There are challenges to establishing a complete network of publicly owned equestrian and multi-use trails. Foremost is the high cost of acquiring sufficient property in the public right-of-way for multi-use paths. Another is the fact that many of the regional parks and mountains, such as Spur Cross Ranch, Tonto National Forest and Continental Mountain, lie beyond the Town limits. Furthermore, the majority of local washes are privately owned, which could limit their use as equestrian and hiking trails.

Notwithstanding these limitations, there are many opportunities for improving multi-use trails and paths along Carefree's streets and enhancing pedestrian and bicycle connections between residential areas, the Town Center, resorts and other key locations.

Traffic Counts

Traffic counts data provides an overall picture regarding the traffic intensity of at primary access points into Carefree and along streets internal to the Town. Total daily vehicle trips were counted in 2000 and 2008, with fewer readings taken in 1985. 2000 and 2008 counts were taken on Carefree's arterial streets a limited number of Collector streets. The results are summarized in Tables 14 and 15 and Figures 13 and 14.

Percent Change

Table 12 below lists the street locations where traffic counts were taken (see also Figures 13-14), corresponding traffic counts and the percent of increase. The greatest average annual increase in total traffic volume (daily traffic heading in both directions) occurred at Cave Creek Road East of Pima Road, with 4,123 more trips from 2000 to 2008. Cave Creek Road north of Carefree Highway experienced the second greatest increase at 3,682 vehicle trips, and Carefree Highway east of Cave Creek Road came in third at 3,660 more trips. The streets with the highest percent increase were Cave Creek Road East of Pima Road at 7.1%, Pima Road south of Cave Creek Road at 6.9% and Pima Road north of Cave Creek Road at 6.6%.

This growth is relatively comparable to the average trips increase of 6,600 increase on Scottsdale Road between Lone Mountain Road and Carefree Highway (4.6% average annual increase) and the 2,700 trips increase on Pima Road between Westland Road and Stagecoach Pass (3.9%).

Table 12. Daily Traffic Volumes on Carefree's Major Streets

Map Location & Street Name (See Figures 13-14)	1985 Era	2000	2008	Total Increase 2000-2008	Average Annual % Increase 2000-2008
A Southwest Boundary of Carefree					
A-1 Carefree Highway East of Cave Creek Road	-	13,333	**16,993**	3,660	3.4%
A-2 Carefree Highway West of Cave Creek Road	-	-	**23,200**	-	-
A-3 Cave Creek Road North of Carefree Highway	3,600	11,250	**14,932**	3,682	4.1%
A-4 Cave Creek Road South of Carefree Highway	-	-	**20,762**	-	-
A-5 Cave Creek Road North of Stagecoach Pass	-	-	**13,953**	-	-
B Approaching Carefree Town Center					
B-1 Tom Darlington Drive North of Carefree Highway	-	12,988	**14,982**	1,994	1.9%
B-2 Tom Darlington Drive South of Stagecoach Pass	-	-	**14,051**	-	-
B-3 Scottsdale Road South of Carefree Highway	-	-	**23,671**	-	-
B-4 Cave Creek Road West of Scopa Trail	-	-	**11,511**	-	-
B-5 Cave Creek Road West of Tom Darlington Drive	6,300	10,800	**10,997**	197	0.2%
B-6 Cave Creek Road East of Tom Darlington Drive	3,900	6,100	**6,970**	870	1.8%
C Approaching Carefree from the East					
C-1 Cave Creek Road East of Pima Road	1,400	7,250	**11,373**	4,123	7.1%
C-2 Cave Creek Road West of Pima Road	-	-	**6,215**	-	-
C-3 Pima Road South of Cave Creek Road	-	6,255	**9,695**	3,440	6.9%
C-4 Pima Road North of Cave Creek Road	-	995	**1,524**	529	6.6%
C-5 Stagecoach Pass West of Pima Road	-	-	**1,660**	-	-
C-6 Stagecoach Pass East of Tom Darlington Drive	-	1,727	**2,401**	674	4.9%
C-7 Mule Train Road South of Cave Creek Road	-	989	-	-	-

Source: Carefree Transportation Plan (2008), Pekala Associates traffic counts (2000), Carefree Master Plan (1988).

Traffic Volume Rankings:

Table 13 below displays the rank-order of total traffic volume and specifies which locations are the busiest access points into Carefree. The three highest traffic counts occur south of the Town's southern boundary at along Carefree Highway, with traffic counts ranging from 20,762 to 23,671. This indicates that a major portion of traffic heads eastbound on Carefree Highway and turns southbound on either Cave Creek Road or Scottsdale Road.

The five highest ranked locations with direct access to Carefree neighborhoods are located south of Stagecoach Pass at Carefree Highway, with a daily traffic count of approximately 16,993. Tom Darlington, with 14,982 trips, and Cave Creek Road, with 14,932 trips, are direct entryways into the Town. This suggests that more traffic enters Carefree from the south. The next busiest primary access ways are Cave Creek Road west of Scopa Trail (11,511 trips), Cave Creek Road East of Pima Road (11,373 trips) and Cave Creek Road West of Tom Darlington Drive (10,997 trips).

Carefree's corresponding traffic counts are comparatively less than the 2006 total daily counts taken on Scottsdale Road between Lone Mountain Road and Carefree Highway (24,700 trips) and Pima Road between Westland Road and Stagecoach Pass (11,300 trips). On the other hand, traffic counts on Stagecoach Pass east of Tom Darlington (2,401 trips) were higher than the segment between Pima Road and Legend Trail (1,800 trips). These comparisons are not entirely accurate, since the Scottsdale counts were conducted two years prior to the Carefree study.

Cave Creek Road traffic counts are higher west of Tom Darlington (10,997 trips) and East of Pima (11,373 trips). Then they drop suddenly while approaching the Town Center, where 6,970 trips were counted east of Tom Darlington and 6,215 west of Cave Creek Road. This again points to a trend in traffic heading south, bypassing the Town Center.

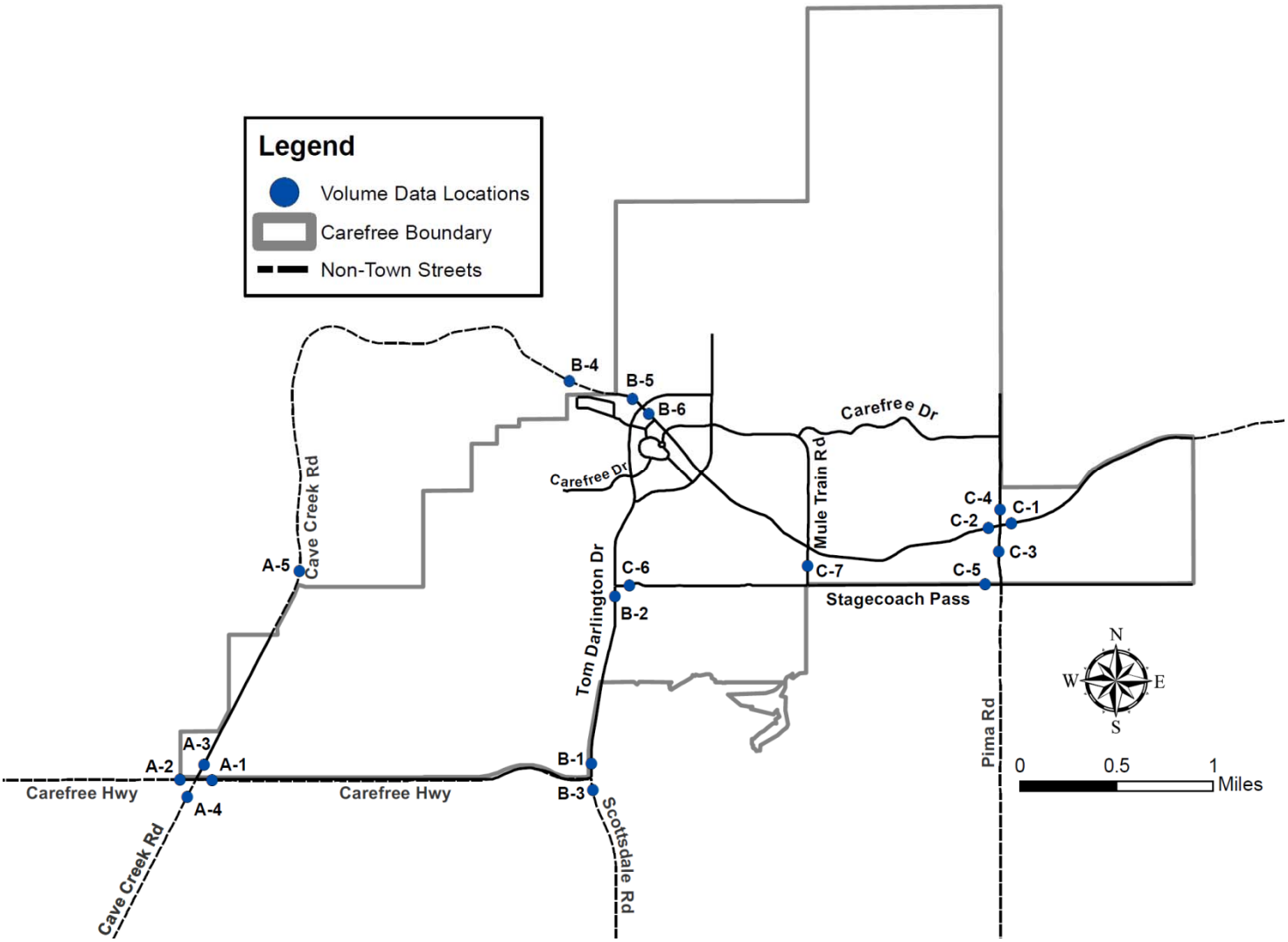
Table 13. Daily Traffic Volume Rankings

Fig. 13 Map Location	Street Name (See Figures 13-14)	2008 Traffic Count	Rank	Primary Access Into Town	Primary Access Rank
B-3	Scottsdale Road South of Carefree Highway	23,671	1		
A-2	Carefree Highway West of Cave Creek Road	23,200	2		
A-4	Cave Creek Road South of Carefree Highway	20,762	3		
A-1	Carefree Highway East of Cave Creek Road	16,993	4		
B-1	Tom Darlington Drive North of Carefree Highway	14,982	5	X	1
A-3	Cave Creek Road North of Carefree Highway	14,932	6	X	2
B-2	Tom Darlington Drive South of Stagecoach Pass	14,051	7		
A-5	Cave Creek Road North of Stagecoach Pass	13,953	8		
B-4	Cave Creek Road West of Scopa Trail	11,511	9	X	3
C-1	Cave Creek Road East of Pima Road	11,373	10	X	4
B-5	Cave Creek Road West of Tom Darlington Drive	10,997	11	X	5
C-2	Pima Road South of Cave Creek Road	9,695	12	X	6
B-6	Cave Creek Road East of Tom Darlington Drive	6,970	13		
C-2	Cave Creek Road West of Pima Road	6,215	14		
C-6	Stagecoach Pass East of Tom Darlington Drive	2,401	15		
C-5	Stagecoach Pass West of Pima Road	1,660	16	X	7
C-4	Pima Road North of Cave Creek Road	1,524	17		

Source: Carefree Transportation Plan (2008).

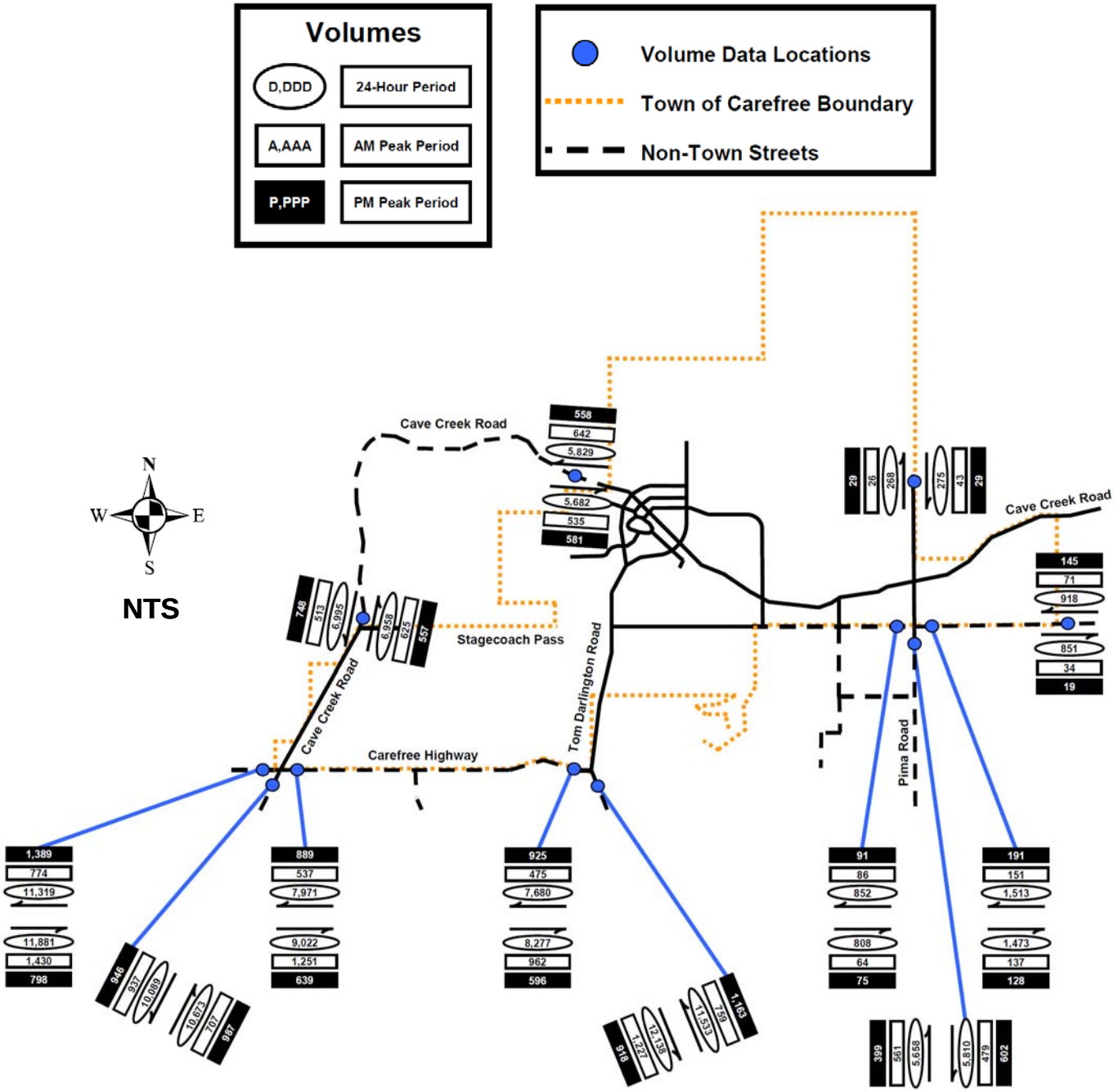
Figure 13 below shows daily traffic counts measured along arterial and collector streets. The points with the highest traffic are primarily located near uses such as Commercial, Garden Offices and Places of Worship. Vacant parcels zoned for single family residential are also located adjacent to areas with high traffic counts, which reflects slower pace of residential development at major intersections.

Figure 13. Daily Traffic Volume Data Locations



Source: Town of Carefree (2011), Carefree Transportation Plan (2008)

Figure 14. Map of Daily Traffic Volumes on Carefree Streets



Source: Carefree Transportation Plan (2008), Pekala Associates (2000), Carefree Master Plan (1988)

Trends between 1985 and 2008

Since 1985, daily traffic volumes on arterial streets within and adjacent to the Town limits have increased as both Carefree and the overall region have developed. The rate of increases dropped between 2000 and 2008 as Carefree's population rate grew at a slower pace. Currently, there is adequate capacity on Carefree's streets and intersections, but traffic volumes will continue to increase as Carefree, Cave Creek and nearby areas in Scottsdale and Phoenix expand.

While the average annual population growth of Carefree was about 4.9% from 1985 to 2010, daily traffic on Cave Creek Road increased during the same time period by 13.7% north of Carefree Highway and 31% east of Pima. In the 1985 era, traffic volumes reflected recreational traffic bound for Bartlett Lake and other destinations in the Tonto National Forest. Today, traffic volumes can be attributed to continued development in Carefree, Cave Creek, Phoenix and Scottsdale, as well as continued recreational traffic.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

The following goals, objectives and policies are set forth to guide Carefree in maintaining its unique character and promoting a sustainable circulation system.

Goal 1. Preserve Carefree's vision of a quality, tranquil place in which to live and is sensitive to the natural environment.

Objectives/Policies:

1) Pursue appropriate traffic calming and other control measures as needed to protect the quality of life; safety of motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians; and the carrying capacity of the Town's streets.
2) Monitor traffic volumes on Carefree's arterial and collector streets and support projects that respond to evolving transportation patterns.
3) Discourage cut-through vehicular traffic in residential neighborhoods while maintaining pedestrian and bicycle access.
4) Encourage higher intensity land uses in the Town Center and activity centers where a variety of transportation options can be provided.
5) Incorporate quality design features in circulation projects that contribute to Carefree's identity.
6) Continue to direct and minimize lighting to streets within pedestrian and commercial areas.

Goal 2. Promote alternative modes of transportation, such as pedestrian and bicycle travel.

Objectives/Policies:

1) Where feasible, promote and enhance walking, hiking and biking trails throughout the Town.
2) As funding is available, connect local trails with multi-use pathways in adjacent communities.
3) Plan for the design and development of pedestrian and bicycle pathways along arterial streets and between strategic Town destinations.
    a. Provide pedestrian/bicycle links between the Town Center and nearby resorts.
    b. Strengthen pedestrian and bicycle access routes to the Town Center and other commercial areas.
    c. Enhance bicycle linkages between the Town's boundaries and the Town Center.
4) Improve pedestrian and bicycle friendly amenities within the Town Center.
5) Utilize nationally recognized studies, policies and guidelines prepared and supported by the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG).

6) Continue to work with the Desert Foothills Land Trust and other property owners to acquire the necessary public right-of-way for the development of walking, hiking and biking trails as shown on the Traffic, Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan.

Goal 3. Protect the Town from the effects of traffic created by development located within adjacent communities.

Objectives/Policies:

1) Encourage adjacent public agencies to construct regional by-pass traffic routes to help alleviate existing and future traffic congestion on the Town's streets.

2) Encourage development of streets and land uses in adjacent communities that result in a positive effect, and discourage those that would have a negative effect on the Town of Carefree.

3) Monitor traffic volumes and speeds on Carefree's streets and support projects that respond to evolving traffic patterns.

4) Work with surrounding municipalities in a spirit of cooperation by monitoring and making recommendations regarding proposed land development projects located in adjacent communities.

Goal 4. Maintain a circulation plan that services the transportation needs of local residents.

Objectives/Policies:

1) Support local and regional government, non-profit agencies and other groups/programs that provide transportation services to local residents.

2) Design circulation projects that enhance access for individuals with impaired mobility in conformance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

3) Continue to monitor the condition of the Town's streets and implement measures to improve their quality, safety and efficiency.

4) Utilize the 2008 Carefree Transportation Plan to support public decisions regarding improvements to the Town's circulation system.

Traffic, Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan – Design Standards

The Street Classification Map and Traffic, Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (see Figures 15 and 16) illustrate the major and secondary street and trails plan for the Town. The primary intent of the Plan is to provide safe, efficient and quality streets and pathways that serve local residents and businesses; preserve Carefree's unique character; and increase opportunities for safe and efficient pedestrian and bicycle mobility.

Street System

Arterial Streets

Arterial streets are principal roadways for accessing the Town and its Commercial areas. The typical right-of-way width varies from 110 feet to 130 feet with up to 72 feet of pavement, 2 lanes in each direction and up to 16 ft. wide medians landscaped with drought-tolerant plants and native vegetation.

Arterial streets located within Carefree's municipal boundaries include the following:

- Tom Darlington Drive north of Leisure Lane to Cave Creek Road
- Cave Creek Road West of Scopa Trail to the Town's eastern boundary
- Cave Creek Road north of Carefree Highway to the Town limits
- Pima Road from of Cave Creek Road to the Town's southern boundary

Carefree Highway, though not located in or maintained by Carefree, is still considered an arterial street because of its nature as a primary access route into Carefree.

There are opportunities for non-vehicular routes to be implemented along arterial streets to service local residents, draw bicyclists and visitors from surrounding communities to Carefree's Town Center, and improve linkages between Carefree Resort and/or the Boulders Resort and the Town Center and between residential neighborhoods and commercial areas.

Collector Streets

Collector streets collect traffic from the local street system and deliver it to the arterial street system. Primarily, they service residential uses, but in some cases they abut non-residential uses such as the Carefree Resort. Collector streets typically consist of 50 to 80-feet right-of-way width, 28 to 48 feet of pavement width and one lane in each direction.

The following is a list of Carefree's collector streets:

- Carefree Drive from Cave Creek Road to Mule Train Road
- Sundance Trail
- Tranquil Trail from Cave Creek Road to Rising Sun Road
- Rising Sun Road from Stevens Road to Cow Track Drive
- Stagecoach Pass from Tom Darlington Drive to eastern boundary
- Mule Train Road from Stagecoach Pass to Carefree Drive
- Pima Road north of Cave Creek Road

There are opportunities for non-vehicular, multi-use trails to be implemented along certain segments of collector streets to improve linkages between the Town Center and nearby resorts and between residential neighborhoods and commercial areas.

Local Streets

Local streets are the first tier of the Town's public roadways. They service primarily residential uses, but in some cases they abut non-residential uses, as is the case in the Town Center. Local streets typically consist of a 50 foot wide right-of-way, 28 feet of pavement width and one lane in each direction. They experience low traffic counts and offer ample opportunities for pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian travel.

Pedestrian / Bicycle Trails

The Traffic Circulation and Trails Plan includes a long-range plan for the development of proposed walking, biking and hiking trails and pathways. The design for each trail segment and/or other project will take place as funding is available, public access is approved and coordination with adjacent municipalities and Maricopa County comes to fruition.

Bikeways will be considered along major roadways, including portions of Cave Creek Road in Carefree, Carefree Highway between Cave Creek Road and Tom Darlington Drive, along Tom Darlington Drive, along Mule Train Road and parts of Carefree Drive. Bikeways should be developed after documentation of need and further analysis of design alternatives.

Pedestrian pathways and hardscape amenities will be enhanced within and adjacent to the Town Center to facilitate access to and from the nearby apartments, condominiums and townhomes. They will make the Town Center a more quality, viable and pedestrian friendly environment for those who visit to work, live or recreate.

Development of New Streets

It is not anticipated that roadway extensions into new areas of Town will occur in the near future. Limited alternatives exist for expansion because of the mountains, foothills, floodplains, difficult topography beyond existing development, and the high cost of providing services and infrastructure to anticipated low density residential land uses.

Streets Managed by Adjacent Municipalities

As indicated previously, some streets which serve the Town are not located within Carefree. At some point in the future, nearby municipalities will likely consider roadway improvements along these routes. The Town will continue to coordinate with the respective external agencies to ensure projects affecting the Town will promote Carefree's standards for safety, efficiency and aesthetics.

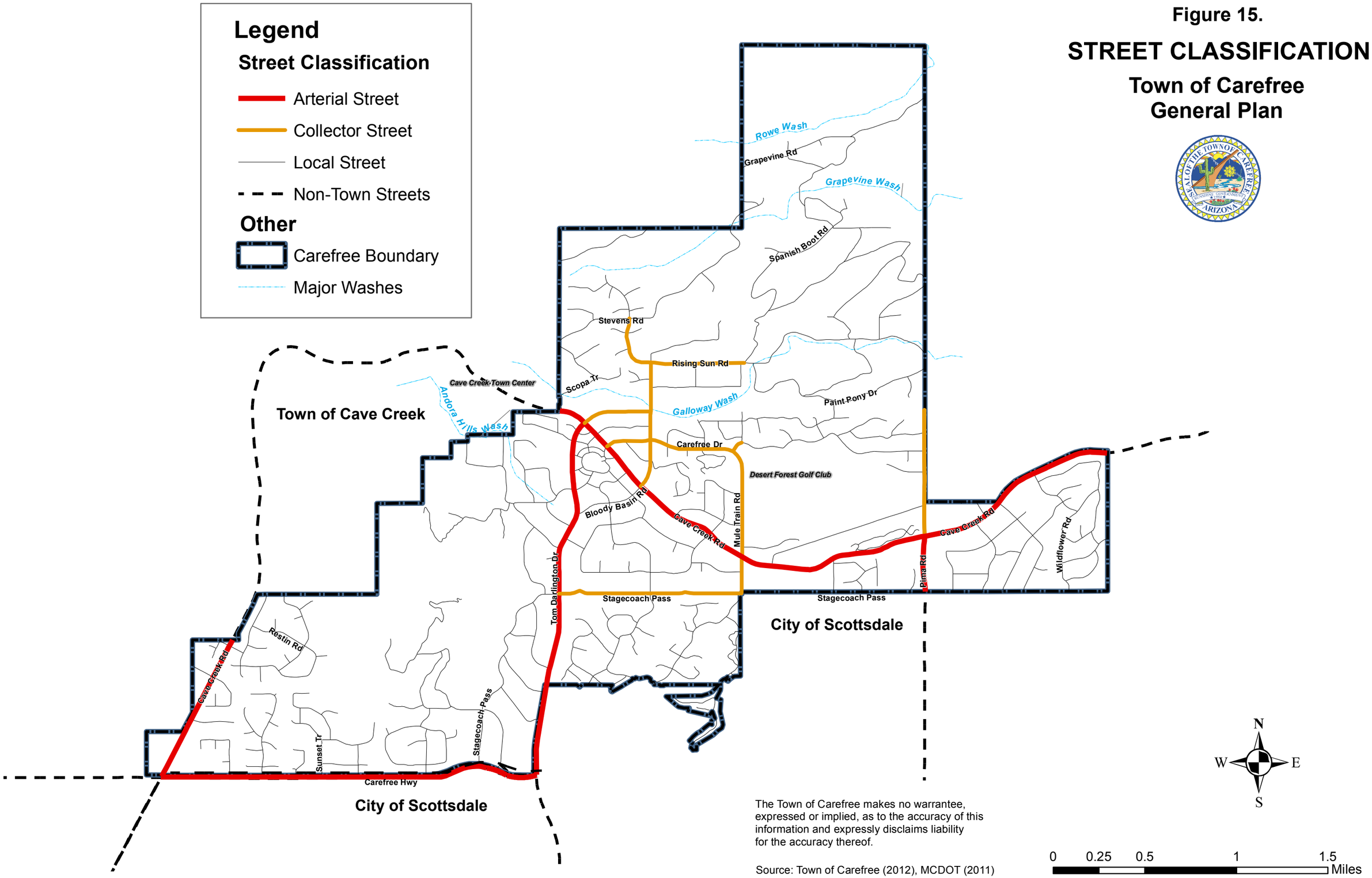
Street Standards

Design standards for arterial streets, collector streets, local residential streets and multi-use pathways are based on MAG standards, the Carefree Transportation Plan and policies and specifications of the Town of Carefree, which are updated from time to time. Various standards are not intended as rigid requirements automatically applied in every situation; rather they are guides to be used in specifying the minimum required design standards.

Figure 15.

STREET CLASSIFICATION

Town of Carefree General Plan



The Town of Carefree makes no warrantee, expressed or implied, as to the accuracy of this information and expressly disclaims liability for the accuracy thereof.

Source: Town of Carefree (2012), MCDOT (2011)

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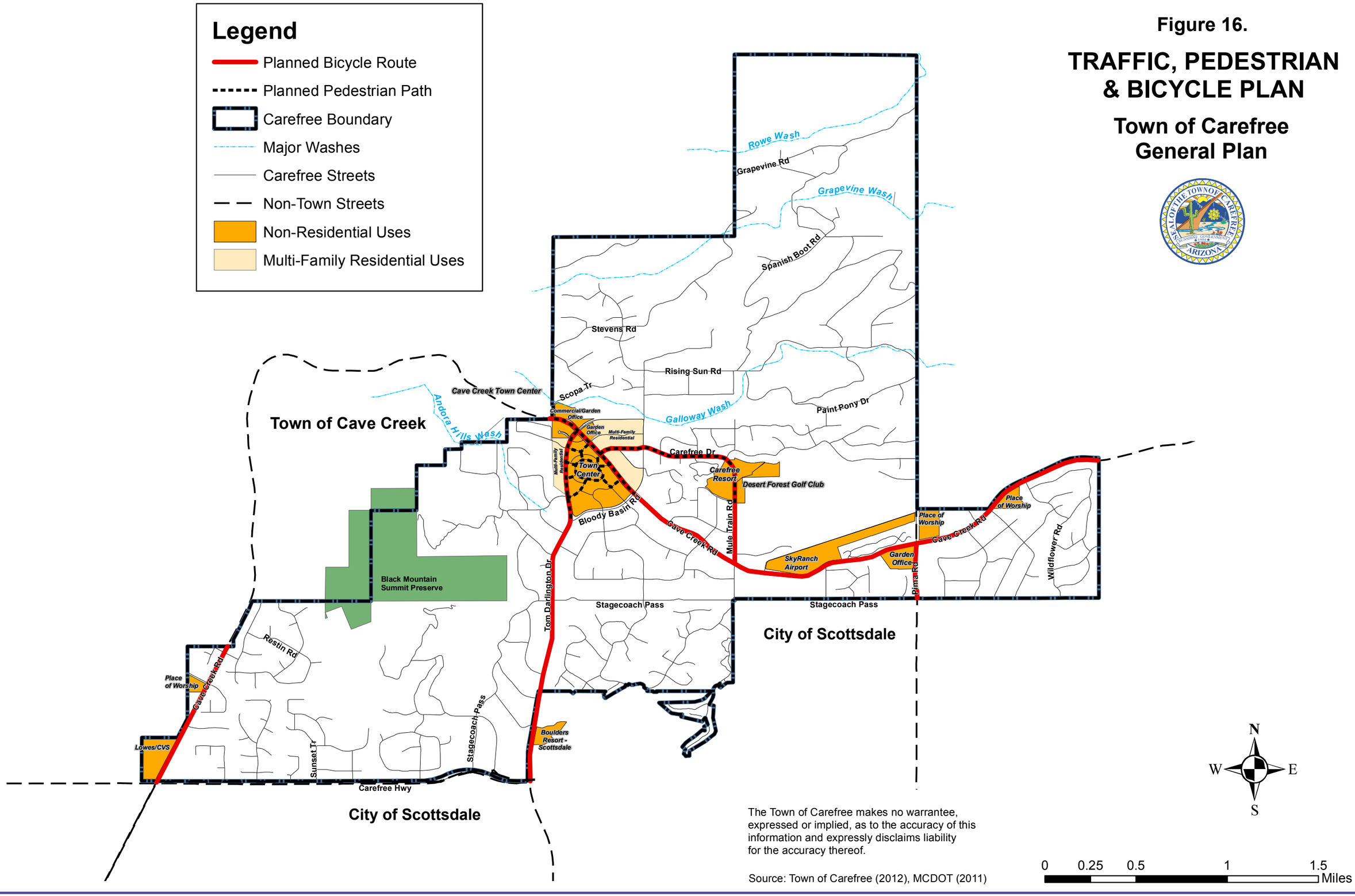
Figure 16.

TRAFFIC, PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE PLAN

Town of Carefree General Plan



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Source: Town of Carefree (2012), MCDOT (2011)

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5. OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

Introduction

Open space preservation contributes to the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Town. It contributes to a healthy lifestyle and creates opportunities for improving the sense of community identity, where people can gather and unite in common events and experiences. In addition, open space provides recreational opportunities for individuals and families with different interests. It benefits local businesses and helps strengthen the local economic base. Furthermore, open space protects the natural flora fauna of the Upper Sonoran Desert, thereby preserving one of the foremost characteristics of the Town.

The Open Space Element provides an inventory of open space areas and recreational resources, and addresses access to these resources. It also outlines the Town's goals, objectives and policies to address forecasted needs and strategies for protecting and strengthening open space resources. Policies and implementation strategies are also designed to promote a regional system of integrated open space and recreational resources.

Regional Open Space

A variety of open space preserves and recreational opportunities are found beyond Carefree in the local region. Cave Creek Regional Park, Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area, Desert Awareness Park and a trail network are located in Cave Creek.

Public open space is also available at public schools, the Desert Foothills Scenic Drive along Scottsdale Road and other amenities in nearby Scottsdale and Phoenix. The Tonto National Forest to the north and east offers additional open space and recreational opportunities, such as Bartlett Lake, Seven Springs, Sears-Kay archaeological and historical site and other destinations.

The Maricopa Association of Governments adopted a policies and guidelines booklet with open space preservation policies for the region, known as the *Desert Spaces: An Open Space Plan for the Maricopa Association of Governments* ("Desert Spaces Plan", 1995). This document and the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation System Strategic Master Plan (2009) identify and recommend conservation and management strategies for regionally significant natural resources and open spaces critical to the quality of life in the Valley. The concept is to preserve and enhance the mountains and foothills, rivers and washes, canals and cultural sites, upland desert vegetation, wildlife habitat and existing parks and preserves in Maricopa County. The plans establish a network of protected open spaces that correspond to and link regionally significant mountains, rivers, washes and upland desert. Some of the priorities related to open space in and around Carefree are as follows:

- The Black Mountain Summit is publicly owned, has exceptional open space value and is classified for conservation.
- Regionally significant open space on the mountains north of the Town limits in Maricopa County and east of the Town in north Scottsdale are privately owned areas with open space value.

- The Tonto National Forest, located north and east of Carefree and Scottsdale is publicly owned and is recommended for conservation.
- A possible link to the regional "Maricopa Trail" outside Carefree is possible along Rowe Wash, Grapevine Wash and/or Galloway Wash. The trails would connect to the mountains north of the Town, Cave Creek Regional Park and Spur Cross Ranch.

Inventory of Open Space Areas

Open spaces areas are classified into two major categories: active open space and passive open space. Parks, tennis courts, ball fields and built recreational amenities generally fall under the active open space category. Natural vegetation, washes, trails and other environmental resources fall under the passive open space category.

Approximately one-third of privately owned land in Carefree is vacant. The majority is covered with native vegetation and other environmental features. While in the short-term this land may be considered a vast amount of natural open space, it is not included in the open space inventory, because the property could be developed at an unknown point in the future. Table 14 below lists the total active and passive open space in Carefree.

Table 14. Carefree Open Space Inventory

Entity	Active Open Space (Acres)	Passive Open Space (Acres)	Total Open Space (Acres)
Maricopa County	0	175.4	175.4
Town of Carefree	2.8	3.4	6.1
Golf Course – Boulders HOA	28.5	90.3	118.8
Golf Course – Desert Forest Golf Club	51	129.3	180.3
Desert Foothills Land Trust Preserves	0	63.05	63.05
Total: Public and Private Property	**82.3**	**461.45**	**543.65**
Total: Public Property Only	**2.8**	**178.8**	**181.6**
Total Acres/1,000 Residents	**24.5**	**137.2**	**161.7**
Total Acres/1,000 Residents (Public Property Only)	**0.83**	**53.2**	**54.0**

Source: Town of Carefree (2011)

Active Open Space

Open Space Inventory

The Town's public active open space amenities are located in the approximately 3-acre Carefree Desert Gardens. There are a variety of features in the Desert Gardens: two playground facilities, an outdoor amphitheater, restrooms, fountains, botanical gardens, walkways, ramadas, art sculptures and other amenities. Carefree Desert Gardens is accessible to nearby moderate density residential uses north of Cave Creek Road and west of Tom Darlington via pedestrian and bicycle connections. It is also located no more than 3.5 miles from the most distant subdivisions.

Residents are also served by a variety of private active open space amenities not shown in the preceding table. Local resorts, moderate density uses (condominiums, townhouses and apartments), residential subdivisions and places of worship include active open space amenities such as swimming pools, tennis and other sports courts, walking paths, recreational centers, etc.

Town Efforts

Emphasis on active open space is directed particularly to the Town Center. Future plans include additional enhancements to the Carefree Desert Gardens, amphitheater and recreational features for local families. Additionally, design and construction of new pedestrian pathways and amenities both in and directed toward the Town Center are planned. Public active open space beyond the Town Center may also be evaluated and implemented as needs arise and funding becomes available.

In 2000, the Town Council created an Open Space Study Group and a long-range funding plan for the acquisition of open space. Open Space Study Group evaluated 65 vacant parcels of 10 acres or larger. Based on the criteria of size, accessibility, visibility and sensitive habitat, recommendations were made to the Town Council. The recommendations included preservation of Black Mountain Summit, the present golf courses, protected floodplains and washes and large tracts of land, some of which have since been subdivided and developed.

Passive Open Space

Open Space Inventory

The largest passive open space preserve within the Town boundaries is the Black Mountain Summit Preserve, a regional conservation area owned and managed by Maricopa County, with approximately 175 acres within the Carefree Town limits. Access to a trail leading to the summit is available along the School House Road public right-of-way in Cave Creek, a short distance from the Town Center. The Town also manages approximately 0.83 acres of permanent open space conservation easements dedicated on private mountainside property. Cave Creek Cemetery (approximately 2.5 acres in size), which is owned and managed by the Town of Carefree, is also considered passive open space because of its natural setting.

Private property surrounding the Black Mountain Summit Preserve has been preserved as a result of private investment and conservation easements dedicated to the Desert Foothills Land Trust (DFLT), a local nonprofit organization. Likewise, private owners and the DFLT have preserved other private property as natural open space areas along major washes and floodplains, wildlife corridors and significant natural stands of vegetation.

The total amount of protected washes and floodplains is an unknown addition to the Town's privately owned, but publicly regulated, passive open space inventory. Both the Town and Maricopa County Flood Control District limit development in FEMA Floodplains in accordance with government regulations. FEMA Floodplains are located within major washes that cut across private property and local streets. The Town also limits development within non-FEMA floodplains to preserve the natural properties of the washes.

Private golf courses in the Carefree Boulders community and Desert Forest Golf Club are classified as passive open space, since they are low intensity areas that blend into the natural environment. They encompass approximately 300 acres.

Town Efforts

The Town pursues opportunities to increase open space and recreational resources through the zoning and platting processes and accumulated development fees.

40-acre State Land Parcel

One of the tracts of land recommended for preservation was the approximately 40-acre parcel owned by the Arizona State Land Department, located at the southeast corner of Mule Train Road and Cave Creek Road. As a result of high land costs and reduced State and Federal grant funding, acquisition of this plot of land is now improbable. The property is currently zoned for single family residential units, yet there are various strategies that may be used to preserve portions of this property for open space during the subdivision process.

Forecasted Needs

National Recreation and Parks Association

General recreational standards as published by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) suggest that a typical community should include approximately 10 total acres of active and passive open space for every 1,000 persons. The standards are further broken down by type of park and/or recreation area. For example, 1.5 acres of playgrounds, 2 acres of neighborhood parks and 3.5 acres of community parks are recommended for every 1,000 persons.

The above standards suggest that Carefree's target should be a total of 33.36 acres of total open space, 5 acres of playgrounds, 6.7 acres of neighborhood parks and 11.8 acres of community parks for its 3,363 residents. Carefree meets the community parks standard, but not the standard for playgrounds.

The above standards are not entirely appropriate for all communities, especially Carefree. While these standards were developed to assist communities in promoting a workable and healthy balance of open space and recreation type areas for citizens, each community, especially the Town of Carefree, have unique population, land use and environmental components that produce different open space and recreation needs.

Carefree's Unique Characteristics

Carefree was designed and has developed as a master planned community catering primarily to a retirement lifestyle. Based on the 2010 Census, population characteristics include a relatively low percentage of persons under 18 years of age (10%), a relatively high median age (59.5), a relatively small average number of persons residing in each occupied household (2) and a relatively low percentage of persons who are employed (51.0% per the 2005-2009 Census survey). While there are few children residing in Town, grandchildren are common visitors, and families in the local region participate in the Town's amenities.

There are existing open space and recreational resources in private subdivisions. Additional open space is located beyond the Town boundaries in nearby Scottsdale, Cave Creek and the Tonto National Forest within close enough proximity to the Town so as to benefit local residents. In addition, unofficial access to native desert and undeveloped wash areas are readily available to most residents of the community. Many citizens reside in private subdivisions which offer active and passive recreational opportunities for their members, reducing the need for publicly owned or maintained active open space areas.

When compared to most cities the Town's total population, land use densities and, accordingly, available funding for acquisition of open space is uniquely low. Some of the contributing factors are location and the natural constraints of mountain land forms, numerous washes and steep slopes associated with the Upper Sonoran Desert. Many of these natural constraints, however, provide a variety of natural open space and recreational opportunities.

Existing Open Space

Including golf courses, the Town contains approximately 162 acres of both active and passive open space per 1,000 residents, of which 24.5 acres per 1,000 persons is active open space. There are approximately 54 acres of total public open space per 1,000 residents (not counting golf courses), which is greater typical communities in the United States. This open space inventory exceeds the national standards for the Town's current and projected population.

Forecasted Needs

The unique dynamics of Carefree suggest that perhaps less than the recommended total 5 acres of public playgrounds and total 18.5 acres of public neighborhood and community parks are necessary. Nevertheless, opportunities are present for increasing and enhancing the Town's active open space amenities in the Town Center to promote greater quality of life and respond to the growth in children and families in and around Carefree over the past 20 years. Additionally, special emphasis should be placed on increasing the Town's inventory of passive open space to preserve some of the prime native desert areas and environmentally sensitive features. New open space and recreational amenities would be either owned publicly or managed by public or non-profit entities through conservation easements.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1. Preserve property with environmentally sensitive features.

***Objectives/Policies*:**

1) Support the preservation of the Black Mountain summit.
2) Promote preservation of floodplains and washes in their natural state.
3) Protect low density residential uses from the effects of non-residential uses through natural open space buffers.
4) Continue the policy of limiting the total amount of disturbed area on private property.
5) Encourage the preservation of floodplains, natural drainage areas, wildlife corridors and other natural open space in new subdivision plats and zoning proposals.

Goal 2. Increase the Town's inventory of natural open space preserves.

Objectives/Policies:

1) Maintain open space areas designated on the Future Land Use Map.
2) As resources are available, continue to evaluate the open space needs of the Town and potential sites for acquisition.
3) As deemed appropriate, acquire select properties for conservation as part of the Town's commitment to its vision of ecosystem preservation, while balancing local social and economic interests.
4) Base decisions for acquisition of property on the prevalence of significant environmentally sensitive features, such as steep slopes on particularly the Black Mountain summit, major washes and floodplains, rock outcroppings, stands of native vegetation, archeological features, wildlife habitat and corridors, erosion protection and buffering low density neighborhoods from nearby non-residential uses.
5) Continue to utilize development incentives to conserve onsite environmentally sensitive features on mountainside properties.
6) Support the open space management efforts of the Desert Foothills Land Trust and other agencies.

Goal 3. Increase the Town's inventory of active open space and recreational resources.

Objectives/Policies:

1) Utilize surveys, newsletters and other means to determine needs for added or improved services and the need for open space, parks and other recreational opportunities.
2) Continue to monitor the changing population characteristics of the Town's residents and the local region through analysis of Census data and special studies.

3) Provide appropriate services, open space, parks, bikeways, play areas and recreation opportunities as needed for local citizens and visitors.

4) The Town will continue to explore shared use of other publicly owned facilities, i.e., school recreational facilities.

5) Pursue open space and recreational opportunities in efforts to further the economic development of the Town.

Goal 4. Support management of open space and recreation resources in the region.

Objectives/Policies:

1) Continue to emphasize placement of active open space amenities primarily in the Town Center. Future plans should include enhancements to the Carefree Desert Gardens, amphitheater and recreational amenities for local families.

2) Work with the Maricopa Association of Governments, Maricopa County and surrounding communities to preserve natural land within the Tonto National Forest and other recreational sites in the region.

3) Work with the Maricopa Association of Governments, Maricopa County and surrounding communities to support establishment of regional pedestrian and bicycle trails and appropriate connections in Carefree.

4) Continue to assemble and provide information to the public about regional open space and recreational resources.

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6. GROWTH ELEMENT

Introduction

The Growth Area Element addresses the need to plan for efficient growth and pursue economic development measures to strengthen the Town's businesses and identity. This element reports on previous growth areas, future growth areas, business make-up, employment data and economic growth estimates. The last section lays out the goals, objectives and policies regarding growth areas and advancing the expansion and diversification of the local economy.

New growth and economic development should be coordinated to promote the interests of the Town and its desire to become more economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. To that end, future growth areas should meet local demand and be located in areas that are particularly suitable for existing or planned multi-modal transportation, infrastructure and accessible to a diversity of land uses. The overall intent is to improve the quality of life of the Town's citizens and the experience of visitors. A major aspect of this intent is maintaining the Town's commitment to preserving and protecting the beauty of the surrounding environment.

A thriving economic development program in Carefree will further establish a unique sense of place and spaces where citizens and visitors can gather and enjoy a satisfying environment. Economic development should clarify to the regional market the Town's unique characteristics. Some of these include the Town's high quality of life, attractive amenities, peaceful atmosphere and the beauty of the surrounding natural environment. Effectively marketing the Town's values will cultivate a greater desire to experience what Carefree offers, thereby attracting new visitors and more satisfied residents, who will in turn contribute to the local economy and a healthy pattern of growth.

Growth Areas

Summary

The Town's growth areas are planned to guide new development into areas with appropriate resources, such as available land, zoning, transportation system and infrastructure, to service the needs of the growth area. In the Town Center and at specified properties adjacent to the Town Center, the existing infrastructure is capable of supporting appropriately planned, concentrated mixed-use development, including retail, commercial, office, moderate density residential, tourism and other specific employment uses.

At intersections along arterial streets at specified Town gateways, the Town would support future commercial or residential growth that meets the intent of the Future Land Use Map and applicable General Plan goals, objectives and policies.

All other growth areas will remain, by design, low density and rural residential areas, to maintain Carefree's vision of a small Town with well-designed homes and businesses that are carefully planned in harmony with their surrounding natural setting.

Existing and new growth areas are categorized as Low Density and Rural Residential, Moderate Density Residential and Employment growth areas, as follows.

1. Low Density and Rural Residential

Previous Growth

The vast majority of Carefree is comprised of low density and rural residential land uses. The most recent residential growth has occurred within subdivisions platted in the past 20 years and non-platted vacant lots located throughout the Town. Growth has been more-or-less evenly distributed throughout the Town.

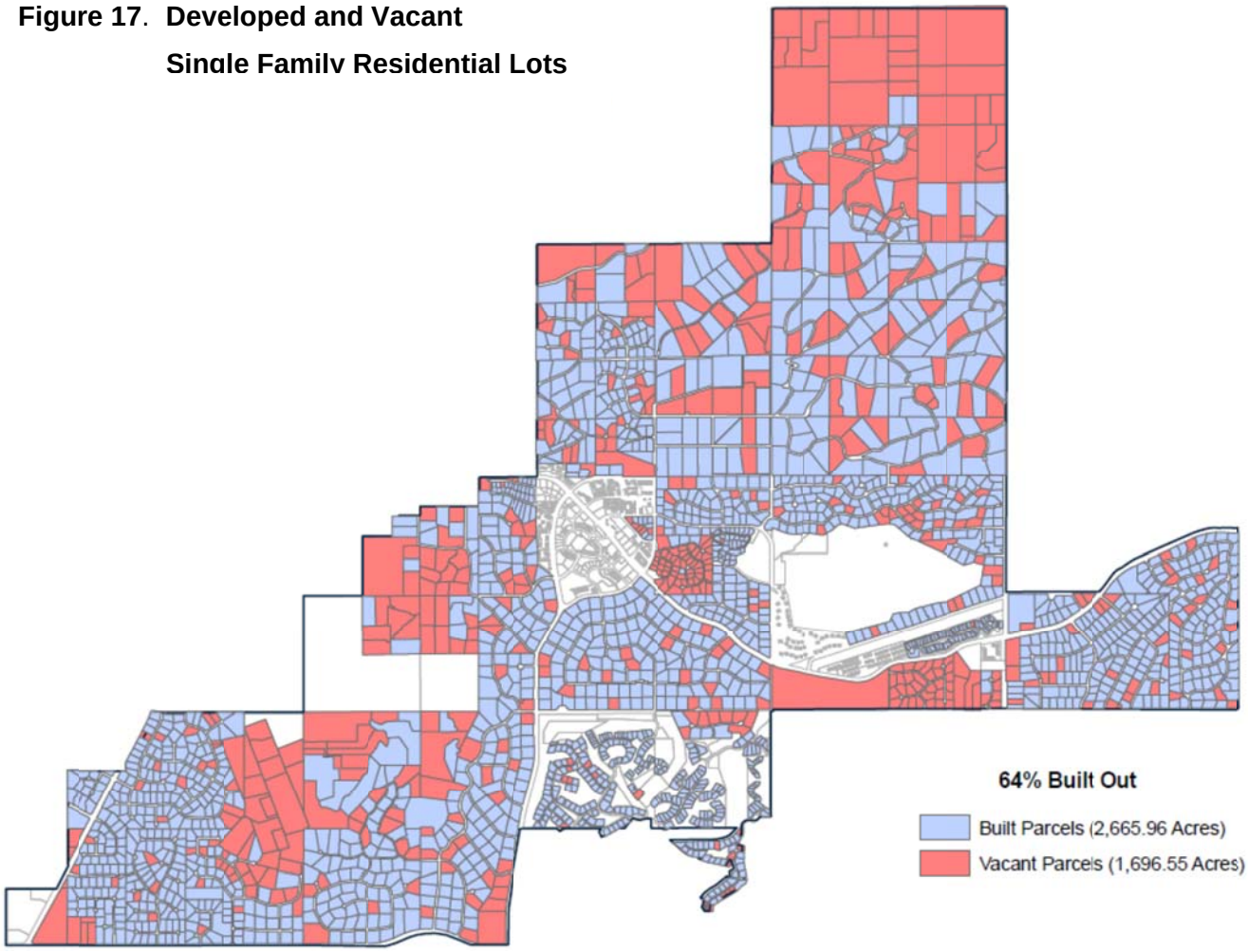
Future Growth Areas

Future growth areas are vacant parcels designated on the Future Land Use Map as Rural Residential (RR), Very Low Density Residential (VLDR) and Low Density Residential (LDR). It is also noted that there remains a possibility of low density residential uses at the northeast corner of Carefree Highway and Cave Creek Road, which is designated on the Future Land Use Map as Special Planning Area (SPA), due to its existing R1-35 zoning. Any new growth will be subject to all applicable Town policies and regulations.

Figure 17 below is a general depiction of which single family lots have been developed and those which are vacant as of 2009. All other properties have been developed with the exception of approximately 20 vacant lots located mainly in the Town Center. This map and the Existing Land Uses section of the Land Use Element indicate where land is suitable for future residential growth.

It is anticipated that the first phase of future development will occur on prime lots and where there is immediate access to existing infrastructure and transportation facilities. There are no plans for expansion into areas beyond the Town's street system and infrastructure network because of the difficult terrain and cost of providing needed services for such new areas.

Figure 17. Developed and Vacant Single Family Residential Lots



Source: Town of Carefree

2. Moderate Density Residential

Previous Growth

Moderate Density Residential uses are developments with up to approximately 7 residential units per acre, including townhouses, condominiums and apartments. The Town's original master plan was designed to locate moderate density uses in and near the Town Center, with low density uses spanning the remaining areas of the community, with the exception of intersections at specified Town gateways. The Land Use Element further establishes this efficient and sustainable land use pattern, thus reinforcing the Town's village concept.

The most recent moderate density growth includes condominiums and townhouses along Tom Darlington Drive west of the Town Center. Property north of Cave Creek Road along Hum Road was subdivided for a townhouse project. A mixed-use retail-residential condominium project was approved on Easy Street in the heart of the Town Center, but these projects were not developed as a result of the recent downturn in the real estate market.

Future Growth Areas

The Growth Areas are planned to handle the current and anticipated growth in moderate density residential uses. They include Moderate Density Residential (MDR) properties within and adjacent to the Town Center. As mentioned in the Land Use Element, a mix of moderate density residential and non-residential uses in the Town Center has been suggested as an opportunity for a quality live-work-play environment. Additionally, future moderate density residential uses may be implemented at the property designated on the Future Land Use Map as Special Planning Area (SPA) at the northeast corner of Carefree Highway and Cave Creek Road.

Vacant properties in and near the Town Center provide ample opportunities for townhouse, condominium, or apartment developments to meet the Town's anticipated housing needs. Such properties are situated where there is direct pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular access to the nearby diverse land uses, which is a factor in planning for sustainable growth.

3. Employment Growth areas

Previous Growth

Growth of employment/commercial uses includes commercial and office uses primarily within the Town Center, as defined on the Future Land Use Map. Other employment areas are also found on properties designated Commercial (C), Garden Office (GO) and Resort Hotel/Resort Development (RH/RD), which are located adjacent to the Town Center, at the Town's periphery and at the Carefree Resort. There are 84.9 acres of developed commercial property in the Town, 29.3 of which was developed in the last 10 years (Tables 18 &20).

Employment uses in the Town Center and secondary employment centers include banks, retail stores, restaurants, retreat/lodging, offices, art galleries, an automobile fuel facility and other similar uses.

Future Growth Areas

Future employment growth areas are located on property designated on the Future Land Use Map as Town Center (TC), Commercial (C), Garden Office (GO) and Special Planning Area (SPA), which are located either within and adjacent to the Town Center, the northwest and northeast corners of Carefree Highway and Cave Creek Road and the southwest corner of Cave Creek Road and Pima Road. There are 36.4 acres of vacant property in the employment/commercial growth areas (Table 18).

Growth in retail businesses should be emphasized over office uses to increase the vitality and synergy of the Town's business environment, improve upon the fiscal stability of the Town and respond to market conditions in a regional real estate market with an overabundance of office space.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Summary

This economic development section provides information on the Town's business make-up, commercial growth, employment data, balancing jobs to housing and population growth and the advantages and opportunities regarding economic development. The Town's economy is based largely on the retail and tourism industries, with the next greatest contributor being construction and development. The main center of commercial activity is concentrated in the Town Center, with secondary centers located at specified Town Gateways.

Businesses in Carefree

Business licenses were recently established which help the Town and local organizations understand the local business make-up. The tables below classify local businesses by their 2007 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) sector ID. Also exhibited are the total number of businesses in each category, their share of total businesses and the percentage of retail versus office/non-retail jobs.

It is noted that the jobs data does not account for home occupations, non-profit organizations, government and public services or businesses located outside Carefree that employ or service residents in Carefree, because the focus here is on local businesses in commercial areas, and information is limited for the other categories.

Table 15. Business Categories and Description

NAICS #	Business Category (NAICS)	General Description
62	Health Care & Social Assistance	Medical, Health and Social Services
81	Other Services, except Public Administration	Salons, Spas, Personal Care, Repair and Maintenance
72	Accommodation & Food Services	Resort, Hotel, Restaurants, Bars, Grocery Store
61	Educational Services	Private Instruction, Education
56	Administration, Support, Waste Management, Remediation Services	Home and Pool Cleaning and Maintenance
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	Management of Companies
54	Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	Professional, Legal, Architectural and other Technical Services
53	Real Estate and Leasing	Real Estate Services, Rental, Leasing and Property Management
52	Finance and Insurance	Financial Services
51	Information Services	Recording Studios, Visual and Telecommunication Companies
44-45	Retail Trade	Retail: Art, Apparel, Home Goods, Other
42	Wholesale Trade	Wholesale Businesses
33	Manufacturing	Jewelry/small manufacturing and sales
23	Construction	Construction, contractors
71	Fitness, Recreation, Sports, Entertainment	Fitness, Private Golf Club

Sources: Town of Carefree Business Licenses (12-2011), MAG Employer Database (12-2010), US Census Bureau (2007 NAICS)

Table 16. Total Businesses and Employees by Business Type

NAICS Code	Business Category (NAICS)	# of Bus.	%	Employees	%
62	Health Care & Social Assistance	27	11.9%	147	11.9%
81	Other Services, except Public Administration	22	9.7%	58	4.7%
72	Accommodation & Food Services	17	7.5%	325	26.4%
61	Educational Services	4	1.8%	8	0.6%
56	Administration, Support, Waste Management, Remediation Services	10	4.4%	48	3.9%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	1	0.4%	2	0.2%
54	Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	20	8.8%	61	4.9%
53	Real Estate and Leasing	27	11.9%	69	5.6%
52	Finance and Insurance	22	9.7%	81	6.6%
51	Information Services	2	0.9%	2	0.2%
44-45	Retail Trade	52	23.0%	286	23.2%
42	Wholesale Trade	4	1.8%	14	1.1%
33	Manufacturing	2	0.9%	8	0.6%
23	Construction	13	5.8%	101	8.2%
71	Fitness, Recreation, Sports, Entertainment	3	1.3%	23	1.9%
	TOTAL	**226**	**100%**	**1,233**	**100%**

Sources: Town of Carefree Business Licenses (12-2011), MAG Employer Database (12-2010)

Table 17. Business Categorized by Retail and Office

Category	Total	%
Retail / Restaurant / Food	71	31%
Office / Other Services	155	69%
TOTAL	**226**	**100%**

According to the above tables, there are a total 226 businesses employing 1,233 persons. The Retail Trade sector contains the greatest number of businesses, with a total of 52, or 23% of all local businesses. Real Estate and Health Care Services the next most common category, each with 27 businesses, or approximately 12%. The smallest categories are Company Management (0.4%), Information Services (0.9%) and Manufacturing (0.9%). Government and Utilities are not included in this study, but it is noted that there are approximately 98 employed at U.S. Postal Service, Town of Carefree, Carefree Water Company, Liberty Water and Rural Metro Fire Department.

The business category with the most employees is Accommodation and Food Services sectors with 325 employees, or 26.4% of total jobs. Retail Trade is the next greatest category, with 286, or 23.2% of total jobs. According Table 17 above, there are more than twice as many Office/Other Services in the Town than Retail/Restaurant/Food establishments.

Existing and Projected Commercial Land Uses

One of the objectives in planning for economic development is to identify existing and available commercial areas and estimate potential building space on vacant land. Tables 18 and 19 below identify a total of 84.9 acres of developed commercial property, 944,462 sq.ft. of existing commercial buildings and 36.4 acres of vacant commercial property.

As indicated in the Land Use Element, the 23-acre property designated on the Future Land Use Map as Special Planning Area (SPA) could be developed in the future as either a residential or a non-residential use. If it were developed as a residential use, the total projected building area of new commercial/non-residential buildings in the Town would be 180,700 sq.ft. If the SPA were developed as a non-residential use, the maximum size of a non-residential building on that property is estimated at 150,000 sq.ft., which would result in a total of 330,700 sq.ft. for the Town. Actual development on vacant property could be less than this estimate, given that this projection does not account for unknown environmental and market conditions that may affect the forecasted building area at build-out.

Table 18. Potential Commercial/Garden Office Property in Carefree

Area	Developed Parcels (sq.ft.)	Developed Parcels (Acres)	Vacant Parcels (sq.ft.)	Vacant Parcels (acres)	Total (sq.ft.)	Total (acres)
Town Center	1,324,043	30.4	418,705	9.6	1,742,748	40.0
Property Adjacent to Town Center	330,705	7.6	40,489	0.9	371,194	8.5
NWC of Carefree Hwy. & Cave Creek Rd.	771,805	17.7	124,388	2.9	896,193	20.6
NEC of Carefree Hwy. & Cave Creek Rd.	0	0.0	1,003,264	23.0	1,003,264	23.0
SWC of Cave Creek Rd. & Pima Road	405,069	9.3	0	0.0	405,069	9.3
Carefree Resort	867,498	19.9	0	0.0	867,498	19.9
Total	**3,699,120**	**84.9**	**1,586,846**	**36.4**	**5,285,966**	**121.3**
Total Acres if SPA were Developed as SFR	**3,699,120**	**84.9**	**583,582**	**13.4**	**4,282,720**	**98.3**

Source: Carefree General Plan 2020 (2002), Town of Carefree (2011), MC Assessor (2011)

Table 19. Commercial Building Space in Carefree

Area	Existing Building Area (sq.ft.)	Potential Available Building Area (sq.ft.)*	Total (sq.ft.)
Town Center	431,796	152,000	683,019
Property Adjacent to Town Center	81,492	14,000	105,785
NWC of Carefree Hwy. & Cave Creek Rd.	134,300	14,700	149,000
NEC of Carefree Hwy. & Cave Creek Rd.	0	150,000	601,958
SWC of Cave Creek Rd. & Pima Rd.	53,852	0	53,852
Carefree Resort	243,022	0	243,022
Total	**944,462**	**330,700**	**1,275,162**
Total Acres if SPA were Developed as SFR	**944,462**	**180,700**	**1,125,162**

Source: Carefree General Plan 2020 (2002), Town of Carefree (2011), MC Assessor (2011)

Employment

Jobs to Employed Population Ratio

As indicated in the Land Use Element, many Carefree residents are retired, with 35.4% of the Town's population (1,189) age 65 years or greater. That means the desired jobs-to-population ratio is less than that typically seen in other communities. According to Table 20 below, the Town's proportion of employable residents between ages 16 and 64 is categorically greater than the county and state level.

Table 20. Typical Employment and Retirement Ages

Jurisdiction	Total Population	Age 16-64 years	Percent (%)	Age 65+	Percent (%)
Carefree	**3,363**	**1,901**	**56.5%**	**1,189**	**35.4%**
Maricopa County	3,817,117	2,456,807	64.4%	462,641	12.1%
Arizona	6,392,017	4,062,650	63.6%	881,831	13.8%

Source: 2010 Census

The ratio of local jobs to employment-aged residents is a useful indicator of the local employment base and to understand the potential for Town residents to work locally. There are 225 total businesses and 5 Government/Utilities in the Town's commercial areas which employ 1,333 persons out of 1,901 persons between 16 and 64 years old. That results in an approximately 1:1.4 "jobs-to-employment-aged-person" ratio, or 0.7 jobs per person of employment age. This ratio is a conservative estimate since certain business categories were not included in the study.

Evidence suggests there is an appropriate jobs-to-population balance because of the comparatively high employment ratio and a high percentage of retired and seasonal residents. The Growth Areas described previously are designed to meet the employment needs of the Town and are planned according to the sizes and locations appropriate to the Town's character and development patterns. The next section offers another way of looking at existing and projected local employment in terms of population and housing growth.

Commercial Growth and Population/Housing Build-out

Carefree's population and housing growth is expected to continue until it approaches build-out in the next 30 years. It is estimated that at build-out, the population will range from 5,500 to 6,500. Total housing units may range from 3,650 to 4,350, depending on the results of future subdividing and development. According to Table 21 below, if commercial development growth in the past 10 years continues at the same rate, commercial build-out will occur later than the population and/or housing units at build-out.

Table 21. Commercial Growth Between 2001 and 2011

Location	Developed Parcel Area (Acres)	Building Area (sq.ft.)
Town Center	3.3	49,796
Property Adjacent to Town Center	4.1	38,165
SWC of Cave Creek Rd. & Pima Road	4.1	43,438
NWC of Carefree Hwy. & Cave Creek Rd.	17.7	134,300
Total	**29.3**	**265,699**
Percent Growth	**24.1%**	**14.5%**
Average Annual Growth	**2.4%**	**1.4%**

Source: 2010 Census, Town of Carefree (2011)

Table 22 describes the effects of commercial growth on jobs and the population at build-out. While in 2011 there were 39% Retail/Restaurant/Food uses and 61% Office/Other Services, the matrix below plans for 50% Retail/Restaurant/Food uses and 50% Office/Other Services to emphasize growth in the retail sector in upcoming years.

The table below gives two jobs estimates and jobs ratios. To calculate estimated jobs, the total commercial building area at build-out is multiplied by a constant to arrive at the total jobs forecasted. In Scenario 1, 4,922 total jobs are estimated at build-out. In Scenario 2, 4,343 total jobs are anticipated if the Special Planning Area shown on the Future Land Use Map were developed as a single family residential use. Next, the total jobs are divided by both the forecasted population and housing units to arrive at ratios of 0.76 to 0.89 jobs per person and 1.13 to 1.35 jobs per housing unit at build-out. As shown in the bottom half of Table 22, it indicates a lower employment ratio if the Special Planning Area were not built for commercial uses.

Table 22. Forecasted Jobs and Jobs Ratios at Build-out

Category	Sq.ft. of Commercial Building Area	Jobs Multiplier*	Jobs	Jobs per Person**	Jobs Per Housing Unit***
Scenario 1: Including SPA					
Commercial Office	637,581	3.33/ 1,000 sq.ft.	2,123	0.33 - 0.39	0.49 - 0.58
Commercial Retail	637,581	4.39/ 1,000 sq.ft.	2,799	0.43 - 0.51	0.64 - 0.77
Total	**1,275,162**	**-**	**4,922**	**0.76 - 0.89**	**1.13 - 1.35**
Scenario 2: Excluding SPA					
Commercial Office	562,581.0	3.33/ 1,000 sq.ft.	1,873	0.29 - 0.34	0.70 - 0.84
Commercial Retail	562,581.0	4.39/ 1,000 sq.ft.	2,470	0.38 - 0.45	0.93 - 1.10
Total	**1,125,162**	**-**	**4,343**	**0.67 - 0.79**	**1.0 - 1.19**

* Source: Tischler & Associates (2001)
** Based on estimated 5,500 to 6,500 population range at build-out.
*** Based on estimated 3,650 to 4,350 total housing units range at build-out.

Analysis

Employment numbers shown above exceed the current and anticipated employment demand for Carefree residents because of the Town's greater-than-average proportion of retired residents and seasonal residents. This finding is an indicator of a healthy local economy, since the Town contributes more to regional employment that would be expected from community of the Town's smaller size. Another indicator of the Town's economy is fiscal sustainability. This aspect will likely be sustained and enhanced by policies and programs favoring growth in the retail sector.

Economic Development Advantages and Opportunities

The Town Center is a well-established primary center of business activity with its variety of commercial and office uses. The major catalysts for economic success are many, as follows:

- Historical appeal as a quality place to live, work and recreate
- Unique Southwest village theme
- Appreciation of the natural desert
- Central location
- Proximity to arterial streets
- Pedestrian-friendly environment
- Concentration of a large amount of commercial space
- Attractive restaurants and businesses
- Sundial, art displays and other attractions
- A variety of public facilities

Some of the above-referenced public facilities include the Town Center botanical gardens, play areas and amphitheater; Town Hall facilities; a centrally-located post office; and other amenities.

The Town's secondary commercial centers benefit from some of the above-listed advantages, especially visibility along major arterials with high traffic volumes and spill-over effects of businesses in adjacent municipalities.

There are opportunities for strategic economic development practices to further enhance the business environment and contribute to a sustainable local economy. Some initiatives may include increasing the visibility of the many pedestrian and vehicular connections to the Town core, providing additional way-finding signs and identifiers for local destinations and implementing additional attractions that complement existing Town Center amenities. Such efforts would support Carefree's reputation as a unique draw for the region.

Many efforts are already under way as a result of collaborative efforts by the local business association, property owners, residents and local government. Some of these efforts include the following: improved signage in the Town Center, an enhanced strategic marketing program, additional special events, continued organization of local businesses, renovation of the botanical gardens and upcoming projects concentrated in the Town Center designed to attract additional visitors.

The main source of the Town's operating revenues primarily comes from local retail sales tax. This means the Town's ability to provide and improve upon desired services for residents is impacted by the success of local businesses. An economic development plan that: (1) targets improvements that make Carefree a more attractive place to visit, (2) draws in additional businesses, and (3) retains current local businesses, will enhance the stature of the Town's business environment and its ability to maintain its programs and services.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

Growth Areas

Goal 1: Support growth of residential uses in an efficient and cost effective manner and in conformance with the Town's character.

Objectives/Policies:

1) Encourage development of future residential uses in designated growth areas.
2) Ensure that any zoning changes associated with new residential development is consistent with the Future Land Use Map.
3) In response to the more severe topography in sections 24, 25 and 26, ensure future land use categories do not exceed the Very Low Density Future (VLDR) Land Use designation (minimum 2 acres per residence), except in the areas already designated on the Future Land Use Map as Low Density Residential (LDR – minimum 1 acre per residence).
4) Support the subdividing of larger properties in conformance with the Future Land Use Map, especially where there is access to existing transportation infrastructure, utilities and other public services.
5) Uphold Town regulations and policies for subdividing property, including planning for efficient circulation and infrastructure.
6) During the platting process for new subdivisions, uphold Town regulations and policies for preserving natural drainage ways, boulder outcroppings, significant stands of vegetation and other environmentally sensitive features.
7) Continue to promote open space preservation and mountainside standards for all new residential uses to help ensure that development responds to the natural conditions of each site.
8) Promote quality design standards in new Moderate Density residential developments.
9) Evaluate vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle accessibility to the planned growth areas, and plan for future improvements.
10) Promote the implementation of open space amenities in new residential developments.

Goal 2: Support growth of non-residential uses in an efficient and cost effective manner and in conformance with the Town's character.

Objectives/Policies:

1) Continue to support the Carefree Town Center as the central business district in Town.
2) Support mixed uses in the Town Center, including converting space above ground-floor offices and/or retail for residential condominium units.
3) Support secondary employment centers at existing commercial and/or office uses adjacent to the Town Center and/or located at arterial street intersections at specified gateways into Town.

4) Evaluate vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle accessibility to and from the Town Center in conformance with Traffic, Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan, and plan for future improvements.

5) Support the installation of pedestrian-friendly amenities on private and public property within the Town Center.

6) Continue to evaluate accessibility to the planned non-residential growth areas, including connections to regional transportation facilities.

Economic Development

Goal 3: Obtain information to broaden the understanding of the economic conditions, thus leading to more informed economic development strategies.

Objectives/Policies:

1) Continue to support the business license program to obtain information about the business composition of the Town and to support marketing efforts. Specializations, possible gaps and potential market niches may be identified.

2) Perform census, economic and marketing studies from current data to understand the existing conditions, make projections and assess future needs.

3) Engage in outreach efforts to obtain information from the public regarding economic development.

4) Coordinate with local and regional agencies in broader efforts to market the Town as a unique place to live, work and visit.

Goal 4: Support economic development policies and projects that make the Town Center a more attractive place to live, work and visit.

Objectives/Policies:

1) Encourage a broader diversity of compatible commercial uses in the Town Center with an emphasis on retail uses that appeal to a variety of people. Employment uses that both enhance and compliment the existing mixed uses in the Town Center are encouraged.

2) Support compatible employment uses that bring additional employees and support local businesses, which will increase commercial activity in the Town Center.

3) Continue to assess the Town Center amenities and plan for improvements designed to attract new visitors and increase their desire to stay longer, thus contributing to a viable business center.

4) Continue to support an increased number of special events to attract visitors to the Town Center.

5) Identify and pursue opportunities to attract compatible business uses that meet the employment needs of the local population.

Goal 5: Increase access to and visibility of the Town Center.

Objectives/Policies:

1) Continue to view the Town Center as the primary center of economic development.
2) Maintain and improve upon signage and other improvements throughout the Town to define the Town boundaries and the Town Center and facilitate access to and from the Town Center and within the Town Center and create a better sense of entry.
3) Increase opportunities for distribution and access to materials with information on local destinations, amenities and events.
4) As deemed necessary, identify possible transportation options for bringing visitors to and from the Town Center.
5) Promote a diversity of attractions and projects that contribute to a sense of Town identity.

Goal 6: Support programs and policies to market the Town.

Objectives/Policies:

1) Expand the Town's market area to residents and tourists in the local region.
2) Where possible, allocate Town revenues for public marketing and economic development initiatives.
3) Support efforts toward attracting new businesses as well as supporting current local businesses.
4) As resources are available, support efforts of the local business association and local businesses in coordinated marketing and economic development efforts.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENT

Introduction

The Environmental Element sets forth plans to maintain the Town's vision as a unique community carefully planned in harmony with the natural environment. This element contains analysis, goals, policies and strategies activities the Town will undertake to address anticipated effects of future development on air quality, water quality and natural resources.

The Town's rugged Upper Sonoran Desert foothills environment presents many challenges as well as opportunities for aesthetic, compatible land development. Environmental preservation is an important goal for Carefree. It is part of a sustainable planning approach that balances environmental considerations with the Town's economic and social goals and objectives.

Slopes, Drainage and Soils

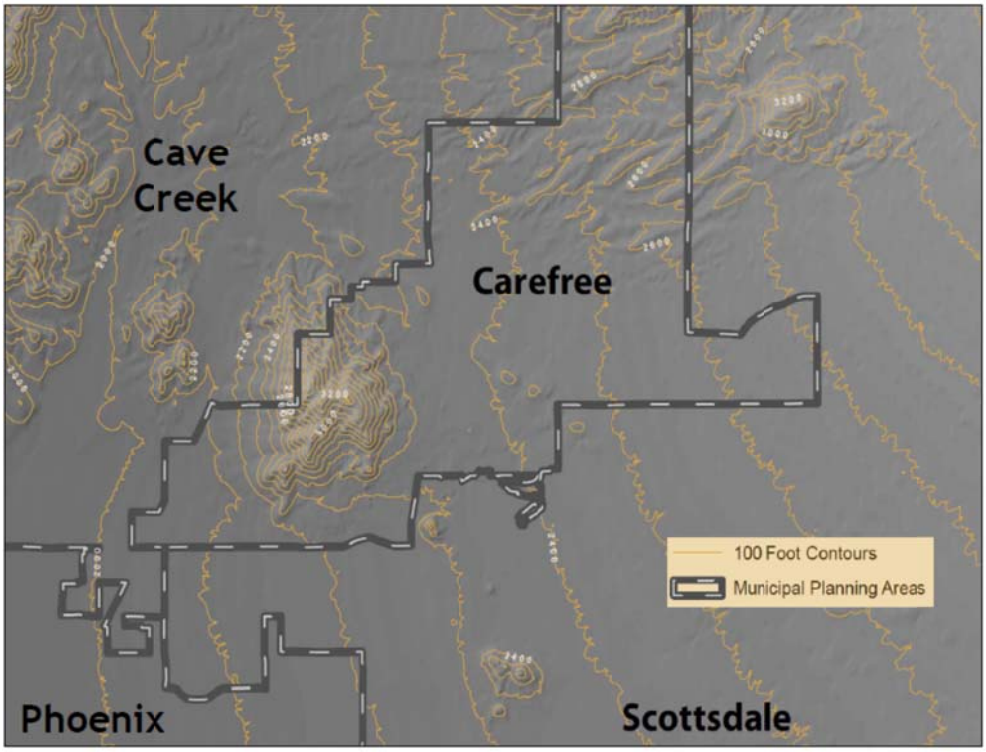
Carefree is located on the edge of the metropolitan Phoenix area in the Upper Sonoran Desert and within the southern foothills of the Continental Mountains. The entire Town has dramatic vistas and mountain views. Black Mountain is the most prominent visual feature of both the northern Phoenix Metropolitan area and of Carefree.

In general, the terrain consists of rolling hills with some steep slopes and mountainous areas, interspersed with flatter areas. Severe slopes in excess of 15% present major constraints to development. The largest sections of Town with severe slopes are located on Black Mountain and in the foothill areas north and northeast of the Town Center. Figures 18 and 19 contain raster map images of the Town's topography and major areas with steep slopes. The steep slopes map does not account for smaller instances throughout the Town where slopes greater than 15% are found on varied terrain.

Various washes of different scales bisect the Town's terrain (See Figure 20). Drainage flows from the northeast to southwest across Carefree to Cave Creek Wash located in Cave Creek. Portions of Grapevine, Rowe, Galloway and Andora Hills Washes and two washes bisecting the southeast and south sections of Town are in a FEMA Floodplain. Various tributary washes drain the remainder of the Town, some of which include sufficient flow during storm events to be classified as protected floodplains.

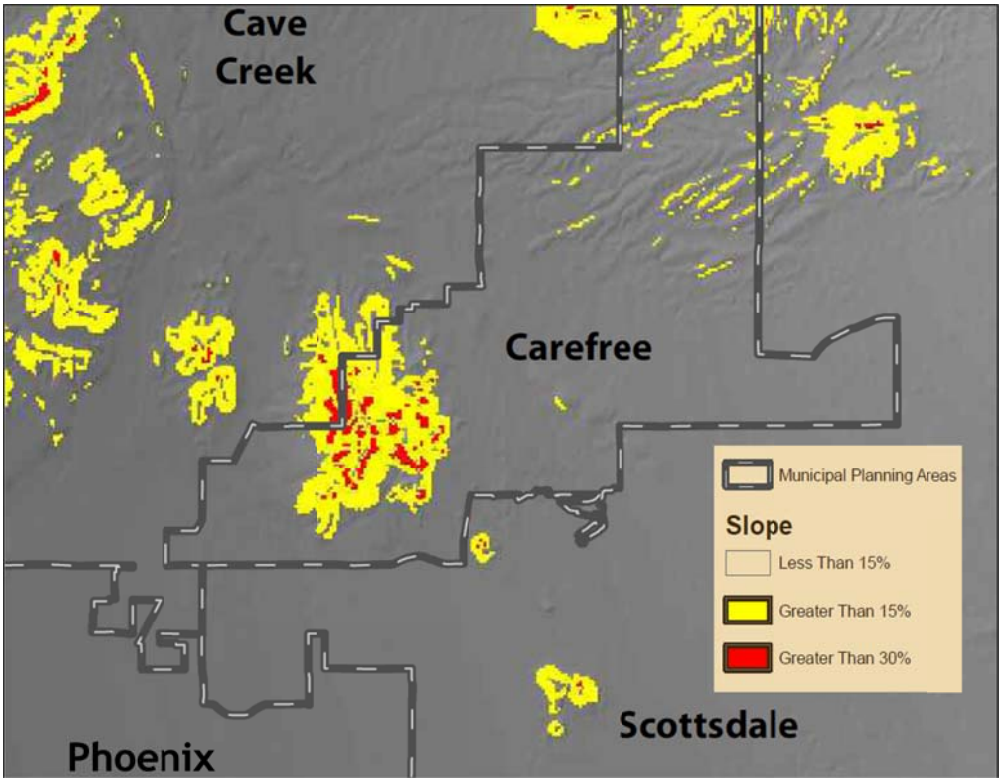
The soil conditions throughout the Town generally allow for development to occur, although there are some areas of sensitive conditions that require special analyses, methods and protection. A variety of soil conditions lead to constraints in planning for streets, driveways, buildings, walls, septic systems and other infrastructure. They include severe slopes, rock outcroppings, shallow bedrock and/or caliche and cobbly loam soils which drain poorly and have high shrink/swell potential. One or more of these soil conditions are present on Black Mountain and its foothills, in the Boulder's community, areas north of the Town's incorporated area and other site specific locations throughout the Town.

Figure 18. Carefree Topography



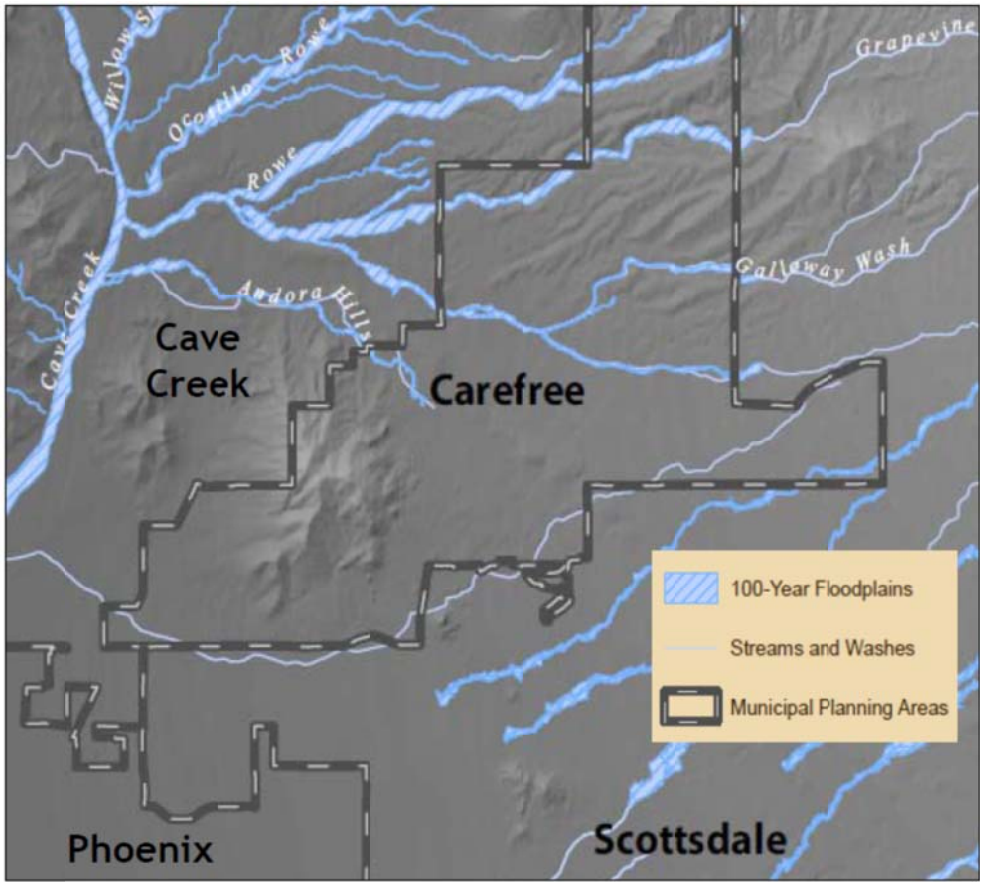
Source: Flood Control District of Maricopa County (2000), MAG (2011)

Figure 19. Carefree Steep Slopes



Source: U.S. Geological Survey (2010), MAG (2011)

Figure 20. Carefree Major Washes and Floodplains



Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency (2010), MAG (2011)

Climate

Carefree's climate is highly variable because the Town is located between the mid-latitude atmospheric circulation region to the north and the subtropical circulation region to the south. July is usually the warmest month with an average maximum air temperature of 102.0° F (WRCC, 2011). The hottest recorded temperature at the SkyRanch Airport station was on July 28, 1995, when the air temperature reached 118° F. Temperatures can dip below freezing from October through March. The coldest night in the long-term record was January 13, 1963, when the temperature dropped to 15° F (2011).

Carefree often receives measurable amounts of precipitation during all months of the year, but March and August are usually the wettest months. The average annual precipitation measured at the Sky Ranch station during the time period between June 1962 and December 2010 is 12.81 inches. However, annual precipitation can vary widely from the driest year in 1997 when only 4.9 inches fell to the wettest year in 1993 when 23.9 inches was measured (2011).

Although Carefree is in the desert, two types of floods often occur. During the winter, more frequent, long-duration storms can cause widespread flooding. During the summer monsoons, localized, intense flash floods can turn dry creek beds into raging torrents.

Vegetation and Wildlife

The flora and fauna of the Upper Sonoran Desert is very fragile. As the Town continues to grow into its most environmentally sensitive areas, techniques are utilized to minimize the effects of development.

The natural vegetation of Carefree is classified as Upper Sonoran Desert. The Upper Sonoran Desert is remarkable for its high diversity of species and life forms. The bi-seasonal rainfall during the winter and summer monsoon season supports a very arboral (tree-like) desert, visually dominated by the Foothills Palo Verde (*Cercidium microphyllum),* Ocotillo *(Fouquicria splendens) and* Saguaro *(Carnegiea gigantea).* This plant community is the most scenic of the Sonoran Desert communities. In addition to Palo Verde species, native trees include Acacias *(Acacia* species), Ironwood (*Olneya tesota)* and mesquites *(Prosopis* species). Most of the native shrubs are Creosote *(Larrea tridentata),* Bursage *(Ambrosia* species), Brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*) and Fairy Duster *(Calliandra eriophylla).* The cacti present include Barrel *(Ferocactus* species), Hedgehog *(Echinocereus* species) and many *Opunia* species such as Buckhorn Cholla, Prickly Pear and Chain Fruit Cholla. High concentrations of trees and shrubs occur along local drainage ways.

Desert soils are easily disturbed and when disturbed may be invaded by early success ional native plants such as Desert Broom *(Baccharis sarothroides)* and weedy species like mustards *(Brassica* species) and ragweed *(Ambrosia* species).

Some of the wildlife commonly seen in Carefree are White-tailed Deer *(Odocoileus virginianus),* Javelina/Collared Peccary *(Dicotyles tajacu), Coyote (Canis latrans),* Bobcat *(Felis rufus),* Desert Cottontail *(Sylvilagus auduboni),* Gambel's Quail *(Callipepla gambelii),* Mourning Doves *(Zenaidura macroura) and* Cactus Wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*). There are also a variety of raptors, migratory songbirds and reptiles. The desert washes are particularly important habitat that provides food, shelter and transportation corridors for a variety of wildlife species.

Regional Studies

The Maricopa Association of Governments adopted a policies and guidelines booklet for environmentally sensitive development areas known as the *Desert Spaces: An Open Space Plan for the Maricopa Association of Governments* ("Desert Spaces Plan", 1995). According to this plan, most of the Town falls within a regional environmentally sensitive area, along with parts of North Scottsdale, Cave Creek, North Phoenix and unincorporated county areas. The Black Mountain Summit Preserve is also viewed as a regionally significant recreational resource. Rowe wash is a potential link to a regional open space and trails system to the north of the Town limits.

Many of recommendations in the MAG Desert Spaces Plan include provisions for guiding development to mitigate its effects on air quality, water quality and other natural resources such as wildlife, natural drainage areas, soils and vegetation. Some of its policies that have applicability to Carefree are included in the Goals, Objectives and Policies below.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

The goals, objectives and policies below are intended to advance the environmental sustainability of the Town, while encouraging quality growth and development.

Goal 1. Continue to preserve and protect the natural environment and environmentally sensitive features.

Objectives/Policies:

1) Protect lands with outstanding open space value by purchase or dedication by the respective property owner/developer as part of an integrated open space system.
2) Protect open space areas by requiring sensitive development measures on adjacent property.
3) Preserve the maximum amount of natural desert at the time of land development, with special emphasis on environmentally sensitive land areas such as mountainside slopes, boulder outcroppings, significant stands of vegetation and major washes.
4) Preserve archeological features found within the Town limits.
5) Support the efforts of regional entities and other communities to preserve the national forest and other nearby regionally significant natural resources.
6) Develop safe public access to appropriate open space areas.
7) Continue to develop and monitor zoning guidelines to preserve and maintain the maximum amount of existing desert, indigenous plant species, steep slopes, natural washes and riparian habitats.

Goal 2. Maintain natural washes and floodplains in their natural state.

Objectives/Policies:

1) Discourage development within 100-year floodplains.
2) Rehabilitate washes in the more developed areas by revegetating.
3) Limit impacts on washes to road and utility crossings. Where wash crossings are necessary, ensure they are designed to minimize disturbance to the natural desert.
4) Except for required streets and/or driveways, restrict grading or disturbance of existing plants within the FEMA designated 100 year floodplain areas.
5) Integrate natural drainage into developments.
6) Emphasize non-structural flood control techniques when possible.
7) Encourage flood control techniques that use and retain natural vegetation.
8) Conserve washes by including an appropriate upland buffer to allow transition to building development.
9) Strictly enforce laws prohibiting refuse disposal and motorized vehicular use of washes.

Goal 3. Guide development so it is responsive to the surrounding environmental conditions.

Objectives/Policies:

1) Encourage development that preserves meaningful undisturbed areas.
2) Protect areas that could serve as major links between regionally significant open space resources.
3) In new residential subdivisions, promote an open, natural desert appearance along subdivision boundaries.
4) Avoid mass grading, and minimize retaining walls, steep banks and large cut and fill areas.
5) Protect open space by requiring adjacent development to be sensitively designed for compatibility.
6) Locate buildings on the flatter portions of the site.
7) Continue to efficiently plan for utilities to minimize site disturbance.
8) Encourage use of indigenous materials and plants.
9) Encourage the use of building materials and colors that blend into the natural environment.
10) Continue to protect scenic views of the regionally significant mountains in the Town and to the north, east and west of Town through maximum building height standards.
11) Require the restoration of disturbed areas to a natural look. This includes rock staining and revegetating with plant types, numbers and sizes consistent with the natural undisturbed desert.

Goal 4. Encourage methods for preserving wildlife habitats and corridors.

Objectives/Policies:

1) Utilize building envelopes to minimize disturbance.
2) Design roads and wash crossings to minimize impacts on wildlife movements.
3) Maintain appropriate upland natural buffers along significant washes.
4) Maintain undisturbed wildlife corridors that are continuous and linked to larger natural areas.
5) Preserve and maintain areas of natural habitat.
6) Promote wall and/or fence design that does not disrupt riparian habitats and natural wildlife corridors.
7) Revegetate washes using native materials to match the natural existing conditions.
8) Minimize the width of streets when possible.

Goal 5. Reduce pollution and promote a more environmentally sustainable consumption of resources to improve the quality of life of citizens and the environment.

Objectives/Policies:

1) Incorporate sustainable practices and materials in public projects where feasible.
2) Continue to encourage green building practices through local Building Code standards. Assess updates to the Code that will continue to encourage development, but in a more environmentally sustainable manner.
3) Promote alternative forms of energy and energy efficient measures in public facilities in conformance with Town financial priorities.
4) To help mitigate light pollution and protect dark skies at night, by minimizing outdoor lighting to pedestrian areas and commercial development. Ensure lighting is shielded and pointed in a downward direction.
5) Pursue external funding for energy efficiency programs according to the needs of the community through government grants, matching funds and public-private partnerships.
6) Support educational and outreach endeavors to disseminate information about sustainable building practices, recycling and energy efficiency measures.
7) Assist the Maricopa County Environmental Services Division in its enforcement of Federal and County regulations geared toward improving air and water quality.
8) Support non-vehicular modes of transportation as outlined in the Circulation Element to reduce vehicular traffic and air pollution.
9) Promote water conservation by pursuing the goals, plans and objectives in the Environmental and Water Resources Elements.

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8. COST OF DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

Introduction

The Cost of Development Element identifies policies and strategies that the Town may use to offset costs associated with providing infrastructure improvements to a new development. This element identifies various mechanisms that are allowed by the existing State law that can be used to fund and finance additional public services necessary to serve the development.

Goals, objectives and policies are identified to ensure that funding mechanisms meet state statutes. Such funding mechanisms must result in a beneficial use to development and bear a reasonable relationship to the burden imposed on the Town to provide additional necessary public services to the new developments.

Current Situation

The Town has utilized various strategies to fund and finance additional public services necessary to serve new development in the community.

Development & Capacity Fees

The Town has used development and capacity fees to offset the costs of extending infrastructure to new developments. Carefree's development and capacity fees cover the capital costs of new water resources, provision of streets, municipal facilities and equipment and open space. The method of preparing the fees and collecting them is to be in accordance with Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS), as amended from time to time.

As a result of recently passed state legislation amending development fees requirements for municipalities, the Town's ability to apply development fees has been greatly limited (ARS, 2011). In addition, since the majority of Carefree has already been built-out, the street and utility systems that service new projects have already been established. Thus, it may not be necessary to assess fees to fund expansions to the system. As new developments occur on remaining vacant lots, the associated fees are not accruing quickly enough to make a real impact on capital improvements. In the few areas where new subdivisions and developments occur, the Town will require the developer to construct all utilities and infrastructure to service the new development.

Subdivision Ordinance Dedication of Right-of-way and Easements

Through the Town's Subdivision Ordinance, the Town can plan and coordinate implementation of necessary public services for new developments. Right-of-way and utility easement dedications are often required in the development process for subdivisions and larger developments, thus ensuring that developments pay for their fair share of necessary infrastructure.

Construction of Infrastructure by the Developer

In addition to development and capacity fees, the Town of Carefree has required developers to construct streets, sewers, water mains, drainage facilities and other improvements in and adjacent to their developments. The Carefree Water Company and other utilities also collect fees designed to pay for acquisition and transmission lines.

Capital Assets

Capital assets will be monitored and coordinated with Town growth in order to provide an appropriate level of service to local citizens.

Funding Strategies

According to State law, municipalities may use the following methods to fund the vision articulated in their General Plan:

1. Development impact fees: These are fees charged at the time of development that are calculated to offset the public costs needed to provide necessary services to a new development. These fees must be specifically tied to the public services they are designated for and based on publicly displayed infrastructure improvement plans in accordance with state requirements. Such fees are to be used for the share of necessary services for the associated new development. Fees are not to be assessed for the general maintenance or replacement of existing services or services not directly associated with a development project (Libby & Carrion, 2004; ARS, 2011). Any local development fee must be consistent with the most current state requirements.
2. In lieu fees: Like development fees, in lieu fees are collected for the provision of public services for a new development. In lieu fees are often used as an alternative to actual dedication of land or development of a public utility or recreational amenity (Evans-Cowley, 2006; ARS, 2011).
3. Bonded debt: Bonded debt may be used that is comprised of general obligation bonds, revenue bonds, certificates of participation notes and municipal property corporation bonds. Bonded debt is used to finance public projects that are too large to fund on a “pay as you go” basis. Development fees, user fees, sales tax revenue, property tax and similar sources could be used to repay the bonds over time.
4. Special taxing districts: These include improvement districts which can be used to finance various street and utility improvements. These districts can be used to accelerate improvements when funds to undertake the improvements are not readily available. Property owners are largely responsible for repaying bonds associated with special taxing districts through property tax assessments.
5. Dedication of land is a method that may be considered to widen streets, preserve land for open space and recreation and other purposes. Landowners making such dedications may receive credits against development and capacity fees or other charges.

6. Public improvement construction by developers and landowners is also used when appropriate. This may occur when services are dedicated for private use, as is the case with private streets in gated subdivisions. Under certain arrangements, developers could receive credit toward development and/or capacity fees or other charges for the value of the improvements constructed.
7. Utility providers separate from the Town manage and enforce regulations and processes for extending services to new developments. The Town has historically coordinated with the various utilities in the development process to identify any service gaps and to provide for quality planning, design and construction in conformance with local, regional and state requirements.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Acquire adequate funding and mechanisms are in place to provide necessary services to existing and new developments.

Objectives/Policies:

1) Assess the Town's current development fee policies and modify them as necessary in conformance with state statutes and the Town's interests.
2) Continue to require all new development to construct necessary public facilities within or adjacent to the development, consistent with State requirements and Town codes.
3) Continue to plan for and manage the fiscal and capital impacts resulting from new development.
4) Support the regulations in the Subdivision Ordinance and other applicable policies to implement the efficient planning and provision of necessary infrastructure and public services for new developments.
5) Coordinate with service providers to facilitate effective planning, design and implementation of public services.
6) Continue to monitor capital assets to identify and prioritize needed Town improvements.
7) Maintain any revenues from development and capacity fees in separate funds and use the funds only to construct facilities for which the fees were collected.

9. WATER RESOURCES ELEMENT

Introduction

Growing Smarter/Growing Smarter Plus requirements under A.R.S. §9-461.05 sets forth the requirements for the Water Resources Element. This element addresses the currently available surface water, groundwater and effluent supplies. It also includes an analysis of how the future growth projected in the general plan will be adequately served by the legally and physically available water supply and a plan to obtain necessary water supplies. This element is laid out as follows: An overview and history is provided, followed by an analysis of current water use and plans to meet current and projected demand. The goals, objectives and policies conclude this section.

Overview

Carefree citizens and non-residential customers receive water services from the Carefree Water Company (CFWC), Cave Creek Water Company (CCWC) and private wells. The Boulders golf course and Desert Forest Golf Club are currently not customers of either water company, utilizing water from private wells, CAP and effluent water from Scottsdale. The CFWC operates as a Utility Community Facilities District, a semi-public/private entity with the Carefree Town Council serving as the board of directors. The CCWC is managed by the Town of Cave Creek.

Various factors contribute to the Town's water distribution system. The Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) regulations; purchased shares of Central Arizona Project (CAP) water; ground water; agreements between CFWC, CCWC and Scottsdale; demand; quality of potable water; and utility costs all affect the amount of water that is drawn and where it is drawn. The local water companies have balanced these factors and maintained a quality and sufficient water supply that meets current and projected demands.

In 2011 the CFWC was providing water for approximately 1,634 residential units, which is approximately 72.6% of the 2,251 total housing units in Carefree, and 180 commercial and other meters (see Table 23 below). The CCWC was serving approximately 488 households, which is approximately 21.7% of Carefree's total residential units, and approximately 15 commercial units. Approximately 129, or 5.7% of the total housing units, are either on private wells or are vacant units not currently being serviced by either water company.

Table 23. Share of Residential Units Serviced

Water Supplier	Units	%
Carefree Water Company	1,634	72.6%
Cave Creek Water Company	488	21.7%
Wells or vacant residential units not receiving service	129	5.7%
Total	**2,251**	**100%**

History

1950's to 1990's:

Both the CFWC and the CCWC were formed to operate wells and water lines that were constructed in the late 1950's by private interests looking to develop the area. Carefree Water Company was initially allocated 400 acre feet (AF) of CAP water. The remaining water supply was pumped from the aquifer.

Before 1965, demand for water was minimal and the decline of the water table was minimal. Development since that time has dramatically increased the size of the service area of both water companies. With increased development throughout the region, pumping of ground water increased dramatically and the water table began to decline. Beginning in the mid 1980's into the early 1990's, a concern for the status of ground water supplies led to increased monitoring of water usage and the status of the ground water.

1990's to Present:

In 1996, a water supply plan was completed by consultant DCI, Inc. (March 27, 1996) to insure adequate water supplies for the future, which led to the eventual installation of a one million gallon underground water tank and other improvements to the system. In 1999, to begin to counteract the groundwater overdraw, the Town of Carefree Utility Community Facilities District purchased CFWC, which is now managed as a semi- public/private entity classified as a Utility Community Facilities District. In 2000, the Town also acquired additional 900 AF of CAP water, which reduced its dependence on ground water. CCWC also began using CAP water, and the Desert Mountain community in Scottsdale placed their golf courses on recycled water received from Scottsdale. Beginning in 2000, the underground aquifer began to refill because of the diminished pumping and the water recharge occurring in the City of Scottsdale. As of 2010 the water table has recovered as much as 83 feet of the water used in the past (G.M. Clement & Associates, Inc., 2009; CFWC, 2010).

The CFWC currently uses its groundwater wells to supplement the CAP water supply in non-emergency conditions up to 500 AF per year. The CFWC has a gallon for gallon water exchange agreement with the Desert Forest Golf Club (DFGC) that allows the golf course to use non-potable water with high arsenic content in exchange for the CFWC receiving potable water in return. The sources are designed to meet anticipated water demand at build-out (CFWC, 2011).

Currently, The CFWC Utility Community Facilities District and Cave Creek Water Company are responsible to provide for current water demand within their service areas, collect fees to cover the costs of water service, forecast future needs and secure the water to service new and existing developments through build-out (see Figure 21). They also pursue policies to promote water conservation, provide a quality potable water supply and sustain efforts to limit the practice of overusing groundwater where feasible.

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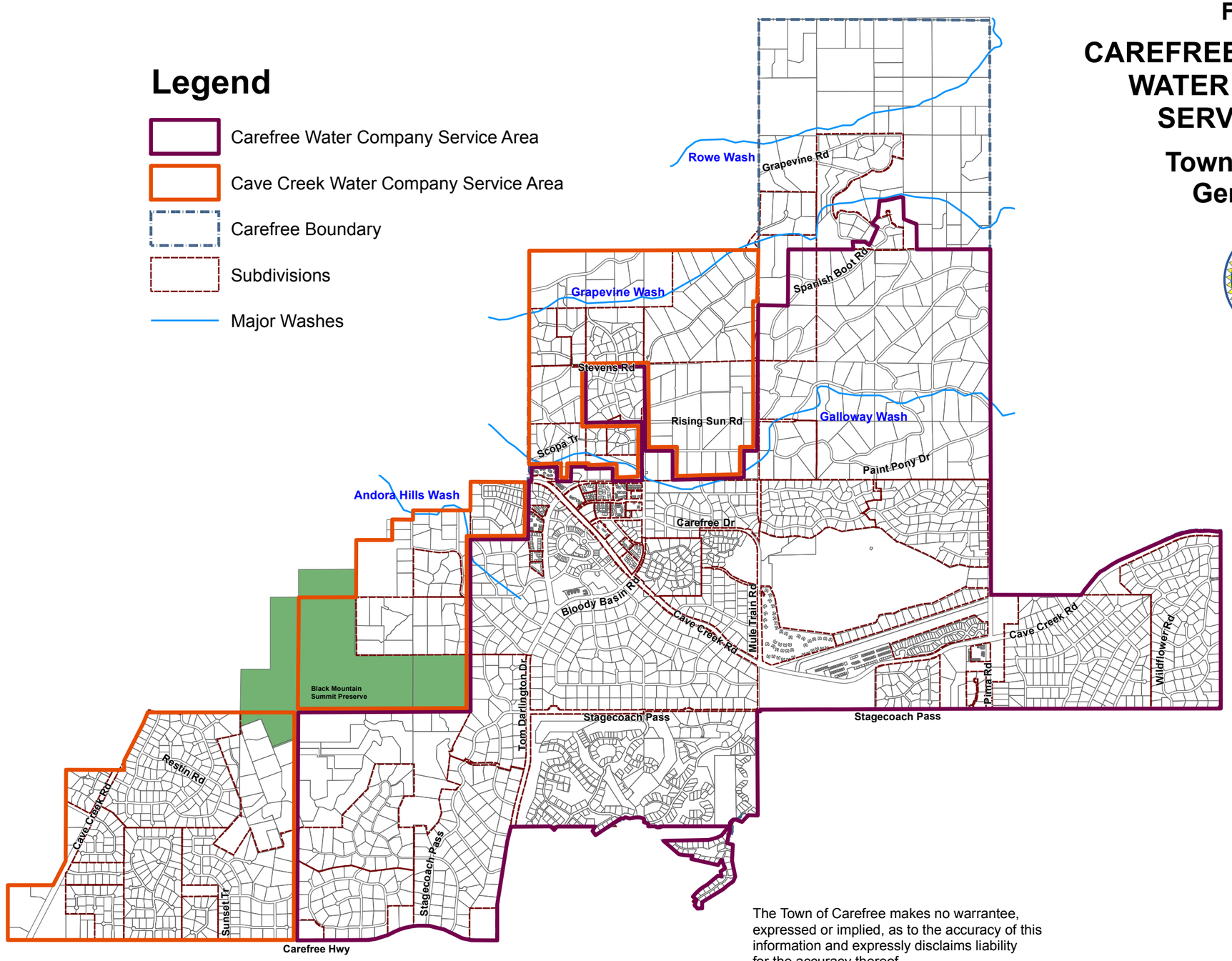
Figure 21.

CAREFREE & CAVE CREEK WATER COMPANIES: SERVICE AREAS

Town of Carefree General Plan



The Town of Carefree makes no warrantee, expressed or implied, as to the accuracy of this information and expressly disclaims liability for the accuracy thereof.

Source: Town of Carefree (2012)

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Carefree Water System

Water Production and Distribution

The CFWC and CCWC service residential and non-residential areas in Town, minus the golf courses (not including the CFWC's 1:1 exchange agreement with DFGC). Water is produced via alternating and pumps at wells and booster stations and distributed to residential developments, commercial units and fire hydrants through a network of water mains and lateral lines. Because of elevation changes within the Carefree water distribution system, there are various areas within the system that require pressure boosting facilities to maintain adequate flows and pressure requirements.

The most common type of pipe is made of PVC. ACP, steel and ductile iron pipes are also located in some areas.

The tables below exhibit both the average and total water produced by Water Companies servicing residential and non-residential uses in Carefree in gallons per minute (GPM) and Acre Feet (AF). It is noted that CFWC is the primary focus of studies in this section, because CCWC's main water production and distribution sources are not located in Carefree. However, for total water use estimates, CFWC data are extrapolated and applied to water data for properties located in Carefree and serviced by CCWC.

Table 24. Average Water Production

Water Company	Average GPM	Average AF/Min.
Carefree Water Company	521	0.0016
Cave Creek Water Company	104	0.0003
Total	**625**	**0.0019**

Source: Carefree Water Co. (1/2012)

Table 25. Total Water Production

Water Company	Total Units	Total AF/Yr.	% of Total
Carefree Water Company			
Single-Family Residential	1,163	601	54.8
Multi-Family Residential	471	97	8.8
Commercial	129	100	9.1
Other	51	42	3.8
Subtotal:	**1,814**	**840**	**76.6**
Cave Creek Water Company			
Single-Family Residential	488	255	23.3
Commercial	2	16	0.1
Subtotal:	**490**	**257**	**23.4**
Total Water Produced	**2,304**	**1,097**	**100%**

Source: Carefree Water Co. (1/2012)

According to tables 24 and 25, CFWC produces an average of 521 gallons per minute (gpm) and a maximum of 625 gpm, which is 0.0016 acre feet per minute (AF/min.) and 0.0019 AF/min. respectively (1 acre foot equals 325,851 gallons). The total water usage for CFWC per year is 840 acre feet (AF). The Total for both water companies is approximately 1,097 AF per year. The peak month for demand for CFWC is the month of July, in which 227 AF is used, or 27% of the annual water use.

Water Sources

The main sources of water are the Town's allotment of CAP water, which includes surface water primarily from the Colorado River and ground water. CFWC used approximately 840 AF of water in 2011. According to Table 26 below, approximately 494 AF of water, or 59% of the CFWC's supply, comes from CAP. 46% of the CAP water (267 AF) is delivered through CCWC and 54% (227 AF) comes through Scottsdale's water system. The remaining 346 AF of water, or 41% of total water used, is pumped from the local aquifer. Notwithstanding the data below, the split between CAP Water and ground water changes each month and can approach a 50-50 share between these two water sources.

Table 26. CFWC Water Sources

Water Source	Total AF/Yr.	% of Total
CAP Water	**494**	**59**
▪ Scottsdale	267	32
▪ CCWC	227	27
Ground Water	**346**	**41**
Total	**840**	**100**

Carefree Water Company (1/2012)

The maximum allowed water that can be obtained from CAP for projected future growth is 1,300 AF per year. According to an agreement between CFWC and the City of Scottsdale, the maximum amount that can be pumped from the ground in non-emergency situations is 500 AF, which amounts to a total of 1,800 AF per year and 4.93 AF per day.

Aquifer level measurements since the year 2000 indicate the water table has been rising and will continue to rise as long as the City of Scottsdale continues its programs for recharging the aquifer and the current practices in Carefree and Cave Creek remain the same. This reduces the concerns in previous years of a declining water table. Town still supports efforts to promote water conservation and refrain from drawing more water from the aquifer than is deemed necessary.

Water Storage

Water storage data in this section is for the CFWC. It utilizes four water storage facilities to manage weekly demand for water. The total water holding capacity is approximately 1,850,000 gallons, or 5.68 AF at maximum capacity. If all of CFWC's well pump systems were to run at maximum capacity, they would be capable of providing a maximum of 2,255 gallons per minute or which is approximately 9.97 AF per day, or 3,637 AF per year. This extreme scenario would most likely not occur, since the output estimate far exceeds the projected future demand. Even in emergency situations or if demand were to somehow

spike, CFWC would more likely draw from a balance of CAP water and water from a selection of local wells, rather than place continuous stress on the well systems or risk a decline in the local aquifer level.

Fire Hydrants & Fire Protection

When the previous General Plan was adopted in 2002, there were an insufficient number of fire hydrants in most areas of the Town to contribute to firefighting capacity. This concern led to the Town requiring fire sprinklers in all new homes and commercial buildings. In the last 10 years, the CFWC installed approximately 200 new fire hydrants and will continue to do so as funds are available, which will further increase the firefighting capability in the Town.

Projected Water Use and Future Plans

The existing water system is capable of supplying the present normal consumption demands as well as peak demands for its users. The existing system is also capable of meeting projected future peak demands. If water consumption remains relatively the same, data suggests there are sufficient resources through CFWC to provide 1,300 AF of CAP water and 500 AF of ground water, which amounts to a total of 1,800 AF per year.

Table 27 below exhibits the total water demand at projected build-out for residential and commercial areas. A multiplier based on CFWC's current water use is applied to the base number to arrive at the total water demand for each category.

Assuming a maximum build-out population of 6,500, the total new occupied dwelling units within Carefree would be 3,202. When adjusted for well sites outside water company service areas (approx. 5%), there will be an estimated 3,042 housing units to be serviced, which would require approximately 1,521 AF of water annually. This estimate is lower than what is in reality expected, because it assumes no residential vacancies. Commercial areas would require between 173 AF and 206 AF per year depending on whether the 23-acre Special Planning Area shown on the Future Land Use Map were developed for residential or non-residential uses. A 5% contingency is added to account for unaccounted losses on non-current usage and an emergency contingency situation if CFWC were to temporarily provide water to CCWC residents within Carefree. That results in a total range of 1,778.7 to 1,813.4 AF per year of projected water demand at build-out.

Table 27. Projected Water Demand at Build-Out for CFWC and CCWC

2010 Census	Existing Units Serviced	Existing Water Use (Acre Feet)	Average Water Use/Unit (Acre Feet)	Projected Total Units at Build-out	Projected Water Needed (Acre Feet)
Residential Dwelling Units	2,122 Housing Units	1,107	0.5*	3,042 Housing Units	1,521
Commercial & Other	106.4 Acres Built	154	1.44	119.8 -142.8 Acres Built**	173 - 206
Total if Special Planning Area Remains LDR	-	-	-	-	1,694
Total if SPA remains LDR Plus 5% Contingency	-	-	-	-	**1,778.7**
Total if SPA is Non-Residential	-	-	-	-	1,727
Total if SPA is Non-Residential Plus 5% Contingency	-	-	-	-	**1,813.4**

Source: Carefree Water Company (1/2012)

* Current annual water usage in CFWC is .45 AF per housing unit, but 0.5 is used here as a conservative estimate used by ADWR.

** The lower end of this range is based on the possibility of the 23-acre Special Planning Area (SPA) being developed as a Low Density Residential use (minimum 1-acre lots). The upper end is based on the possibility of the SPA being developed as a commercial/nonresidential use.

The above estimates should not be seen as final and/or firm because of various factors that could affect Town growth and water demand. Given the conservative built-out estimate of 6,500 units, seasonal residents in the Town, and vacancy rates inherent with any community, CFWC's total available 1,800 AF of water per year exceeds the projected build-out scenarios. While it is unlikely this entire amount will be needed, it provides the assurance that the Town will be able to provide for future water demand were growth to exceed projections or if per capita demand for water were to increase.

It is anticipated that both CFWC and CCWC will continue to supply water to their Carefree customers based on demand and regulations set forth by ADWR (Carefree, 2012; Cave Creek General Plan, 2011). A majority of the water supplied at build-out will probably come from CAP, with a certain amount extracted from the aquifer in accordance with state allowances and local agreements. Future increased CAP use could reduce Carefree's dependence on ground water. On the other hand, CAP water is approximately 6 times more expensive than water pumped from local wells. In the effort to keep rates as low as possible, the CFWC may increase its share of water pumped from the aquifer. In doing so, it will continue to monitor the aquifer levels to promote a sustainable level of draws.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1. Maintain a reliable and efficient water utility system that services the needs of residential and non-residential uses.

Objectives/Policies

1) Prepare detailed land use studies along with detailed water use studies so that an updated water resource plan can be made available to the Town.
2) Continue to evaluate the water system and strategies for improving the efficiency of existing facilities and expanding service.
3) Maximize fire protection in the community by continuing to install fire hydrants as funding is available and by supporting Building Code requirements concerning fire sprinklers.
4) Use a pricing plan to encourage water conservation.
5) Utilize the subdivision ordinance standards to support efficient extension of water services to new developments.
6) In accordance with State law and the Cost of Development Element goals, objectives and policies, ensure new development will complete its reasonable and fair share of providing for new water facilities that directly service the respective development.
7) Support the Arizona Department of Water Resources in its regulations concerning water allocation.

Goal 2. Provide for a safe and clean supply of potable water.

Objectives/Policies

1) Continue to monitor water sources to ensure that quality potable water is available for distribution to local residences and businesses.
2) Support the land use designations on the General Plan Future Land Use map, which encourage low density residential uses in the majority of the Town.
3) Support the efforts of the Carefree Water Company to protect water lines from breakage and infiltration of contaminants.
4) During development review, promote measures in developments to mitigate ground water contamination.
5) Support the Arizona Department of Water Resources and the Maricopa County Environmental Services Department in their regulations concerning water quality.

Goal 3: Promote water conservation and water reuse.

Objectives/Policies

1) Monitor water use and contact customers when irregular peaks occur in the amount used.
2) Promote the use of controlled irrigation methods to reduce over-watering.

3) Maintain xeriscape landscaping and native plant material on public property.
4) Continue to require use of drought-tolerant plants in landscape plans for new construction.
5) Promote products and technologies that use an efficient amount of water in the home and for irrigation systems.
6) Pursue policies to limit the use of natural turf in public and private developments.
7) Preserve the maximum amount of natural desert at the time of land development, thereby maintaining natural areas for water infiltration and restoration of groundwater.
8) Where developments occur in or near washes, emphasize non-structural flood control techniques where possible to limit the amount of impervious surfaces.
9) Encourage use of permeable surfaces for new parking lots and driveways in new developments to increase groundwater infiltration.
10) Promote use of methods for using reclaimed wastewater, where possible, to facilitate transfer of large-scale irrigation consumers away from reliance on the aquifer.
11) Continue to encourage and assist the Carefree Water Company and Cave Creek Water Company in identifying opportunities to conserve water and educating the public on water conservation strategies.

10. PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES ELEMENT

Introduction

The Public Services and Facilities Element gives an overview regarding current public services and outlines general goals and policies for development-related public facilities under the Town's management. One of the Town's main purposes is to maintain a small government that provides core, essential services for local residents. Presently, these services include town administration, municipal court administration, code enforcement, building and safety, planning and zoning, citizen relations, public works, streets and right-of-way management and economic development.

Various public services are either managed by private companies or contracted out to external agencies to reduce the financial burden on the Town and better serve the community. Such services vary and change from time-to-time. External services currently include public safety, fire protection, emergency medical services, public legal counsel, Town magistrate, sales tax auditing, drainage and stormwater management, civil engineering, waste management, water provision (see Water Resources Element) and wastewater.

Existing Conditions

Public Safety

The Town contracts with the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) for public safety. Pursuant to the current contract, local deputies are assigned to Carefree to assist with law enforcement and other public safety needs. Some of the specific services MCSO currently provides are traffic enforcement, security during Town events, public outreach and prescription drug collection and disposal.

Fire Protection

Prior to 2007, fire protection and ambulance services were managed by Rural/Metro Fire Department (Rural Metro), a subscription based private company funded through annual fees from its customers. As of January 1, 2007, the Town entered into a master contract with Rural Metro for fire and emergency medical services, ending the need for individual subscriptions in the Town. Since 2007, to control costs, the Town purchased a fire truck and constructed the Town's fire station.

Contracted Services

A variety of professional services and expertise is provided by external consultants, including public legal counsel, the Town magistrate, sales tax auditing, drainage and stormwater management and civil engineering services. Other services are contracted out on an as-needed basis, such as marketing, transportation and other studies and maintenance of the Carefree Desert Gardens.

Public Utilities

External public utility companies service the Town's demand for electric, gas, cable, telecommunications, waste management, wastewater and other services. The Town coordinates with utility companies and county agencies regarding planning and development. It requires permits for any work performed in the right-of-ways consistent with state, county and municipal regulations and policies.

Wastewater

Wastewater services are provided by Liberty Water (formerly known as Algonquin Water Services), which purchased Black Mountain Sewer Company in 2001. Liberty Water's franchise area covers approximately 7 square miles, a portion of which is in Carefree. Of its approximately 2,100 customers, 1,076 are residential and commercial customers in Carefree (Liberty Water, 2011). Liberty Water's wastewater franchise area does not include the entire Town limits, and a collection system is unavailable in some parts of the franchise area, which results in the use of privately owned septic systems in certain areas (see Figure 22 – Liberty Water Wastewater Service Area). Maricopa County Environmental Services oversees permitting for private septic systems.

Wastewater in Liberty Water's franchise area is currently treated at a Liberty Water-owned treatment plant located in the Boulders Carefree community and other facilities located further south in Scottsdale. At the time of Carefree's incorporation in 1984, the Boulders plant was owned and managed by the Boulders Carefree Sanitary Sewer Corporation, but it was later purchased by the Black Mountain Sewer Company. Recently, residents of the Boulders community and Liberty Water have pursued measures to facilitate decommissioning this plant and route all wastewater into facilities located in Scottsdale. The Town also supports decommissioning the treatment plant.

If the Boulders treatment plant is decommissioned, Liberty Water has sufficient capacity to provide for the Town's current and future wastewater demands through build-out within its franchise area by directing all wastewater to treatment facilities outside the Town's limits. In some cases, new lines may be necessary to connect new developments to the system.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: **Continue to provide quality public services. Support the ongoing efforts of external agencies to maintain a reliable, efficient and quality level of public services.**

Objectives & Policies:

1) Frequently evaluate the quality of the Town's core public services and facilities and improve upon the Town's assets in accordance with local needs and as resources permit.
2) Continue to coordinate with public agencies and utilities to ensure that quality and efficient planning and development occurs in providing for the Town's existing and future public service needs.
3) During the design and development phases for utility projects and line extensions, promote measures to protect sensitive natural resources by implementing the goals, objectives and policies outlined in the Land Use, Circulation, Open Space and Environmental Elements.
4) Support Maricopa County Environmental Services in its enforcement of wastewater regulations and permitting process for onsite septic systems.

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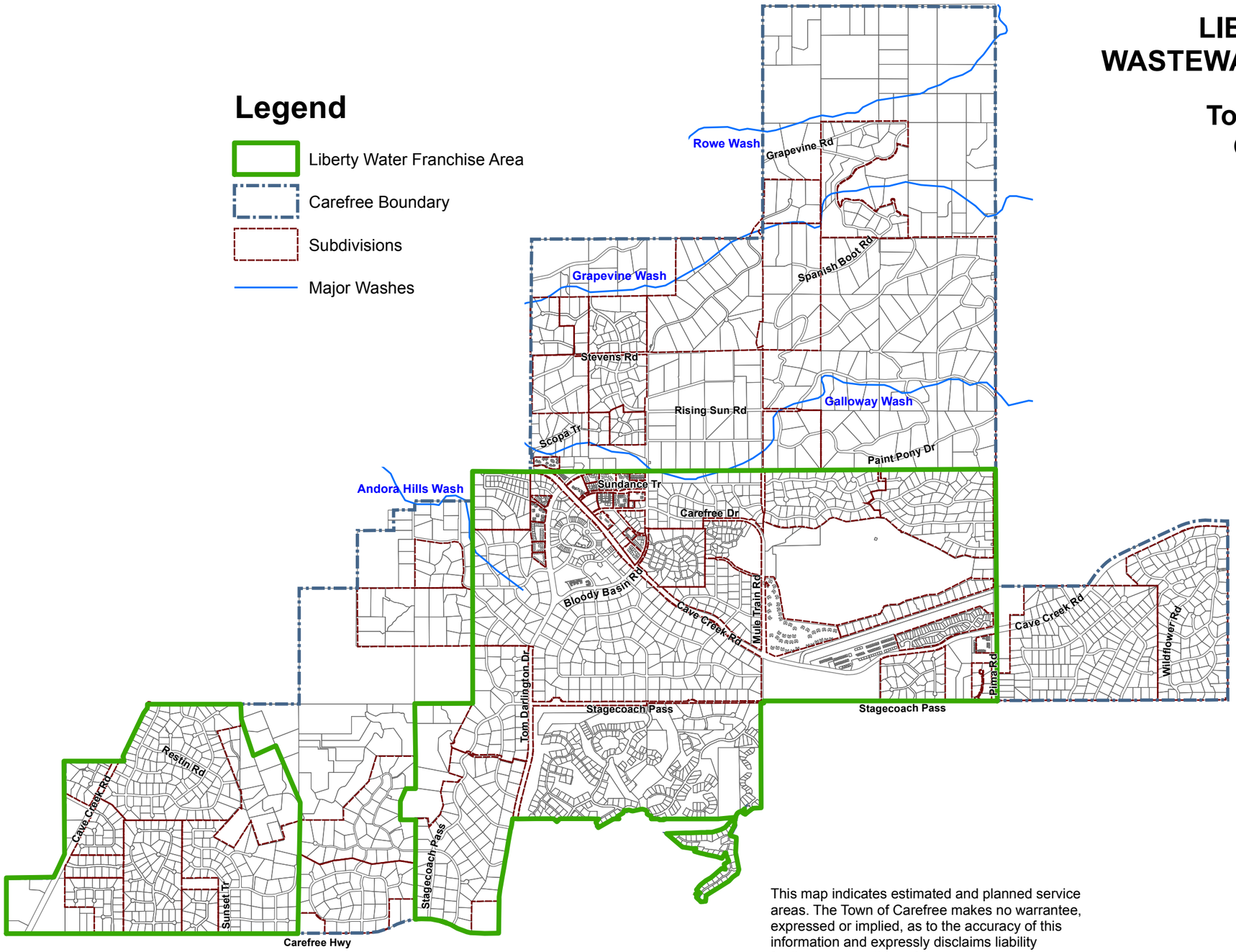
Figure 22.

LIBERTY WATER WASTEWATER SERVICE AREA

Town of Carefree General Plan



This map indicates estimated and planned service areas. The Town of Carefree makes no warrantee, expressed or implied, as to the accuracy of this information and expressly disclaims liability for the accuracy thereof.

Source: Town of Carefree (2012)

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11. IMPLEMENTATION

Plan Adoption Process

The final draft of the updated General Plan is prepared by means of a thorough public process overseen by the Planning and Zoning Commission. There are three formal steps in adopting the updated General Plan. First, the Planning and Zoning Commission approves the General Plan in a public hearing. Second, the Town Council adopts the General Plan in a public hearing. Third, the adopted General Plan is submitted to the voters for ratification at an election. Upon voter ratification, the plan becomes the Town's policy document concerning land development.

Continuing Planning

The General Plan provides a vision, guiding principles and policies to give direction to the development of more specific plans, programs and projects. It represents the first step in an on-going planning process for development aspects of the Town. In this endeavor, the Town will continue to periodically assess the Zoning Ordinance, capital assets, budget and finances, public services and Town policies and regulations. These policies and documents will be amended as necessary to bring into fruition the goals and intents of the General Plan.

Major Amendments to the General Plan

State requirements under A.R.S. §9-461.06 sets forth the requirements for major amendments to the General Plan, as summarized below:

1. The adoption or re-adoption of a major amendment to the General Plan shall be approved by affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the legislative body of the municipality.
2. All major amendments proposed for adoption to the General Plan by the governing body of a municipality shall be presented at a single public hearing during the calendar year the proposal is made. At least sixty days before the major amendment is noticed, a copy of the proposal shall be transmitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission and required public agencies.
3. "Major amendment" means a substantial alteration of the municipality's land use mixture or balance as established in the municipality's existing General Plan Land Use Element.
4. The municipality's General Plan shall define the criteria to determine if a proposed amendment to the General Plan effects a substantial alteration of the municipality's land use mixture or balance as established in the municipality's existing General Plan Land Use Element.

Procedure

Major amendments to the General Plan are subject to a higher standard than minor amendments in terms of the public process and scrutiny, and shall be in conformance with State requirements.

A major amendment(s) may be requested or proposed by a property owner, the Planning and Zoning Commission, or Town Council. To provide for sufficient review and public notice, a major amendment(s) to the General Plan must be submitted on or before August 1st of the associated year. Consistent with Town policies, measures will be taken to provide for effective Citizen Participation.

The application shall be presented at a single public hearing of the Planning and Zoning Commission in November of the calendar year in which the proposal is made. A final decision shall be made by the Town Council in a public hearing in conformance with State requirements.

Criteria for Major Amendments to the General Plan

A major amendment to the General Plan is defined as any one of the following:

1. A change in a land use designation shown on the General Plan Future Land Use Map from Open Space (OS) and/or any single family residential land use designation (Rural Residential - RR, Very Low Density Residential - VLDR and Low Density Residential - LDR) to Garden Office (GO), Commercial (C), and/or Resort Hotel/Resort Development (RH/RD); and the change occurs on any lot that is a minimum of five (5) acres in size.
2. Any expansion of the Town Center (TC), Special Planning Area (SPA) and/or Airport (Air) land use designation shown on the General Plan Future Land Use Map, regardless of the size of the expansion.
3. A text amendment and/or General Plan Future Land Use Map amendment that creates a new land use designation which changes the densities and/or intensities of land uses.

Application Criteria

The applicant shall provide the information listed below in association with a request for a major General Plan amendment. The Town will consider this information when evaluating the request for a major General Plan amendment.

1. Explain how the amendment will constitute an improvement to the General Plan and the community.
2. Explain how the change will affect the proposed alteration of the Town's land use mixture or balance as established in the Land Use Element.
3. Indicate how the amendment will affect the vision, goals, objectives and purposes of the General Plan, and how these aspects of the General Plan support the proposed amendment.
4. Provide information concerning how evolving trends in land development and local market support the proposed amendment.

5. Provide an analysis concerning how the proposal could influence property values and neighborhood stability.
6. If the proposed amendment relates to a specific site, address how the change would be compatible with the surrounding land uses.
7. Provide information concerning how the proposed amendment will affect any existing infrastructure and public services, more particularly the street systems, water and wastewater.
8. If applicable, explain how the amendment will impact the school districts' ability to accommodate any additional children.

Minor Amendments to the General Plan

Any requests that are not determined to be major amendments are minor amendments. Minor amendment(s) may be submitted, reviewed and heard in public hearings at any time during the year in conformance with State Statutes and Town regulations concerning timing, public notification and procedure.

A minor amendment(s) shall be requested or proposed by a property owner, the Planning and Zoning Commission, or Town Council. The same application criteria listed for major General Plan amendments shall be provided in association with any application for a minor amendment(s). Consistent with Town policies, measures will be taken to provide for effective Citizen Participation.

Applications for minor amendment(s) shall be considered at public hearings by the Planning and Zoning Commission and Town Council per State and Town requirements. Any minor General Plan amendment(s) shall be approved prior to the approval of any corresponding application for a rezoning, special use permit, or preliminary plat.

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REFERENCES

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