



## **Private Investment Sparks Revitalization in Carefree**

**9-21-2017**

There is no question Carefree is a nimble, financially responsible organization when comparing our small organizational structure, financially conservative budgets and steady reserves. However, Carefree's historical financial model has taken a one two punch from the legacy of the global recession and recent state legislative changes that will adversely impact one of the largest revenues streams to local municipalities – construction sales tax.

As a result, it is incumbent upon our current Town leadership to evaluate and address projected revenue declines. As with any financial issues, internal savings have been considered and achieved; however with our historical financially conservative approach, there are not many opportunities which would yield sufficient savings to address the declines in our revenues. Therefore, we must investigate ways to enhance our main revenue stream – municipal sales tax.

This evaluation process started over four years ago, when the Town commissioned the Urban Land Institute to review how the Town could cultivate a more sustainable business environment which had the capacity to generate the sales taxes the Town relied on to pay for services such as police, emergency services, street maintenance and building safety. A recommendation from this public forum was to create a revitalization plan which engages the community and outlines specific solutions to create a more sustainable Town Center and tax base. During this one year process there was a tremendous amount of citizen and business involvement which yielded a revitalization plan that has been recognized and awarded by the State Planning Association as the most outstanding revitalization plan for small communities within the State.

We are beginning to experience very positive results from this collaborative community effort and award winning plan with approximately \$90 million of private investment.

- The Bashas' grocery store remodel.
- The renovation of Spanish Village, including the new Bacan restaurant opening later this fall.
- The current renovations to the Carefree Post Office.
- The repositioning of the Carefree Resort into a world class resort – Civana Resort and Spa
- The introduction of a new luxury rental home development on what many residents have referenced in the past as the "big ugly dirt lot" located on the backside of Bashas' and down the hill from the Spirit in the Desert Retreat Center.

The aforementioned private investment in the community did not happen arbitrarily. These tangible investments are a direct reflection of efforts to engage the community, develop a plan and implement the plan. As we collectively discuss these investments within our community please take some time to review this collaborative plan which can be found at [www.carefree.org/190/Revitalization-Master-Plan](http://www.carefree.org/190/Revitalization-Master-Plan) or please stop by Town Hall to speak to the Mayor or Town Administrator so we may collectively share our thoughts regarding building a sustainable community.

