



Town of Carefree

Village Center

Redevelopment Plan

Town Council Approved

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Acknowledgments

Carefree Town Council

John Crane – Mayor
Cheryl Kroyer – Vice Mayor
Sheila Amoroso
Vince D’Aliesio
Tony Geiger
Stephen Hatcher
Michael Johnson

Carefree Planning & Zoning Commission

Tom Cross, Chairperson
Lyn Hitchon, Vice Chairperson
Heather Burgett, Commissioner
Peter Burns, Commissioner
Phil Corso, Commissioner
Daniel Davee, Commissioner
Ralph Ferro, Commissioner

Town Staff

Gary Neiss – Town Administrator
Kandace French Contreras – Town Clerk
Steve Prokopek – Economic Development Director
Stacey Bridge-Denzak – Planning Director
Mark Milstone – Town Engineer
Erica Shumaker – Communications Coordinator

Consultant Team



In association with

ESI Corporation
L.L. Consulting

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Over the last seven years the Town of Carefree has undertaken a number of public projects and initiatives as a way to encourage development and redevelopment that supports the ongoing success of Carefree's Village Center. Despite this investment and activity, several areas within the Village Center continue to require improvement, particularly in new retail and housing options, but also around infrastructure, transportation, and safety improvements. This Redevelopment Plan recognizes recent improvements within the Village Center and builds on the areas original Village Center Master Plan (2015) to recommend enhanced strategic initiatives, and in turn, make available additional redevelopment tools that are not currently accessible to improve conditions within the Village Center.

This Chapter provides essential information about the components of this Redevelopment Plan, including its purpose, study limits, and planning process. At the end of this Chapter is a user's guide. This guide should be utilized by all interested parties to better understand how to most effectively use this Redevelopment Plan.

Plan Purpose

The primary purpose of the Carefree Village Center Redevelopment Plan is to function as a unifying guide to help Town officials and community stakeholders restore and enhance the economic vibrancy of the Village Center in a way that supports the long-term viability and sustainability of the entire Carefree community.

Legislative Authority and Benefits of a Redevelopment Plan

State Law strictly limits the manner in which Cities and Towns can use public funds for private use as well as the way in which public property can be managed and sold.

In response, a Redevelopment Plan (Arizona Revised Statute 36-1474) enables a special set of tools, where communities can use public resources to leverage private investment. These tools allow:

- The ability for municipalities to have greater control over the disposition of real estate.
- The ability to enter into public/private partnerships, allowing public sector investment in the revitalization of private property.
- Enhanced rules for bond financing of municipal improvements.
- Access to federal grants and loans.

Further, it is important to note, this plan does not propose relocation of any residents as part of the implementation of this redevelopment effort.

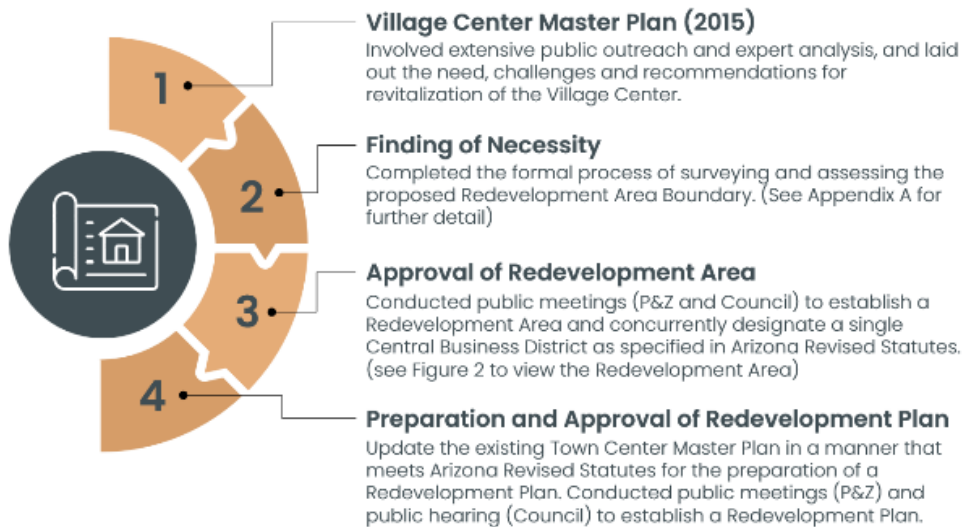
Regional Context

The Village Center is located in the heart of the Town of Carefree. Carefree is located along the northern edge of the Phoenix Metropolitan Area, approximately 10 miles north of Loop 101 and 10 miles east of Interstate-17. Situated around picturesque Black Mountain, Carefree is 9 square miles in size and is one of three communities that combine to form the area known as the Desert Foothills. Generally, land locked, Carefree is positioned between the communities of Cave Creek to the west, Scottsdale to the south and east, and a small pocket of mountainous unincorporated land to the north. The Town also serves as the gateway to Bartlett Lake, which is located approximately 16 miles east of the Carefree town limits. *See Figure 1 – Regional Context*

Planning Process & Redevelopment Area

To establish this Redevelopment Plan and access the redevelopment powers allowable under Arizona law, the Town of Carefree underwent the planning process identified on the following page, which included conducting a "Finding of Necessity" and approval of the Plan's formal "Redevelopment Area".

Redevelopment Area - The Village Center Redevelopment Area is sited in the geographic center of the Town and encompasses approximately 81 acres. Through formal adoption by the Town Council on August 3, 2022, the Redevelopment Area was determined to be defined by Tom Darlington Drive to the west (including parcels along Ed Everett Way and within Mariachi Plaza), Cave Creek Road to the north and east, and Bloody Basin Drive to the south. *See Figure 2 – Redevelopment Area and Appendix A – Resolution for the Redevelopment Area/CBD Establishment.*



Historical Overview & Public Outreach

Historical Outreach

The previously prepared 2015 Carefree Village Center Master Plan, upon which this Redevelopment Plan is based, was the product of a multi-phased, community driven process that was designed to provide opportunities for community input at a variety of levels. This original planning process included technical advisory committee meetings, one-on-one interviews with key project stakeholders, and multiple community workshops. Following is a brief summary of the previous public outreach elements of the 2015 Village Center Master Plan process:

Village Center Steering Committee - A 19-member Steering Committee (SC) was appointed by the Town to provide oversight to the planning process. Over the course of the project the SC met four times to review and discuss materials presented by the planning team and to provide feedback and direction. SC membership was designed to represent a broad cross-section of the community and included: Town residents; downtown business and property owners; Town staff and elected officials; members of the development community; and members of the local Chamber.

Stakeholder Interviews - Project team members conducted numerous one-on-one interviews with key project stakeholders over the life of the project. These meetings were held to gather background information and to obtain a variety of perspectives on the issues impacting the Village Center.

Community Open Houses (2015) - Two Community Open Houses were held during the visioning and draft concept review portions of the planning process (November 18, 2004, and December 13, 2004) to increase awareness of the committee's ongoing efforts and to solicit feedback on various aspects of the Village Center Master Plan.

Redevelopment Plan Outreach

As part of the process to update the original 2015 Village Center Master Plan and prepare this Redevelopment Plan, additional stakeholder and public outreach was conducted:

Planning & Zoning Commission - Multiple public workshops and public meetings were conducted with the Planning & Zoning Commission over the course of this effort.

Economic Development Technical Advisory Panel (EDTAP) - To supplement and expand on the feedback provided by the Planning & Zoning Commission, input was also garnered from the Carefree EDTAP. This staff level professional panel was comprised of property owners and representatives as well as business owners within the Village Center.

Community Open House & Outreach - Along with the opportunity to attend all public workshops and meetings that were conducted with the Planning & Zoning Commission to review this effort, a community open house was also hosted by the Town to inform residents about the project and gain feedback on any aspects of the planning process. Approximately 70 participants attended the meeting and the resulting input was incorporated into the final plan. Community engagement and public involvement will continue to be an integral part of the implementation of the Village Center Redevelopment Plan.

Figure 1 - Regional Context

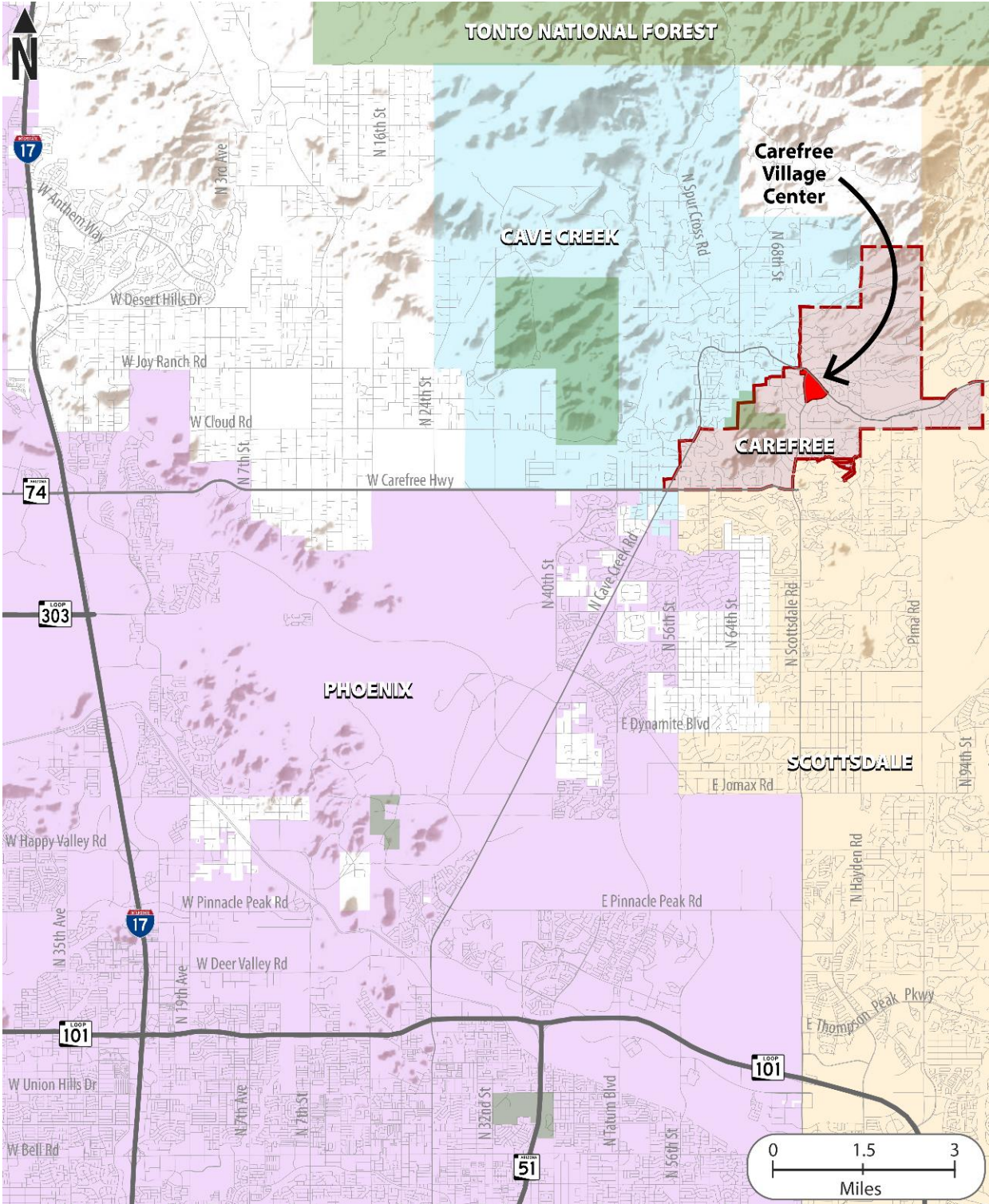
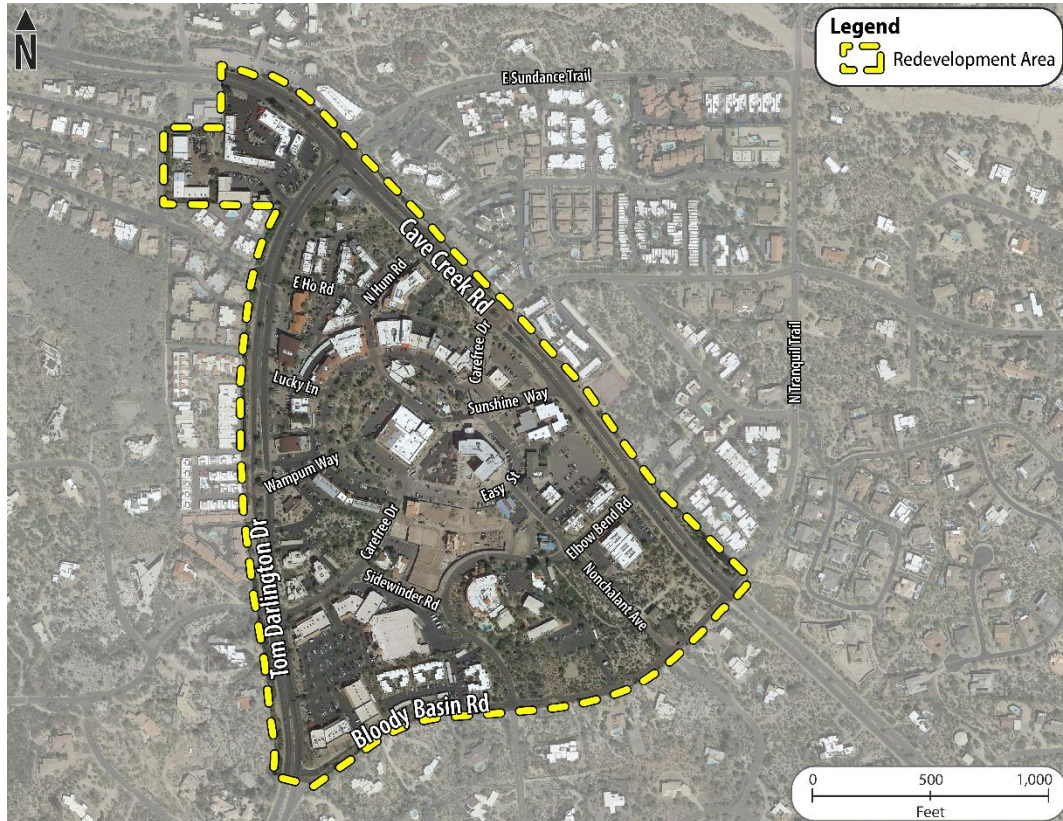


Figure 2 – Redevelopment Area



User's Guide to the Redevelopment Plan

Since the Redevelopment Plan will be utilized by a variety of users (such as property owners, Town staff, business owners, residents, and elected and appointed officials), this user's guide was developed to help quickly direct a reader to portions of the plan that are of most interest to them. The Redevelopment Plan consists of the following mutually supportive Chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This Chapter provides a summary of the plans purpose, legal authority, and overview of the Redevelopment Area along with an outline of the project's history, public outreach and planning process.

Chapter 2: Carefree Today

This Chapter provides detailed background information related to conditions that are currently present in the Village Center such as, historical context, land use, urban form, mobility, marketing, promotions and organization.

Chapter 3: The Vision

This Chapter describes the overall vision and goals, as well as presents the overall Redevelopment Master Plan for the Carefree Village Center.

Chapter 4: The Plan for Action

This Chapter outlines the planning framework for revitalizing the Village Center, including identification of primary objectives, strategies, and supporting action items. Maps, illustrations and photos in this section help outline the major concepts for achieving the Village Center vision.

Chapter 5: Implementation

This Chapter provides a framework for implementing the Redevelopment Plan. The framework includes a detailed matrix that outlines and prioritizes the timing of specific strategies, as well as identifies those priority projects that should be implemented first and the funding mechanisms that may be used to facilitate them.

Chapter 2: Carefree Today

The foundation of an effective Redevelopment Plan begins with a clear understanding of where the Carefree community is today. This Chapter includes a comprehensive overview of issues and opportunities in the Redevelopment Area relative to past or existing history, land use, urban form, mobility, market, promotion, and organization conditions.

Historical Context

The Town

Despite having only been incorporated as a town for 38 years, Carefree's history is nearly twice as long. The Carefree area was originally a goat farm until the mid-1950s, when K.T. Palmer and Tom Darlington purchased the farm and conceived the development of a master planned community. The Town's name originated from the lighthearted development company formed by the pair, the "Carefree Development Corporation." The name Carefree stuck and was enhanced by the whimsical street names, such as Tranquil Trail, Easy Street, and Ho Hum Drive. At the same time, they maintained its Western heritage with street names like Long Rifle, Stagecoach and Bloody Basin. Planning for Carefree's various subdivisions began shortly after, and in 1959 the first home was built and sold. After several attempts, Carefree incorporated as a town in 1984.

The Village Center

The Village Center has served as Carefree's center of social and economic development since its inception. The Village Center continued to gain importance as both the central business district and the Town's primary source of revenue from 1984 to today, suffering recently during the economic recession. The Village Center was conceived as the center of a master planned community of unique residential subdivisions surrounding a Spanish Colonial village of eclectic shops and restaurants. Strategically positioned along the Desert Foothills Scenic Drive, which became a very popular day trip for seasonal tourists, the Village Center benefited from its ideal location. However, the remote picturesque drive that initially enticed visitors to the area has slowly vanished in place of residential and commercial development. The Village Center, which has historically relied upon local resident patronage and the seasonal in-migration of tourists for its success, must now evolve to compete within the Desert Foothills market place.



Carefree Village Center (1959) – This aerial image displays the original natural setting of the Village Center and the prevalence of a well-defined two-lane divided main entry drive that connects directly to the sundial in the foreground.



Carefree Village Center (2014) – This more recent aerial photo shows the level of development that has occurred within and around the Village Center, as well as shows how the original main Carefree Drive entry experience has been altered.

Recent Improvements

Beginning in 2000, the Town has taken several proactive steps to enhance the Village Center and position it for success in the future. In 2000 and 2001, three documents were created to help enhance the Village Center. These plans include “The 2000 Town Center Specific Plan”, the “2001 Town Center Parking Analysis” and the “Town Center Improvement Plans”. These involved the construction of the Carefree Desert Gardens, Pavilion, on-street parking, traffic circles at Village Center entrances, a drainage system, and outdoor lighting, among other features. Recent improvements include gas lamp period lighting and new business directory signs. Subsequent efforts to update the Town’s 2002 General Plan included a new section on Economic Development, which outlines the Town’s goal to refocus its efforts in the Village Center. The impetus behind this goal was to ensure the Village Center continues to develop in a manner consistent with the Town’s ideals and unique character.

Since 2015, the Town has experienced a significant surge in new businesses locating in the Village Center, development of vacant properties, placement of gateway arches, enhancements to the Carefree Desert Gardens, and an enhanced schedule of community events.

Material Review

The Town of Carefree has undertaken a number of plans and policy documents in the recent past that specifically, or in part, relate to the Village Center. Each of these documents was extensively reviewed to help inform this redevelopment effort. A partial list of these plans include, the Carefree General Plan 2030, Carefree Zoning Ordinance, 2014 Urban Land Institute (ULI) Arizona Technical Assistance Panel (AzTAP) Summary Report, 2000 Town Center Specific Plan, Carefree Economic Development Strategic Plan, Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Cave Creek/Carefree Transportation Framework Study, Carefree Commercial Design Guidelines, as well as various existing and past private development plans.

Land Use

General Plan 2030

The Carefree General Plan estimates the potential for 100 future residential dwelling units located within the Village Center. Thirty of these anticipated residential units are currently being developed as part of “The View Carefree” development. When multiplied by 2.0 persons per housing unit (based on the 2020 Census), the estimated new population at build-out in the Village Center would be approximately 200 residents. Planning for the development of residential units directly in the Village

Center is a positive objective of the General Plan, because a permanent population base that actively lives in the Village Center, is a key ingredient to developing a more vibrant Town core environment.

According to Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) 2019 Socioeconomic Projections, there are a total of 1,600 jobs in Carefree compared to a workforce (age 16-64) of 1,496 people (2020 ACS 5-Year Estimate). 98.2% of the existing workforce in Carefree out commutes to work, in turn, over 98% of the existing jobs in Carefree are filled by non-Carefree residents. MAG estimates by the year 2040 the total number of jobs in Carefree will increase to 2,400 jobs. Consequently, a large number of future jobs in Carefree are expected to continue to be filled by workers who live outside of Carefree. These existing and future workers, particularly in the Village Center, represent a consumer base that should not be overlooked for their potential contribution to creating a more active Village Center.

The current “Town Center” (TC) land use designation identified for the Village Center promotes many of the components needed for a vibrant Village Center; however, it is important to note that the inability to develop stand-alone residential development possibilities in the TC district (without a General Plan Amendment) greatly limits the development flexibility and potential population/ customer base expansion needed to drive increased market potential for commercial use in the study area. *See Figure 3 – General Plan Land Use*

Zoning

A detailed review of the Carefree Zoning Ordinance identified numerous opportunities to strengthen existing zoning standards in order to promote economic vitality in the Village Center. This may include but is not limited to; introduction of mixed-use development regulations to encourage greater design flexibility; development of shared parking standards that reduce parking requirements by accounting for different peak parking demands; and creating additional zoning districts or updating development standards that account for the unique identity and development potential of the Village Center. In addition, a review of existing Commercial Design Guidelines relative to development within the Village Center found them to be appropriate and favorable to the urban fabric but could benefit from some additional enhancements to further improve the function and form of the built environment. *See Figure 4 – Existing Zoning*

Figure 3 - General Plan Land Use

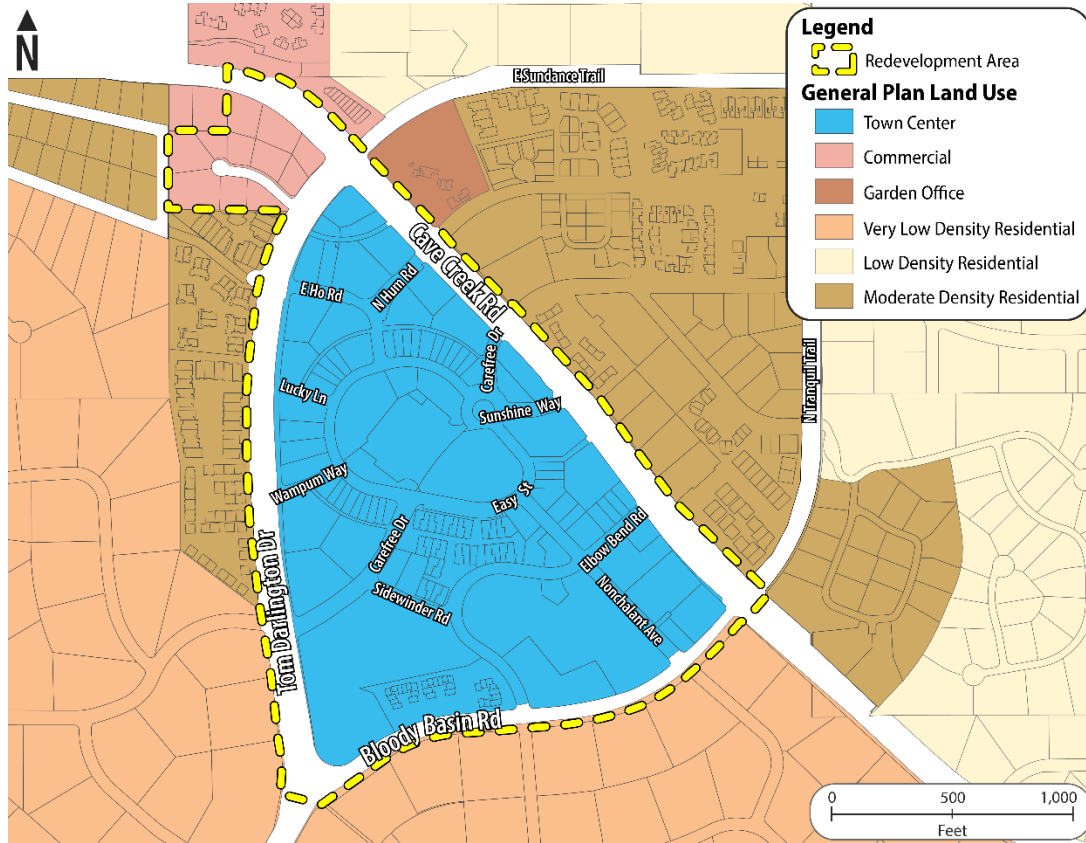
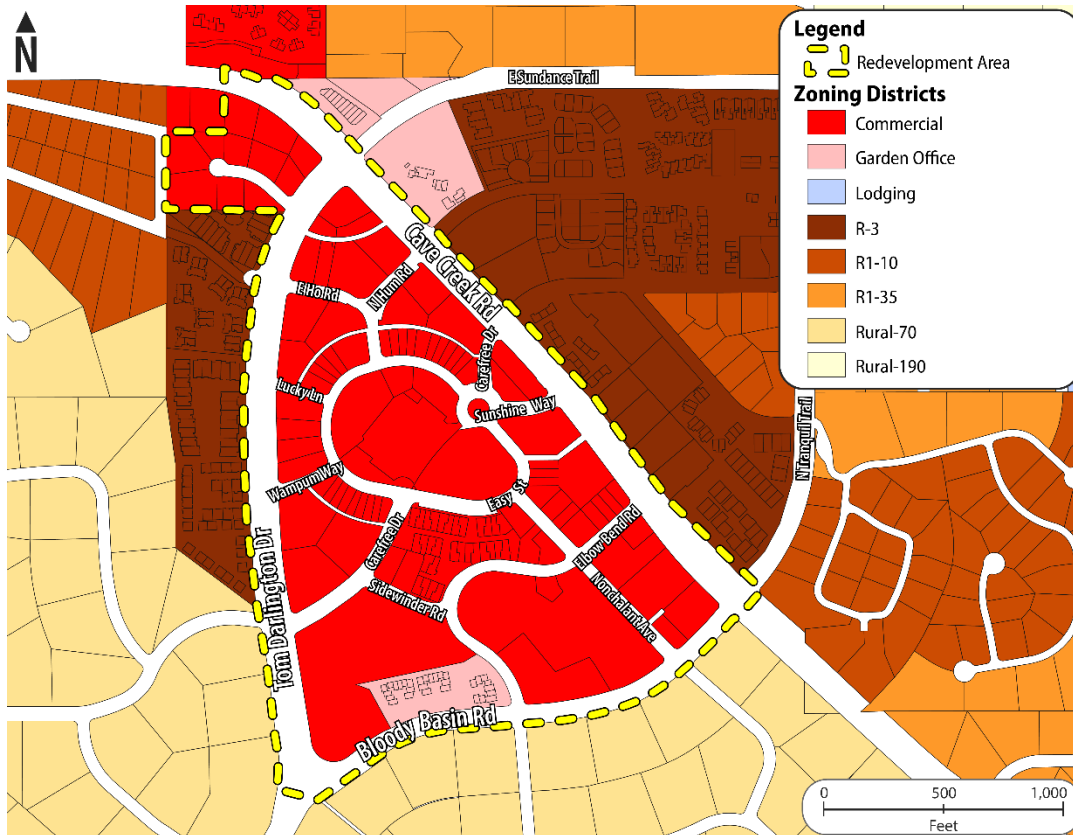


Figure 4 - Existing Zoning

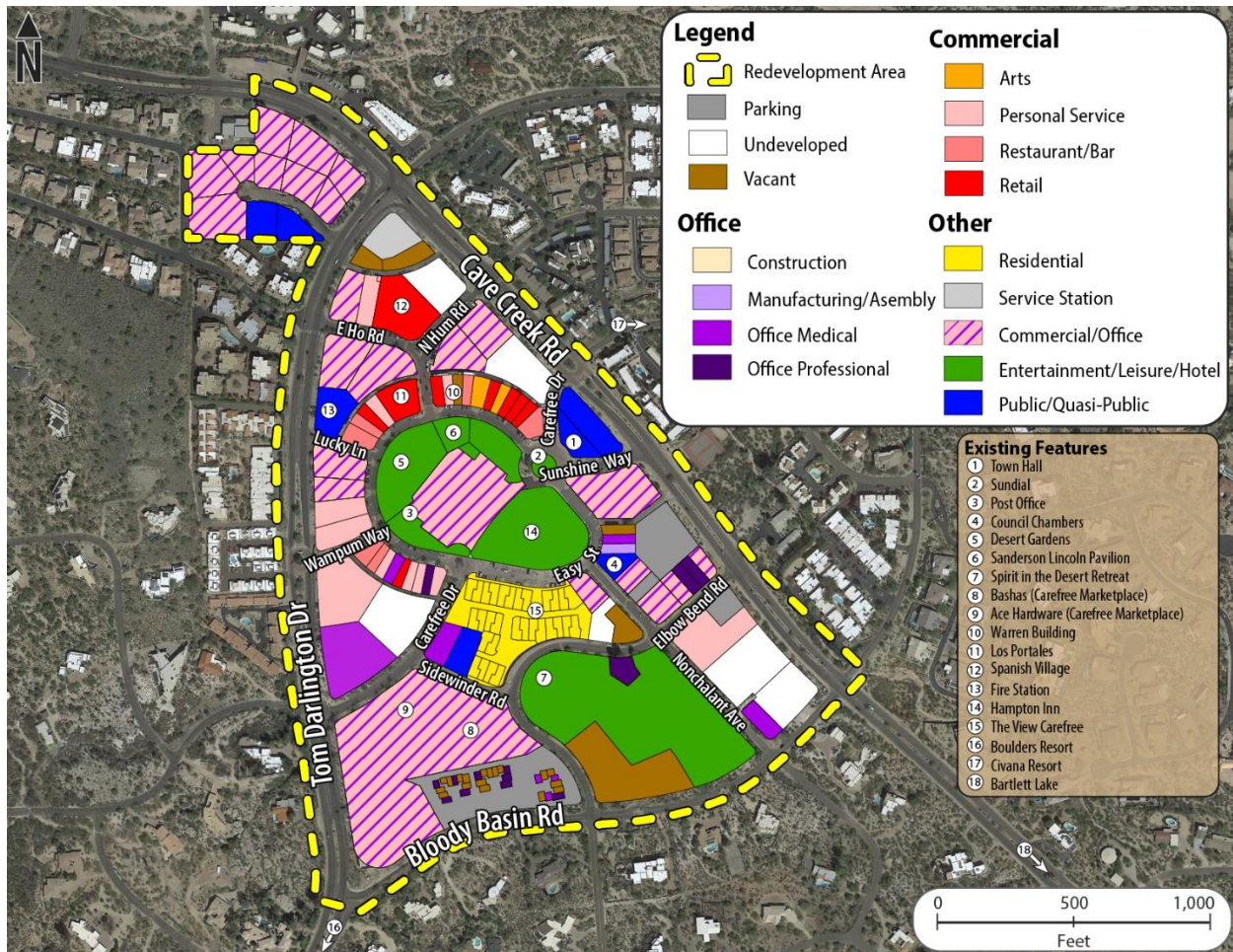


Existing Uses

VILLAGE CENTER – Non-retail type businesses including medical, personal and professional office uses account for over half of the establishments within the Village Center; while retail and restaurant/bars only account for one quarter; and government uses, religious centers, and leisure uses combine to comprise the remaining quarter. Most recently, a 97-room hotel opened along Easy Street. However, to attract new and return visitors, the distribution of businesses in the Village Center must be improved to provide a higher concentration of commercial services (e.g. retail, restaurants, entertainment) that support the needs of this desired consumer group. See *Figure 5 - Existing Land Use/Business Inventory*

There is currently a very limited amount of housing in the Village Center, with only a couple second floor apartments located along Tom Darlington Drive and the 30 units within “The View Carefree”, a townhome community currently being developed along Easy Street. While there are several residential developments that exist around the periphery of the Village Center, housing within the Village Center is a critical part of infusing energy into a downtown area. In addition, over 41 percent of community survey respondents indicated they would consider living in the Village Center, so there is a clear demand in the market place that is currently not being met.

Figure 5 - Existing Land Use/Business Inventory



A large number of non-retail uses are intermixed within the retail and restaurants located along Easy Street. While office uses are an important anchor to any downtown, the non-retail nature of these uses can detract from creating an active streetscape during peak evening and weekend periods.

There is no home mail delivery in Carefree; all residents must pick-up their mail at the post office. This unique situation is one of the charming qualities of Carefree and causes the post office to function as an important social hub of the community that promotes opportunities for impromptu shared interaction. While creating opportunities for casual social meetings fulfills one of the key elements of a healthy downtown; the Post Offices' preeminent location, non-retail nature, and need for constant vehicular access by residents can be in direct conflict with the retail demands and frequent special event activities that occur in the Village Center.

Another important element regarding the composition of land uses within the Carefree Village Center is the presence of a large number of "Lifestyle" businesses. The lack of consistent traditional retail business hours that these establishments maintain deflate the potential for added energy/vibrancy in the Village Center which in turn reduces the shopping experience and the potential of attracting return visitors.

COMMUNITY SETTING - The abundant, unique, and diverse amenities that surround the Carefree Village Center should also be viewed as a beneficial opportunity. The Village Center is fortunate to have convenient access to a high concentration of adjacent residential condominium neighborhoods as well as two full-service resorts, the CIVANA Wellness Resort and the Boulders Resort. However, non-vehicular connectivity to these adjacent uses is lacking. Elements such as dedicated paths to these adjacent uses or bike rentals at these nearby resorts could be developed to capitalize on this "built-in" residential and tourist base. The Village Center is also a gateway to Bartlett Lake, Spur Cross Ranch, and the Tonto National Forest. Establishments that offer access to these exceptional amenities, such as jeep tours, boat rentals, or guided hikes should be introduced to expand the services of the Village Center beyond its physical footprint.



Easy Street has an eclectic mix of retail, office restaurant, and recreational uses. Providing an environment where people can shop, eat, work and play is important to creating a vibrant "downtown"; however, the physical placement of these uses is just as important in order to promote and maintain an active streetscape.



The Town Mall is an integral part of the Village Center due to its central location and use as the Town Post Office; unfortunately, these qualities also conflict with many of the special events held in the Village Center.



Many businesses in the Village Center do not maintain traditional or consistent business hours, which deflate the vibrancy of the Towns retail core and reduces the potential of attracting return visitors.

Existing Conditions

Property Ownership

A large part of the Village Center is controlled by a select number of individuals or entities that own more than one parcel within the study area. This fact is important to note as partners are sought in the future that may be able and willing to improve/assemble their properties to make a proposed development option not only more feasible but a significant component in the revitalization of the Village Center. *See Figure 6 – Property Ownership*

Underutilized Sites and Spaces

Despite the presence of several successful businesses within the Redevelopment area, there are a number of underutilized or vacant spaces that currently detract from the Village Center’s overall character, appeal, functionality and economic vitality. There are select vacant and/or majority vacant parcels located within the Village Center.

These vacancies are predominantly found within the developments of Los Portales, the Sundial Courtyard of Carefree, and the parcels south of the Shell gas station. The prominent location of these developments within the study area causes these parcels to have the highest need and greatest opportunity for enhanced utilization.

The three most prominent undeveloped pieces of land in the heart of the Village Center are located along Cave Creek Road and Carefree Drive (south). As previously stated, a new townhome residential project and a hotel are currently being developed along Easy Street. The residential and visitor serving components of these projects are in harmony with the existing need to support the desired economic base of the Village Center and will be a catalyst for a vibrant, year-round restaurant and retail destination. *See Figure 7 – Property Status*

Figure 6 – Property Ownership

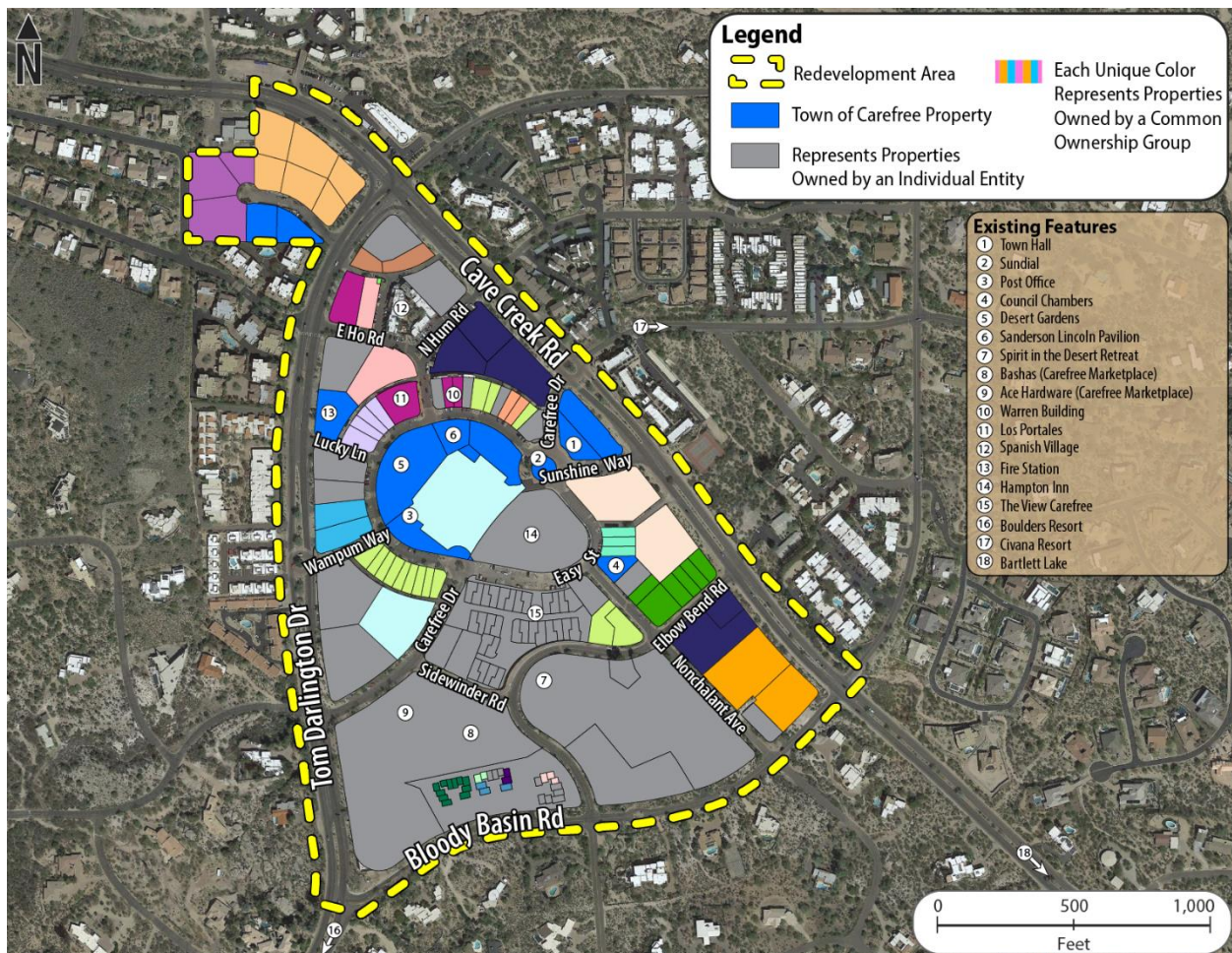
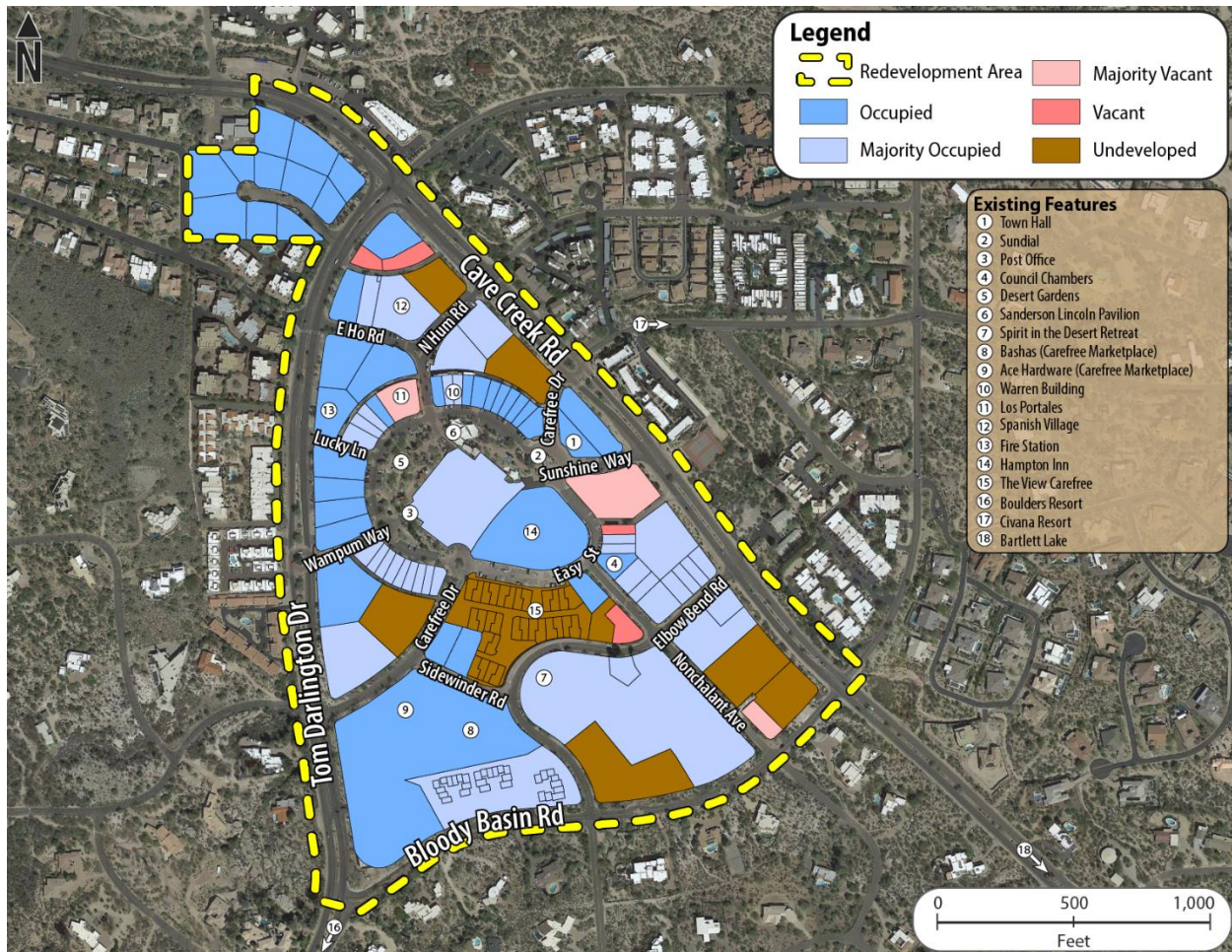


Figure 7 - Property Status



Urban Form

Physical Design

The internal, circular design of the Village Center is one of its most uniquely defining characteristics, but also causes many visitors to believe the businesses along Tom Darlington Drive represent the extent of “downtown Carefree” and/or overlook the presence of the larger Village core due to a lack of direct vehicular visibility from the perimeter roadway network. Consequently, the matter of how the Village Center physically connects/interfaces with Tom Darlington Drive and Cave Creek Road is a critical issue.

Architectural Character

The Carefree Village Center is fortunate to exhibit a solid architectural design aesthetic. The diverse yet complimentary mix of Spanish Colonial and modern mid-century style buildings, particularly along Easy Street, creates a visually appealing and inviting environment.

Although, just beyond Easy Street within the southeastern portion of the study area, the distinctive character of the Village Center is significantly diminished due to a lack of consistent architectural style, complimentary building materials, and pedestrian friendly design elements.

Building Facades

A community’s overall image is instrumental to its success in the competitive marketplace. Many participants who participated in the initial master planning process commented that the various commercial developments located in the Village Center looked “tired”. Comments received noted that there were a number of empty storefronts, and that some buildings and facades needed repair – from minor cosmetic improvements (paint, new awnings and/or repair of window and door casing) to “major overhauls”.

Building Heights

The historic community support for strict control of building heights in the Village Center has maintained the quaint Village feel of the study area and effectively protected external views of Black Mountain to the west and Continental Mountain to the north. However, a possible unintended consequence of limiting building heights prescribed in the zoning ordinance is the lack of visibility of the Village Center from the edge of the study area.

Streetscape

Many locations along Easy Street and Hum Road have wide, ample sidewalks, shaded arcades, and verdant landscaping. These design qualities combine to create an inviting public space that offers room for a leisurely stroll, opportunity for outdoor dining areas, casual places to sit, and protection from the desert heat. This is in contrast to other sections of the Village Center streetscape that are unappealing due to a car-centric design, constricted sidewalks or no sidewalks at all, lack of shade, improperly placed seating, and poor landscaping. Improving this condition is complex because unlike many communities where the sidewalks and streets are all located within the public right-of-way, many of the sidewalks in the Village Center are located on private property and the public right-of-way only extends to the edge of the street or parking areas.

Civic Spaces/Landmarks

Certainly, key features of the Village Center are the Desert Gardens and Sanderson Lincoln Pavilion. These civic spaces are extremely well designed, landscaped, maintained, lit and the public restroom amenities are also very clean and in good working order. One critique of the lush vegetation in the gardens and the structures associated with the pavilion is that they obstruct the viewshed through the Village core and prohibits visitors from identifying the existence of additional shopping destinations in the Town Mall.

Another element of the Village Center that is synonymous with Carefree is the Sundial. While it certainly is an iconic symbol of Carefree, the sentiment shared by many residents and business owners is the Sundial does not capture visitor's attention for very long. This condition brings to light the need for additional features in the Village Center that will extend a visitor's length of stay and evoke a positive experience that encourages return visitation.



The inward facing design of the core retail area causes many visitors to overlook the Village Center due to the lack of direct vehicular visibility from the primary perimeter access roads.



The composition of Spanish and modern mid-century style architecture combine to create a diverse, yet visually appealing, environment that is distinctive to Carefree.



This view along Wampum Way, towards Easy Street, demonstrates the current lack of verticality in the Village Center, which contributes to the limited visibility of the retail core from the primary access routes located along the fringe of the redevelopment area.



One critique of the Desert Gardens and the Sanderson Lincoln Pavilion is the lush vegetation and ancillary structures can obstruct views through the Village Center, making it difficult to identify the existence of additional shopping destinations

Mobility

Access and Gateways

One of the primary obstacles that needed to be overcome during the original 2015 planning process in order to ensure successful revitalization was addressing the lack of a sense of entry into the Village Center from Tom Darlington Drive and Cave Creek Road. In response, one of the recent improvements conducted within the Village Center included the design and placement of gateway arches along both Tom Darlington and Cave Creek Road. Travel along each of these roads, also shows they are congested with a large number of roadway intersections and parking lot driveways. This prevalence of vehicle access points is confusing and makes it difficult for the typical visitor to navigate around the Village Center.

To assist with navigation, Carefree has facilitated the placement of several wayfinding signs at each entry road to direct visitors into the Village Center. Unfortunately, the traffic circles where some of these signs are located are not entirely effective in directing passerby's into the Village Center and appear to only promote the misconception that the commercial strip along Tom Darlington Drive or Cave Creek Road is the sum total of "Downtown" Carefree. Similarly, while very attractive and widely accepted by residents, the sundial wayfinding

signs actually blend into the surrounding landscape and thus are overlooked by many visitors as they drive by.

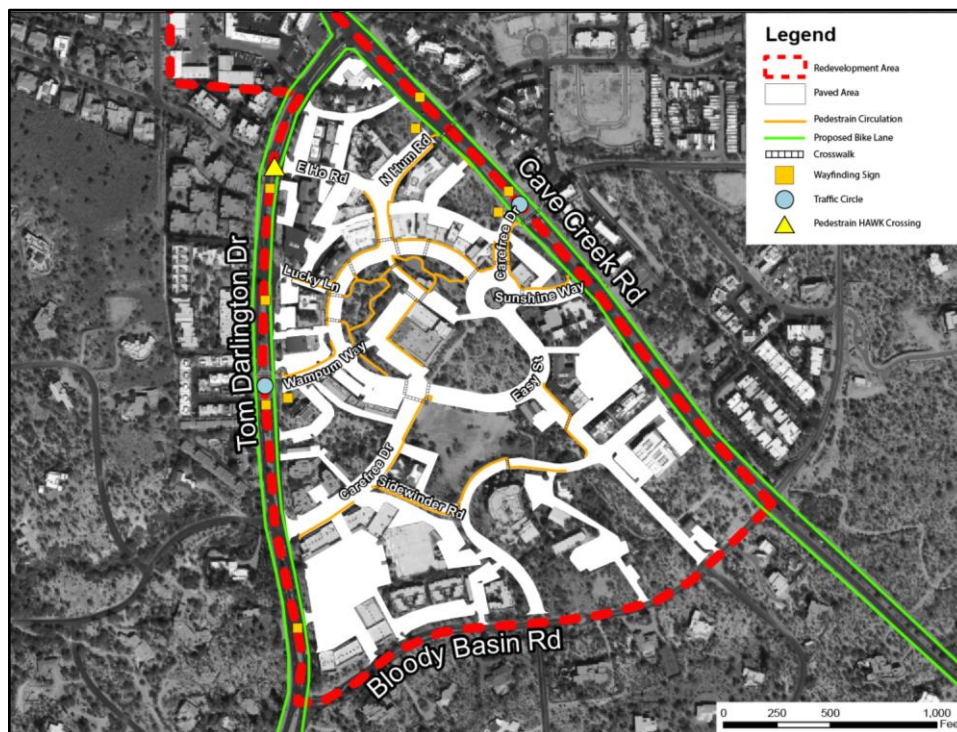
Street Network

The study area's existing internal street pattern forms a pinwheel configuration that radiates out from Easy Street, creating a confusing web of collector streets, local streets, alleys, and driveways. Creating a defined street hierarchy within the study area will help to accentuate the gateways into the Village Center. *See Figure 8 - Street Network*

Non-Motorized Network

Outside of the Easy Street corridor and Desert Gardens; which is a very walkable, safe environment that generally incorporates wide sidewalks, defined crosswalks and sidewalk bulb-outs; the Village Center contains very few sidewalks along roadways or adjacent to on-street parking. The limited areas that include sidewalks frequently contain large gaps, dead ends, or do not provide connections from common points of origin to desired destinations. Improving this condition is necessary to encourage visitors to experience the Village Center on foot rather than a vehicle and to allow visitors the ability to explore all the shops the downtown has to offer.

Figure 8 - Street Network



Parking

Carefree's current zoning code identifies parking requirements and demand ratios that are fairly standard for a small suburban community. However, applying these universal parking standards to the Village Center does not adequately address the unique shared parking needs of this multi-use core area.

Beyond reviewing the existing parking requirements associated with the Village Center, the planning team also completed a general analysis of its physical parking conditions to determine if existing and future parking demands are being met. The parking analysis of the Village Center determined there are more than enough parking spaces within the Village Center to accommodate current demand based on the existing levels of occupancy.

Through the initial public outreach efforts of this ongoing revitalization effort, comments relating to inadequate parking surfaced as a frequent complaint of residents, businesses and property owners. After further review of the current parking condition, it was determined that the primary parking issue is not associated with the availability of vehicular parking; rather it is focused on the location and placement of that available parking. In the Village Center, when the limited public spaces located in front of a particular business become occupied, there is a perceived issue that sufficient parking does not exist, even though the Village Center overall has adequate capacity.

The availability of parking during special events and/or direct access to parking for a specific business (e.g. the post office) during special events was also a frequent comment by residents during public outreach efforts. The Cave Creek/Carefree Transportation Framework Study reviewed this existing issue and proposed a series of recommendations to improve parking during special events.

A selection of these recommendations includes:

- Improve shoulder parking along Tom Darlington Drive between Bloody Basin Road and Cave Creek Road;
- Improve shoulder parking along Cave Creek Road between Tom Darlington Drive and Bloody Basin Road;
- Encourage private businesses to open parking lots to the public during larger special events, and
- Consider establishing priority lots for special event visitors that carpool.



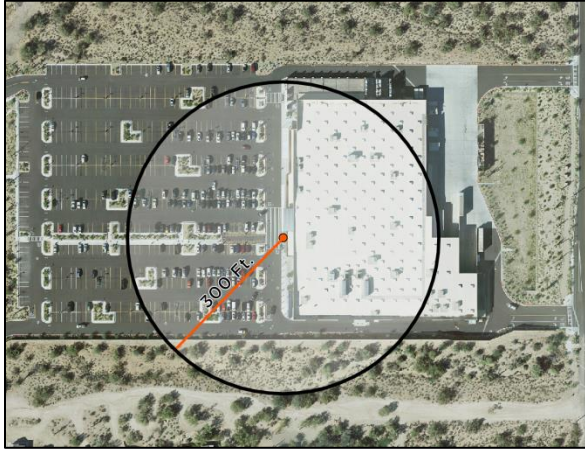
Several streets are car-centric and lack amenities, which discourage visitors from exploring the Village Center.



The Town has invested in the placement of many attractive wayfinding elements along Tom Darlington Drive and Cave Creek Road to enhance the visibility of the Village Center; unfortunately, many of these features blend into the landscape and are often overlooked by visitors as they drive by.



Outside of the Easy Street corridor, the lack of sidewalks and/or bike facilities between common points of origin and desired destinations, create an uninviting environment.



An analysis of a typical walking distance from a parking spot to the front door of a big box store (top image) and that same distance in the Village Center (bottom image) shows that even if a visitor is unable to park directly in front of their desired Village Center destination and must park elsewhere, they will still probably walk a shorter distance than they would visiting a big-box store.

Market Analysis

A retail market analysis was prepared in early 2022 to supplement the Carefree Village Redevelopment Plan. This analysis represents an update to the original market

analysis completed in 2015 for the Carefree Village Center Master Plan. (please see Appendix B to review the detailed 2015 Market Analysis of Carefree and the Village Center)

Methodology

The defined study area and methodology used in this analysis are the same as the 2015 report. When forecasting the demand for retail space within Carefree Village, a variety of data sources were utilized including information from the Town, MAG, CoStar, US Census and Esri. Varied assumptions were incorporated into the demand model including the percentage of household income spent on retail items, retention of sales within Carefree, employee and hotel guest spending within the commercial core, and demand from the greater trade area. The demand analysis is for 2020 (base year) and projected to 2030.

There are two notable differences in the MAG data sets used in the 2015 and 2022 reports. For the 2022 report, the 2019 MAG socio-economic data projects Carefree household growth to be minor with an annual growth rate of 0.6 percent through 2030. This is less than MAG's 2014 socio-economic projection of 1.3 percent used in the 2015 report. Second, there is a reduction in square footage of existing retail space within the town center. Retail square footage data is from CoStar for both timeframes, however, the methodology used by 3rd parties for collecting the data may have differed.

Findings

The following compares key data from the 2015 report to the 2020 analysis. Based on household growth and expenditures, demand from workers and hotel guests, and spending from the greater trade area, the analysis reflects a projected retail demand of 70,503 square feet by 2030, which is greater than the 2015 report at 41,180 square feet. This increase in square feet demand can be attributed to a combination of household growth, demand from workers, hotel guests and secondary trade area, as well as the reduction in existing square feet of space in the Town Center.

Figure 9 - Market Analysis Area

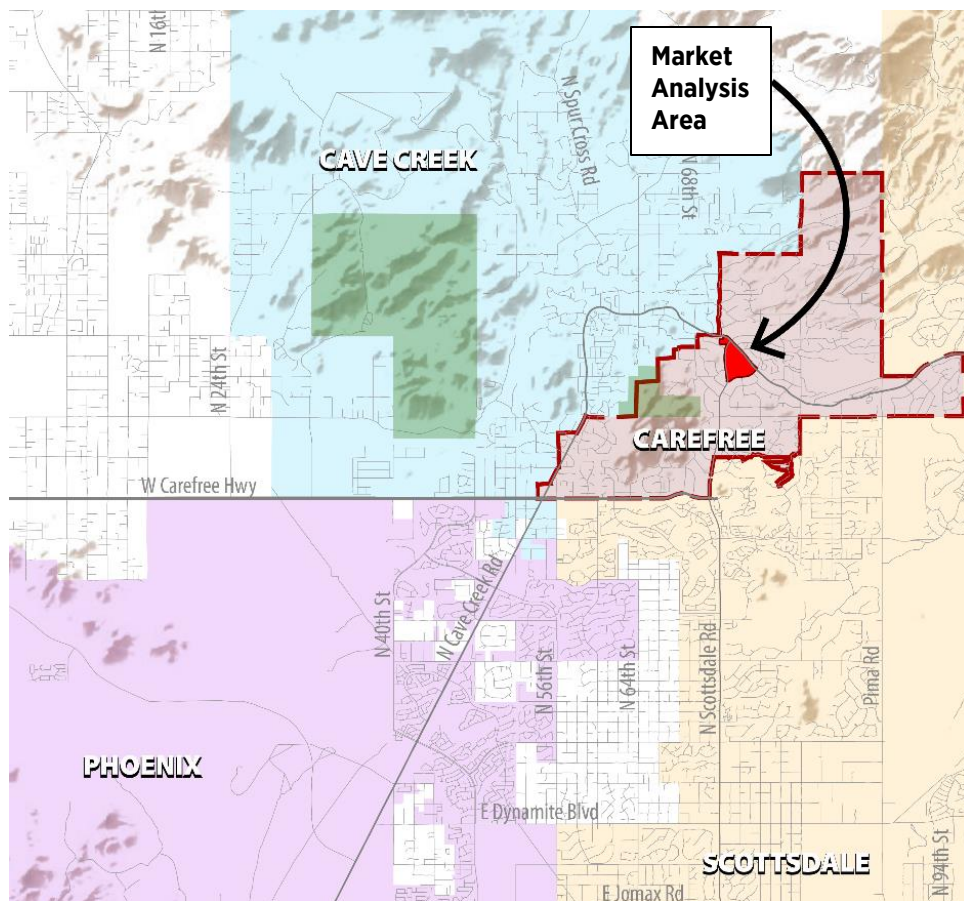


Figure 10 - Market Trade Area

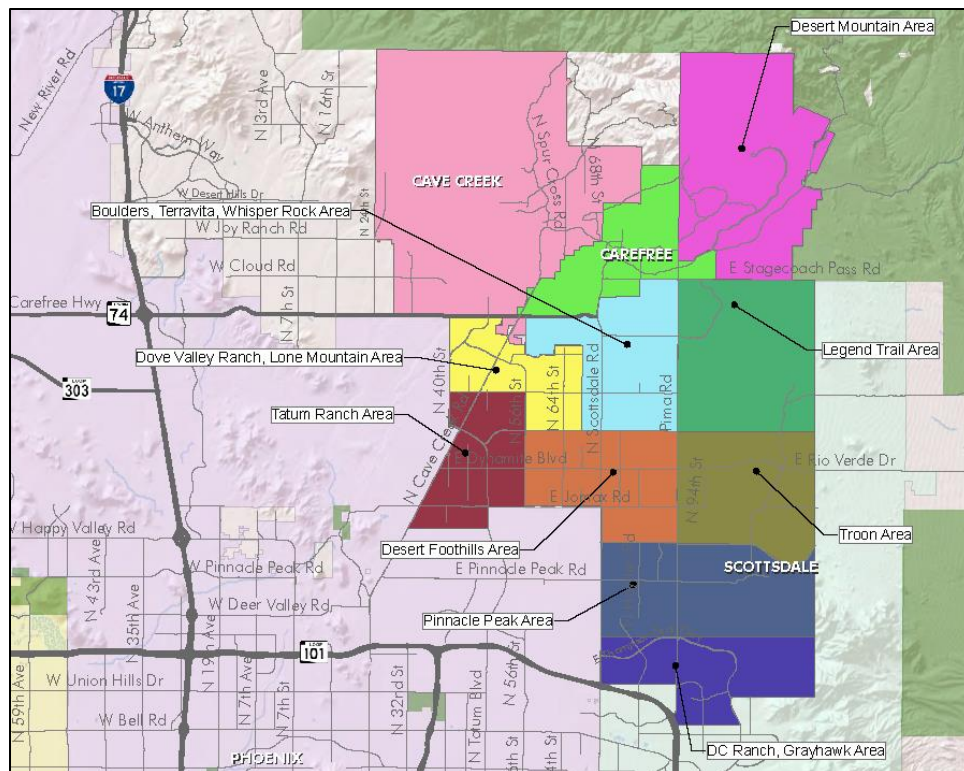


Table 1 – 2015 and 2022 Retail Market Analysis Comparison

	2020	2030
Households		
2015 Report	1,839	2077
2022 Report	1,865	1968
Difference	26	-109
Forecast Square Feet Demand		
2015 Report	289,013	327,261
2022 Report	283,275	332,402
Difference	-5,738	5,141
Existing Retail Square Feet		
2015 Report	286,081	286,081
2022 Report	261,899	261,899
Difference	-24,182	-24,182
Residual Square Feet Demand		
2015 Report	2,932	41,180
2022 Report	21,376	70,503

Chapter 3: The Vision

To support actions that can be taken to revitalize the Carefree Village Center, there needs to be a clear vision that describes the physical outcomes this plan is intended to bring about. This Chapter provides a direct response to this need by establishing what the Village Center should be 10 or 15 years from now. This Chapter also provides supplementary guidance by describing the key Goals the planning team focused on to effectively develop a plan to achieve this desired vision. In the following Chapter – The Plan for Action, these Goals are translated into a series of five Objectives, each encompassing a set of Strategies and supporting Actions that form the comprehensive “Redevelopment Master Plan” for the Village Center.

The desired outcomes and principles outlined below came out of an initial public involvement process conducted in 2015 organized around a series of steering committee meetings, community survey, stakeholder interviews, and community workshops that were focused on clarifying the community’s aspirations for the Village Center. This feedback was then validated through additional public outreach as part of the preparation and review of this Redevelopment Plan.



Vision Statement

The Carefree Village Center vision statement was developed to serve as the foundation for decisions made throughout the redevelopment plan process. A vision is a broad statement which communicates where the Town would like to be in the future. Written in the present tense, the vision describes the Towns’ accomplishments 10 to 15 years from now for the Village Center. The following represents the community vision for the Village Center:

“Carefree’s Village Center is the heart of a forward thinking community that is also a regional magnet for activity. Entry to the Village Center is distinct and beckons visitors and locals alike to wander and discover new goods, services and entertainment within. A diverse mix of specialty shops, art, and dining opportunities leverage the unique design and natural setting of the Village Center to thrive and prosper. Selected cultural amenities and exceptional annual events showcase the authentic character of the community and attract new residents who choose to live in the Village Center and enjoy the true “Carefree” lifestyle.”

Redevelopment Goals

To further refine the vision statement into direction-able items, a series of Goals or guiding principles were developed. **Goals**, like a vision statement, are broad in nature but usually provide a level of specificity which seeks to give purpose or define results of the redevelopment process.

Each Goal represents some part of the vision and begins to provide direction for what the community should focus on to realize the desired end state. In the next Chapter, these Goals were then shaped into a set of more specific actionable **Objectives** and **Strategies**. Rather than individually apply to a specific Goal, it is envisioned the following objectives and strategies will “cross pollinate” and collectively rollup to accomplish the Plans stated Goals below:

- *Goal 1 - Aggressively market a “Village” image that is unique, yet readily identifiable as Carefree.*
- *Goal 2 - Create cultural anchors and community focal points that repeatedly attract local residents and regional visitors.*
- *Goal 3 - Improve the economic viability of the Village Center through enhancement of the mix of retail, business, arts and culture.*
- *Goal 4 - Enhance the physical visibility of the Village Center while preserving its architectural and pedestrian character.*
- *Goal 5 - Thoughtfully regulate development of vacant land and promote repurposing of underutilized buildings.*
- *Goal 6 - Strengthen public-private partnerships to achieve mutual goals.*

Redevelopment Master Plan

The Redevelopment Master Plan (see Figure 11) provides a look into the future of the Carefree Village Center. It offers the Town and community stakeholders an illustration of one potential scenario for redevelopment within the Village Center. It is possible that redevelopment could occur in a different manner than that which is shown on the plan. Therefore, the Redevelopment Master Plan illustration should not be viewed as an absolute plan or form of regulation. There are many unforeseen conditions, opportunities and/or constraints that may arise in the future. Instead, this

Redevelopment Master Plan should serve as a guide for where and how future development and redevelopment within the Village Center may occur and provide a common purpose that all investors can rely upon, contribute to, and derive value from.

In addition, Table 1 – Redevelopment Master Plan Summary, outlines the redevelopment or new development potential for each Plan ID site. This planning approach was based on evaluating existing conditions along with, 1) future occupancy and absorption potential, 2) future use potential, 3) probability of development, 4) availability of water resources, 5) input from property owners, and 6) input from the community, especially regarding density expectations. In support of this planning approach, Table 2 – Redevelopment Master Plan Build-out Matrix was prepared to outline the anticipated net change to the Village Center over the 10-year period of this Redevelopment Plan. Collectively, the following objectives and strategies illustrate the essential efforts, projects, amenities and infrastructure improvements that are necessary to stimulate market demand in the Village Center while positively responding to this Plans overarching vision and goals. Development density and intensity projections are estimates and may occur through different distributions than shown in Table 2. Final net development impacts for each Plan ID will be based on current market conditions at the time of construction.

Property owners within the Redevelopment Area are anticipated to utilize and support the recommendations of this Redevelopment Plan by submitting required applications to the Town and by gaining necessary approvals from the Town to carry out the vision of the following Redevelopment Master Plan. These applications may be for new development or redevelopment, renovation of existing development, or simply to eliminate a substandard or detrimental condition as identified in the Finding of Necessity and approval of the Redevelopment Area. (see Appendix A for the Redevelopment Area approval)

Adequate public utilities exist to accommodate projected future growth and redevelopment of the Village Center; provided, however, that select infrastructure may be improved as deemed necessary during future more detailed design and/or construction phases. Further, this plan does not propose the relocation of any residents within the Redevelopment Area.

Figure 11 – Redevelopment Master Plan

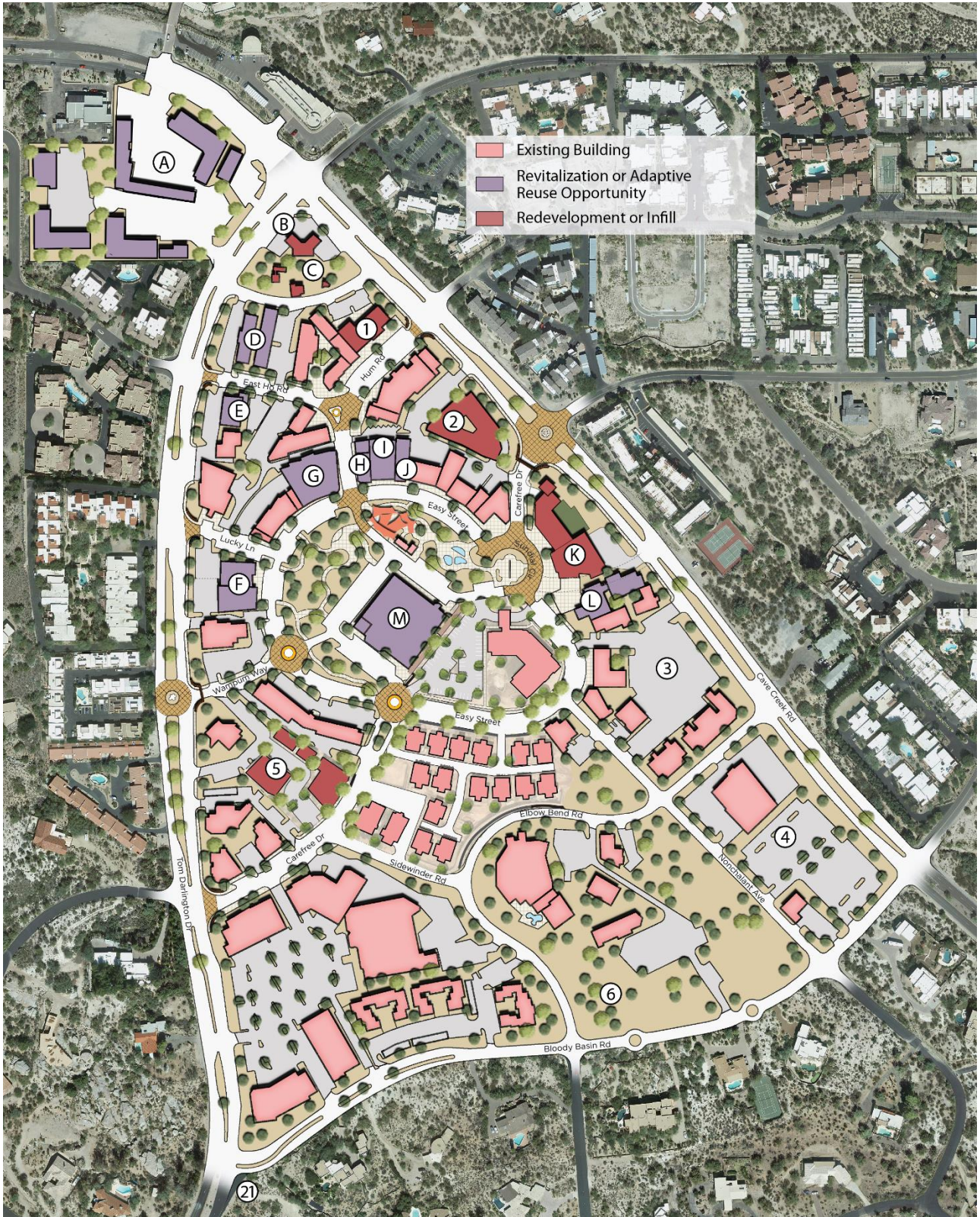


Table 1 – Redevelopment Master Plan Summary

Plan ID	Parcel (Common Name/APN)	Development Type	Current Use	Potential Use
A	Mariachi Plaza	Revitalization	Retail	Retail
B	Shell Station	Redevelopment	Retail/Gas	Retail/Gas
C	216-83-017D & 017F	Redevelopment	Vacant	Parking
D	Sundancer Plaza	Revitalization	Retail	Retail
E	37417 Tom Darlington Dr.	Revitalization	Retail/ Residential	Retail/Residential
F	Chamber Building	Enhanced Use	Office	Retail/Office/Residential
G	Los Portales	Adaptive Reuse	Retail	Retail/Residential
H	Ortegas	Revitalization	Retail	Retail/Residential
I	Warren Plaza	Enhanced Use	Retail/Service	Retail/Residential
J	Native American Gallery	Enhanced Use	Retail	Retail/Residential
K	Town Hall	Redevelopment	Office	Restaurant/ Residential
L	11 Sundial (Bank)	Adaptive Reuse	Office	Restaurant/ Residential
M	100 Easy Street	Revitalization	Retail/Office	Retail/Restaurant/ Office
1	216-83-018	Infill	Undeveloped	Retail
2	216-83-014	Infill	Undeveloped	Retail/Residential
3	216-83-288	Infill	Undeveloped	Office/Parking
4	216-83-063A & 064C	Infill	Undeveloped	Retail/Residential
5	216-83-037	Infill	Undeveloped	Residential
6	216-83-066B	Infill	Undeveloped	Residential

Table 2 – Redevelopment Master Plan Build-Out Matrix

Net Office* (SF)	Net Residential* (units)	Net Restaurant* (SF)	Net Retail* (SF)	Net Parking* (spaces)
-1,800	60	9,000	3,500	155

* Totals reflect the anticipated net change within the Redevelopment Area over the 10-year period of this plan.
(note: parking will be both onsite and offsite)

Chapter 4: The Plan for Action

Redevelopment and revitalization of the Carefree Village Center will not be achieved through a few simple policy changes or one “silver bullet” development project. Rather, successful improvement of the Village Center will occur through initiating a series of complimentary, well-defined efforts that build upon one another to set the course for real change.

The following “Plan for Action” establishes the blueprint for achieving the desired enhancements within the Village Center by outlining a framework of **Objectives** that focus on achieving the community’s Vision and Goals for this critical area of the Town. Each Objective includes a summary of its importance to the Village Center, key **Strategic Initiatives** toward which planning efforts should be directed, and detailed **action steps** that could be undertaken to advance each strategy.

To give further structure and guidance to this redevelopment plan, as well as to support the additional implementation measures detailed in Chapter 5, each action step listed in Chapter 4: Plan for Action are identified as: **potential projects** – indicating they will require physical development, **regulatory updates** – indicating they will require revisions to Town regulatory documents, **in-kind support** – indicating they will require Town, stakeholder or volunteer time commitments, or **catalyst projects** – indicating the action is a critical component of the redevelopment plan.

Objective 1 – Improve the Village Center’s visibility and access

The manner in which a visitor approaches the Village Center directly establishes their first impression of the area. A favorable first impression is important to fostering an enjoyable experience for visitors, because ultimately the more comfortable a visitor is the more likely they are to patronize businesses and directly contribute to the success of the Village Center. Therefore, promoting and maintaining an environment that is welcoming to existing and new visitors is critical to the Village Center redevelopment efforts.

The Village Center today is relatively compact and offers a pedestrian friendly inward facing design. As part of the Town’s revitalization efforts following the development of the 2015 Master Plan, gateway entrances were placed along Tom Darlington Drive and Cave Creek Road. However, the Village Center has a limited formal presence along these regional significant roadways and many tenants shared concern that visitors have trouble finding it. In fact, many consumers in the larger trade area expressed they were unaware that Carefree has a Village Center at all. Compounding this issue is the fact that vehicular circulation routes are not well defined,

pedestrian connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods is limited, several directional signs intended to provide guidance to visitors lack visibility, and a perception of a parking problem exists.

These following recommendations provide gateway enhancements to help infuse life into the Village Center; improved auto, pedestrian, and bicycle connections to create a more cohesive Village Center identity; and signage and parking modifications to support these visibility and access improvements.

Strategic Initiatives

- a. **Celebrate the points of arrival into the Village Center to counteract the inward facing design.** Enhancing the character and appearance of these points are important factors in establishing the overall visibility and perception of the Village Center to new and unfamiliar visitors.
 - i. Build upon the placement of the primary Village Center gateway arches by designating all other entry drives into the Village Center from Tom Darlington Drive and Cave Creek Road as secondary gateways. Design and place entry

features that are similar in character to the primary arched gateways, but simpler in form such as monument pillars or low half-walls. These alternative entry points are intended to be used primarily by those who are already well oriented to the Village Center, such as residents and current workers of the area. *(Potential Project)*

- ii. Enhance seasonal plantings at each entry point to further distinguish from the surrounding natural landscape. *(Potential Project)*
- iii. Improve the visual character of the Tom Darlington Drive and Cave Creek Road intersection by placing enhanced wayfinding signage and landscape islands. *(Potential Project)*
- iv. To fully achieve these improvements, portions of private property at each intersection may need to be acquired, consolidated with Town owned right-of-way, then cleared and improved. *(Potential Project)*

b. Decrease the number of entry drives along Tom Darlington Drive and Cave Creek Road. At first view from Tom Darlington Drive and Cave Creek Road, the Village Center struggles to look well defined or inviting to visitors given the prevailing number of entry roads and driveways located along these auto-oriented corridors.

- i. Identify opportunities to consolidate the number of existing entry drives along Tom Darlington Drive and Cave Creek Road to reduce confusion to visitors and encourage entry to desired primary and secondary gateway entrances. Possible alternatives include, abandoning Sunshine Way and relocating driveway entrances along Tom Darlington to adjacent side streets. *(Potential Project)*

c. Establish a hierarchy of street typologies. The arrangement of streets, driveways, and alleys should be legible and attractive. Well-designed, appealing, and navigable streetscapes will help provide clarity to the Village Center as well as contribute to visitors enjoying their stay, which encourages return visits and positive referrals to others.

- i. Clearly define primary streets over secondary service streets (i.e. alleys, private drives) to guide visitors to desired points in the Village Center. *(Potential Project)*

- ii. Primary Streets include: Carefree Drive, Wampum Way, Lucky Lane, East Ho, Hum Road, Ho Hum Drive and Easy Street. *(Potential Project)*
- iii. Design and provide common streetscape elements such as vertical curbs, alternate paving material, on street parking, sidewalks, seasonal landscaping, signage and streetlamps to clearly denote these primary streets as preferred travel routes. *(Potential Project)*



Existing Conditions: Currently there are several entry roads and driveways along Tom Darlington Drive that impeded traffic flow and clutter access to the Village Center.



Conceptual Rendering: Creating cross-access connections and relocating entry drives to side streets reduces the number of entry drives along Tom Darlington Drive and helps encourage visitors to utilize desired primary access points when entering the Village Center.

Figure 12 – Street Hierarchy Improvements (E. Ho Road)



Existing Conditions: In many areas of the Village Center, the circulation system lacks clarity, making it difficult for a visitor to discern what is a roadway, driveway or alley.



Conceptual Rendering: Establishing a more complete street cross-section along key entrance drives, that has clearly defined travel ways, sidewalks, artistic focal points, wayfinding, lighting, and landscaping will create a more inviting environment and bring needed order to the circulation system within the Village Center.

d. Build-upon the Village Center’s pedestrian and bicycle friendly design. Studies have proven that successful pedestrian and bicycle environments contribute to increased usage and enjoyment of downtown areas. Greater ease of non-vehicular movement to and within the Village Center will also allow the area to become a more integral part of the Desert Foothills. Therefore, long-term revitalization success depends upon integrating the Village Center’s limited pedestrian and bicycle amenities with surrounding neighborhoods and the larger trade area.

- i. Construct sidewalks along identified primary streets to create stronger pedestrian connections between destination points, including adjacent residential neighborhoods, Carefree Marketplace, Spanish Village, and Sundance Center. *(Catalyst Project)*
- ii. The usage of bicycles should also be supported and accommodated, especially given the placement of bike lanes along Tom Darlington Drive and Cave Creek Road, which connect to the greater Desert Foothills region. Enhanced elements should include posting Wampum Way and Carefree Drive as bike routes, locating additional bike racks in the Village Center, and coordinating bike rentals with adjacent resorts. *(Potential Project)*

- iii. Create additional access to the Village Center by developing an urban trail system to connect to the existing Civana and Boulders resort destinations. *(Potential Project)*
- iv. As development occurs, ensure appropriate cross-access connectivity between businesses along Easy Street by placing a pedestrian corridor along the original Carefree Drive alignment. *(Potential Project)*
- v. Improve the public realm during summer months by placing pedestrian friendly amenities such as misters, shade trees, and arcades. *(Potential Project)*
- vi. Explore ability to work with existing property owners to place sidewalks into the public right-of-way. *(Potential Project)*

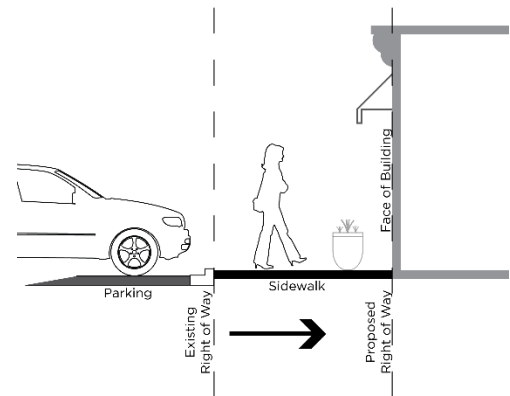
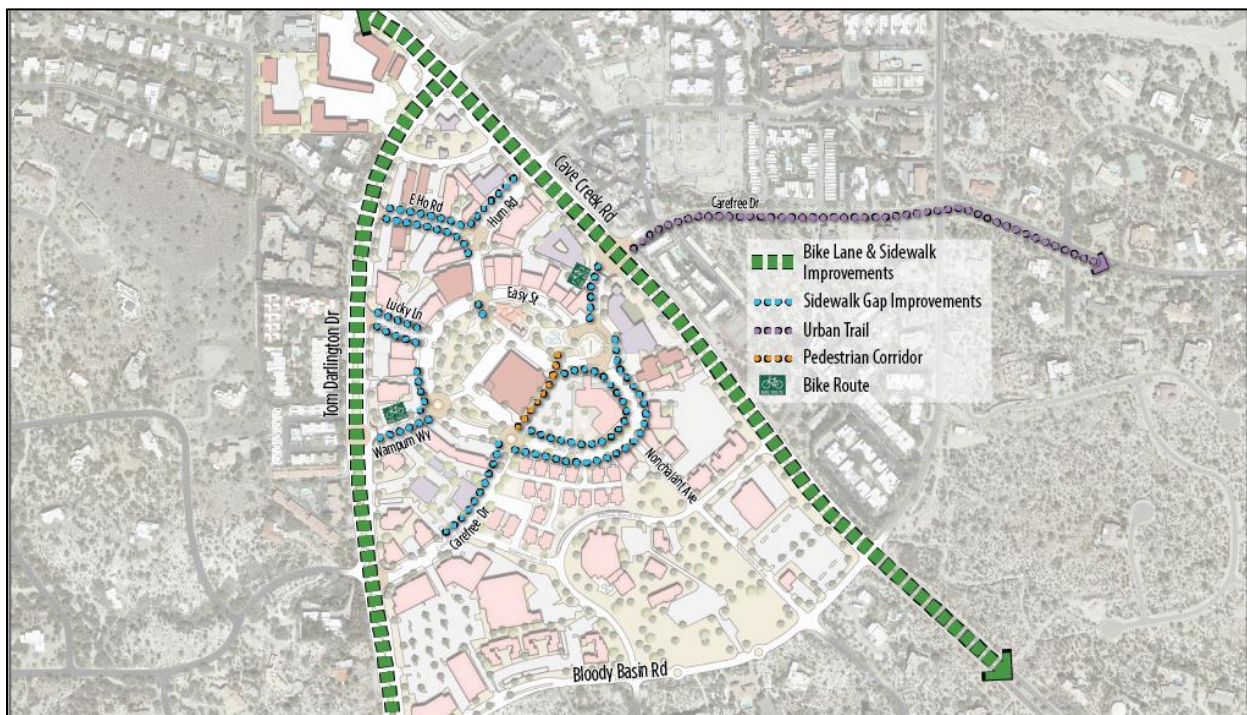


Figure 13 – Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements



Improving non-vehicular connectivity will help to promote the compact, pedestrian friendly design of the Village Center as well as encourage customers to park once and convert single-purpose trips into multi-purpose trips.

- e. **Create additional parking opportunities.** While a parking analysis indicated that there is adequate parking to meet the current demand in the Village Center, the perception by many residents and property owners of limited parking is still a real concern.
 - i. To combat this perception problem, Carefree should invest in wayfinding signage to clearly identify and direct visitors to existing parking options. *(Catalyst Project)*
 - ii. Seek opportunities to acquire undeveloped land to preserve future parking options when needed. Consider vacant land at southwest corner of Cave Creek Road and Carefree Drive and behind the Shell station at the intersection of Cave Creek Road and Tom Darlington Drive. *(Catalyst Project)*
 - iii. Review right-of-way conditions within the Village Center to determine where further on street parking may be placed. *(Catalyst Project)*

Objective 2 – Foster development of a strong retail, residential, entertainment, and service core in the Village Center

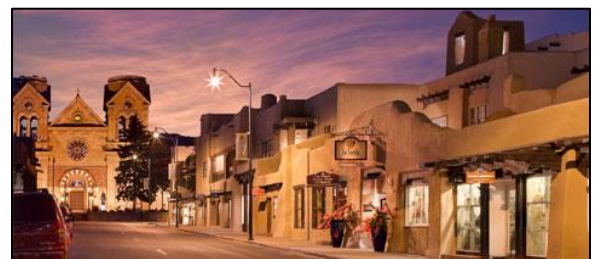
Developing a strong relationship to the local economy is a necessary step toward formulating a successful Village Center. However, the current land use and tenant mix of the Carefree Village Center does not meet the needs of residents, future residents and customers in the greater trade area and must change in order to maximize its potential and ability to increase market share and subsequently retail sales.

As noted in the 2015 consumer survey, residents and trade area consumers desire a variety of commercial related uses including restaurants, a specialty food store, and a bakery; a better and wider selection of merchandise; and entertainment venues for concerts, culinary festivals, live theater and independent films. Moreover, survey results showed a strong support/demand for residential opportunities in the Village Center.

The following recommendations address how to organize to help existing businesses succeed, attract new business and engage/encourage property owners to envision and work toward a vibrant, unified Village Center.

Strategic Initiatives

- a. **Identify and pursue key anchor or cultural center projects in strategic locations that can be a catalyst for economic change.** In order to further attract new and repeat visitors, Carefree needs to establish anchor destinations that provide reasons for people to visit the Village Center. Attracting the right “anchors” to increase foot traffic was a key theme noted in the ULI Technical Assistance Panel Report which would help support existing establishments and enhance the viability of the Carefree Village Center. A thriving Village Center sometimes requires uniting public and private interests and resources to accomplish a variety of goals.
 - i. Consider creative alternatives to developing museum-like spaces. This could include a phased implementation approach or joint use space with other local (Sonoran Arts League), regional (Arizona-Sonoran Desert Museum), or national (International Arts & Artists) cultural institutions. *(Catalyst Project)*
 - ii. Evaluate the Town Mall (post office) location and create a vision for more sophisticated uses that complement the foot traffic generated by patrons of the post office. *(Catalyst Project)*
 - iii. Before formal approval, all discussions regarding key anchor projects should be conducted in a business appropriate environment that allows for open public dialogue and fosters collaboration. *(Catalyst Project)*
 - iv. Ensure a thorough project proforma, business plan and funding strategy is completed for any project utilizing public funds. A clear memorandum of understanding (MOU) should be created that defines the business relationship, responsibilities, and exit strategy of each project. *(Catalyst Project)*



Case Study – Santa Fe, NM: Iconic downtowns, such as Santa Fe’s, utilize multiple anchor destinations (i.e. cathedrals, museums, performing arts venues, exhibition spaces, lodging and public plazas) to attract new and repeat visitors.

b. Help foster the growth of existing Village Center business establishments. Statistics show that it is far more cost effective to retain an existing business than to attract a new one. Carefree should implement a comprehensive business strengthening strategy focused on business retention/expansion.

- i. Develop a Business Retention and Expansion program (BRE) that hosts business visitation meetings to communicate strongly to businesses that the community is interested in their challenges and in keeping them in the area. It is recommended that the Town of Carefree, in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, consider conducting systematic business visitations as one of its priorities for the next 18 months to build a stronger network among the business community and help link businesses with resources and technical assistance. *(In-Kind Support)*
- ii. Work with the Carefree/Cave Creek Chamber of Commerce to promote programs that target supporting small business education. Using information gathered through business visitations, tailor programs to meet the needs of the Center's business owners as well as consider focused assistance in the areas of hospitality training, customer service, displays/presentation, social media, and e-marketing. *(In-Kind Support)*
- iii. Explore the feasibility of creating a special assessment district, like a Business Improvement District (BID), within the Village Center. Services that BID's can provide include marketing and promotion, planning, recruitment and retention, parking and enhanced security services, to mention a few. In the early stages of plan implementation, it is not advisable to pursue the BID option, because assessments may confer an economic disadvantage on business owners until the inherent value of the area is built up. *(In-Kind Support)*
- iv. Work with developers and building owners to cluster businesses together with similar customer bases to boost sales. By grouping together a mix of businesses that can benefit from each other's sales, customers, and market, the Village Center could create a stronger identity causing it to stand out in customers'

minds amongst the various shopping choices.
(In-Kind Support)

c. Revitalize existing commercial areas/buildings through redevelopment, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse. Improvements to revitalize existing commercial space has been widely used in other markets to help upgrade an area's image, allow modern retailing to exist in an aged downtown environment, and or make it more convenient for shoppers. There are buildings in the Village Center that have some historic significance to Carefree but are not performing at the level that they used to. These buildings do not meet retailers' standard models in terms of square footage, frontage and other assorted requirements.

- i. Collect data on potential development/redevelopment sites and work to fill vacancies with appropriate adaptive reuse and/or rehabilitation concepts. Consider redeveloping underutilized buildings as incubator spaces for small start-up or niche businesses (i.e. indoor food market, maker studio and art incubator, home and hearth retail, etc.). Investigate alternative reuse possibilities, such as a culinary school or housing. *(In-Kind Support)*

Figure 14 – Adaptive Reuse Concept (Los Portales)

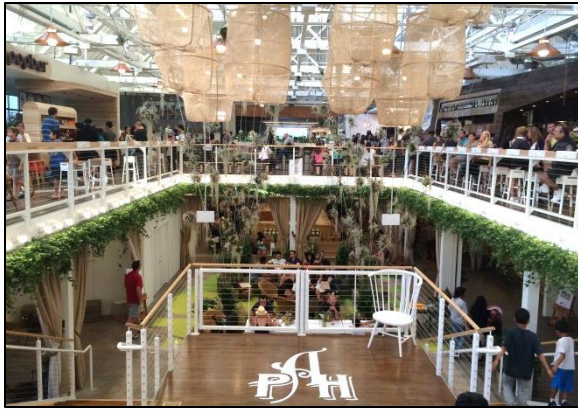


Existing Conditions: The charming character and design of the Los Portales building makes it a great asset to the Village Center. Unfortunately, it largely sits vacant because most of the interior spaces do not meet today's retailers' standard model in terms of square footage, frontage and other requirements.



Conceptual Rendering: Repurposing the building as an incubator space for small start-up culinary or niche artist businesses is one concept that could be implemented to capitalize on the buildings existing design as well as offer a more flexible retail space in the Village Center.

- ii. To help facilitate reuse concepts, explore opportunities to team with experienced developers who can help curate vendors, merchants, or operators. *(In-Kind Support)*



Case Study – Anaheim Packing House: The City of Anaheim repurposed a historic packing plant into a food hall and teamed with LAB Holding to help curate the 28-gourmet food and beverage vendors. *(Source: www.planetizen.com)*

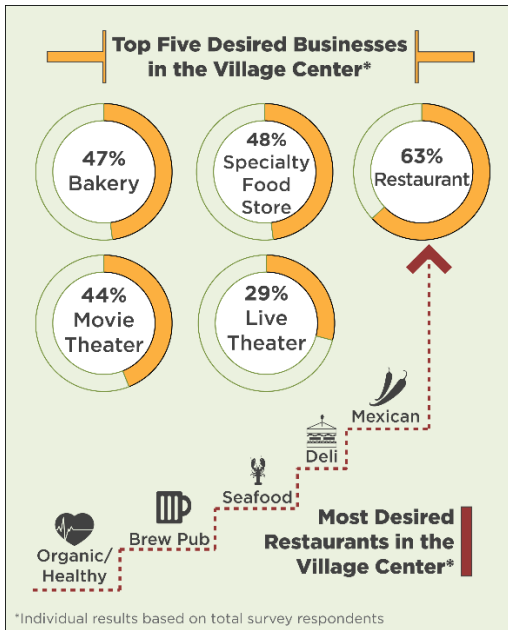
- iii. Work with building owners and developers to create larger retail floor plates in new developments and renovations. *(In-Kind Support)*
- iv. Consider providing a redevelopment incentive for qualified projects by reimbursing a percentage of the construction sales tax, which could help the property owner defray some of their expenses making redevelopment financially feasible. *(Potential Project)*
- v. Develop an Infill Incentive District that would allow expedited processing of plans, waiver of permit fees, and relief from development standards to encourage redevelopment and construction of new spaces. Additionally, the property owner could consider joint venturing with a development company who could structure a financial arrangement that would mitigate the financial impact of the lost revenue stream. *(Potential Project)*
- vi. Allow pop up retail to take place to; take advantage of underutilized space, expose small entrepreneurial talent, build brand awareness, and drive additional foot traffic to the area. Identify empty space in the Village Center that can be programed during peak seasons. Meet with the property owner(s) to talk about the concept and obtain their participation. Prepare a

list of potential business establishments that you would like to include and issue an invitation. Consider soliciting retail prospects from the list of exhibitors at the various Town festivals, and/or research and identify desirable pop-up retail in other commercial venues in the Valley. *(Potential Project)*



Case Study – Grand Rapids, MI: The City of Grand Rapids coordinated with Middle West a retail co-op to develop a two-day pop-up retail store in their downtown that featured products only made in Michigan. *(Source: www.mlive.com)*

- d. **Develop a recruitment campaign targeting specific restaurant and retail business establishments.** One of the key ingredients of a successful downtown is providing a retail mix that meets the needs of the desired consumer base. The market demand analysis shows that sales leakage is taking place in nearly every major category in Carefree, which is a clear indicator that consumer needs are largely not being met. This also suggests there is solid potential for expanding the existing commercial base. However, to adequately support a larger commercial base (particularly restaurants), Carefree will need to broaden its appeal and embrace the larger trade area.
 - i. Capture a larger share of regional spending and investment by promoting businesses that cater to the demographic and lifestyle trends of the larger trade area such as childless households, families and local workers. *(In-Kind Support)*
 - ii. Create a list of potential retail and restaurant prospects to pursue. Focus on local chains or independently owned and operated “fine casual” restaurants, boutiques, specialty stores and services. Assess each retailer’s site location needs including space requirements, median household income, parking, etc. Determine potential Village Center locations for each retailer on the list. *(In-Kind Support)*



- iii. Develop marketing materials that showcase the vision for the Carefree Village Center, its location, area amenities, demographics and potential commercial demand. These materials should be available on the Town’s web site and in hard copy format. *(In-Kind Support)*
 - iv. On an ongoing basis, work with developers, and building owners to collect all information on vacant retail space within the Village Center, including floor plans, photos, terms, timeframes, and contact information. *(In-Kind Support)*
 - v. Target commercial real estate brokers and developers who specialize in retail and present information to begin to educate them on business opportunities in the Carefree Village Center. *(In-Kind Support)*
 - vi. Identify local/regional business prospects by conducting site visits to other preferred neighborhoods or downtowns and initiate business recruiting calls directly from the Town. *(In-Kind Support)*
 - vii. Assign Town staff person to develop and maintain a prospect database that keeps track of calls and conversation details. *(In-Kind Support)*
- e. Establish the Village Center as the next great neighborhood.** People are drawn to the energy of living downtown and they have a powerful multiplier effect on an areas economy by providing businesses with a “built-in” customer base. A component

currently missing in the Carefree Village Center is housing, at a density high enough to achieve a critical mass, which would bringing people to the area and help to activate the street during daytime and evening periods. The results of the consumer survey show that people want to live in the Carefree Village Center and are primarily interested in condo ownership.

- i. Build a captive audience that can help support businesses during day and evening hours by adding housing to the mix of uses in the Village Center. *(Catalyst Project)*
 - ii. Continue to work with property owners to create additional alternative living options through new construction and work with existing building owners to develop upper story renovations. *(Catalyst Project)*
 - iii. Update permitted uses and development standards (i.e. setbacks, lot coverage, parking requirements, etc.) in the Zoning Code to allow for compatible mixed use residential development by right or through minimal entitlement procedures. *(Regulatory Update)*
 - iv. Plan for complementary amenities that are desirable to residential development such as grassy areas or walking paths. *(In-Kind Support)*
- f. Consider Town acquisition of available properties to directly guide/seed redevelopment efforts.** Investing directly in a project that contributes to achieving a community’s vision for their downtown is a common approach used by cities to get a revitalization process off the ground and to build the critical momentum needed to spur a long-term cycle of private development and investment.
- i. Identify opportunities where the Town can acquire/assemble property to directly create development opportunities that are consistent with the Redevelopment Plan Vision. *(Catalyst Project)*
 - ii. Consider developing a Municipal Property Corporation to assist in implementing this recommendation where appropriate. *(Catalyst Project)*
 - iii. Consider use of the Government Property Lease Excise Tax (GPLET) as an incentive for redevelopment. *(Potential Project)*
 - iv. Utilize a formal request for proposal process and a public/private partnership to identify potential

development partners that can help to achieve the desired end use for these opportunity sites. *(Catalyst Project)*

g. Modify existing land use policies/development standards.

Setting a clear vision for preferred enhancements in the Village Center is important to the redevelopment effort, but Carefree must also be open to doing what it takes to help create the right environment for desired private sector development and investment.

- i. Create a special Village Center zoning or overlay district that establishes development standards that carry forward the Vision for the Village Center. Assist property owners by facilitating rezoning efforts to this new zoning district. *(Regulatory Update)*
- ii. Require ground-level activity generating, retail, restaurant, and entertainment uses and avoid placing ground-level, street facing office uses. *(Regulatory Update)*
- iii. Improve development standards including; requiring additional right-of-way to allow placement of sidewalks within public realm, reduce front setback from 10-feet to 0-feet, increase “by right” height limits for mixed use residential projects, and enhance shared-use parking guidelines. *(Regulatory Update)*
- iv. Increase and promote sidewalk cafes and outdoor dining. Create an easier outdoor dining permit process and encourage developers designing new space or renovating existing locations to include an area for outdoor dining. *(Regulatory Update)*
- v. Further refine the Village Center design guidelines to promote attractive, high-quality architecture and public spaces. Ensure refinements address the following *(Regulatory Update)*:
 - Establish a vibrant environment that lends to a dynamic, exciting, and welcoming atmosphere that defines the Village Center Vision.
 - Promote thoughtfully designed pedestrian-scaled mixed use infill development and redevelopment.
 - Create a safe and pedestrian-friendly environment for all use groups.

- Enhance and reinforce the identity of the Village Center through the design of building facades, cohesive signage, lighting, streetscape elements, public art, shade and landscape.
 - Promote quality development and construction that respond to community values of exceptional architectural design and distinctiveness.
 - Create an interesting, unique neighborhood that reflects the values and cultures of the people who reside in the area.
 - Emphasize existing landmarks and community characteristics to create a unique sense of place.
- vi. To stimulate ideas and concepts for these guidelines, conduct a design charrette (a community collective and creative brainstorming session) to discuss issues related to development, public space, connections, various modes of traffic, and the future character of the Carefree Village Center. *(Regulatory Update)*.

Objective 3 – Enhance the Village Center experience

While diversifying the types of land uses within the Village Center will foster a distinct community destination, urban design principles need to be applied to achieve a unified and “exciting” urban atmosphere. Historically, Carefree was a destination within the region and functioned as a popular day trip for shopping and culture. A key strategy of this plan is to renew the reputation as a focal point in the region by fostering lively street activity for all to enjoy. To achieve this, the Village Center should have attractive design elements, great open spaces, vibrant streetscapes, public art, programming of activities and attractive architecture.

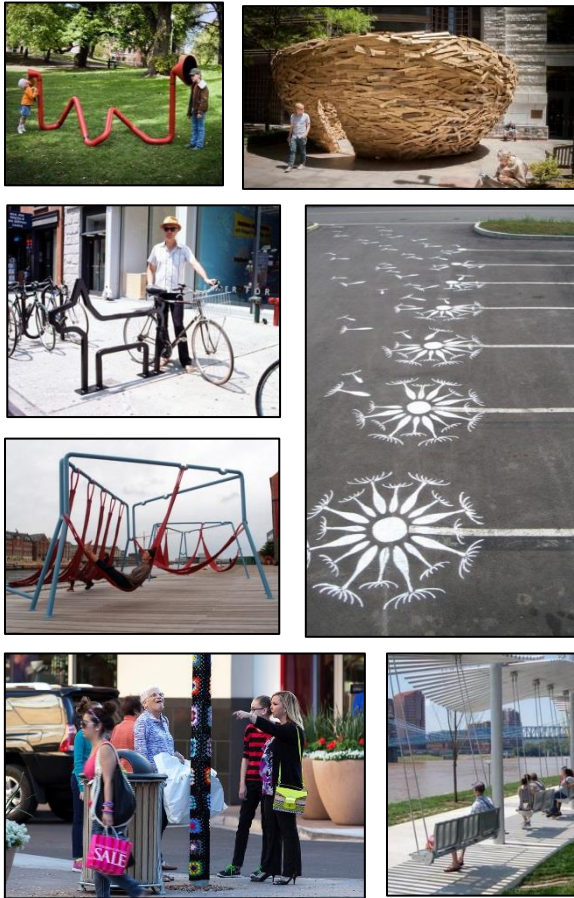
This section outlines recommended design elements and encourages attention to detail. In order for the Village Center to function as both a local and regional destination, it should not be conceptualized as a place for “cookie-cutter” development; rather, one that is authentic, exceptional, and unique.

Strategic Initiatives

- a. **Foster characteristics that set the Village Center apart from other places in the Valley.** The legacy of Carefree and the Village Center itself should be highlighted wherever possible. This is not to suggest that projects should replicate the past or past styles, rather that the area should highlight the past through

interpretive means that are unique, distinguishable, and memorable.

- i. Be audacious, move away from “sameness” and exploit Carefree’s historic qualities, like the whimsical street names, to develop a character that is unique to Carefree. *(In-Kind Support)*
- ii. Utilize common public elements such as seating, shade canopies, bike racks, trash cans and parking areas as opportunities to promote this unique “Carefree” atmosphere. *(Potential Project)*



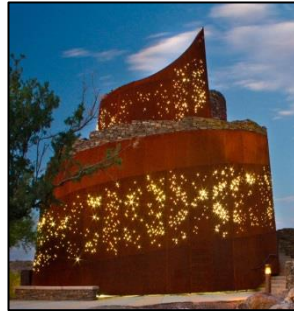
b. Enhance the Village Center’s prominence through iconic imagery. Public art provides an opportunity to make a place exceptional, to celebrate local identity, to stimulate social interaction, and to honor heritage. Carefree has had a successful history in celebrating arts and culture and strong support for building upon this identity was provided by residents during the public involvement process.

- i. Build on the historic whimsical character of Carefree and the original design qualities of the Sundial to provide interesting experiences through public art. *(Potential Project)*
- ii. Introduce new works of iconic public art that make an impact at critical nodes in the Village Center (i.e. Wampus Way, Carefree Drive and Ho Hum Road). Allow these nodes or focal points to act as a “Trail of Interest” that draws the visitor into and through the Village Center. *(Potential Project)*
- iii. Establish criteria related to the size, type and quality of the public art. “Plop art”—art that is put down simply to fulfill a requirement with no relation to context—should be avoided. *(Potential Project)*
- iv. Consider interactive art that incorporates the viewer, artistic lighting, sustainable art, “SmartArt” that takes advantage of smartphone technology and provides self-guided tours, or transitory art that is situated on a temporary basis. *(Potential Project)*
- v. Create a Public Art Program to help develop and administer the effort, and explore utilizing crowdfunding to launch the campaign or create an open design competition to increase exposure. *(Potential Project)*

Figure 15 – Trail of Interest



Place iconic public art pieces at key decision points to establish a “Trail of Interest” that draws visitors in and guides them through the Village Center.



Public art should not only be utilized to create an identity that is unique to Carefree, but should be interactive and utilize elements such as light, wind, solar energy, and “smart” technology to incorporate the viewer.



Case Study – Mankato, MN: The City placed 25 sculptures in their City Center by artists from around the world. Each piece was displayed for a full year and visitors were encouraged to vote for their favorite. The winner was purchased by the City for permanent display. (Source: *City Art Mankato*)



Case Study – Bakersfield, CA: Bakersfield Downtown Business Development Corporation launched a crowdfunding website to gain funds to launch phase 1 of their downtown plan. (Source: www.indiegogo.com)

c. Create incentives for commercial building and site improvements. A community’s overall image is key to its success in the competitive marketplace. Consequently, improving the physical aspects of the Village Center buildings, facades and storefronts must be a priority.

- i. Initiate an incentive grant program (i.e. façade improvement program) to spur exterior building improvements. Identify and pursue funding that

allows various levels of financial assistance to support simple paint and fix-it projects to more extensive rehabilitations of buildings or storefronts. (*Potential Project*)

- ii. Create a volunteer “makeover” program. As part of “Spruce Up the Village Center” campaign, develop a competitive program that mobilizes volunteers to make a major difference in the appearance of one property in a day (plus prep time) through repairs, painting, and installation of landscaping. (*In-Kind Support*)

d. Work with businesses to improve their physical presentation as well as enhance the presentation of empty storefronts. In tandem with access to the Village Center; storefronts, displays, signage and overall exterior presentation of businesses contribute to a visitor’s first impression of the Center. Business owners need to continually be attentive to front entrances, window displays and interior conditions to improve the overall image of the Village Center as well as to help “sell” the Village’s economic opportunities.

- i. Encourage cleanup and maintenance. Meet one-on-one with property owners to encourage them to remove old signs, products and junk from vacant buildings and especially from vacant display windows. Create a list of local companies or resources to assist with window cleaning, awning repair, removal of junk or debris, and painting. (*In-Kind Support*)
- ii. Create a program for displays in vacant storefronts. Create “phantom galleries” to display art, small museum exhibits, merchandise from other Village Center businesses, promote community events or link visitors to local amenities like jeep tours and boat trips on Bartlett Lake. (*In-Kind Support*)



Case Study – Sedona, AZ: Window display within the Tlaquepaque Arts & Crafts Village

e. Encourage exploration by improving wayfinding and signage. Signage is placed to inform and direct the unfamiliar visitor, so care should be given to develop signs that respect the natural area as residents identified they preferred, but ultimately must stand out to help guide the desired visitor.

- i. Develop a comprehensive sign package that carries a common design theme through the Village Center. *(Catalyst Project)*
- ii. Relocate and enhance the visibility of existing signage along Tom Darlington Drive and Cave Creek Road. Signage should include vibrant earth tones to avoid blending into the background; signs should be placed on the right shoulder of the road; and information should be limited to primary activities and destinations rather than specific businesses. *(Catalyst Project)*
- iii. Design and place appropriately scaled new signage that directs visitors traveling in vehicles at high speeds (trailblazer signs), low speeds (identification signs), as well as on foot (pedestrian signs/kiosks). *(Catalyst Project)*
- iv. Place a Village Center directory and location map kiosk in the Desert Gardens to promote visitors to explore beyond Easy Street and discover all destinations in the Village Center. *(Catalyst Project)*

f. Activate the Desert Gardens during non-event periods. The Desert Gardens are a great and unique asset for special events, but they offer an inherent value to the Village Center that extends well beyond these limited periods. The Desert Gardens qualities should be embraced outside of special events to maximize use of this community asset.

- i. Cater to the needs of Carefree residents, the larger trade area, and the out of state visitor by developing multi-generational public amenities that attract retirees, families, singles and tourists. *(In-Kind Support)*
- ii. Introduce retail kiosks, moveable seating, informal street entertainment, and/or a snack vendor for al fresco dining to encourage visitors to linger and extend their stay in the Desert Garden. *(Potential Project)*
- iii. Cluster complimentary elements to create synergy (place a coffee cart, next to outdoor seating, that is next to a fireplace). *(Potential Project)*
- iv. Explore areas for adding pockets of grass to soften the public spaces, provide additional green to the Center, and offer alternative gathering spaces. *(Potential Project)*

g. Improve sightlines through the Village Center. The Desert Gardens must function as a component of the overall pedestrian circulation network within the Village Center. This includes promoting connections between the buildings and businesses that face it by tying the individual blocks together (i.e. connecting Easy Street Shops with Town Mall Shops).

- i. Strategically trim/thin vegetation in the Desert Garden to create specific view corridors that allow visitors to physically see alternative shopping destinations or activities within the Village Center. *(Potential Project)*

Figure 16 – Signage Improvements



Existing Conditions: Existing signage along the periphery of the Village Center is attractive, but blends into the surrounding landscape and does not give visitors proper advance notification.



Conceptual Rendering: Adding brighter earth tones to existing signs as well as relocating them in advance of desired turning movements will help to better guide visitors into the Village Center.

Figure 17 - Activating the Desert Gardens



Existing Conditions: The Desert Gardens is a unique and inviting amenity in the Village Center and hosts several special events. However, during non-event times the Gardens are underutilized and can be a “line of sight” barrier to experiencing other parts of the Village Center.



Conceptual Rendering: Placing complimentary elements within the Desert Gardens such as; a coffee cart, next to moveable seating, next to a fireplace begins to create synergy that encourages visitors to linger and extend their stay in the Village Center. Trimming some of the trees and plantings in the Desert Gardens also will contribute to this synergy by increasing views, which encourages further exploration by visitors.

Objective 4 – Market and Promote the Village Center

The Market Trade Area for Carefree encompasses 148 square miles and includes Cave Creek, and portions of the cities of Phoenix and Scottsdale. The analyzed population of the trade area is 82,150 compared to the Town of Carefree at 3,690 (2020 Census). In addition, on a typical workday, there are nearly an equal number of people out commuting to work as in commuting to Carefree for jobs. These workers who come to Carefree, as well as the solid population base in the trade area, represent potential customers the Carefree Village Center businesses can draw upon. However, a consistent flow of promotions or activities focused on attracting these two markets to the Village Center are limited to almost non-existent. This creates an opportunity for the business community and supporting organizations to explore strategies to pull together, leverage resources and implement a formalized calendar of promotional activities specifically targeted at the local Carefree resident, the families within the market trade area and the day workers within the region.

The following summary provides distinctive recommendations aimed at improving the Carefree Village Center’s draw as a destination for tourism. This includes strengthening the Center’s existing marketing to attract visitors, building upon the Center’s events and promotional calendar, improving the image of the Center’s commercial areas and making sure visitors find the experiences they are looking for. Strategies to create a stronger link between local businesses and local customers with focus on the people who live and work in or near Carefree are also included in this section. Guidance on how to involve the community and engage the various organizations in supporting the Village Center Redevelopment Plan and making it a reality are provided as well.

Strategic Initiatives

a. Create a comprehensive Village Center marketing plan. A downtown’s image and ability to attract customers is directly tied to its marketing efforts. Managing a unified, consistent approach to marketing the Village Center’s unique qualities can help to establish the desired brand for the Center and can contribute to strengthening consumer confidence in the area, which results in increased commercial activity and investment. Successful shopping centers and malls routinely utilize focused and deliberate

marketing plans to distinguish and promote themselves in the marketplace.

- i. Align the data, recommendations, and action steps outlined within the Redevelopment Plan with future promotional and marketing strategies. *(Potential Project)*
- ii. Continue to make periodic visits to the local and regional resort/hotel concierges to keep them informed of the various festivals, venues and attractions in Carefree. *(In-Kind Support)*
- iii. Consider hosting a tour of key attractions, restaurants and galleries for the concierges. Put together a “goodie” bag for the attendees and make sure that they go back to their place of work with ample marketing materials about the Carefree Village Center in hand. *(In-Kind Support)*
- iv. Host regular meetings with the businesses, venues and attractions to layout the current advertising campaign being supported, identify how they can leverage the results as well as ideas for future strategies. *(In-Kind Support)*

b. Encourage businesses and organizations to tie-in their own advertising efforts with those promoting the Village Center in general. While utilizing a comprehensive marketing plan is critical to supporting the Village Center’s revitalization efforts, individual businesses must still work to develop/maintain their own consumer base. This reality creates challenges when independent marketing materials are not consistent with the image or quality that the larger Village Center is trying to convey. In contrast, this reality creates opportunities for likeminded or complimentary businesses to collaborate and further strengthen the overall marketing approach for the Village Center.

- i. The Village Center businesses that advertise on a regular basis should collaborate to develop programs with their local advertising media to cluster their advertisement and leverage cooperative opportunities when possible. Once the Village Center logo and tagline is created, include it in all cooperative and cluster advertising as well as including information on upcoming events or activities. *(In-Kind Support)*

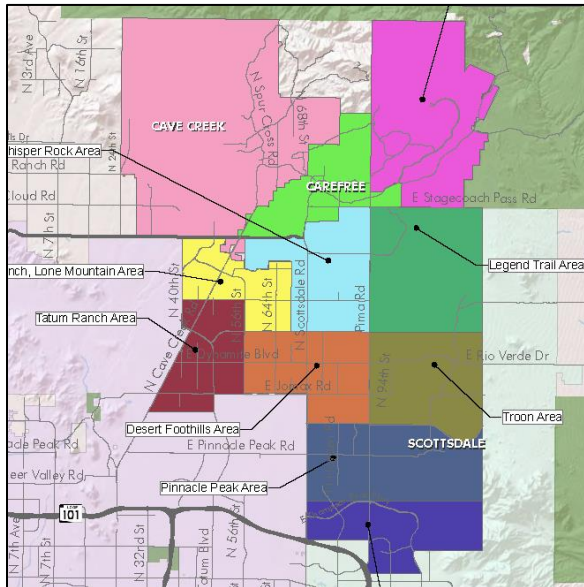
- ii. Working with the local newspaper, prepare quarterly inserts that combine advertising, positive and informational editorial content (including upcoming events), photos, and a listing of all the Center's businesses. Overruns of this insert can be distributed at the Visitor Center, Town Hall, provided to concierges, etc. Have it available as a PDF on the visitor and Town websites as well. *(In-Kind Support)*
 - iii. Create a Village Center coupon book. The books could offer discounts, 2-for-1 dining opportunities, and service and professional offerings. The books could be distributed at key events in goodie bags, in the event information booth, offered to Carefree Resort and the Boulders to put in rooms and distributed to new residents or explore ways to create a digital coupon book. *(In-Kind Support)*
 - iv. Village Center businesses should cluster advertising about their businesses in high quality, professionally produced flyers to cross-promote between related businesses and share advertising costs. These flyers should be placed in the advertised businesses, Chamber of Commerce, Carefree and Boulders Resort, Visitor Center, etc. *(In-Kind Support)*
- c. Enhance web, social media, and e-marketing campaigns.** Simply utilizing nontraditional marketing efforts is not enough to compete in today's marketplace. When a potential visitor is trying to plan their trip or itinerary to a location, they don't want to just be able to find relevant web content, they want the web process to be as easy and seamless as possible without having to go to various sites to gather information. Equally important, social media has become one of the most vital, cost-efficient tools in tourism marketing. Effective use of social media has been proven to boost the number and length of visits, as well as visitor satisfaction and number of return visits. Utilizing e-mail marketing has also become a proven method for reconnecting to visitors and "inviting" them back to enjoy the events, activities and venues.
- i. Continue to utilize visitcarefree.com as the "Official On-line Visitor Guide to Carefree, AZ" Ensure the website has weekly, content- rich blogs, (which will assist with increasing its search engine optimization), links to the local visitor/tourist based businesses, venues and attractions, and a current calendar of events and promotions. *(In-Kind Support)*
 - ii. Other Carefree focused websites that also contain information relevant to visitors should cross promote the primary visitor website as well as link to it accordingly. *(In-Kind Support)*
 - iii. Explore strategies of how to capture emails during events, through visitor touch points such as encouraging businesses to have a guest book that asks for comments and email addresses. These databases can then be used for an email marketing campaign. *(In-Kind Support)*
 - iv. The e-marketing campaigns should cross promote other attractions within the region that would also be appealing to visitors such as jeep tours, lake activities, horseback riding, hiking, etc. This helps to begin establishing Carefree as a home base for longer day trips. *(In-Kind Support)*
 - v. Inquire if CIVANA and the Boulders would be inclined to share the consumer e-newsletter with their visitor database. *(In-Kind Support)*
 - vi. Encourage businesses to use social media. The Chamber of Commerce regularly hosts workshops and seminars on social media. Continue to encourage the Village Center businesses to attend these workshops and engage in social media—especially ratings sites such as Yelp, Foursquare, and TripAdvisor where people may already be posting opinions about their businesses. *(In-Kind Support)*
- d. Leverage local markets to boost the Center's Commerce.** The trade area is comprised of many sub-markets or consumer groups that have varied preferences, desired activities, and expendable income levels. By capitalizing on the different needs



Case Study – Desert Ridge Marketplace: During the holiday season Desert Ridge encouraged visitors to take “selfies” in front of their Christmas tree and post them to their Facebook page for a chance to win a Desert Ridge gift card.

of the consumer groups in the trade area, businesses can better drive visitors to the Village Center.

- i. Utilize available resources and implement a formalized calendar of ongoing promotions and mini events (like customer appreciation month, “move-in” coupon books, resort room advertisements, restaurant guides, “bounce back promotions”, “Girl’s Night Out” or “Evening on the Town” event’s) specifically targeted at the local Carefree resident, the families within the larger market trade area and the day workers within the region. *(In-Kind Support)*
- ii. Work with the Chamber to ensure that marketing collateral about the Village Center is always included in relocation packets. *(In-Kind Support)*
- iii. Develop a “Shop Local” campaign. The majority of businesses located in the Village Center are independently owned, which makes the Center the perfect candidate for capitalizing on the national “shop local” movement. Contact Local First Arizona to come and make a presentation to the local business community on the various ways this organization can support them. <http://www.localfirstaz.com/> *(In-Kind Support)*



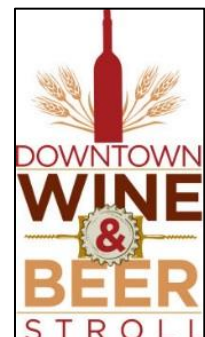
The Carefree trade area includes all of Carefree, Cave Creek and Dove Mountain Ranch as well as extends to DC Ranch to the south and Tatum Ranch to the west.

- e. **Strategically program and manage the calendar of events.** Special events are important to increasing awareness of and interest in the Village Center. They create a sense of liveliness, build community and

provide a safe, inviting atmosphere for visitors to have fun. While they generally do not generate a significant increase in retail sales, they are critically important in creating a positive feeling towards the Village Center. Yet resident and stakeholder input have indicated the current slate of special events in Carefree has lost some of these qualities.

- i. Continue to maintain the existing arts and cultural events to keep key festivals fresh and unique, meeting the expectations of the attendee and building upon the strong arts and cultural brand. *(In-Kind Support)*
- ii. Compliment the art and culture calendar of events by developing events or promotions that are not primarily art-focused activities. Ideas shared by residents and stakeholders included Farm-To-Table event (leveraging the healthy eating movement), road cycling race, Wellness and Health Fair, “Maker Faire” (<http://makerfaire.com/>), Chili or BBQ Cook off, or a Taste of Carefree. *(In-Kind Support)*
- iii. Fully leverage the Desert Gardens by continuing to regularly host music performances and movie nights along with other events such as a Spring Garden Festival, Dinner in the Garden, Art in the Garden, Shakespeare in the Garden, etc. *(In-Kind Support)*
- iv. Carefree should strive to add events or promotions during the months of May through September to balance the current Calendar of Events thus generating a more consistent flow of consumers to the Village for businesses to draw upon. *(In-Kind Support)*

- v. Due to the summer heat, consider evening events like a Light Festival, Car Show or a Culinary & Wine Stroll. The summer events do not need to be long, drawn-out three-day festivals but shorter, indoor or outdoor promotions. *(In-Kind Support)*





Case Study – Rome, Italy: The “whatami” exhibit is an elegant, yet fun, temporary landscape, art, and light installation situated within the piazza of the MAXXI museum. (Source: www.designboom.com)

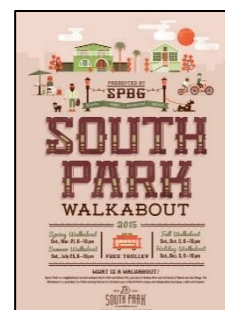


Case Study – Houston, TX: The “Bubbles” glowing ornament seasonal art installation was placed in Discovery Green, a civic park developed through a public-private partnership in downtown Houston. (Source: www.discovergreen.com)

- vi. The Town should encourage the event organizations to provide some type of communication piece that can be given to every business in the Village informing them of days and times of the event, any street closures or parking restrictions and opportunities for participation, sponsorship and/or advertising. *(In-Kind Support)*
- vii. Due to the fact that there are a number of non-profit organizations as well as professional promoters who wish to utilize the Village Center for their events, it is imperative that the Town develops strong and consistent guidelines to ensure that EVERY event meets the overall standard and quality the community demands. *(Regulatory Update)*
- viii. Consider having exist surveys from attendees to gather feedback on the event. *(In-Kind Support)*
- ix. Periodically survey the businesses to capture input on how they leveraged the event to drive customers into their establishments. *(In-Kind Support)*

f. **Continue to work towards all businesses being open year-round and consider implementing an “Open All Year Round” campaign to support the goal.** 70% of all consumer spending (both locals and visitors) takes place after 6:00 pm). If the Village Center is truly going to achieve its vision, there must be a concentrated effort focused at getting the majority of retail, restaurants, and art galleries to be open year-round as well as expand the hours that they are open (Saturday, Sunday and later in the evening). As in many traditional commercial business districts that are comprised of independently owned businesses, their biggest weakness is not being open when the consumer or visitor is available or wanting to come down to shop, stroll and visit. The Village Center must be open to capture the “working” resident as well as the day or weekend visitor who might drive up to Carefree to explore the area or attend an event.

- i. One strategy that other communities have implemented to support making the shift toward opening both year-round and/or seven days a week is hosting a specific “Open” campaign targeted at driving business to a particular time of the year, day of the week and/or evening hours. *(In-Kind Support)*
- ii. Have businesses commit to being open during specific summer or special evening hours. Have businesses sign an agreement that they will make the commitment and encourage them to promote it within their own advertising and marketing venues. Plan several “mini” events specifically during these hours such as an evening “walkabout” with refreshments offered at participating businesses or “hot days of summer” promotion. As a group, promote that the Village Center is open during these hours and list participating businesses through a variety of promotional venues such as a display ad in the local media, press releases, websites, flyers, posts on bulletin boards, direct mail, table tents in restaurants, and inserts in visitor packets. *(In-Kind Support)*



Case Study – San Diego, AZ: The South Park neighborhood in San Diego hosts several walkabouts throughout the year to showcase businesses within the district. The event includes maps, complimentary treats, live entertainment and special promotions. (Source: www.southparkscene.com)

- iii. Work with, educate, and encourage property owners to incorporate provisions in their lease agreements that promote consistent operating hours and days. *(In-Kind Support)*

g. Support the Town's Visitor Center located in the Village Center amphitheater and continue to collaborate with the Cave Creek/Carefree Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center on Easy Street (operated by the Chamber) as the primary visitor information outlets. When visitors or tourists finally arrive at their desired location they may still need additional information, brochures or a personal welcome to the area. Each Visitor Center that is conveniently located in the Village Center is designed to function as a comprehensive "visitor center" experience. The center includes ample marketing collateral about the various events, attractions and activities in the town and region, volunteers who meet, greet and answer visitor questions, and artifacts and gift items related to the area.

- i. During the peak season, the Visitor Centers should strive to be open on the weekends or consideration should be given to developing a Village Center ambassadors program where volunteers walk the Center and assist visitors as needed. *(In-Kind Support)*
- ii. The Town Hall can continue to have collateral on hand and answer questions from visitors if needed but efforts should be made to ultimately direct individuals to the dedicated Visitor Centers. *(In-Kind Support)*
- iii. Encourage everyone located in the Village Center to cross promote the Chamber's visitor center as the area's official Visitor Center and Carefree's visitor center as the Town's official destination for tourism information. *(In-Kind Support)*

Objective 5 – Develop a strong organizational structure

At present, like most communities, there is no one entity or organization that is solely responsible for all aspects of maintaining, promoting, and managing the Village Center. As the Town moves forward in implementing the Village Center Redevelopment Plan, there will be ample opportunities for all sectors of the community to be involved in supporting each of the various plan strategies. Strengthening relationships and communication among the various organizations will need to be a priority as well as supporting a structure that engages the business and

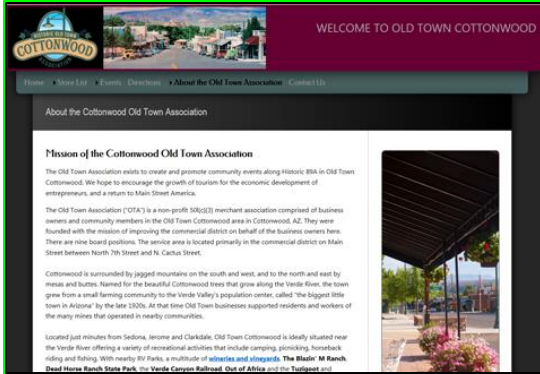
property owners in the process. In order to be competitive in the marketplace the Town must have a framework that does not rely on one entity, but includes all of the community with each understanding their function, role and mission.

The recommendations outlined for this strategy provide the necessary focus to bring all downtown organizations and interests together to achieve common goals for the revitalization of the Village Center.

Strategic Initiatives

- a. Build and sustain a strong downtown network and organizational structure.** To maintain a focus on the Carefree Village Center, develop a strong organizational structure that represents both the private and public sectors. There are many options for organizing the effort, but the approach must reflect the character and resources of the community and have the long-term capacity to properly manage the Center and engage all the various stakeholders and partners. The goal of the organizational framework should involve as many components of the community as possible and not rely on just one entity to single-handedly keep the commercial area "vitalized". To create a commercial district that is competitive in all aspects, it must have dedicated resources, a strong organizational structure, and dedicated staff to focus just on the Village Center area.
 - i. Facilitate a meeting with the organizations who have a key role in implementing the Village Center Redevelopment Plan to discuss each of their function or mission, identify the types of programs or activities they currently support and outline areas of synergy, collaboration and/or overlap. Use this meeting as the base for forming a Carefree Village Center alliance or collaborative that meets quarterly. Encourage members of this collaborative to share information about their current and upcoming activities. Provide opportunities for members to form task groups or committees and work on projects together (such as marketing advisory committee, business development task force, and beautification and aesthetics team.) *(Catalyst Project)*
 - ii. Support the formation of a Village Center merchant group or Carefree Tourism and Merchant Committee. In the past there was a grassroots merchant group formed that helped with facilitating cooperative advertising

opportunities and promotions for the Village Center. Activate this group again with the focus of carrying the common voice for the Center's businesses forward and participating in the collaborative meetings. *(Potential Project)*



Case Study - Cottonwood, AZ: The Cottonwood Old Town Association evolved from an ineffective organization into a cohesive 501(c)(3) merchant association. Their recent efforts have assisted in obtaining a grant from the Arizona Office of Tourism for three billboard advertisements and they also host the annual Walking on Main and Chocolate Walk events. *(Source: www.oldtown.org)*

- iii. Continue to expand the community's knowledge of commercial district development and management. Members of the Carefree Village Center alliance or collaborative, other stakeholders, and supporting agencies should continue to attend conferences and other educational opportunities including field trips to other successful communities. *(In-Kind Support)*
 - iv. Explore the Main Street Four Point Approach® as a possible structure to strengthen the public/private partnerships and help carry forward the key strategies outlined in the Redevelopment Plan. The Main Street Four-Point Approach® developed in the early 70's has been one of the most successful and proven economic development tools to assist traditional commercial districts and downtowns with reaching its full potential both economically and as a community-gathering place. A functioning Main Street program can be viewed as a grassroots business retention program that focuses on helping businesses understand how to stay competitive (economic restructuring), promoting the area as a destination to attract consumers (promotion), keeping the downtown looking attractive (design) and maintaining communication and advocacy on behalf of the businesses and property owners (organization). *(In-Kind Support)*
- b. Maintain the Marketing and Communication Coordinator position.** Continue to uphold the Marketing and Communication Coordinator position to help form and work with the Center's merchant group; interface with event promoters to ensure success between all parities; work with businesses to implement specific promotions and initiatives, and assist in bridging any communication gaps between the Town and the Center property and business owners.
- i. Conduct outreach to maintain engagement of the property owners in the Village Center improvement efforts. It will be critical to the overall success of the Village Center to gain the support of various Center property owners and get their buy-in for the overall vision. *(In-Kind Support)*
 - ii. Similar to the business visitation program described previously, initiate a separate outreach program focused on property owners, which will help connect them to resources to improve their properties and participate in efforts to grow and recruit businesses. *(In-Kind Support)*
 - iii. Maintain an accurate database of all Center property owners. Use the database to mail (or email) business newsletters and invitations to upcoming community meetings and keep property owners informed on what is happening in downtown. Maintain mailing addresses of out-of-town property owners and management companies and make sure they are included in mailings. *(In-Kind Support)*
 - iv. Create and distribute a property owner "news flash." Consider periodically (about twice a year) publishing a one-page downtown property owner "news flash" that covers specific issues and needs related to downtown properties. This could include a current listing of vacancies, properties that were recently leased, new programs or incentives for owners, educational pieces on keeping properties clean and pristine, and upcoming meetings. *(In-Kind Support)*
 - v. Host a downtown property owner brown bag lunch. Informal brown bag lunches should be held on a quarterly basis and be targeted to gather feedback from property owners

regarding their current needs or issues concerning leasing, *(In-Kind Support)*

c. Maintain consistent communication regarding the Carefree Village Center Redevelopment Plan.

As Carefree begins to implement the recommendations outlined in the Redevelopment Plan, a consistent communication effort will be key to keep stakeholders, partners and the community well informed.

- i. Dedicate a regular section in the “Carefree Connection” to promote the Village Center Redevelopment Plan. Identify new projects or programs, new businesses, property improvements, incentives or trainings available, educational articles, meetings, and information about how to get involved. Keep the Redevelopment Plan “alive” and the community engaged. *(In-Kind Support)*

- ii. Host bi-annual, structured community town hall events to disseminate information about projects and successes related to the Village Center and provide opportunities for input. Send invitations to stakeholders and promote these events to the general public. Include ways to engage passionate individuals such as asking them to volunteer on a committee or support an activity. *(In-Kind Support)*

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Chapter 5: Implementation

The Plan for Action outlines the direction for the Village Center over the next 10 to 15 years. While the plan contains multiple strategies and actions to pursue, each recommendation requires a different set of partners, level of effort, and funding sources, which impacts their timeline for implementation. In response, this Chapter provides a framework for implementation and funding mechanisms that may be used to facilitate the plan. Within this framework, Town staff will actively work with the Planning and Zoning Commission and Town Council as the Plan is implemented to update priorities, review proposals, and evaluate projects. Collectively, these public coordination efforts will include comprehensive engagement with businesses, property owners and Carefree residents.

Implementation Guide

To assure the momentum from planning to implementation is clearly directed and not delayed, the following matrix is presented to detail the timeframe, responsibility and partners, and priority actions/projects for each strategic initiative.

- The matrix is organized according to the five Village Center **Objectives** that were outlined in the previous Chapter of this Redevelopment Plan.
- Individual **Strategic Initiatives** associated with each Objective are then listed and identified as a short (0-2 years), mid (2-5), or long (5+) term effort.
- Within each short-term strategy, **priority actions/projects** are also identified, which represent those specific actions steps that should be undertaken immediately to take advantage of current conditions and/or effectively jump-start the redevelopment process.

This guide is intended to provide a road map to success and enables stakeholders to also keep track of the community's progress in implementing the plan's strategies. However, while this implementation plan provides clear and specific direction to initiate change in the Village Center; project timelines, key players, and priority actions may need to be modified over time as market demands change, behavioral patterns shift, and momentum builds around the Village Center itself. In response, as the plan is implemented Town staff will provide periodic updates to the Planning and Zoning Commission and Town Council on overall redevelopment progress as well as seek further direction on preferred priorities and/or action efforts.

Ultimately this implementation plan exemplifies that work must be done on the ground every day to ensure that each Redevelopment Plan Goal is met, and tangible change occurs. Village Center stakeholders will need to work together to continue to build public and private support for the Redevelopment Plan and to ensure that every project is implemented to its maximum extent.

Implementation Matrix

Objective	Strategic Initiative	Key Players		Priority Action/Project	Order of Magnitude Cost	Short Term (0-2 Years)	Medium Term (2-5 Years)	Long Term (5+ Years)
		Lead Entity	Partners			Implementation Phase		
						Implementation Phase	Implementation Phase	Implementation Phase
Objective 1 Improve the Village Center's Visibility and Access	Celebrate the points of arrival into the Village Center to counteract the inward facing design.	Town of Carefree	Business Development Task Force; Business owners; Property owners; local organizations	Complete detailed wayfinding and signage plan for the Village Center	\$70K - \$80K	On-Going Implementation		
	Decrease the number of entry drives along Tom Darlington Drive and Cave Creek Road.	Town of Carefree	Business owners; Property owners				On-Going Implementation	On-Going Implementation
	Establish a hierarchy of street typologies.	Town of Carefree	Business owners; Property owners; Management Companies				On-Going Implementation	
	Build-upon the Village Center's pedestrian and bicycle friendly design.	Town of Carefree	Business Development Task Force; Business owners; Property owners; local Resorts				On-Going Implementation	On-Going Implementation
	Create additional parking opportunities.	Town of Carefree	Business owners; Property owners;	Identify and acquire properties for preservation of future parking alternatives	\$60K - \$80K (study)	On-Going Implementation		On-Going Implementation
Objective 2 Foster development of a strong retail, residential, entertainment, and service core in the Village Center	Identify and pursue key anchor projects in strategic locations that can be a catalyst for economic change.	Town of Carefree	Business Development Task Force; Business owners; Property owners; Property Management Companies; Chamber;	Continue to collaborate with potential anchor/cultural partners.	In-kind Support	On-Going Implementation	On-Going Implementation	
	Help foster the growth of existing Village Center business establishments.	Town of Carefree	Business Development Task Force; Business owners; Property owners; Property Management Companies; Chamber;	Conduct business visitations of all Village businesses and rank highest needs accordingly	In-kind Support	On-Going Implementation		
	Revitalize existing commercial areas/buildings through redevelopment, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse.	Town of Carefree	Business Development Task Force; Business owners; Property owners; Property Management Companies; Chamber;	Identify empty space in the Village Center that can be programed for pop up retail during peak seasons; meet with the property owner(s)	In-kind Support	On-Going Implementation	On-Going Implementation	On-Going Implementation
	Develop a recruitment campaign targeting specific restaurant and retail business establishments.	Town of Carefree	Business Development Task Force; Business owners; Property owners; Property Management Companies; Chamber	Create a list of potential prospects to pursue; develop marketing material; meet with local real estate brokers to review	In-kind Support	On-Going Implementation	On-Going Implementation	On-Going Implementation

Objective	Strategic Initiative	Key Players		Priority Action/Project	Order of Magnitude Cost	Short Term (0-2 Years)	Medium Term (2-5 Years)	Long Term (5+ Years)
		Lead Entity	Partners			Implementation Phase		
						On-Going Implementation		
Objective 2 Foster development of a strong retail, residential, entertainment, and service core in the Village Center	Establish the Village Center as the next great neighborhood.	Town of Carefree	Business Development Task Force; Business owners; Property owners; Property managers					
	Consider acquisition of available properties to directly guide/seed redevelopment efforts.	Town of Carefree	Property owners					
	Modify existing land use policies/development standards.	Town of Carefree	Business Development Task Force; Business owners; Property owners; Property managers	Amend zoning code/design guidelines to promote Redevelopment Plan Vision	\$15K-\$30K			
Objective 3 Enhance the Village Center Experience	Foster characteristics that set the Village Center apart from other places in the Valley.	Town of Carefree	Business Development Task Force;	Be audacious, move away from "sameness" and focus on the whimsical character of Carefree's history	In-kind Support			
	Enhance the Village Center's prominence through iconic imagery.	Town of Carefree	Business Development Task Force; Business owners; Property owners; Property Management Companies; Chamber; Sonoran Arts League	Research the feasibility of creating public art program; review other cities programs on how art is funded and how artists are selected	\$10-\$20K			
	Create incentives for commercial building and site improvements.	Town of Carefree	Business Development Task Force; Business owners; Property owners; Property Management Companies; Chamber	Launch a volunteer "façade makeover" demonstration project	\$5-\$10K		Formal Incentive program	
	Work with businesses to improve their physical presentation as well as enhance the presentation of empty storefronts.	Town of Carefree	Business Development Task Force; Business owners; Property owners; Property Management Companies; Chamber					
	Encourage exploration by improving wayfinding and signage.	Town of Carefree	Business Development Task Force	Develop a sign package; repurpose and relocate existing signage to better guide unfamiliar visitors to the Village Center; place a directory kiosk in Desert Garden to direct visitors to Village shops off Easy Street	\$60K - \$80K (study)			
	Activate the Desert Gardens during non-event periods.	Town of Carefree	Business Development Task Force	Explore introducing kiosk retail with seating during weekend periods to energize gardens and promote local business	\$10-\$20K			

Objective	Strategic Initiative	Key Players		Priority Action/Project	Order of Magnitude Cost	Short Term (0-2 Years)	Medium Term (2-5 Years)	Long Term (5+ Years)
		Lead Entity	Partners			Implementation Phase		
						On-Going Implementation		
	Improve sightlines through the Village Center.	Town of Carefree		Strategically trim/thin vegetation in Desert Gardens to maintain shade and promote key view corridors	In-kind Support			
Objective 4 Market and Promote the Village Center	Create a comprehensive Village Center marketing plan	Town of Carefree	Chamber	Draft a Marketing Plan identifying key markets and the types of promotional and advertising tactics to reach them. Present the plan to the businesses, supporting organizations and venues for input	\$50K-\$80K			
	Encourage businesses and organization to coordinate the advertising efforts	Town of Carefree	Village Center businesses and local organizations	Host a meeting to discuss where, what and how businesses/ organizations are advertising and are there opportunities to collaborate	In-kind Support			
	Enhance web, social media, and e-marketing campaigns	Town of Carefree	Chamber	Draft recommendations of how to improve engagement and "likes" on facebook page, draft strategies of how to capture emails during events	In-kind Support			
	Leverage local markets to boost the Center's Commerce	Town of Carefree	Chamber	Hold a meeting with businesses to identify one initial or a series of promotions to reach consumers. Meet with Local First Arizona	In-kind Support			
	Strategically program and manage the calendar of events	Town of Carefree	Promoters of events; businesses;	Evaluate current calendar of events and draft new recommendations. Look for "low hanging fruit" (such as seasonal events, continue movies in the Pavilion)	In-kind Support		Phase in new events	
	Continue to work towards all businesses being open year-round	Town of Carefree	Chamber	Launch some type of "open one night a week during the summer (I.e. After the Sun Sets)" promotion	In-kind Support			
	Support the Town and Chamber Visitor Center's	Chamber	Town of Carefree;	Strive to have the Visitor Center open on the weekends during high season	In-kind Support			

Objective	Strategic Initiative	Key Players		Priority Action/Project	Order of Magnitude Cost	Short Term (0-2 Years)	Medium Term (2-5 Years)	Long Term (5+ Years)
		Lead Entity	Partners			Implementation Phase		
						On-Going Implementation		
Objective 5 Develop a Strong Organizational Structure	Build and sustain a strong downtown network and organizational structure.	Town of Carefree	Business owners; property owners; organizations; Chamber; Promoters; citizens	Form a Village Center Alliance or Collaborative; create task groups or teams (such as Marketing Advisory, Business Development, Beautification and Aesthetics) to assist with implementation of the Redevelopment Plan	In-kind Support			
	Maintain the Marketing and Communication Coordinator Position	Town of Carefree		Continue to maintain a staff point person that can focus on implementing the specific recommendations of this plan	\$50k – \$70k			
	Maintain consistent communication regarding the Carefree Village Center Redevelopment Plan.	Town of Carefree	Leaders of each committee or task force or team	Hold a meeting with the property owners and management companies to discuss Redevelopment Plan recommendations and gather feedback of what is important to them.	In-kind Support			

Funding

Many of the action items outlined within this Redevelopment Plan can be implemented administratively or on a volunteer basis with minimal effort. However, other recommended action items will require financial assistance.

While the projected tax revenue generated by existing and new development establishes the business case for targeted public investments associated with the Master Plan projects that are most likely to stimulate further sustained private investment, Carefree cannot provide this financial assistance with public funds alone. Ultimately, the implementation of the Village Center Redevelopment Plan will depend upon the Town’s ability to access alternative sources to fund public improvements as well as develop programs to incentivize direct private development.

Building off the various funding sources presented within the Plan for Action Chapter, Carefree should evaluate and consider the following list of assorted funding sources and/or mechanisms to support the specific action items

recommended in this plan. It is important to keep in mind that many projects—especially physical ones—will often require unique funding strategies that creatively combine a multitude of these sources to ultimately finance each effort.

Funding Sources and Mechanisms

- **Public Bonding such as:** Improvement (Assessment) Bond, General Obligation Bond or Revenue Bond
- **Special Taxing District such as:** Business Improvement District, Municipal Improvement District, Special Assessment District, Community Facilities District, etc.
- **Infill Incentive District**
- **State Incentive Programs:** Angel Investment
- **Municipal Property Corporation**
- **Government Property Lease Excise Tax (GPLET)**
- **User Fees:** Parking fees

- **Voluntary Agreements such as:** Development Agreements, Public-Private Partnerships, Payback Agreements, etc.
- **Loans such as:** Greater Arizona Development Authority - GADA loans, Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program, Community Facilities Loan & Grant Program
- **Viable Grant Programs such as:** Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Community Facilities Loan & Grant Program, Arizona Office of Tourism, Maricopa County Proposition 302 program, National Endowment for the Arts - Our Town Grant Program, etc.,
- **Partnerships with public agencies or non-profit interests such as:** US Small Business Administration - Development Centers, Main Street Four Point Approach, Local First Arizona, Chamber, etc.
- **Sponsorships with corporate or private interests such as:** naming rights (Sanderson Lincoln Pavilion), product sampling displays, adoption crowdfunding, etc.
- **Creation of non-profit agency such as:** Village Center Association, Public Art program, etc.

APPENDIX A

Resolution for the Redevelopment Area & CBD Establishment

APPENDIX B

Market Analysis Summary (2015 Master Plan)

APPENDIX C

Community Participation Summary (2015 Master Plan)

At the onset of the project the planning process undertook an initial public consultation process which included three components: a community survey (reviewed in Chapter 1), stakeholder interviews, steering committee meetings and community workshops.

When combined, these outreach methods provided rich and meaningful feedback in the process of developing preliminary and ultimately final revitalization concepts. Following are the major themes that arose from the combined outreach:

Steering Committee Input – SLOT Analysis

<p>Village Center STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design/Layout * • Business Mix • Community Character • Desert Garden/Pavilion • Pedestrian Friendly • Setting/Geography • Special Events 	<p>Village Center LIMITATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visibility/Exposure* • Land Use Mix* • Building Age • Demographic Profile • Design • Funding • Marketing/Positioning
<p>Village Center OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business & Uses * • Culture & Arts • Location to Natural Settings • Physical & Visual Character • Promotion & Marketing • Special Events • Specific Target Markets 	<p>Village center THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical, Design, Infrastructure* • Economics & Seasonal Influences • Leakage & Competition in other Cities • Organization & Promotion • Policies & Branding

* Identified as highest priority issue



Community Workshop – Café Discussion

Vision Discussion

What will the Village Center be known for in the future?

- Gathering place for people
- Culture (arts/music/theater)
- Museum
- Desert garden
- Unique experience

What is missing from the vision statement?

- More diverse restaurants
- Festivals need to be balanced
- More traffic in summer
- Incorporate arts and music for kids

Urban Design Discussion

Main Themes from the Urban Design Discussion:

- The Village Center needs something unique/visually appealing/iconic to help Carefree stand out; could be something whimsical
- Walkable streets and wanted more to enhance that experience, including shading or misting the sidewalks and adding more trees and plants
- Outdoor uses should be encouraged and increased, including outdoor dining, night time events and live music
- Mixed use development would enhance the overall Village Center experience

Special Events Discussion

Ideas on different types of events from the Special Events Discussion

- Car/Motorcycle Show
- Film Festival
- Music Festival
- Tax-Free Day
- Derby Day
- Food Festivals (“Farm to Table”, Baking Contest, Chili Cook-off, Taste of Carefree, Oktoberfest)

Circulation/Access Discussion

Ingress/Egress – Best Access and Least Needed

- Primary access points:
 - Pedestrians: Wampum and Ho
 - Vehicles: Carefree, Wampum, Lucky
- Streets that could be eliminated:
 - Sunshine: One resident thought this would make a nice greenbelt
 - Lucky Lane

Economic Base Discussion

Potential Business/Uses (and Partnerships)

- Theater (Herberger, ASU, Desert Foothills)
- Museum (Heard, Musical Instrument Museum)
- Education (ASU, Maricopa County Community Colleges)
- Film House/Movie Theater
- Garden/Greenbelt (Desert Botanical Garden)
- Gathering Hall for meetings/wedding receptions

APPENDIX D

Cultural Facility Evaluation Guidelines (2015 Master Plan)