



TOWN OF CAREFREE

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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

VIA HAND DELIVERY

June 3, 2009

Mayor Vincent Francia
Cave Creek Town Council
Planning and Zoning Commission
TOWN OF CAVE CREEK
Cave Creek, Arizona 85331

Dear Mayor Francia:

As families, communities, states and the nation confront the reality of today's economy, our society faces unique pressures to modify paradigms of the past to ensure vitality in the future. Shifts in any paradigm such as modifying the blue print to the future, the General Plan, should be thoroughly analyzed to ensure the long held vision of the community is preserved.

Cave Creek and Carefree have many common threads which bind our communities together. Our predominant low-density residential development pattern defines and distinguishes our communities from the urbanizing communities to the south. This vision is clearly embodied in each of our community's General Plan. These General Plans stand as a testament against which future development proposals should be judged.

Over the years, the Town of Carefree has been challenged by various development interests to change existing residential land uses to commercial land uses. These development proposals did not comply with Carefree's Master Plan nor the Town's subsequent General Plan and would have compromised the community's predominant low-density residential development pattern. As a result, these nonconforming proposals were rejected.

Today, it appears that the Town of Cave Creek is at a critical crossroads. The desire to address today's economic pressures is compromising the very character citizens in each of our communities cherish and celebrate. At the center of this debate are the applications to convert residential properties to commercial use near the intersection Carefree Highway and Cave Creek Road. Indeed, two of the corners of this intersection have developed as commercial (one in Carefree and one in Cave Creek), one commercially zoned property has remained undeveloped (in Cave Creek) and one has been platted for a residential subdivision (in Carefree). The two proposed major General Plan Amendments are not located immediate to the corner, do not provide for adequate

transition to the surrounding land uses, and establish precedence which will encourage additional property owners to apply for similar requests under parallel pretenses.

The evolution of Bell Road to the south of our communities clearly illustrates what happens in a community when economic positioning overshadows rational land use planning. This positioning can be seen in communities throughout the nation which compromise their character and forever alter their sense of place. A once unique town is replaced by a conglomeration of poorly conceived, unsustainable commercial development, obtrusive commercial signs, large illuminated parking lots and little or no resemblance to its heritage.

This is why a more holistic approach should be sought in any change in land use at this intersection. This approach would include the participation of surrounding jurisdictions of Carefree, Scottsdale, Phoenix, County, Cave Creek Unified School District, and Paradise Valley Community College. Certainly, the collaboration of these stakeholders in association with the residents of the area would yield a more sustainable and economically viable result for all interests.

Recently, as you may recall, the Episcopal Church north of this intersection expressed interest to build a school. The leaders of this Church were requested to conduct a series of open houses to engage the citizens of the community. These citizens were from both Cave Creek and Carefree and expressed similar concerns over the proposed request. Every citizen was heard and treated with respect regardless of where they resided. All opinions were respected and collectively the community as one responded and encouraged the Church to evaluate other options.

It is within this spirit of cooperation that the Town of Carefree and its Town Council request that the Cave Creek Town Council not approve the proposed major General Plan amendments and work collectively with its neighbors and stakeholders to ensure a more holistic approach be sought.

We look forward to your response and continuing to work together to protect our unique lifestyle and community character.

Sincerely,



David Schwan
Mayor, Town of Carefree

- C. Carefree Town Council
 Carefree Planning & Zoning Commission
 Gary Neiss, Town Administrator
 Betsy Wise, Town Clerk