

## State of the Town of Carefree: January, 2020

Dear Carefree Residents and Businesses,

Happy New Year and best wishes for a healthy and prosperous 2020!

This past fiscal year contains many positive indicators, most prominently, increasing the Town's Capital Reserve Fund by over \$1.2 million. As a result of these significant savings, the Town has begun an extensive program to reinvest within the Town's infrastructure. Additionally, the current fiscal year has started quite strong with a 12% increase in cumulative sales tax revenue for the first five months of the fiscal year.

The Town continues to work diligently on many initiatives to help refine and improve the Town's economic base and physical infrastructure to further enhance the exceptional quality of life within our community. Indeed, each one of these initiatives takes a village, therefore, I would be remiss if I did not offer my gratitude to the Carefree Town Council, community volunteers and the Town Staff whose help and support have been extremely beneficial.

Below is a summary of some of the more significant initiatives, many of which relate to infrastructure and offer long term benefits to Carefree residents and businesses:

- Developing an integrated dependable water system for all Carefree residents. The acquisition and integration of approximately 1,000 Carefree residents into the existing Carefree Water System is well on its way. Binding arbitration has been scheduled for July and the process to disconnect and connect in to the Carefree Water distribution system will begin thereafter as soon as possible. The completion of this much needed initiative will significantly increase the quality and dependability of water service for these Carefree residents.
- Comprehensive street maintenance program. Over the past year, approximately 40% of the Town's public streets have been treated with a fiber micro-surface which helps to seal the existing cracks and creates a more uniform appearance to the street surface. The remaining public streets are scheduled for the same treatment. However, it is important to note that due to some of the impending water improvement projects in several of the remaining neighborhoods, these street improvements will be coordinated with the aforementioned water improvements.
- Improving existing Town Center pedestrian crosswalks. The Town commissioned a study to evaluate new technology and methods to further improve the safety of the existing pedestrian crosswalks near the Town Center. The traffic engineer will present his findings later this winter. Many of these crosswalk improvements are anticipated to be completed in the next fiscal year.

- Traffic enforcement. The Town continues to work with our traffic and public safety provider, Maricopa County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) to ensure appropriate levels of traffic enforcement; however, the Town continues to receive complaints from concerned residents especially during peak times such as Bike Week. Following recent discussions with MCSO and the Governor's Office of Highway Safety, plans for additional police presence and enforcement of the traffic laws in Carefree are being finalized for this peak period. In addition, the Town is beginning the process to investigate options to supplement MCSO's traffic enforcement through proven traffic calming techniques such as photo enforcement. Our collective goal is to provide calmer and safer streets and address the bad actors adversely impacting our quality of life.
- Evolving the Town's current marketing focus to highlight economic development. Over the past five years, the Town has developed and implemented broadly appealing fairs and festivals to increase awareness of Carefree and help build traffic in downtown Carefree. This approach was the necessary first step to gain additional exposure to the Town's business district. The Town will now decrease its focus upon large, Town driven events and work more directly with our current businesses to help them build their businesses as well as attract new businesses into Carefree. The Hampton Inn under construction is one example of the successes being realized in this area.
- Improving Emergency/Fire capabilities. The Town is in the process of preparing specifications and bid documents to begin the process to replace the Town's aging fire truck. In addition, the Town has and continues to replace older, deteriorating equipment which supports our first responders.
- Wayfinding signage master plan. The Town has begun the process to hire a signage master planner/designer with the goal to have a uniform signage plan that makes it easier for people unfamiliar with the area to find restaurants, businesses and key attractions.

As I suggested, this is just a high level look at some of the more significant efforts the Council and Staff will be tackling over the next year. Indeed, there may be other concerns or issues at a more local level that may be impacting you or your neighborhoods. Please feel free to contact me or stop in at Town Hall to speak with staff to see how we can help you with these issues.

I look forward to the opportunities and challenges ahead as well as working with many of the talented and dedicated people throughout our community to resolve differences and design solutions which enhance our quality of life in Carefree.

Carefree Mayor Les Peterson