

IMAGINE SOMERTON 2032
STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

ARIZONA, USA

JUNE 2026








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Imagine Somerton 2032 - Strategic Action Plan

The City of Somerton Strategic Action Plan was developed during 2026 to establish a shared vision and roadmap for the community's future. The project brought together City Council, staff, residents, community stakeholders, to identify the priorities that will guide Somerton through to 2032. Residents shared their aspirations for the future, while staff helped translate those aspirations into practical strategies, identifying the organizational capabilities, partnerships, and transformational initiatives needed to deliver the community's vision.

The result is a Strategic Action Plan built around five Strategic Pillars that will guide investment, decision-making, and community development through to 2032. Together, they provide a clear roadmap for ensuring that Somerton continues to Grow with Purpose while preserving the character, values, and community spirit that define the City.

This reports and the associated data analysis are available on the project portal:
https://lab2.future-iq.com/imagine-somerton/

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GROWING WITH PURPOSE – BUILDING SOMERTON'S FUTURE TO 2032

The **Imagine Somerton Strategic Action Plan 2032** provides a long-term roadmap for guiding growth, investment, and community development over the next decade. Developed through extensive community engagement, staff collaboration, and strategic analysis, the Plan balances Somerton's small-town character with a bold vision for future opportunity. It is built around f**ive Strategic Pillars** supported by a foundation of **responsive, transparent, and community-centered government.**

STRATEGIC PLAN SNAPSHOT

A community-led vision for the future - Developed through community engagement, Council leadership, staff workshops, and strategic analysis, the Plan reflects the aspirations of residents while providing practical strategies for implementation.

Five integrated Strategic Pillars - The Plan focuses on preserving community character, enhancing quality of life, growing the local economy, investing in infrastructure, and preparing for future growth. These priorities work together as one integrated strategy rather than as separate initiatives.

Growth with Purpose - The Plan is founded on a simple principle: growth should strengthen Somerton's identity while creating new opportunities for residents, businesses, and future generations.

Five transformational initiatives - Signature projects—including the Community Campus, Recreation and Aquatic Destination, Commercial Gateway Initiative, Connected Somerton Initiative, and the Somerton 2050 Growth Framework—provide long-term catalysts for community transformation.

A systems-thinking approach - Rather than treating issues independently, the Plan recognizes the connections between economic development, infrastructure, recreation, housing, neighborhoods, governance, and community wellbeing—ensuring that progress in one area supports success across the whole community.

Implementation built into the strategy - The Plan is supported by an implementation framework that emphasizes annual planning, performance measurement, adaptive management, organizational alignment, and transparent reporting to ensure the strategy remains a living document.

Looking beyond today's challenges - The Strategic Action Plan positions Somerton to respond confidently to changing demographics, economic opportunities, technology, infrastructure needs, and environmental challenges while remaining true to its community values.

A roadmap to 2032 - By aligning leadership, investment, partnerships, and community priorities around a shared vision, the Strategic Action Plan provides a practical roadmap for ensuring that Somerton continues to Grow with Purpose—creating a community that is connected, resilient, prosperous, and welcoming for generations to come.



1.0 | INTRODUCTION

The plan is built upon the principle that 'Growth should strengthen the community—not change what makes it special.'

Strategic Context and Foundation

Every community reaches defining moments that shape its future for generations. For the City of Somerton, that moment is now. Somerton is a community with deep roots, a proud agricultural heritage, a rich cultural identity, and a strong tradition of family and community. Over many decades, these qualities have created a city that residents describe as welcoming, resilient, hardworking, and connected.



At the same time, Somerton is experiencing the opportunities and challenges that accompany growth. Residents are seeking expanded recreational opportunities, stronger neighborhoods, improved infrastructure, greater economic opportunity, more local services, and a higher quality of life—all while preserving the small-town character that makes Somerton unique.

This Strategic Action Plan has been developed to guide that journey. It provides a long-term framework for decision-making that balances today's priorities with tomorrow's opportunities. Rather than focusing solely on individual projects, the plan establishes a shared vision for how Somerton can grow intentionally, invest wisely, and continue building a community where people want to live, work, raise families, and invest.

The plan is built upon the principle that **'Growth should strengthen the community—not change what makes it special.'**

A Systems Thinking Approach

One of the distinguishing features of this Strategic Action Plan is its use of systems thinking.

Communities do not function as a collection of isolated projects or departments. Every decision will influence multiple parts of the community. This plan therefore recognizes that long-term success depends upon understanding these relationships. Rather than treating each issue independently, the Strategic Pillars have been designed as an integrated framework where progress in one area reinforces success in others. For example - Investing in recreation improves health, strengthens neighborhoods, and attracts families. Strong neighborhoods support business investment and increase community pride. Economic growth generates the resources needed to invest in infrastructure. Infrastructure enables sustainable housing and commercial development.

Thoughtful growth management protects community identity while preparing for the future.

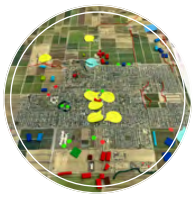
By viewing the Somerton Strategic Action Plan as a connected system rather than a collection of separate initiatives, the City can make better decisions, maximize the impact of public investment, and build greater long-term resilience.



The Somerton Strategic Action Plan has been developed through a comprehensive planning process that combined community aspirations, organizational expertise, strategic analysis, and long-term thinking.

The objective was to create a shared vision for the future that reflects the values of the community while providing a practical framework for implementation. The planning process recognized that successful strategies require two equally important perspectives. First, they must reflect the hopes and aspirations of the community they are intended to serve. Second, they must be grounded in the operational knowledge and experience of the people responsible for delivering them. By bringing these perspectives together, the Strategic Action Plan is both aspirational and achievable.

Engaging the community residents



Community engagement provided the foundation for the plan by answering one fundamental question: *What kind of community do we want Somerton to become?*

- Residents consistently expressed their desire to preserve Somerton's welcoming small-town character while creating new opportunities for future generations. They spoke about the importance of strong neighborhoods, quality parks and recreation, vibrant local businesses, safe streets, expanded community services, attractive public spaces, and thoughtful growth that enhances rather than diminishes the City's identity.
- Throughout the engagement process there was a clear message that growth should improve quality of life while protecting the values and sense of community that make Somerton unique.



Engaging the City Staff

While the community established the vision, the City staff workshops made an equally important contribution by addressing a different question: How do we make that vision a reality?

- Residents consistently expressed their desire to preserve Somerton's welcoming small-town character while creating new opportunities for future generations. They spoke about the importance of strong neighborhoods, quality parks and recreation, vibrant local businesses, safe streets, expanded community services, attractive public spaces, and thoughtful growth that enhances rather than diminishes the City's identity.
- Throughout the engagement process there was a clear message that growth should improve quality of life while protecting the values and sense of community that make Somerton unique.



While the community engagement established the vision for Somerton's future, the staff workshops transformed that vision into a practical framework for implementation. Together, these two perspectives created a Strategic Action Plan that is both aspirational and actionable.



3.0 | STRATEGIC PILLARS FRAMEWORK – IMAGINE SOMERTON 2032



The Strategic Pillars Framework provides a roadmap for how Somerton can move confidently toward 2032 while protecting the qualities that make the community special.



Data Insights

- The framework reflects a core strategic balance. Residents want more opportunities, amenities, services, jobs, recreation, and investment. At the same time, they want to protect Somerton's safe, family-oriented, culturally rich, small-town character.

Responsive, transparent and community-centered government is the foundation that supports every pillar in the Strategic Action Plan. It is not a separate policy area; it is the way the City should deliver all priorities.

As Somerton grows, the expectations placed on local government will also grow. Residents will expect clear communication, reliable services, accountable decision-making, visible progress, bilingual outreach, and meaningful opportunities to participate in shaping the City's future. This foundation recognizes that public trust is one of the City's most important strategic assets. When residents understand City priorities, see progress being made, and feel their voices are heard, they are more likely to support long-term investments, participate in civic life, and work collaboratively with local government.



Why This Strategic Foundation Matters

- A strategic action plan only succeed if it can be implemented. Implementation requires more than a list of projects. It requires leadership, organizational capacity, communication, public trust, staff alignment, and clear accountability.
- Somerton's future priorities—growth management, infrastructure investment, recreation expansion, economic development, and community identity—will require coordination across departments, partnerships with external organizations, and ongoing engagement with residents. A transparent and community-centered approach will help ensure that these investments reflect community needs and remain aligned with long-term goals.

Aspirational Strategic Outcome

By 2032, Somerton is recognized as a responsive, transparent and community-centered city government that communicates clearly, engages residents meaningfully, reports progress openly, and delivers services with professionalism, accountability, and care.

Strategic Action ideas that support this strategic foundation include:

- Create an Annual Community Survey and Performance Report
- Build a Public Strategic Plan Dashboard
- Expand Neighborhood Listening Sessions
- Establish a Youth Advisory Council
- Launch a Citizen Leadership Academy
- Expand Bilingual Communication and Engagement





PILLAR 1 | PRESERVE SMALL-TOWN CHARACTER AND COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Pillar 1: Preserve Small-Town Character and Community Spirit

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:

Maintain Somerton's identity as a safe, welcoming, family-oriented community while strengthening community pride, connection, and belonging.



Somerton's greatest strength is not simply its location or infrastructure—it is its people and the strong sense of community that defines the City. Residents consistently describe Somerton as a welcoming, family-oriented community where neighbors know one another, cultural traditions are celebrated, and people take pride in where they live. This identity is one of Somerton's greatest assets and provides a strong foundation for future growth. As the City continues to evolve, preserving these qualities will require deliberate leadership and investment. Community character is not something that can be taken for granted; it is strengthened through neighborhoods, public spaces, community events, volunteerism, youth leadership, cultural celebration, and opportunities for residents to connect with one another.

Why This Pillar Matters



- Communities with a strong identity are more resilient, economically competitive, and socially connected. They attract investment, encourage volunteerism, strengthen public safety, and create places where people want to live, work, and raise families.
- For Somerton, preserving small-town character is about managing growth in a way that reflects community values while strengthening neighborhoods and improving quality of life. As new residents arrive and opportunities expand, maintaining a strong sense of identity will help ensure that growth contributes to community wellbeing rather than weakening it.
- This pillar establishes the social foundation upon which every other Strategic Pillar is built. Strong communities support stronger economies, healthier neighborhoods, more active public spaces, and more successful long-term planning.



Future Insights

- Across North America, communities increasingly compete on quality of place rather than simply location or infrastructure. Families are seeking places that offer safety, connection, authenticity, and opportunities to participate in community life.
- Technology is changing how people interact, making physical gathering places and neighborhood relationships even more valuable.
- For Somerton, investing in community identity represents an investment in long-term resilience. The City's future competitiveness will depend not only on attracting new residents and businesses, but on maintaining the welcoming culture and strong sense of belonging that distinguish it from many larger communities.

Pillar 1: Preserve Small-Town Character and Community Spirit



ACTION 1.1: Community Identity and Pride

Celebrate Somerton's unique history, culture, and agricultural heritage through community branding, placemaking, gateway features, public art, and storytelling that reinforce civic pride and create a strong sense of place. Key actions ideas include:

- Develop a city-wide identity and branding initiative.
- Enhance gateways and public spaces.
- Celebrate local history and cultural heritage.
- Expand public art and placemaking projects.

ACTION 1.2: Family and Community Connections

Create more opportunities for residents to connect through festivals, neighborhood events, volunteer programs, and activities that strengthen relationships across generations and build a stronger sense of belonging. Key actions ideas include:



- Expand community festivals and cultural events.
- Support neighborhood gatherings.
- Develop a community volunteer network.
- Strengthen partnerships with local organizations.

ACTION 1.3: Youth Leadership and Civic Engagement

Invest in young people through leadership development, recreation, mentorship, and civic participation, helping prepare the next generation of community leaders. Key actions ideas include:

- Establish a Youth Advisory Council.
- Expand youth leadership programs.
- Increase after-school and summer activities.
- Encourage youth volunteering.

ACTION 1.4: Safe and Inclusive Neighborhoods

Maintain Somerton's reputation as a safe and welcoming community through neighborhood partnerships, community policing, bilingual communication, and initiatives that ensure every resident feels connected and included. Key actions ideas include:

- Expand neighborhood safety programs.
- Strengthen community policing.
- Improve bilingual communication.
- Enhance neighborhood lighting and public spaces.



Bold Idea: Sommerton Community Campus

A Somerton Community Campus could become the City's signature civic destination—a place where recreation, lifelong learning, youth programs, cultural activities, community services, and public events come together in one shared location. More than a facility, the Community Campus can represent an investment in social infrastructure. It would strengthen community identity, encourage lifelong learning, expand opportunities for young people, support healthy lifestyles, and provide a central gathering place that reinforces Somerton's family-oriented character.

Pillar 1: Preserve Small-Town Character and Community Spirit

ASPIRATIONAL STRATEGIC OUTCOME

By 2032, Somerton will be recognized as one of Arizona's most welcoming and family-oriented communities—a city where residents feel safe, connected, proud of their heritage, actively engaged in community life, and confident that growth is strengthening the City's identity rather than changing it.

Community and Data Insights

- Community engagement consistently identified preserving Somerton's small-town character as one of the City's highest priorities. Residents emphasized the importance of maintaining a safe, welcoming community while expanding opportunities for youth, recreation, community events, and neighborhood connections.
- Staff workshops reinforced these aspirations by recommending initiatives focused on community branding, placemaking, neighborhood engagement, bilingual communication, volunteerism, youth leadership, and stronger partnerships between residents and the City. Together, these discussions recognized that preserving community character requires active investment rather than simply maintaining the status quo.
- The Situational Analysis also highlights several community strengths that support this pillar, including a relatively young population, strong homeownership, and a stable family-oriented community. These characteristics provide an excellent foundation for continued investment in neighborhoods, community life, and civic participation.





Strategic Outlook to 2032

- As Somerton grows, one of its greatest opportunities will be maintaining the qualities that residents value most while embracing new possibilities for the future. Successful communities are increasingly defined by their ability to create belonging, foster trust, and strengthen neighborhood connections.
- By 2032, Somerton can become recognized not only as a growing city, but as a community where people genuinely know one another, participate in civic life, celebrate their shared heritage, and take pride in the place they call home.
- Investing in community identity, youth leadership, neighborhood connections, and inclusive public spaces will help ensure that growth strengthens rather than diminishes Somerton's unique character. This commitment to preserving small-town spirit while planning confidently for the future will remain one of the City's greatest competitive advantages and an enduring legacy for future generations.

Implementation Insights:

Staff recognized the importance of highly visible improvements that residents experience every day. Ideas included expanding street trees, improving neighborhood lighting, enhancing signage, creating walkable streets, adding shaded gathering areas, improving accessibility, and investing in streetscape beautification. These smaller-scale improvements help build community confidence while making neighborhoods safer, more attractive, and more enjoyable.



PILLAR 2 | EXPAND RECREATION, PARKS AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Pillar 2: Expand Recreation, Parks and Quality of Life

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:

Provide exceptional recreational opportunities, public spaces, and amenities that improve quality of life for all residents.

A high quality of life is one of the defining characteristics of successful communities. Parks, recreation, public spaces, community events, and opportunities for healthy living contribute directly to the wellbeing of residents while making communities more attractive places to live, work, visit, and invest. For Somerton, expanding recreation and quality of life is about much more than providing amenities. It is about creating places where families gather, children grow, neighbors connect, and residents of every age enjoy healthy, active, and fulfilling lives. Recreation strengthens community identity, supports public health, encourages social interaction, and contributes to economic prosperity by making the City an increasingly attractive place for residents and businesses alike. As Somerton continues to grow, investment in parks, recreation, and community spaces will play an increasingly important role in shaping the City's future. This pillar recognizes that recreation is not simply a municipal service—it is an investment in people, neighborhoods, and community wellbeing.



Why This Pillar Matters

- Communities across the country are increasingly competing on quality of life. Residents and businesses are drawn to places that offer excellent parks, recreational opportunities, vibrant public spaces, cultural activities, and opportunities to connect with others.
- For Somerton, expanding recreation contributes to many broader community outcomes. Well-designed parks encourage healthy lifestyles, improve neighborhood attractiveness, support tourism, increase property values, and strengthen community pride. Recreation programs provide positive opportunities for young people, promote lifelong wellbeing, and create stronger social connections across the community.
- Investment in quality of life also supports the City's long-term economic competitiveness. Businesses increasingly recognize that attracting and retaining employees depends upon offering communities with excellent recreational amenities and a high standard of living.

Future Insights

• The role of parks and recreation is changing. Future communities will increasingly view recreation as essential public infrastructure rather than simply a discretionary service. Public spaces will become more important as places for social interaction, community resilience, physical activity, cultural celebration, and environmental sustainability.

• Climate adaptation will also influence recreation planning. Shade, water-efficient landscaping, connected trails, cooling spaces, and year-round outdoor recreation opportunities will become increasingly valuable in Arizona communities.

• By investing today, Somerton can create a recreation system that supports healthier lifestyles, stronger neighborhoods, and a more connected community for decades to come.

Pillar 2: Expand Recreation, Parks and Quality of Life

ACTION 2.1: Parks and Public Spaces

Develop an integrated network of attractive parks, trails, green spaces, and gathering places that are accessible, well maintained, and connected to neighborhoods throughout the community. Key action ideas included:

- Update and implement the Parks Master Plan.
- Expand neighborhood parks and green spaces.
- Increase shade, landscaping, and tree canopy.
- Improve accessibility and park amenities.



ACTION 2.2: Recreation Facilities and Programs

Expand recreation opportunities through new facilities, year-round programming, sports, aquatic recreation, and activities that serve residents of all ages and abilities. Key action ideas included:

- Develop a multi-purpose recreation center.
- Expand sports and aquatic facilities.
- Increase year-round recreation programming.
- Strengthen partnerships with schools and community organizations.

ACTION 2.3: Healthy and Active Communities

Encourage healthier lifestyles by creating safe opportunities for walking, cycling, fitness, outdoor recreation, and wellness programs that improve both physical and mental health. Key action ideas included:

- Expand walking and fitness opportunities.
- Develop trails and active transportation links.
- Increase senior wellness initiatives.
- Promote healthy lifestyle programs.

ACTION 2.4: Community Beautification and Placemaking

Create attractive public spaces that strengthen civic pride, celebrate Somerton's identity, and encourage residents to spend more time enjoying their community. Key action ideas included:

- Expand public art and beautification.
- Improve streetscapes and gathering places.
- Enhance neighborhood landscaping and lighting.
- Encourage community-led beautification projects.



Bold Idea: Somerton Recreation and Aquatic Destination

The idea of a Somerton Recreation and Aquatic Destination represents an opportunity to create one of the City's signature community assets. Designed as a multi-generational recreation campus, the facility would combine aquatic recreation, sports facilities, fitness spaces, community programming, and flexible event areas into a destination that serves residents throughout the year. Beyond recreation, the facility would strengthen youth development, improve public health, support tourism, attract regional events, and create a vibrant gathering place.

Pillar 2: Expand Recreation, Parks and Quality of Life

ASPIRATIONAL STRATEGIC OUTCOME

By 2032, Somerton will be recognized as one of Arizona's most family-friendly communities, offering exceptional parks, recreation facilities, public spaces, and community programs that support healthy lifestyles, strengthen neighborhoods, and enhance quality of life for residents of every age.

Community and Data Insights



- Community engagement consistently identified recreation, parks, youth activities, community events, walking trails, aquatic facilities, sports fields, and family-oriented amenities among the City's highest priorities. Residents expressed a desire for more opportunities to gather, recreate, and enjoy quality public spaces close to home.
- Staff workshops reinforced these aspirations by identifying the need for expanded recreation programming, improved neighborhood parks, increased shade, enhanced sports facilities, healthier lifestyles, community beautification, and stronger connections between recreation and neighborhood development.
- The Situational Analysis highlights that Somerton has a relatively young population with a strong family orientation, creating ongoing demand for recreation, youth programming, and community facilities. At the same time, an ageing population will require accessible parks, walking opportunities, and wellness programs that support healthy ageing. These demographic trends reinforce the importance of investing in recreation as essential community infrastructure.

Strategic Outlook to 2032

- By 2032, the communities that are most successful will be those that recognize parks and recreation as essential investments in community wellbeing rather than optional amenities.
- For Somerton, expanding recreation is about creating opportunities for healthier lifestyles, stronger neighborhoods, and deeper community connections. Well-designed parks, recreation facilities, public spaces, and community programs will help attract families, retain young professionals, support healthy ageing, and strengthen the City's overall competitiveness.
- As Somerton continues to grow, recreation will play an increasingly important role in shaping community identity. By investing in quality public spaces and experiences that bring people together, the City can ensure that quality of life remains one of its greatest strengths and one of the defining characteristics of Somerton for generations to come.

Implementation Insights:

Staff discussions highlighted that parks and recreation should be viewed as essential community infrastructure rather than optional amenities. Ideas included updating the Parks Master Plan, expanding recreation programming for all ages, improving neighborhood parks, creating additional shaded areas, incorporating public art into parks, increasing year-round activities, improving lighting, and expanding opportunities for walking, running, and healthy living. Staff also emphasised designing parks that support families, seniors, youth, and residents of all abilities.



PILLAR 3 | GROW ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND VIBRANT COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

Pillar 3: Grow Economic Opportunity and Vibrant Commercial Districts

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:

Create a thriving local economy that expands employment opportunities, strengthens local businesses, and provides services residents want close to home.

A strong local economy is fundamental to Somerton's long-term prosperity and quality of life. A thriving business community creates employment opportunities, supports local investment, strengthens municipal revenues, and provides the resources needed to enhance parks, infrastructure, public safety, and community services. As Somerton grows, economic development must go beyond attracting new businesses and it must create a resilient and diverse economy that benefits residents, supports entrepreneurs, and reinforces the City's identity. Somerton is well positioned to build on its strategic location, agricultural heritage, growing workforce, and strong sense of community. Residents have consistently expressed a desire for more shopping, restaurants, healthcare services, entertainment, and quality employment opportunities closer to home. Meeting these aspirations will improve everyday convenience, strengthen the local economy, and reduce the need for residents to travel elsewhere for goods and services. This pillar seeks to create an economy that is innovative, diverse, and resilient while preserving the welcoming, family-oriented character that makes Somerton unique. It recognizes that economic development is ultimately about creating opportunity—for businesses, workers, entrepreneurs, and future generations.



Why This Pillar Matters

- Economic prosperity influences every aspect of community life. It provides jobs, supports local businesses, generates municipal revenue, and creates opportunities for residents to build successful lives within their own community. A strong local economy also strengthens neighborhoods, increases community confidence, and enables continued investment in public facilities and services.
- Today's communities compete not only on cost and location, but on quality of place. Businesses increasingly seek communities with skilled workers, attractive public spaces, reliable infrastructure, strong leadership, and a high quality of life. By combining economic growth with investment in community character, Somerton can position itself as one of the most attractive small cities in the region for business investment and entrepreneurship.

Future Insights

- The economy of the future will be increasingly driven by innovation, entrepreneurship, technology, and collaboration. Communities that diversify their economies and support local business growth will be better positioned to respond to changing markets and economic conditions.
- For Somerton, future success will come from creating a balanced economy that supports both existing industries and emerging opportunities. Strengthening commercial districts, supporting entrepreneurs, investing in workforce development, and promoting tourism will help create a resilient economy that benefits the entire community while reinforcing the City's unique identity.

Pillar 3: Grow Economic Opportunity and Vibrant Commercial Districts

ACTION 3.1: Business Growth and Investment

Strengthen Somerton's economy by attracting new investment while supporting the growth of existing businesses and encouraging commercial development that reflects the City's long-term vision. Key action ideas included:

- Develop a proactive business attraction strategy.
- Recruit retail, dining, healthcare, and professional services.
- Promote investment-ready commercial sites.
- Expand business retention and expansion programs.

ACTION 3.2: Entrepreneurship and Workforce Development

Support entrepreneurs and prepare residents for future employment by strengthening workforce partnerships, business support services, and opportunities for innovation. Key action ideas included:

- Expand small business mentoring and assistance.
- Strengthen workforce training partnerships.
- Support youth career pathways.
- Improve access to business development resources.



ACTION 3.3: Downtown and Commercial Districts

Create vibrant commercial centers that become destinations for shopping, dining, community events, and local business activity while enhancing the City's sense of place. Key action ideas included:

- Revitalize downtown and key commercial corridors.
- Encourage mixed-use development.
- Improve streetscapes and pedestrian environments.
- Activate commercial areas through events and programming.

ACTION 3.4:Tourism, Culture and Destination Development

Leverage Somerton's cultural heritage, agricultural traditions, and community events to strengthen tourism, celebrate local identity, and diversify the economy. Key action ideas included:

- Promote cultural and heritage tourism.
- Support agritourism initiatives.
- Expand signature community events.
- Develop a coordinated destination marketing strategy.

Bold idea: The Commercial Gateway Initiative

The idea of the Commercial Gateway Initiative could establish a signature mixed-use commercial destination that combines retail, restaurants, healthcare services, professional offices, local businesses, public gathering spaces, and community events. More than a commercial center, this initiative could become a catalyst for private investment, job creation, and community activity. It could provide services residents currently travel elsewhere to access while strengthening Somerton's identity as a complete community where people can live, work, shop, and gather.

Pillar 3: Grow Economic Opportunity and Vibrant Commercial Districts

ASPIRATIONAL STRATEGIC OUTCOME

By 2032, Somerton will be recognized as one of southwestern Arizona's most business-friendly small cities, with a diverse local economy, vibrant commercial districts, thriving entrepreneurs, expanding employment opportunities, and a reputation as an attractive place to invest, work, shop, and visit.

Community and Data Insights

- Residents consistently identified economic development as one of Somerton's highest priorities, particularly the need for more shopping, restaurants, healthcare services, entertainment, and quality employment opportunities. Community engagement highlighted a strong desire to create more opportunities for residents to live, work, and spend locally while strengthening the City's tax base and reducing retail leakage.
- Staff workshops built upon these aspirations by identifying business attraction, entrepreneurship, workforce development, commercial revitalization, and tourism as the City's primary economic priorities.
- The Situational Analysis Report further demonstrated that Somerton benefits from a strong workforce, strategic regional location, and growing population, while also highlighting opportunities to diversify employment, strengthen commercial activity, and support local business growth.

Strategic Outlook to 2032

- By 2032, economic success will be measured not only by business growth but by the opportunities available to residents and the strength of the local community. Communities that invest in entrepreneurship, workforce development, vibrant commercial districts, and quality of place will be best positioned to attract investment and adapt to changing economic conditions.
- For Somerton, economic development should strengthen community identity while expanding opportunity. By supporting local businesses, encouraging innovation, creating vibrant commercial centers, and celebrating its unique heritage, the City can build a resilient economy that enhances prosperity while preserving the welcoming character that defines Somerton.



Implementation Insights:

Staff discussions recognized that Somerton is transitioning from a small town to a larger regional community and that economic development should be approached proactively rather than reactively. Workshop participants highlighted the importance of developing a clear economic vision, attracting higher-paying employment, supporting local spending, strengthening downtown, improving commercial infrastructure, and creating a more coordinated approach to investment attraction. Planning ahead was viewed as essential to ensuring growth supports long-term prosperity.



PILLAR 4 | INVEST IN INFRASTRUCTURE, MOBILITY AND COMMUNITY APPEARANCE

Pillar 4: Invest in Infrastructure, Mobility and Community

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:

Build and maintain infrastructure that supports growth, improves mobility, and enhances the appearance and functionality of the city.

Infrastructure provides the foundation for a safe, connected, and prosperous community. Roads, sidewalks, utilities, public spaces, drainage systems, lighting, and streetscapes influence how residents experience Somerton every day. They support neighborhoods, enable business investment, improve public safety, and create the physical framework needed for sustainable growth. As Somerton continues to grow, infrastructure investment must look beyond maintaining existing assets. It should create a more connected, resilient, and attractive city that improves quality of life while supporting future economic development. Well-planned infrastructure encourages investment, strengthens neighborhoods, enhances community pride, and ensures that growth occurs in a coordinated and financially responsible manner.

This pillar recognizes that infrastructure is not simply about building roads or utilities—it is about creating places where people can move safely, connect with one another, and enjoy an attractive, well-maintained community.

Why This Pillar Matters

- Infrastructure decisions made today will shape Somerton for decades to come. Safe roads, reliable utilities, attractive streetscapes, walkable neighborhoods, and efficient public services all contribute directly to quality of life and economic competitiveness.
- Community engagement consistently highlighted the importance of improving roads, sidewalks, drainage, lighting, neighborhood appearance, and public infrastructure. Residents want a city that is easy to move around, well maintained, and visually attractive. Businesses likewise seek reliable infrastructure and efficient transportation networks when making investment decisions.
- Investment in infrastructure is therefore an investment in the City's future. It strengthens neighborhoods, supports economic development, improves public safety, and creates confidence that Somerton is prepared for continued growth.



Future Insights

- Communities are increasingly rethinking infrastructure as more than physical assets. The most successful cities are creating infrastructure systems that improve connectivity, encourage healthy lifestyles, strengthen environmental resilience, and enhance community identity.
- Future investment will place greater emphasis on complete streets, active transportation, sustainable infrastructure, digital connectivity, and attractive public spaces. By planning strategically today, Somerton can build an infrastructure network that supports future generations while remaining financially sustainable and environmentally responsible.

Pillar 4: Invest in Infrastructure, Mobility and Community

ACTION 4.1: Transportation and Mobility

Develop an integrated transportation network that improves safety, connectivity, and accessibility while making it easier for residents to travel throughout the community. Key action ideas included:

- Improve roads and key intersections.
- Expand sidewalks and pedestrian crossings.
- Improve connections between neighborhoods.
- Strengthen regional transportation links.



ACTION 4.2: Infrastructure and Public Utilities

Invest in reliable utility systems that support existing residents while providing the capacity needed for future growth and economic development. Key action ideas included:

- Upgrade water and wastewater infrastructure.
- Improve drainage and stormwater systems.
- Plan for future utility capacity.
- Pursue state and federal infrastructure funding.



ACTION 4.3: Neighborhoods and Community Appearance

Create attractive neighborhoods and public spaces that strengthen community pride, encourage private investment, and improve everyday quality of life. Key action ideas

- Improve streetscapes and landscaping.
- Expand street lighting.
- Support neighborhood revitalization.
- Encourage community beautification initiatives.

ACTION 4.4: Environmental Stewardship and Resilience

Incorporate sustainable practices into infrastructure planning to protect natural resources, improve resilience, and create a healthier community. Key actions included:

- Increase tree planting and shade.
- Promote water conservation.
- Support sustainable infrastructure practices.
- Integrate climate resilience into future projects.



Bold idea: The Connected Somerton Initiative

The idea of the Connected Somerton Initiative represents a long-term vision for creating one of Arizona's most connected and livable small communities. The initiative would establish an integrated network of streets, sidewalks, trails, parks, neighborhoods, and public spaces that safely connect residents with schools, recreation facilities, commercial districts, and community destinations. At the same time, it would coordinate transportation improvements with landscaping, public art, lighting, drainage enhancements, and environmental improvements to create infrastructure that is both functional and attractive.

Pillar 4: Invest in Infrastructure, Mobility and Community

ASPIRATIONAL STRATEGIC OUTCOME

By 2032, Somerton will have a safe, connected, attractive, and resilient infrastructure system that supports sustainable growth, strengthens neighborhoods, improves mobility, and enhances the quality of life for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Community and Data Insights

- Residents consistently identified infrastructure as one of Somerton's highest priorities, particularly improvements to roads, sidewalks, neighborhood appearance, drainage, lighting, and public facilities. Community members also expressed the desire for a more attractive, connected, and walkable city that supports future growth while maintaining a high quality of life.
- Staff workshops reinforced these priorities by identifying transportation, utility infrastructure, neighborhood improvement, mobility, and environmental stewardship as key areas for future investment. The workshops also recognized the importance of coordinating infrastructure planning with economic development, housing, recreation, and long-term growth management.
- The Situational Analysis Report highlights opportunities to strengthen connectivity and improve community affordability through strategic investment in transportation and infrastructure. Somerton's compact urban form provides an excellent foundation for creating more connected neighborhoods where residents can more easily access parks, schools, shopping, employment, and community facilities.

Strategic Outlook to 2032

- By 2032, infrastructure will be recognized as one of Somerton's greatest strategic assets. Successful communities will no longer measure infrastructure simply by the amount of road constructed or utilities upgraded, but by how effectively those investments improve quality of life, support economic prosperity, strengthen neighborhoods, and prepare for future growth.
- For Somerton, strategic infrastructure investment represents an opportunity to create a safer, greener, and more connected community. By integrating transportation, neighborhood revitalization, environmental stewardship, and public spaces into a single vision, the City can ensure that infrastructure becomes a catalyst for community transformation rather than simply a response to growth.
- As Somerton continues to evolve, thoughtful investment in infrastructure will help create a community that is resilient, attractive, and well prepared to meet the needs of future generations while reinforcing the City's vision of Growing with Purpose.

Implementation Insights:

Staff consistently emphasized that infrastructure investment begins with maintaining essential public services. Priorities included reliable water and wastewater systems, road maintenance, sidewalks, street lighting, drainage improvements, multimodal transportation, and long-term asset management. Workshop participants highlighted the importance of aligning master plans with the Capital Improvement Program to ensure infrastructure investments are coordinated, financially sustainable, and support future growth.



PILLAR 5 | MANAGE GROWTH AND PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE

Pillar 5: Manage Growth and Prepare for the Future

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:

Guide growth in a way that protects community character, supports economic prosperity, and prepares Somerton for future opportunities.

Planning for the future is one of the most important responsibilities of local government. The decisions made today about growth, housing, infrastructure, economic development, environmental stewardship, and community investment will shape Somerton for generations to come. As the City continues to evolve, thoughtful planning will ensure that growth strengthens the community while preserving the qualities that residents value most.

This pillar is about preparing Somerton for long-term success. It recognizes that growth is inevitable, but how growth is managed will determine the City's future character, financial sustainability, and quality of life. Through strategic planning, regional collaboration, innovation, and responsible stewardship, Somerton can confidently embrace new opportunities while maintaining its strong sense of identity. Rather than simply responding to change, this pillar positions Somerton to lead change. It provides a framework for making informed decisions that balance economic opportunity, housing, infrastructure, environmental responsibility, and community values, ensuring that future generations inherit a resilient and prosperous community.

Why This Pillar Matters

- Successful communities plan beyond immediate needs. They anticipate future trends, prepare for emerging challenges, and invest in the infrastructure, housing, partnerships, and organizational capacity needed to remain competitive and resilient.
- Community engagement demonstrated strong support for growth that is carefully planned, fiscally responsible, and respectful of Somerton's character. Residents recognized the importance of creating new opportunities while preserving the City's welcoming, family-oriented identity. Staff workshops reinforced these priorities by emphasizing long-term growth planning, housing diversity, regional partnerships, innovation, and environmental stewardship.
- Preparing for the future also means remaining adaptable. Demographic change, technological advancement, climate resilience, workforce needs, and regional growth will all influence Somerton over the coming decade. A proactive approach will allow the City to respond confidently while remaining focused on its long-term vision.

Future Insights

- The pace of change affecting communities continues to accelerate. Advances in technology, changing workforce expectations, housing affordability, environmental pressures, and evolving community expectations will require local governments to become more adaptive than ever before.
- Communities that succeed will be those that think strategically rather than reactively. They will align growth with infrastructure, embrace innovation, strengthen partnerships, and continually review their plans as conditions evolve. By preparing today, Somerton can build the organizational capacity and strategic flexibility needed to thrive well beyond 2032.

Pillar 5: Manage Growth and Prepare for the Future

ACTION 5.1: Strategic Growth and Land Use

Guide future development through coordinated planning that aligns land use, infrastructure, housing, and economic development while protecting Somerton's community character. Key action ideas included:

- Develop a long-term growth strategy.
- Coordinate infrastructure with new development.
- Encourage compact and connected growth.
- Protect community character through thoughtful planning.

ACTION 5.2: Housing and Complete Communities

Support a range of housing choices that meet the needs of families, young professionals, seniors, and essential workers while creating complete neighborhoods with access to parks, schools, services, and employment. Key action ideas included:

- Upgrade water and wastewater infrastructure.
- Improve drainage and stormwater systems.
- Plan for future utility capacity.
- Pursue state and federal infrastructure funding.

ACTION 5.3: Innovation and Future Readiness

Build organizational and community resilience by embracing technology, innovation, and forward-thinking approaches that improve public services and prepare Somerton for future challenges. Key action ideas included:

- Expand digital infrastructure.
- Improve online government services.
- Encourage innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Strengthen organizational resilience and adaptability.



ACTION 5.4: Regional Partnerships and Leadership

Strengthen collaboration with neighboring communities, educational institutions, businesses, and regional organizations to maximize investment, improve services, and address shared opportunities. Key action ideas included:

- Expand regional partnerships.
- Pursue collaborative funding opportunities.
- Strengthen relationships with educational institutions.
- Promote regional economic development initiatives.



Bold idea: The Somerton 2050 Growth Framework

The Somerton 2050 Growth Framework could provide a long-term blueprint for how the City grows over the next generation. It would identify where growth should occur, how infrastructure should be prioritized, and how new development can strengthen neighborhoods while protecting Somerton's character. More than a planning document, the Growth Framework could become the City's long-term guide for investment, decision-making, and community development, providing confidence for residents, businesses, developers, and future Councils.

Pillar 5: Manage Growth and Prepare for the Future

ASPIRATIONAL STRATEGIC OUTCOME

By 2032, Somerton will be recognized as one of Arizona's most forward-looking small cities—managing growth strategically, providing diverse housing opportunities, embracing innovation, protecting its agricultural heritage, and building strong partnerships that support long-term prosperity, resilience, and community wellbeing.



Community and Data Insights

- Residents consistently supported growth that is carefully planned, financially responsible, DSC_3780 and aligned with Somerton's community values. Throughout the engagement process, participants highlighted the importance of preserving the City's small-town character while expanding housing choices, improving infrastructure, creating economic opportunities, and preparing for future generations.
- Staff workshops reinforced these priorities by identifying strategic growth management, housing diversity, innovation, agricultural heritage, and regional collaboration as essential elements of Somerton's long-term success. The workshops also emphasized the importance of integrating land use, infrastructure, economic development, and environmental stewardship into one coordinated planning framework.
- The Situational Analysis demonstrates that Somerton is well positioned for future growth because of its strategic location, strong workforce, and family-oriented community. These strengths provide an excellent foundation for implementing a proactive approach that balances growth with sustainability, resilience, and fiscal responsibility.

Strategic Outlook to 2032

- By 2032, the communities best positioned for success will be those that have prepared for change rather than simply responded to it. Growth, technology, demographic change, environmental challenges, and regional collaboration will continue to reshape communities across Arizona, requiring local governments to be increasingly adaptive and forward-looking.
- For Somerton, preparing for the future means more than managing growth. It means creating a community that remains welcoming, resilient, innovative, and financially sustainable while preserving the qualities that residents value most.
- Through strategic planning, collaborative leadership, and a commitment to continuous improvement, Somerton can confidently embrace the opportunities of the coming decade while remaining true to its vision of **Growing with Purpose.** This pillar brings together the aspirations of the entire Strategic Action Plan and positions the City to create lasting benefits for current and future generations.

Implementation Insights:

Staff recognized that successfully managing growth requires more than good planning—it requires a high-performing organization. Workshop discussions highlighted the importance of strengthening internal systems, staff development, leadership training, organizational culture, and cross-department collaboration. Building organizational capability was viewed as essential for successfully implementing the Strategic Action Plan over the coming decade.

IMAGINE SOMERTON 2032 PRIORITIZATION OF ACTIONS

The 20 actions below were prioritized against 'Relative Importance of Actions,' 'Urgency in Implementing the Actions' and 'Level of Investment willing to make.' The darker the color, the higher the average score. This provides a way to sort the highest priority actions. The Prioritization Survey was taken by City Councilors, City Staff and City Boards and Commission members.

Scale: Low (below 7.0); Medium (7.0-7.9); High (8.0-8.9); Very High (over 9.0)

Pillar	Action	Importance	Urgency	Investment	
Pillar 1: Preserve Small-Town Character and Community Spirit	1.1 Community Identity and Pride	7.7	6.4	6.2	
	1.2 Family and Community Connections	8.2	6.8	7.1	
	1.3 Youth Leadership and Civic Engagement	8.5	7.7	8.1	
	1.4 Safe and Inclusive Neighborhoods	8.8	8.2	7.9	
Pillar 2: Expand Recreation, Parks and Quality of Life	2.1 Parks and Public Spaces	9.1	7.7	8.3	*
	2.2 Recreation Facilities and Programs	8.8	7.8	8.0	
	2.3 Healthy and Active Communities	8.6	7.5	7.9	
	2.4 Community Beautification and Place-making	8.7	7.4	7.5	
Pillar 3: Grow Economic Opportunity and Vibrant Commercial Districts	3.1 Business Growth and Investment	8.9	8.7	8.2	*
	3.2 Entrepreneurship and Workforce Development	8.3	8.7	8.0	*
	3.3 Downtown and Commercial Districts	8.6	8.1	8.0	*
	3.4 Tourism, Culture and Destination Development	7.7	7.2	7.0	
Pillar 4: Invest in Infrastructure, Mobility and Community Appearance	4.1 Transportation and Mobility the community.	7.7	7.1	7.2	
	4.2 Infrastructure and Public Utilities	8.4	8.2	8.1	*
	4.3 Neighborhoods and Community Appearance	8.2	7.7	7.8	
	4.4 Environmental Stewardship and Resilience	8.8	8.2	7.5	
Pillar 5: Manage Growth and Prepare for the Future	5.1 Strategic Growth and Land Use	9.0	8.5	7.8	*
	5.2 Housing and Complete Communities	9.1	8.5	7.8	*
	5.3 Innovation and Future Readiness	8.5	7.6	7.5	
	5.4 Regional Partnerships and Leadership	8.3	7.6	7.3	

5.0 | IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK - FROM STRATEGY TO ACTION



The Strategic Pillars establish the City's long-term direction, and the Implementation Framework provides the governance, leadership, accountability, and management systems needed to transform vision into measurable outcomes. Implementation is not a final stage of planning—it is the beginning of an ongoing cycle of continuous improvement. The most successful communities treat their strategic plans as living documents that guide annual budgets, departmental priorities, capital investments, partnerships, and community conversations. They continually review progress, learn from experience, respond to emerging opportunities, and adapt to changing circumstances while remaining focused on their long-term vision.

For Somerton, implementation should be viewed as a citywide commitment rather than a collection of individual projects. Every Council decision, departmental work program, capital investment, partnership, and community initiative should contribute toward one or more Strategic Pillars. This integrated approach ensures that the Strategic Action Plan becomes the City's principal framework for decision-making over the coming decade.

An Adaptive Framework for Long-Term Success

- Communities today operate in an environment of continual change. Population growth, economic cycles, technological advancement, climate resilience, infrastructure demands, housing affordability, workforce shortages, and changing resident expectations all require local governments to be increasingly agile.
- Rather than creating a rigid implementation schedule, Somerton should adopt an adaptive management approach. Adaptive management recognizes that while the City's vision remains constant, the pathways used to achieve that vision may evolve over time.
- This approach enables the City to:
    - **respond to new opportunities without losing strategic direction;**
    - **adjust priorities as community needs change;**
    - **incorporate lessons learned through implementation;**
    - **respond to new funding opportunities;**
    - **maintain flexibility while preserving accountability.**

The Strategic Action Plan should be viewed as a dynamic management framework rather than a static planning document. For Somerton, implementation represents an opportunity to establish a culture of strategic leadership. Rather than reacting to issues as they arise, the City can proactively shape its future through disciplined planning, transparent governance, continuous learning, and collaborative decision-making.

By 2032, success should not simply be measured by the number of projects completed. It should be reflected in the City's capacity to think strategically, respond confidently to change, engage its community, and continually improve its performance.



6.0 | ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND MORE INFORMATION

Community members have engaged in this visioning and planning process with great enthusiasm. We would like to thank the community members of Somerton for their positivity and creativity.

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For more information on the Imagine Somerton 2032 Strategic Action Plan process please contact:

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This report and the associated data analysis are available on the project portal: https://lab2.future-iq.com/imagine-somerton/





IMAGINE SOMERTON 2032

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN PLAN

ARIZONA, USA

JUNE 2026