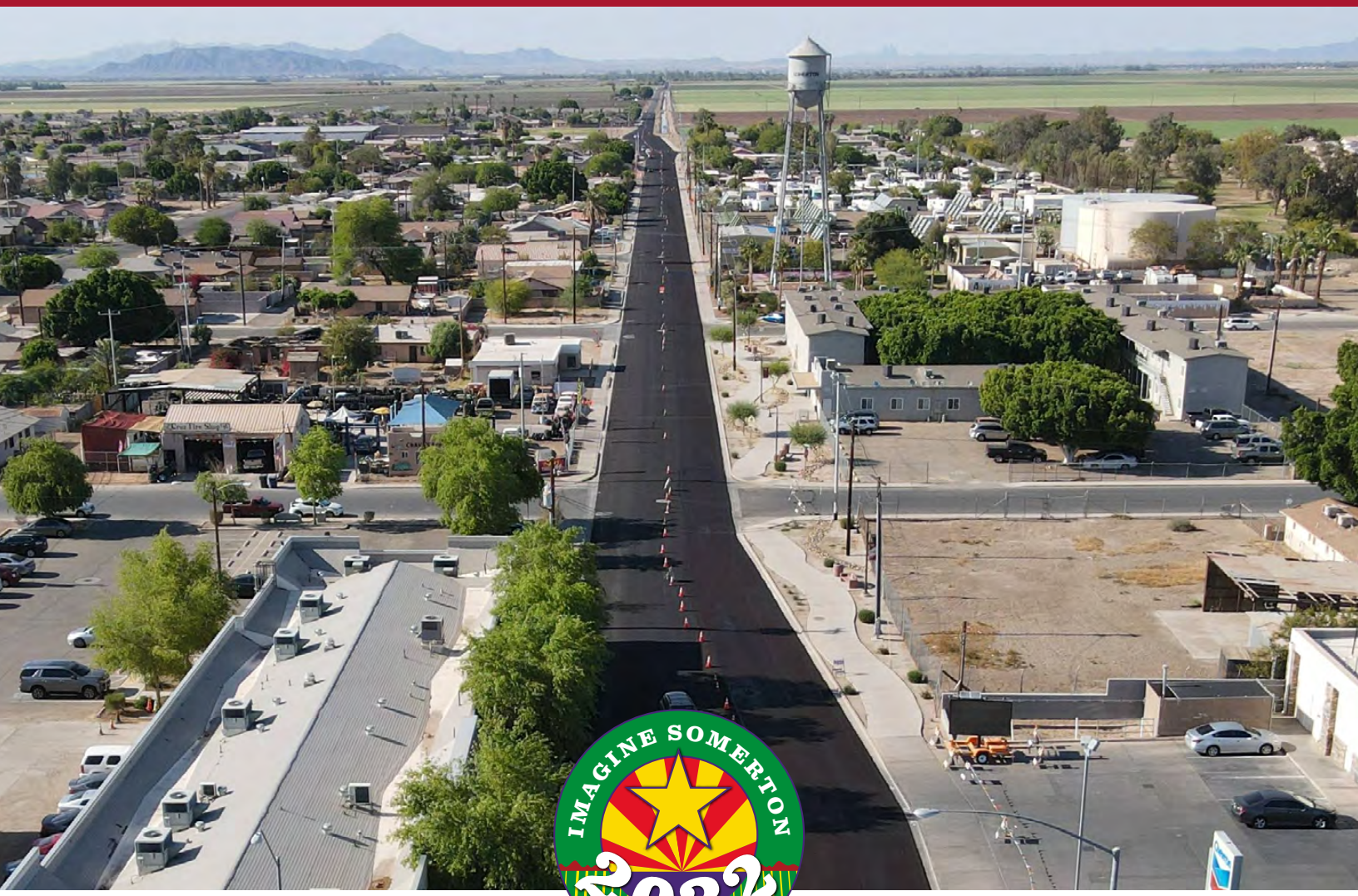


IMAGINE SOMERTON 2032

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT REPORT

ARIZONA, USA

JUNE 2026

PRODUCED BY:

future→iQ
Create Future Intelligence











TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 | Introduction 3
2.0 | Engagement Participation Metrics 4
3.0 | Community Survey Respondent Profile 5
4.0 | What Residents Value Most About Somerton 6
5.0 | What Residents are most concerned about for Somerton 7
6.0 | Demographic groups and their priorities 8
7.0 | Priority of issues via Demographic Groups 9
8.0 | Creating the Strategic Pillars 10
9.0 | Future Vision for Somerton 11
10.0 | Suggestions for Improved Community Engagement 12
11.0 | Conclusion 13
12.0 | Acknowledgements and for More Information 14









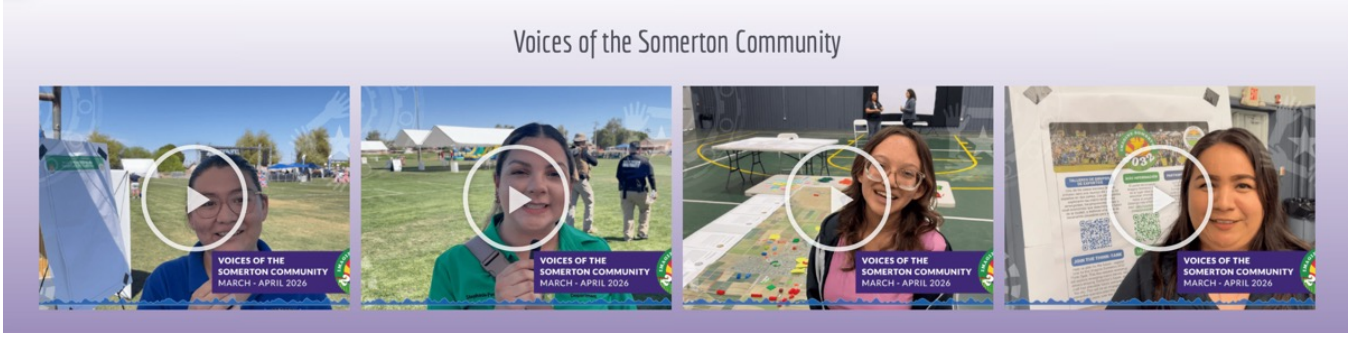
1.0 | INTRODUCTION

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

The Imagine Somerton 2032 Strategic Plan process was conducted January 2026 through June 2026. The objective of the process was to create a comprehensive and sustainable five-year Strategic Plan for the City of Somerton. The focus was on extensive research and community engagement that focused on the community of Somerton. This research and engagement identified the needs and wants, as well as raising awareness and providing clarification to the community on the potential future of Somerton, looking out to 2032.



Community engagement was key and included key stakeholder interviews, Community Survey, Greater Days Festival Booth, Think-Tank/Open House and Strategic Pillar Focus Groups. The Imagine Somerton 2032 Strategic Plan website at https://lab2.future-iq.com/imagine-somerton/ was the 'go-to' place for community members to learn about the project, register for key events and view images and results throughout the process. Newsletters were sent out to update community members during this process. Video interviews were conducted via "Voices of the People" at the Future Days event, held on 21 March and can be viewed at https://lab2.future-iq.com/imagine-somerton/



This Imagine Somerton 2032 Stakeholder Engagement Report lays out the findings from the community engagement throughout the 6-month process. This report precedes the Imagine Somerton 2032 Strategic Plan and gives a background to the engagement with stakeholders and community members which informed the Imagine Somerton 2032 Strategic Plan.

Five Strategic Pillars were generated in late May 2026, gathered and grouped from the engagement process. These Strategic Pillars formed the key themes for the Strategic Plan:

- Preserve Small-Town Character and Community Spirit.
- Expand Recreation, Parks and Quality of Life.
- Grow Economic Opportunity and Vibrant Commercial Districts.
- Invest in Infrastructure, Mobility and Community Appearance.
- Manage Growth and Prepare for the Future

2.0 | ENGAGEMENT PARTICIPATION METRIC



Community Engagement during the Imagine Somerton 3032 Strategic Plan process used multiple channels to capture both structured and informal input. This approach was important as the Community Survey produce quantifiable metrics, as well as open ended qualitative responses, while the Greater Days booth and Think-Tank/Open House revealed the language, priorities and emotional tone Somerton residents used when describing their community.

Engagement component	Metric / reach	Primary insight value
Community survey	60 total survey respondents; open-ended response counts varied by question	Quantified sentiment, strategic planning support, resident priorities and detailed comments.
Survey open-ended questions	Q11: 45 comments; Q12: 41; Q14: 38; Q15: 33; Q17: 35; Q19: 24; Q23: 25; Q27: 17; Q28: 13	Detailed qualitative evidence of strengths, concerns, aspirations and engagement preferences.
Think-Tank / Open House appreciation notes	Approximately 70+ readable appreciation notes in the supplied verbatim list	Community identity, valued assets and positive sentiment.
Think-Tank / Open House vision notes	Approximately 60+ readable vision notes in the supplied verbatim list	Future amenities, commercial services, recreation, mobility and downtown ideas.
Greater Days Festival appreciation activity	25 total notes reported: 17 readable and 8 unreadable	Pop-up input on what people love and appreciate.
Greater Days Festival vision activity	20 clearly readable notes, 5 partially readable notes and 4 unreadable notes	Pop-up input on desired future services and amenities.

Data Insights

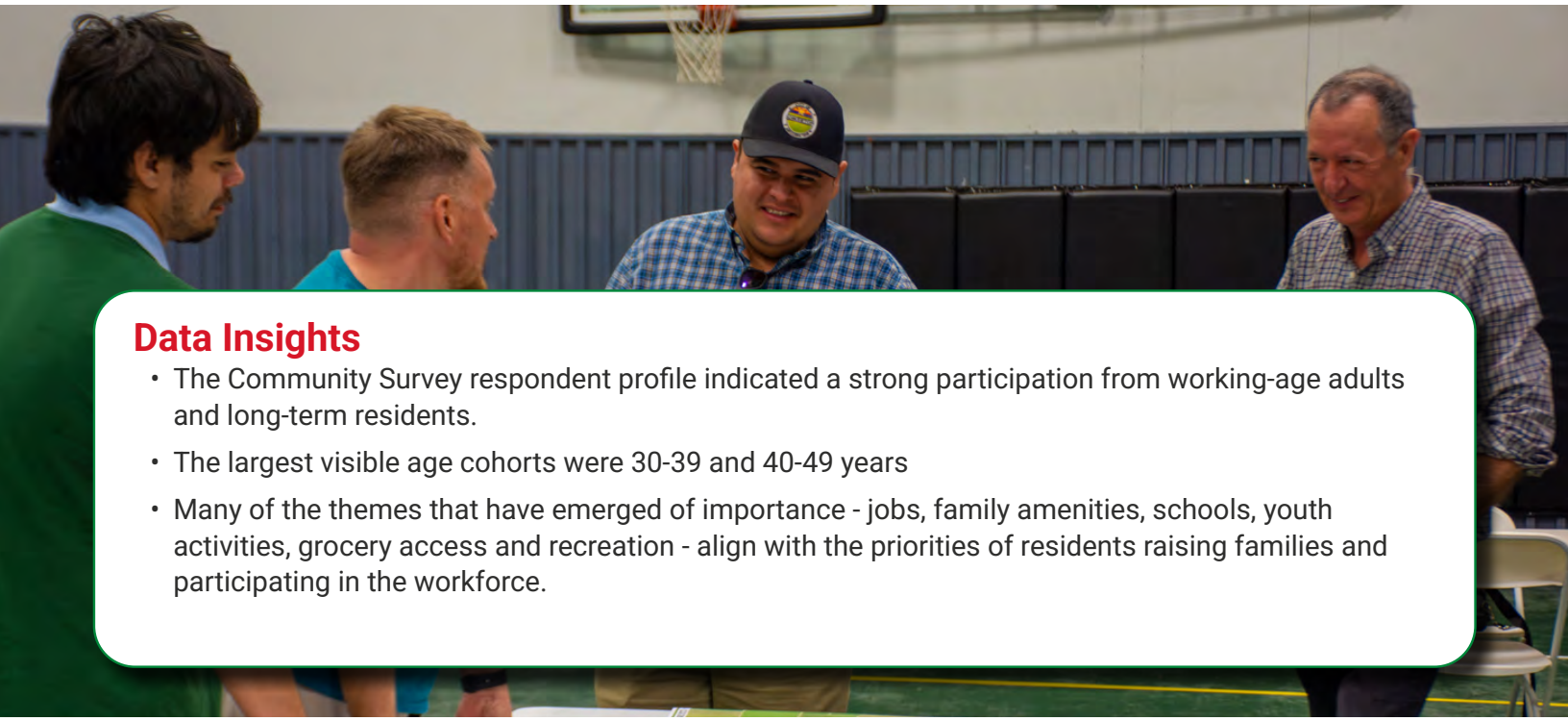
- The open-ended survey comments alone provided more than 270 qualitative entries across key questions.
- Additional sticky-note exercises contributed over 150 short-form comments and ideas.
- The consistency between these channels is one of the strongest findings in the engagement process.
- The Strategic Pillar workshops formed the 5-7 Pillars/Themes that would make up the Strategic Plan, and these were generated from engagement via the Greater Days booth, Community Survey and Think-Tank/Open House.

3.0 | COMMUNITY RESPONDENT PROFILE



The Community Survey respondent profile indicated a strong participation from working-age adults and long-term residents. The largest visible age cohorts were 30-39 and 40-49 years. This is important because many of the themes that have emerged - jobs, family amenities, schools, youth activities, grocery access and recreation - align with the priorities of residents raising families and participating in the Somerton workforce.

Profile dimension	Finding	Interpretation
Survey size	60 total respondents for demographic questions	Useful directional sample; not a statistically weighted community survey.
Age	Largest cohorts were 30-39 and 40-49, based on the survey chart	Strong working-age and family-stage participation.
Ethnicity	Hispanic/Latino was the dominant self-identification category, visually around the mid-80% range on the chart	Findings strongly reflect Somerton's Hispanic/Latino community identity.
Residency	Responses included a broad spread of residency lengths, including long-term residents	Strong lived experience and community memory in the dataset.
Work connection	Responses included residents who work in Somerton and those who do not	Useful for understanding both local employment and commuter dynamics.



Data Insights

- The Community Survey respondent profile indicated a strong participation from working-age adults and long-term residents.
- The largest visible age cohorts were 30-39 and 40-49 years
- Many of the themes that have emerged of importance - jobs, family amenities, schools, youth activities, grocery access and recreation - align with the priorities of residents raising families and participating in the workforce.

4.0 | WHAT RESIDENTS VALUE MOST ABOUT SOMERTON



The Greater Days booth, Community Survey and Think-Tank/Open House all asked the question, "What do you love and appreciate about Somerton". These results were captured via open ended responses in the Community Survey and on boards at the Greater Days booth and Think-Tank/Open House where people wrote their thoughts onto sticky notes and posted onto the boards.

Strength theme	Evidence pattern	Strategic interpretation
Small-town feel and identity	Repeated references to small-town feeling, small community, quiet, calm, less congested and people knowing each other.	Protect this identity in growth, branding, design and communications.
Community spirit and belonging	Comments referenced community feeling, unity, support, family connection and friendly people.	Use engagement, events and volunteerism to reinforce social cohesion.
Safety and low crime	Survey and sticky notes repeatedly mentioned safe community, low crime, police presence and calm neighbor-hoods.	Growth strategies must include safety and policing considerations.
Family orientation	Residents referenced family events, raising children together, schools, youth programs and community activities.	Family amenities should remain central to strategic priorities.
Events and festivals	Events were one of the most frequent positive comments across open house and festival sources.	Events are a high-value mechanism for identity, engagement and tourism.
Growth with character	Residents appreciate growth when it preserves the community feel and brings opportunities.	Frame growth as a managed quality-of-life strategy rather than expansion for its own sake.

Data Insights

- Findings from this question show that Somerton's strongest assets are social and cultural rather than purely physical.
- Residents repeatedly described the community as small, safe, friendly, supportive and family-oriented.



5.0 | WHAT RESIDENTS ARE MOST CONCERNED ABOUT FOR SOMERTON

"I cannot emphasize enough on the possibility of having another grocery store"

– Community Survey Respondent

The Greater Days booth, Community Survey and Think-Tank/Open House all asked the question, "What are you most concerned about for the future of Somerton". These results were captured via open ended responses in the Community Survey and on boards at the Greater Days booth and Think-Tank/Open House where people wrote their thoughts onto sticky notes and posted onto the boards.

Rank	Issue	Relative intensity	Evidence pattern	Planning implication
1	Grocery / retail / shopping	Very high	Most frequently coded practical issue; repeated requests for grocery store, Walmart, Fry's, Target, Food City and more retail competition.	Critical quality-of-life and economic development priority.
2	Recreation / parks / youth amenities	Very high	Waterpark, recreation center, pool, parks, sports, family activities and youth programs appeared repeatedly.	High community support for recreation investment and feasibility work.
3	Jobs / economy / business opportunity	High	Comments referenced jobs, better pay, employers, local business support, economic development and keeping spending in Somerton.	Economic development should focus on local employment and commercial anchors.
4	Infrastructure / roads / mobility / access	High	Roads, sidewalks, lighting, traffic safety, drainage, ADA access and transportation to Yuma were frequently raised.	Infrastructure investments must support safety, connectivity and growth.
5	Growth management / housing	Moderate to high	Residents support growth but are concerned about residential growth without services, rapid growth and loss of character.	Growth framework should pair housing with services and infrastructure.
6	Downtown / appearance / beautification	Moderate	Main Street, downtown vitality, unkept properties, golf course, trees and green space appeared across comments.	Placemaking and corridor improvement can connect identity and economic development.

Data Insights

- The most consistent concern was about lack of grocery and everyday retail services. This issue appeared in the survey dislikes, future opportunities, strategic vision, sticky-note visioning and final comments. It was also connected to affordability, senior access, transportation burden and quality-of-life concerns.
- Several concerns are interconnected. Grocery access is not just a retail issue; it is also an affordability, mobility and aging-in-place issue. Recreation is not just an amenities issue; it is a youth development, family retention and community cohesion issue. Roads and lighting are not just infrastructure issues; they affect safety, perception of care and neighborhood quality.

"There aren't enough shopping and dining options, and you find yourself needing to drive 30 minutes to Yuma for necessities."

– Community Survey Respondent



6.0 | DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS AND THEIR PRIORITIES

Throughout the Imagine Somerton 2032 Strategic Plan process via the Community Survey, six Demographic groups emerged. The table below shows each demographic group and their priority issues as they look to the future of Somerton in 2032.

Stakeholder segment	Likely priority issues	Interpretation
Families with children	Youth activities, schools, parks, safety, sports, family entertainment, grocery access	Strong evidence across survey comments and sticky notes. Families want Somerton to remain safe while offering more things for children and teenagers to do.
Young adults and workforce-age residents	Jobs, better pay, restaurants, retail, entertainment, housing, commute reduction	Comments about jobs, stores, restaurants and not needing to travel to Yuma/San Luis reflect workforce and young adult concerns.
Long-term residents	Community identity, safety, slow/managed growth, local traditions, governance trust	Long-term residents value what Somerton has been and want growth to respect local character.
Older adults / seniors	Grocery access, healthcare, local services, affordability, accessibility, aging-in-place	Comments specifically referenced retirees, elderly residents, senior apartments and inability to travel easily for shopping.
Business-oriented participant	Retail recruitment, downtown, permitting, local business support, employers, workforce development	Several comments referenced business attraction, small business barriers and commercial districts.



7.0 | PRIORITY OF ISSUES VIA DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS



Key issues that were identified as concerns by the Community are highlighted below and how they relate to each Demographic Group.

Issue	Families	Young adults / workforce	Seniors	Long-term residents	Business lens
Grocery / retail access	High	High	Very high	High	High
Jobs / wages / career pathways	Medium	Very high	Low to medium	Medium	High
Recreation / youth amenities	Very high	High	Medium	Medium	High
Safety / security	High	Medium	High	Very high	High
Roads / lighting / walkability	High	Medium	High	High	High
Growth management	Medium	Medium	Medium	Very high	High
Downtown / commercial districts	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Very high
Healthcare / accessibility	Medium	Low to medium	High	Medium	Medium
Community engagement / transparency	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	High

Data Insights

- Lack of grocery and retail was the predominant issue across all demographic groups, with Seniors being most concerned
- Access to jobs and careers was the most important issue with Young Adults/Workforce
- Recreational opportunities were the most important issue for Families
- Safety and security were the most important issue for Long-term residents
- Downtown/Commercial districts were the most important issue for Business Owners



The engagement data helped shape the strategic pillars, with ideas included under each pillar. The engagement process itself revealed a clear desire for ongoing communication and visible accountability. Residents want to know that their input is heard and reflected in decisions.This should sit underneath all strategic pillars as an implementation foundation.

Preserve Small-Town Character and Community Spirit

This theme is the emotional core of the engagement findings. Residents repeatedly identified Somerton's small-town feel, family orientation, safety, culture and community support as defining strengths. The strategic plan should treat these qualities as assets to strengthen rather than as qualities that will naturally persist through growth. Key action ideas included community branding, local history storytelling, bilingual engagement, expanded events, neighborhood gatherings, youth leadership, public safety initiatives and community volunteer networks.

Expand Recreation, Parks and Quality of Life

Recreation and quality-of-life amenities emerged as one of the strongest future priorities. The requests ranged from smaller programmatic improvements to major facilities such as a recreation center, aquatic center or waterpark. Key actions ideas include a recreation/aquatic feasibility study, park upgrades, shade and tree canopy improvements, sports facility planning, teen programming, senior wellness programs and family events.

Grow Economic Opportunity and Vibrant Commercial Districts

Economic development is a daily-life issue in Somerton. Residents want more grocery and retail options, restaurants, jobs, better wages, small business support and stronger commercial districts. The desire is not simply for growth; it is for services that improve daily life and keep spending local. Key action ideas included grocery/retail recruitment, commercial gateway planning, downtown revitalization, small business technical assistance, permitting process improvements, business retention visits and workforce partnerships.

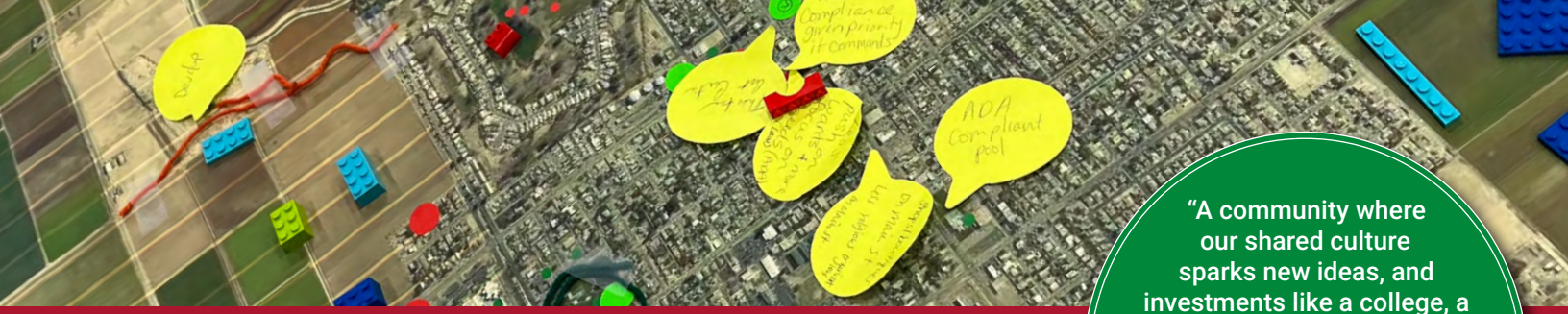
Invest in Infrastructure, Mobility and Community Appearance

Infrastructure issues appeared in practical and place-based language: roads, lighting, traffic, sidewalks, drainage, accessibility, parking and water quality. These issues influence perceived safety and quality of life. Key action ideas included a connected mobility plan, street lighting upgrades, sidewalk gap assessment, school-area safety improvements, drainage priorities, ADA accessibility plan and corridor beautification.

Manage Growth and Prepare for the Future

Residents support growth when it is tied to jobs, services and amenities. They are less supportive of growth that appears to consist mainly of housing without grocery, jobs, parks or infrastructure. This theme requires a long-range growth framework that links land use, infrastructure capacity, housing choices and identity. Key action ideas included a Somerton 2050 growth framework, annexation strategy, housing needs assessment, infrastructure phasing, agricultural heritage strategy and regional partnership agenda.





9.0 | FUTURE VISION FOR SOMERTON

> "A community where our shared culture sparks new ideas, and investments like a college, a hospital, and major employers bringing more people, more opportunity, and a stronger future for Somerton."
>
> – Community Survey Respondent

The Imagine Somerton 2032 Strategic Plan engagement process included the question "What is your vision for Somerton in 2032" within the Community Survey and in-person events. Community members were not describing a radically different city, in their myriad of responses, however they wanted a more 'complete' Somerton including everyday services, recreation destinations, better local employment, stronger downtown spaces and improved mobility while retaining the close-knit identity of the community.

Vision theme	Examples from engagement	Strategic meaning
Complete Community	Grocery store, Walmart/Target/ Food City/Fry's, medical services, pharmacy, bank, restaurants and cafes	Residents want to meet more everyday needs inside Somerton.
Recreation Destination	Waterpark, pool, recreation center, sports courts, pickleball/tennis, indoor playground, museum, family entertainment center	Recreation is central to the future identity and quality-of-life vision.
Vibrant Local Economy	More jobs, better pay, local businesses, commercial gateways, downtown shops, business attraction	Economic development should reduce leakage and create local opportunities.
Connected and Accessible Somerton	Transportation to/from Yuma, sidewalks, biking, ADA accessibility, traffic lights, safer routes, parking	Mobility and access are essential for youth, seniors, workers and families.
Green and Beautiful City	Trees, green space, golf course restoration, less hardscape, public spaces, parks, trail networks	Residents want growth to include landscape quality and shade.
Community-Centered Growth	More housing where appropriate, but balanced with services, jobs, safety and community character	Growth should be phased and supported by infrastructure and amenities.

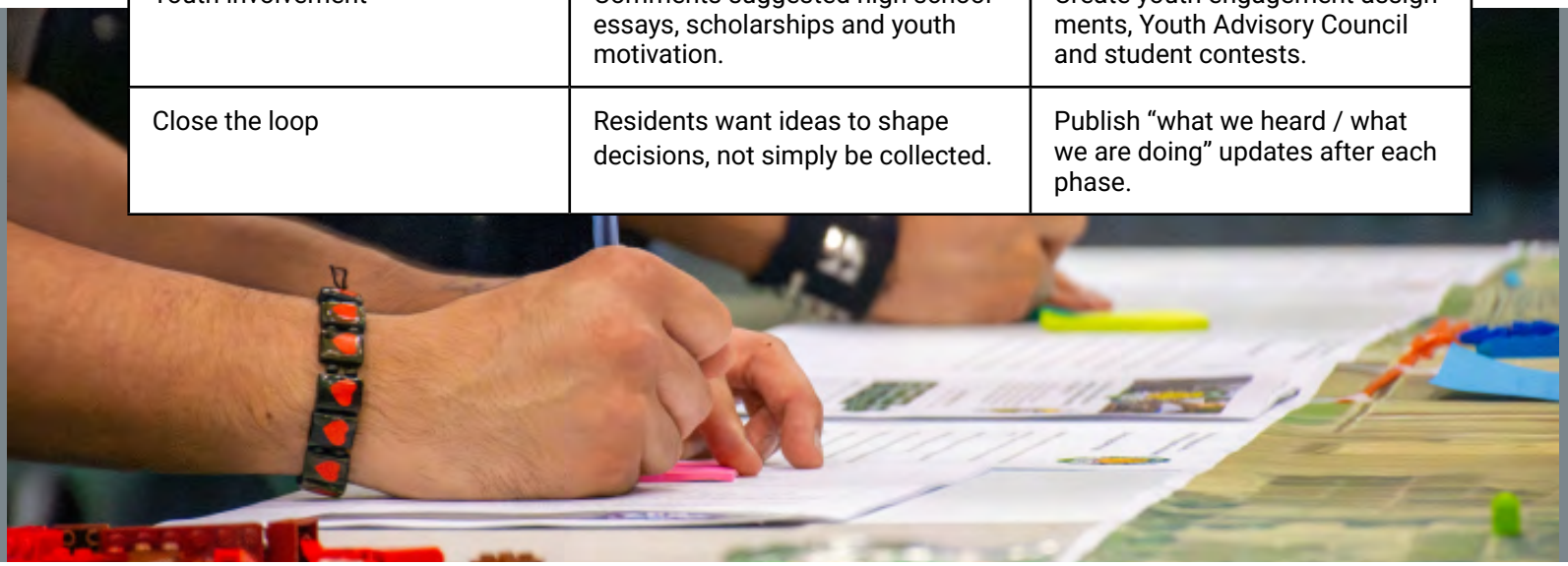




10.0 | SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVED COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community members provided direct suggestions for maximizing future engagement from the City of Somerton. These comments align strongly with best practices for inclusive local planning: meet people where they are, offer multiple participation channels, communicate early, use trusted community institutions and demonstrate that input matters.

Recommendation	Evidence from comments	Action approach
Multiple times and formats	Residents specifically requested in-person opportunities at varied times and dates.	Offer weekday evening, weekend, daytime and pop-up options.
Neighborhood-based forums	Residents suggested visits to all neighborhoods and small hubs in different areas.	Create rotating neighborhood listening sessions.
Use trusted local institutions	Schools, churches, senior center and local businesses were named as outreach channels.	Develop partner outreach kits and bilingual materials.
Festival and event engagement	Festivals and family events were recommended as engagement venues.	Use community events for visible, low-barrier engagement.
Digital communication	Social media and online presence were requested.	Maintain social updates, survey links and a public dashboard.
Youth involvement	Comments suggested high school essays, scholarships and youth motivation.	Create youth engagement assign-ments, Youth Advisory Council and student contests.
Close the loop	Residents want ideas to shape decisions, not simply be collected.	Publish “what we heard / what we are doing” updates after each phase.



11.0 | CONCLUSION



This Imagine Somerton 2032 Stakeholder Engagement Report reveals a community with a clear and shared vision for its future. The community want a safer, more complete, more opportunity-rich Somerton, but they want that future to remain grounded in the community's small-town character, cultural identity and family-centered spirit.

- The Imagine Somerton 2032 engagement process produced a clear and consistent community narrative. Residents value Somerton as a safe, family-oriented, culturally connected small town with a strong sense of belonging. They are broadly positive about the community and optimistic about its future. At the same time, residents are direct and specific about the practical gaps that affect daily life: grocery choice, retail access, local jobs, recreation amenities, youth activities, roads, lighting, walkability, and the need to manage growth carefully.
- The core finding is that the community supports growth when growth produces visible benefits for residents and protects the character that makes Somerton distinctive. Participants repeatedly asked for more opportunity, more amenities and more services, while also emphasizing that Somerton should remain safe, connected, family-oriented and recognizably small-town in character.
- The strong consistency of feedback across the Community Survey, Greater Days Festival, Think-Tank/Open House and Strategic Pillar workshops provides confidence that these priorities reflect the views of the broader community. The engagement process has created a clear foundation for the Imagine Somerton 2032 Strategic Plan, ensuring that future actions are grounded in the aspirations of residents and stakeholders. Moving forward, maintaining ongoing communication, reporting progress and continuing to involve the community will be essential to building trust and achieving the shared vision for Somerton.





12.0 | 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.

We would also like to thank the City of Somerton staff, for their work in developing the strategic pillars and bringing their expertise to this work.

Additionally, our appreciation is extended to Carmen Juarez, Deputy City Manager, and Priscila Ochoa, Planner Associate, for their leadership and support and to Louie Galaviz, City Manager, and to James Jones and his Parks and Recreation team.

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

Priscila Ochoa

Planner Associate
City of Somerton/143 N State Ave.
Somerton, AZ 85350
Office: (928) 722-6714
priscilaochoa@somertonaz.gov
www.somertonaz.gov

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





IMAGINE SOMERTON 2032

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT REPORT

ARIZONA, USA

JUNE 2026