

# Speak Up! Youngtown



9/29/2011

Report on Community Dialogue

Gunn Communications, Inc.  
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Executive Summary.....	4
Introduction.....	7
1.1 Community Survey Development.....	8
1.2 Public Notification and Outreach.....	8
1.3 Press Coverage.....	10
1.4 Response and Statistical Validity.....	11
2.0 Demographics .....	12
3.0 Today’s Youngtown.....	15
3.1 Reasons People Live in Youngtown.....	15
3.2. Local Community Values .....	16
3.3 Current Use of Local Services .....	17
3.4 Importance of Existing Services.....	22
4.0 Youngtown’s Future .....	25
4.1 New Programs and Services.....	25
4.2 Importance of Local Control.....	29
5.0 Options for the Future .....	30
5.1 Support for Future Options .....	30
5.2 Demographic Analysis of Support for Future Options.....	33
5.3 Other suggestions for the future direction of Youngtown .....	38
6.0 Comment from Town Hall and Community Meetings.....	42
6.1 Community Pride .....	42
6.2 You Get What You Pay For.....	42
6.3 Property Tax Discussion .....	43
6.4 Keep Local Law Enforcement .....	43
6.5 Provide More Detailed Information.....	43
Appendix.....	44
Question 1: Why did you choose to live in Youngtown? .....	49
Question 2: What do you value about living in Youngtown? .....	51
Question 12: Do you have any other suggestions for the future direction of Youngtown? w.....	56
Comments from Town Hall and Community Meetings .....	70

## Table of Figures

Figure 1: Location of Residence .....	13
Figure 2: Age of Respondents.....	13
Figure 3: Length of Residency .....	14
Figure 4: Home Ownership .....	14
Figure 5: Why do people live in Youngtown?.....	15
Figure 6: Village Reporter - Frequency of Use.....	18
Figure 7: Frequency of Use – Town Parks.....	18
Figure 8: Frequency of Use - Library .....	19
Figure 9: Frequency of Special Event Attendance .....	19
Figure 10: Frequency of Calls to Police Department.....	20
Figure 11: Frequency of Use – Town Website.....	20
Figure 12: Frequency Use - Historical Museum .....	21
Figure 13: Frequency of Use - ESL Classes .....	21
Figure 14: Importance of Town Police.....	22
Figure 15: Importance of Street Lighting.....	23
Figure 16: Importance of Street Maintenance .....	23
Figure 17: Importance of Alley Maintenance.....	24
Figure 18: Importance of Park Maintenance .....	24
Figure 19: Interest in New Community Classes.....	25
Figure 20: Interest in More Park Amenities.....	26
Figure 21: Interest in Youth Activities.....	26
Figure 22: Interest in New Transit Service.....	27
Figure 23: Interest in Dog Park .....	27
Figure 24: Interest in Community Garden .....	28
Figure 25: Importance of Local Control .....	29
Figure 26: Support for a Property Tax .....	31
Figure 27: Support for De-annexation .....	31
Figure 28: Support for Disincorporation.....	32
Figure 29: Support for Eliminating Services.....	32
Figure 30: Support for Municipal Bankruptcy .....	33

## Executive Summary

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More than 250 people attended a Town Hall or community meeting and 777 people completed a community survey during the 16-day Speak Up! Youngtown campaign. Speak Up! Youngtown encouraged residents to take part in a community conversation about the Town's future between September 7 and September 23, 2011 and included a large-scale outreach plan with various ways residents could interact and complete the community survey. Gunn Communications, Inc. (GCI) was hired by the Town Council to design and implement the Speak Up! Youngtown campaign.

The campaign was launched with a special Speak Up! Youngtown edition included in the September 2011 issue of the *Youngtown Village Reporter* and community surveys (dropped off, mailed, online, and door-to-door collection), Town Hall meetings, and interaction at other activity centers and events. Four news articles and one letter to the editor were published in local newspapers.

According to the 2010 Census, Youngtown has a population of 4,457 adults. Based on this population size, the sample size of 777 completed surveys represents a  $\pm 4.21$  margin of error at the 99% confidence level. The number of responses is greater than the votes cast in the March and May 2011 elections, 458 and 226 votes, but less than the 880 votes cast in the May 2010 property tax election.

### Participant Demographics

A **majority of the survey respondents live north of Peoria Avenue** (59%) and just under a third (32%) live south of Peoria Avenue. Out of town property and business owners also participated in the survey and makeup 9% of the responses. The respondents were **fairly equally divided into four age groups:** under 40, 40-54, 55-69 and over 70. Forty-three percent (43%) of the respondents **have lived in Youngtown less than 5 years**, 26% lived in town 5-9 years, and 31% more than 10 years. Almost two-thirds (**63%**) **own their homes** while 30% are renters.

### Community Values

The survey asked residents why they live in Youngtown and what they value most about the community. Affordable housing and safe, quiet neighborhoods were clearly the two primary reasons current residents choose to live in Youngtown. The small town atmosphere and being close to family and friends were other important reasons for living in the Town.

Other community values cited by the survey respondents included:

- Friendly people and family and friends who watch out for each other
- Clean, pretty areas, wide streets and felt the community was comfortable
- Good place to raise a family with quiet neighborhoods and safe streets

- Proximity of Youngtown to work, shopping, medical services, church, family, and friends
- Having a small town police force that knows the community and watches out for the residents
- Availability of affordable housing and a community with no property taxes and no fees
- Local government and elected officials who are accessible and responsive

## Current Use of Local Services

The **most frequently used local service is the Youngtown Village Reporter** with 63% of the respondents reading the paper at least occasionally and 40% reporting say they read the paper frequently. The **least utilized services are the English as Second Language (ESL) Classes and the Town's historical museum.** Eighty-seven percent (87%) have never taken an ESL class, and 69% have not visited the museum.

**All of the services currently provided by the Town are important to the residents with police protection being the most important.** Eighty-eight percent (88%) feel it is important the Town provides police protection with 69% stating it was VERY important.

## New Programs and Services

Residents were asked to determine how interested they or someone in their household would be in several new programs and services being considered by the Town. Half of the respondents (50%) are **interested in new community classes** with 20% being very interested.

## Importance of Local Control

Residents were asked how important local control was to them. Local control was defined as the ability to elect council members and a Mayor and maintain Town staff to make local decisions on providing services to Youngtown residents. **Two-thirds (68%) of the respondents stated local control is important** with 41% rating it very important.

## Future Direction for Youngtown

There was no overwhelming support for any of the five proposed future options. Survey respondents indicated **some support for a property tax and for elimination of services.** A property tax is likely to be supported by 40% of the respondents with 18% stating they were very likely to support. Twenty-two (22%) remain neutral, and 38% are unlikely (25% very unlikely) to support a property tax. Based on the survey results, it appears there is an equal amount of support for and against a property tax with about one-fourth of the population undecided. The **least favorable options are municipal bankruptcy and de-annexation** with more than half of the respondents unlikely to support bankruptcy (58%) and de-annexation (50%).

More than 300 other suggestions for Youngtown's future were provided by the respondents. These suggestions include services to be reduced or eliminated, opportunities to improve the town, ideas for business development, recommendations to reduce town administration and staff, and reasons for supporting a specific direction for the future.

To better understand which portions of the population support the various options, a series of crosstabs were created showing support by age group, home ownership, location, and length of residency. The  $\pm$  4% margin of error was used to determine if any of the variations were significant.

Significant variations included the following.

- Respondents under the age of 24 were the least likely to support a property tax and are more likely to support de-annexation
- Survey participants age 25-39 are less likely to support a property tax
- Respondents over the age of 55 were the most likely to support a property tax
- Renters were less likely to oppose a property tax than homeowners
- The longer the person has lived in Youngtown, the less likely they are to support de-annexation as an option
- Residents who have lived in Youngtown more than 25 years are the most unlikely to support disincorporation as an option
- Residents who have lived in Youngtown 15-24 years are most likely to support a property tax

## Town Hall and Community Meeting Comments

The Town hosted two Speak Up! Town Hall meetings (September 10 and 19) and a special meeting with business owners and operators (September 20.) Speak Up! Youngtown was also discussed during the September meeting of the Agua Fria Homeowners Association meeting and during other community events such as the Jam Session, Sing a Long, Compass Bible church events, and Methodist church potluck. Comments made during the meetings followed the following themes.

- **Community Pride** – Residents need to come together as a community and get involved to solve the challenges facing Youngtown in the future.
- **You Get What You Pay For** - The money to operate the police department, light the street lights, maintain parks and streets, operate the library, and all of the other services comes from the people. With declining state shared revenues and lack of future Federal grant funds, the residents and business are the only source of revenue available to operate the Town.
- **Property Tax Discussion** - People expressed concern about the increased costs and impact of increased taxes on the community. Some residents stated no matter which option is taken, sooner or later, the residents will have to pay a property tax to some jurisdiction, and they prefer it be to Youngtown.
- **Keep Local Law Enforcement** - Most felt it was important to keep a local police department, and some expressed concern about the impact the recent cuts are having on the department and the safety of the community and officers.
- **Provide More Detailed Information** - Several residents asked for more detailed information on how much of a property tax is needed and how much it will cost each homeowner.

## Introduction

Speak Up! Youngtown was a short-term, focused campaign designed to engage the Youngtown residents and businesses in a community conversation about the Town's future. The campaign took place between September 7 and September 23, 2011. The goal of the campaign was to proactively involve the community in providing direction to the Town Council on upcoming decisions which will determine the future of the Town. Gunn Communications, Inc. (GCI) was hired by the Town Council to design and implement the Speak Up! Youngtown campaign.

During the last five years, the Town has grown to over 6,000 residents and has shifted demographics from an older population, due to a historical age overlay, to a younger population with an average age of 37 years. The growth and transition to a younger, family-oriented community, combined with a continued decline in state shared revenues, has put a strain on Town resources and ability to pay for Town services. The Town Council has taken action to reduce expenses, but still the Town is unable to maintain a base level of services without using money in its reserve account. At the current rate of expenditure and no new sources of revenues, the Town's savings account will be exhausted in approximately three years.

During the sixteen-day campaign, residents were encouraged to Speak Up! by attending a Town Hall meeting and completing a community survey. A large-scale outreach plan was implemented to provide various ways for the public to engage in the conversation and encourage participation in the community survey.

This report compiles and interprets all the feedback received from community surveys (dropped off, mailed, online, and door-to-door collection), Town Hall meetings, and interaction at other activity centers and events over the course of the campaign.



*Town employees put up a Speak Up! banner at entrance to Town Hall complex.*

## 1.1 Community Survey Development

The primary method for providing input was a community survey. GCI, with guidance from Town leadership, developed a twelve question community survey instrument to gather the following information from Town's residents and businesses:

- Why residents live in Youngtown and what residents value most about living in Youngtown
- How frequently they use the existing services (i.e. Library, Town Parks, Police) and the importance of maintaining these existing services
- Interest in new programs and services
- Importance of local control to residents
- Willingness to support the five possible future options
- Opportunity to provide additional suggestions regarding the future direction of the Town

Online survey software, SelectSurvey.net, was used to administer the survey. A copy of the survey is included in the Appendix to this report.

## 1.2 Public Notification and Outreach

The campaign was launched with a special Speak Up! Youngtown edition included in the September 2011 issue of the *Youngtown Village Reporter* which was delivered to residents and businesses on September 7. The special section included a message from the Mayor, announcement of two Speak Up! Town Hall meetings, overview of the five possible options for the future, and a copy of the community survey which could be completed and dropped off at a designated collection location. The survey could be completed online by going to the Town website.



*GCI staff went door to door to collect surveys from Youngtown residents.*

Surveys and collection boxes were located at Youngtown Town Hall and Library, ACE Hardware, 4 Paws Animal Rescue, Brenda's Kitchen, Compass Bible Church, Youngtown Methodist Church, and Compass Bank.

Surveys were also distributed and collected at:

- Speak Up! Town Hall Meetings – September 10 and September 19
- Town Council Meeting – September 15
- Business Meeting – September 20
- Various activity centers, meetings, and events over the course of the campaign
- Door-to-door collection September 24-25 in both Agua Fria Ranch and north of Peoria Avenue.



Surveys and collection boxes were distributed to key activity centers throughout the Town.

Communication methods used to advertise the Speak Up! Youngtown campaign included:

- Outdoor banner hung at entrance to Town Hall complex
- Signs posted at various locations throughout the Town, and flyers posted on community bulletin boards
- Email blasts were sent to businesses, residents, and Agua Fria Ranch HOA members and included a direct link to the online survey
- GCI staff attended community meetings and events to encourage participation in the community dialogue

The following table summarizes the outreach efforts accomplished over the course of the Speak Up! Youngtown campaign.

**Table 1: Speak Up! Youngtown Outreach Efforts**

Stakeholder	Description of Tasks	Date(s)
Surprise Regional Chamber of Commerce	Sent email to Youngtown members 9/13 and attended business meeting on 9/20	9/13 and 9/20
Youngtown Businesses	Town staff sent email to all businesses and letter with invitation to meeting, sent 9/9; meeting scheduled for 9/20; canvassed all businesses on 9/20-21 from Alabama Avenue to Grand Avenue including Youngtown Shopping Center south of Alabama Avenue	9/9, 9/20, 9/20-21
Agua Fria Ranch	Email sent to residents 9/12; flyers posted by mailboxes; attended HOA meeting 9/14; reminder email sent 9/21 and door to door collection of surveys 9/24; sandwich boards placed at 5 locations around neighborhood	9/12, 9/14, 9/24-25

Stakeholder	Description of Tasks	Date(s)
AARP - Youngtown Chapter	Attended potluck to announce campaign	9/2
Youngtown United Methodist	Collection box at the church – attended potluck on 9/23	9/23
New Joy	Surveys distributed to Youngtown residents	9/13
Compass Bible	Sent information to put in weekly bulletin, sent slide to announce campaign during their presentation, presented briefing to attendees, distributed and collected surveys on 9/18 and 9/21.	9/7-23
Spanish Garden HOA	Sent email encouraging distribution and collection of surveys	9/7-23
Ventana Winds	Sent email encouraging distribution and collection of surveys	9/7-23
Arizona Baptist Village	Distributed and collected surveys from residents	9/7-23
Sing-Along	Presented briefing to attendees, distributed and collected surveys	9/10
Jam Session	Presented briefing to attendees, distributed and collected surveys	9/8
ESL Classes	Presented briefing to students, distributed and collected surveys	9/7
4 Paws Animal Rescue	Sign and collection box dropped off 9/6, conducted intercepts 9/22	9/7-23 and 9/22
Brenda's Kitchen	Sign and collection box dropped off 9/6, conducted intercepts 9/14, 9/16, 9/20	9/7-23 and 9/14, 9/16, 9/20
Ace Hardware	Sign and collection box dropped off 9/6, conducted intercepts 9/16 and 9/17	9/7-23
Compass Bank	Sign and collection box dropped off 9/9	9/9-23
Outdoor Relay	Message on electronic board	9/7-23
Riverbend Apartments	Distributed and collected surveys to residents	9/13-23
Pet Vaccination; Spay and Neuter Event	Presented briefing, distributed and collected surveys	9/14 and 9/21

### 1.3 Press Coverage

Youngtown issued a media release on September 2, 2011, and invited local news reporters to a briefing held on September 6. The following is a list of newspaper articles published during the campaign. Articles are included in the appendix.

- Youngtown Polls Residents about Community's Future - Daily News Sun, 9/7
- Youngtown Future is Up to You - AZ Republic Northwest Section Editorial, 9/10
- Our View: Don't be shy, Youngtown; Speak Up! – AZ Republic West Valley Editorial Blog, 9/13
- Letter to the Editor – Sun City/Youngtown Independent, 9/14
- Youngtown leaders: Town will go broke without service cuts – AZ Republic, 9/15

## 1.4 Response and Statistical Validity

Based on a population size of 4,457 adults, the 777 survey responses represent **a  $\pm$  4.21 margin of error at the 99% confidence level.**

Participation in the Speak Up! Youngtown was voluntary and not a randomly selected sample. To determine validity of a non-random sample, it must be determined if the respondents were reflective of the community as a whole. Based on an analysis of the Census data for the adult population, it appears for this survey:

- Residents under the age of 40 are underrepresented (36% of adult population compared to 25% of the survey respondents)
- Residents age 55-69 years are over represented (18% of adult population compared to 28% of survey sample)
- Renters are underrepresented (46% of households compared to 30% of respondents)

This report includes analysis of the future options by demographic group, and indicates where the over or under representation of a group may have influenced the results.



*Relay Outdoor included campaign information on their electronic billboard near Agua Fria Ranch.*

## 2.0 Demographics

Based on the 2010 Census, Youngtown has an **adult** population of 4,457. The community survey was completed by 777 people, 17 percent of the population. The number of responses is greater than the votes cast in the March and May 2011 elections, 458 and 226 votes, but less than the 880 votes cast in the May 2010 property tax election.

A majority of the survey respondents live north of Peoria Avenue (59%) and just under a third (32%) live south of Peoria Avenue. Out of town property and business owners also participated in the survey and makeup 9% of the responses.

Age of the respondents is almost equally divided into four categories:

- Under 40 years– 25%
- 40-54 years – 25%
- 55-69 years – 28%
- Over 70 years – 22%

When the age breakout of the survey responses are compared to the 2010 Census, the residents under the age of 40 are slightly under represented (36% of adult population), and the residents age 55-69 years are over represented (18% of adult population).

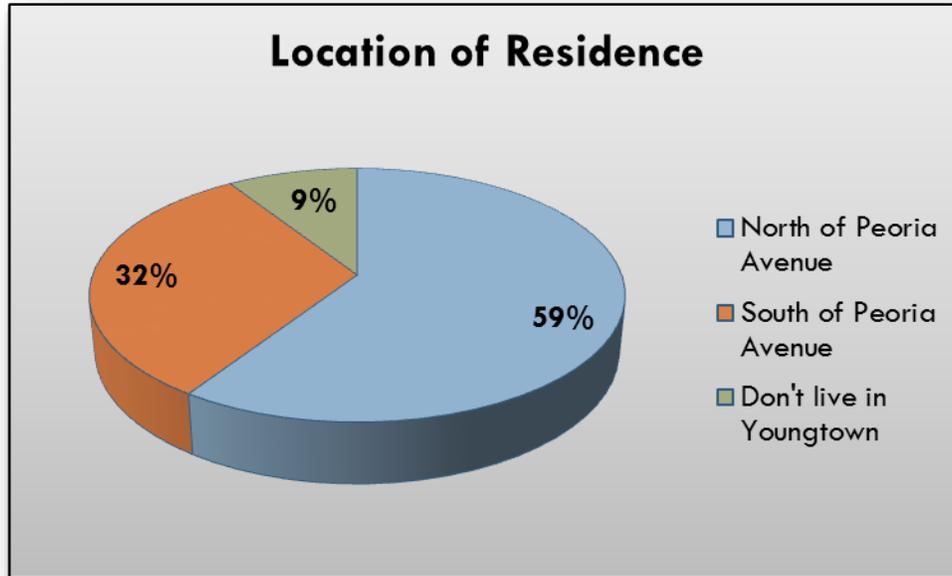
Forty-three percent (43%) of the respondents have lived in Youngtown less than 5 years, 26% lived in town 5-9 years, and 31% more than 10 years.

Almost two-thirds (63%) own their homes while 30% are renters.

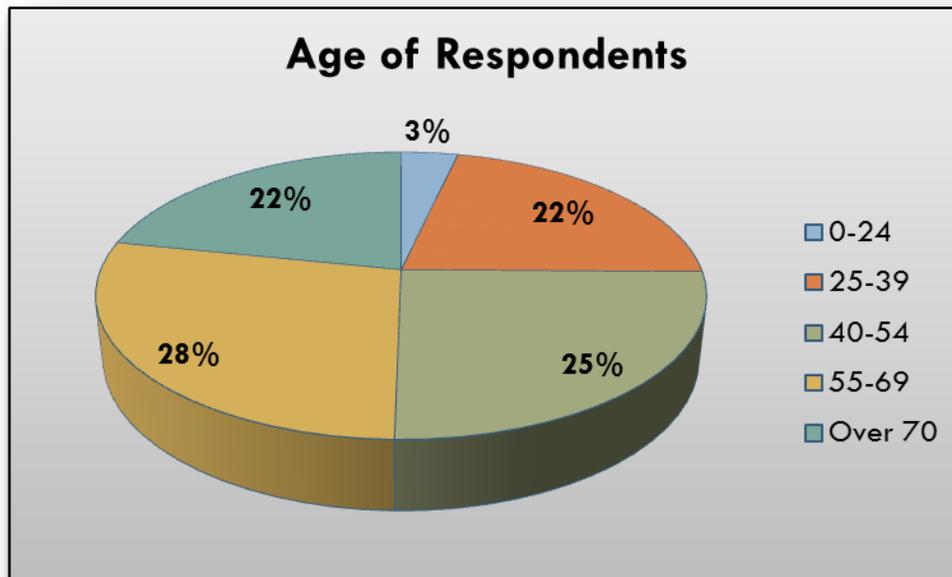


Flyers were posted on community bulletin boards.

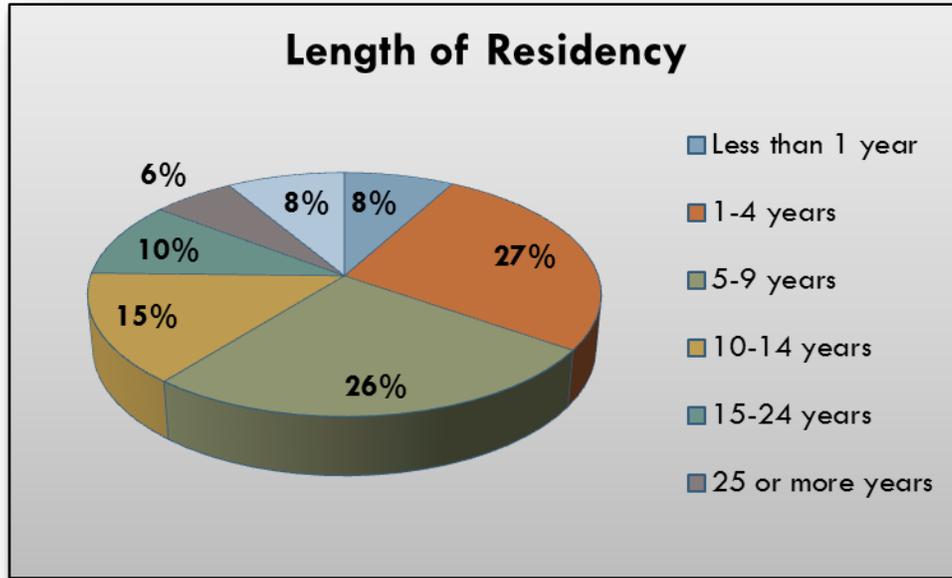
**Figure 1: Location of Residence**



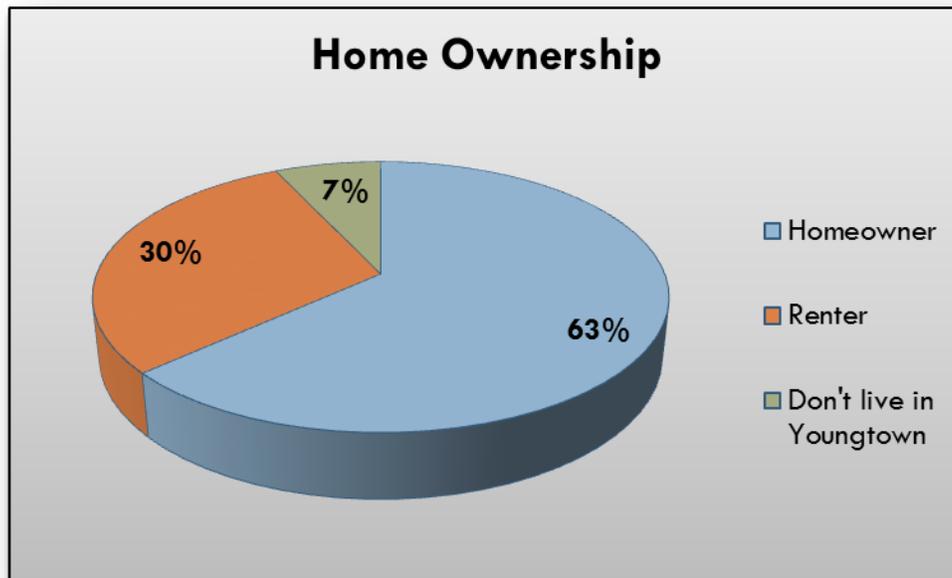
**Figure 2: Age of Respondents**



**Figure 3: Length of Residency**



**Figure 4: Home Ownership**

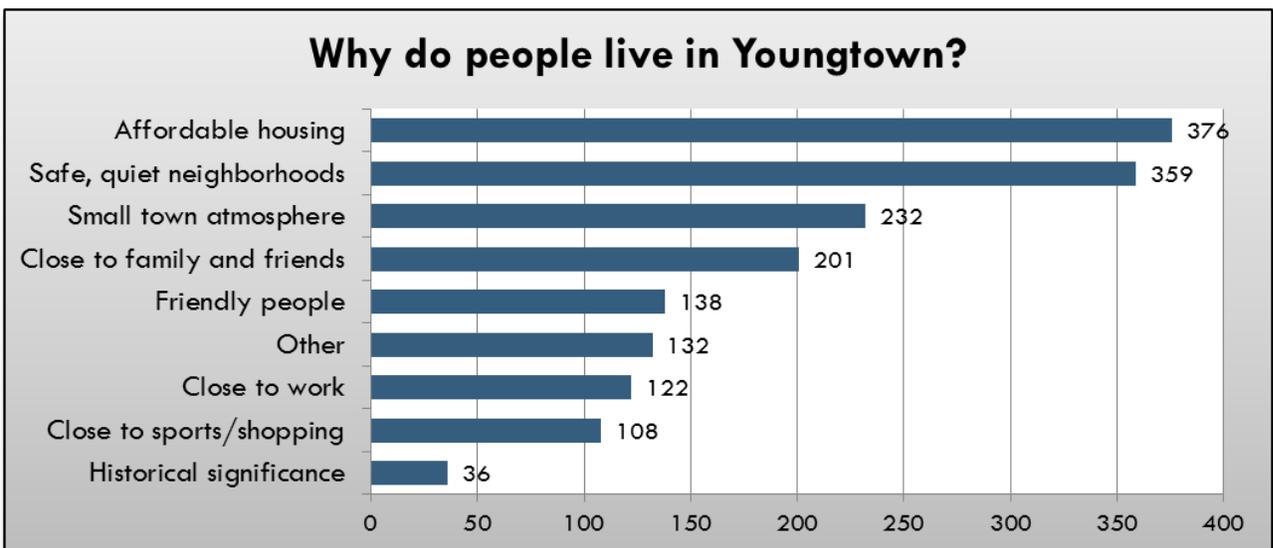


## 3.0 Today's Youngtown

### 3.1 Reasons People Live in Youngtown

The survey asked residents why they live in Youngtown and what they value most about the community. Affordable housing and safe, quiet neighborhoods were clearly the two primary reasons current residents choose to live in Youngtown. The small town atmosphere and being close to family and friends were other important reasons for living in the Town.

**Figure 5: Why do people live in Youngtown?**



Some residents stated they originally moved to Youngtown because it was an age restricted community, and others moved to the community because they inherited a family home. Access to the freeway and close proximity to work, family, medical services, church and independent living options were other reasons given for moving to Youngtown.

A few indicated they moved to the Town because there was not a property tax.

Some of the other comments indicate a few residents are becoming concerned about the transition of the community and the increase in crime and lack of retirement community benefits.

A complete list of the other reasons cited for choosing to live in Youngtown is included in the Appendix.

## 3.2. Local Community Values

### Friendly People – Small Town Atmosphere - Convenience

When asked what they value most about their Town, a large portion of the respondents mentioned friendly people and family and friends who watch out for each other. Residents enjoy the small town atmosphere and feel safe walking outside. Some appreciated the clean, pretty areas, wide streets and felt the community was comfortable.

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*The neighbors are one of a kind, everyone knows everyone, our kids are able to go outside and play and all of the neighbors hang out, having this bond is very rare.*

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*Quiet place to do business, not busy streets, just a nice friendly location, somewhat off the beaten path, but once our clients discovered that we are here, they continue to return.*

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Some respondents also felt Youngtown was a good place to raise a family with quiet neighborhoods and safe streets, but others are disappointed there are not more kid activities and facilities.

Many value the proximity of Youngtown to work, shopping, medical services, church, family, and friends. Easy freeway access is also a bonus.

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*Close to everything/small town but away from the hustle and bustle/big city*

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### Youngtown Police Department

The residents also highly value the Youngtown Police Department and support the efforts of the officers. They like having the small town police force that knows the community and watches out for the residents. The department is able to maintain the balance of keeping a watchful eye on their neighbors in order to keep the community safe and secure.

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*When I worked, I did evening shift work as a nurse. Our police dept. knew when I would come home and often there would be someone at the corner to make sure I got home safe.*

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Even though a majority of the respondents feel a local police department is very important, some of the comments reveal a concern in the community about the cutback in the police force and the impact it is having on crime in the community. Some are concerned about having only one officer per shift with no backup. They feel the criminals know this and are moving back into Youngtown.

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*I loved living here; I have put a lot of money into my home...all for nothing... now I can't wait to get out. It's no longer safe, we have virtually no PD. The drug dealers, tweakers, gang bangers are all moving in. So very sad for those who can't get out. What we're people thinking when they voted out our Police?!*

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### **Affordability**

The availability of affordable housing and a community with no property taxes and no fees was important to some respondents.

### **Town Government and Services**

Several respondents stated they value their local government and elected officials who are accessible and responsive and felt they had a good Town government. One person would like to have the restrooms at the parks open in the afternoons and on weekends and another would like to have the library open later. One person was dissatisfied with both the elected officials and Town administration.

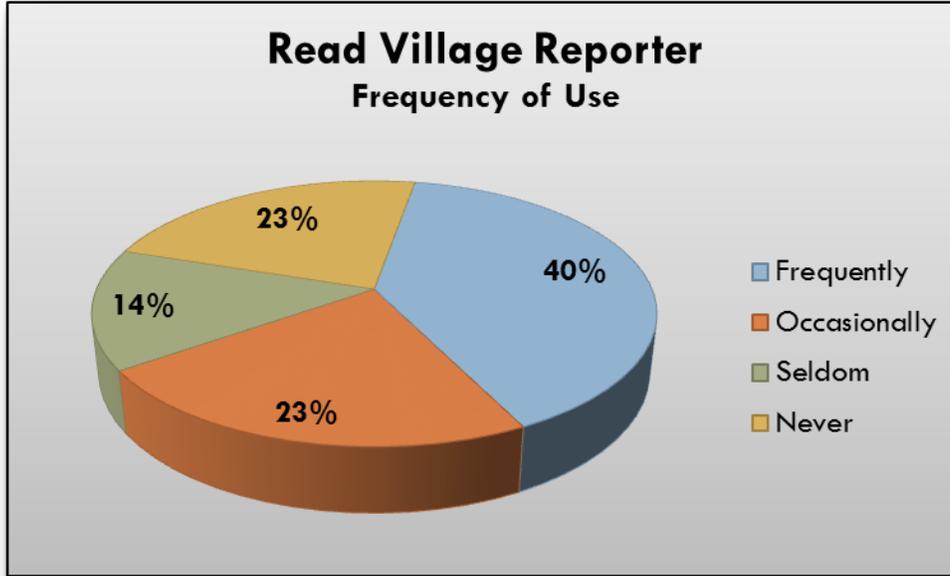
A complete, verbatim list of the responses to question two is included in the appendix.

### **3.3 Current Use of Local Services**

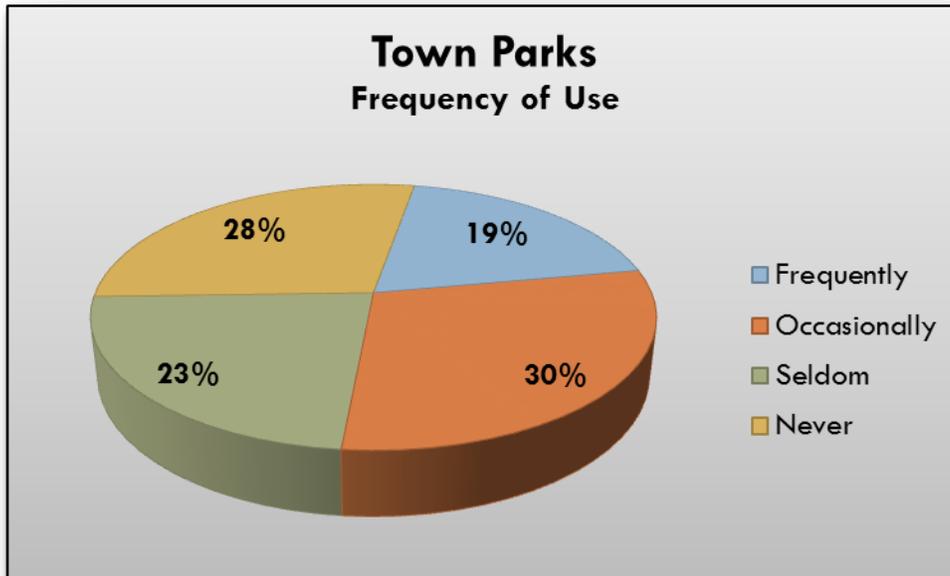
The most frequently used local service is the *Youngtown Village Reporter* with 63% of the respondents reading the paper at least occasionally and 40% reporting say they read the paper frequently. Almost half (49%) use the Town parks at least occasionally and one-third of the survey participants use the library and attend Town events at least occasionally. Only 4% state they frequently call the police, and 20% reported occasionally calling the department.

The least utilized services are the English as Second Language (ESL) Classes and the Town's historical museum. Eighty-seven percent (87%) have never taken an ESL class, and 69% have not visited the museum.

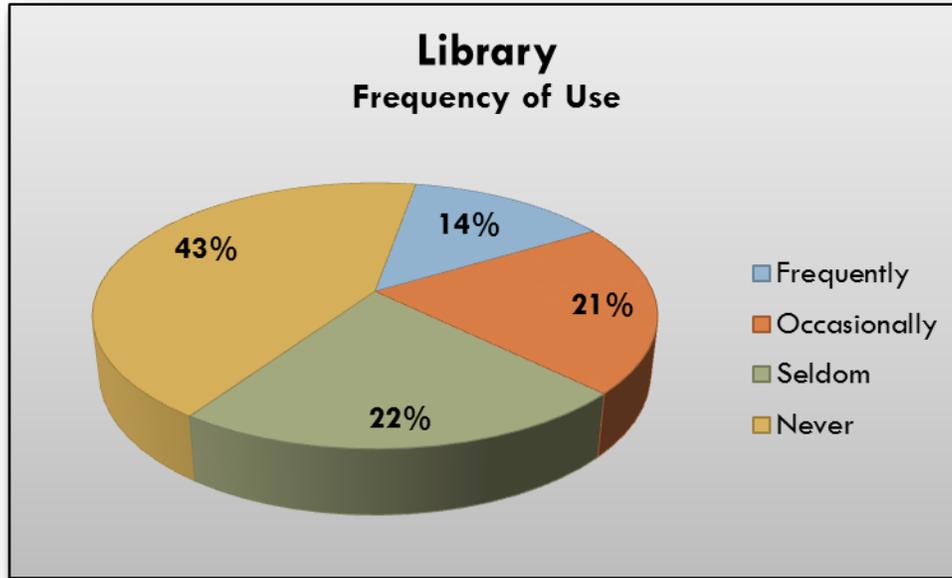
**Figure 6: Frequency of Use – Village Reporter**



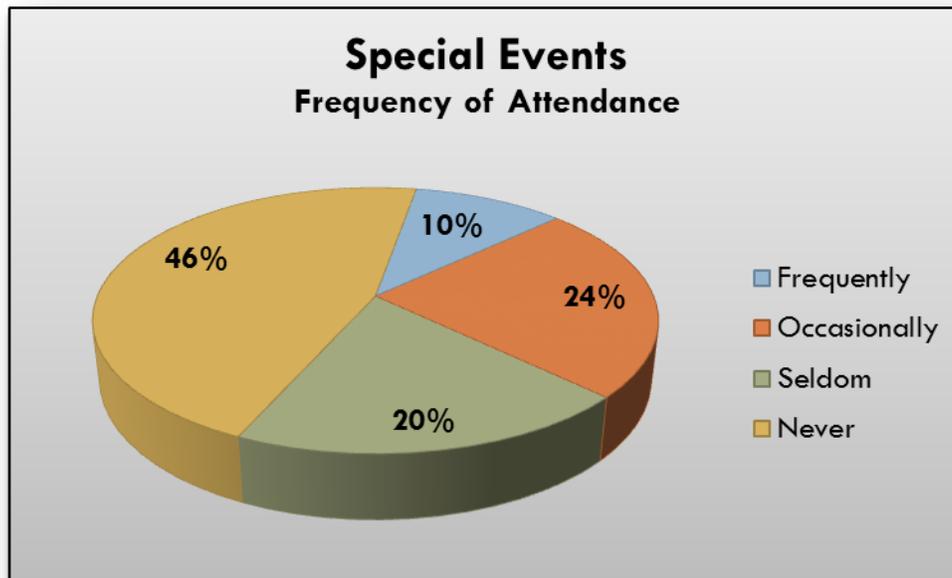
**Figure 7: Frequency of Use – Town Parks**



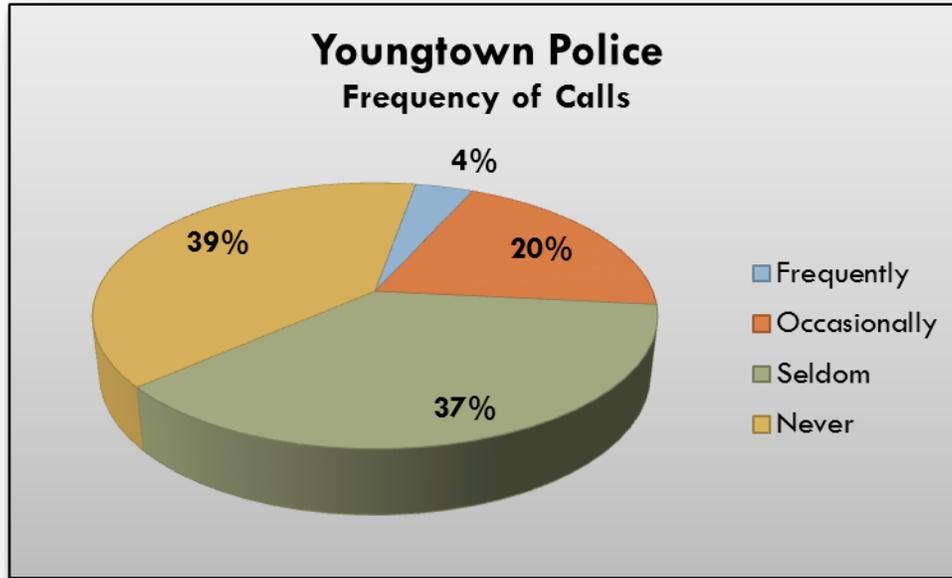
**Figure 8: Frequency of Use - Library**



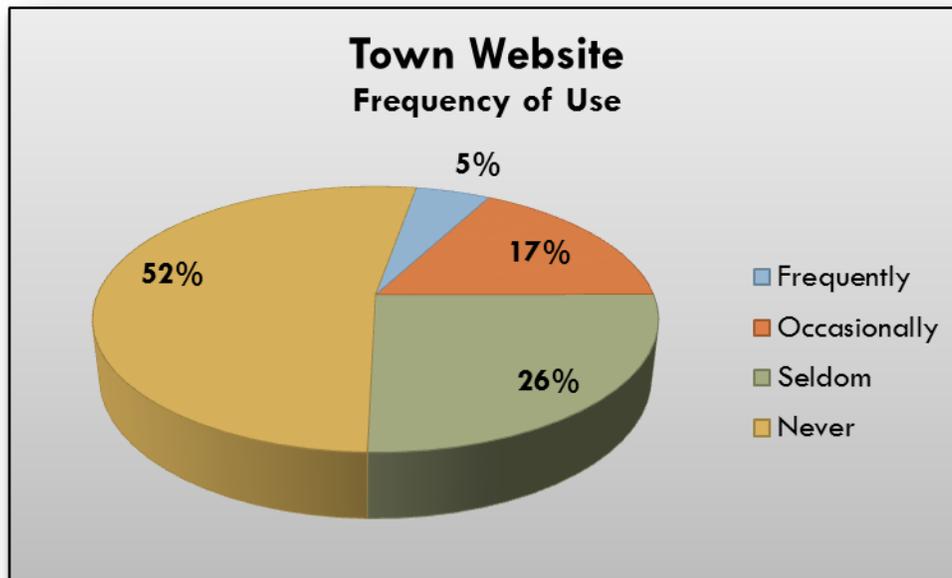
**Figure 9: Frequency of Special Event Attendance**



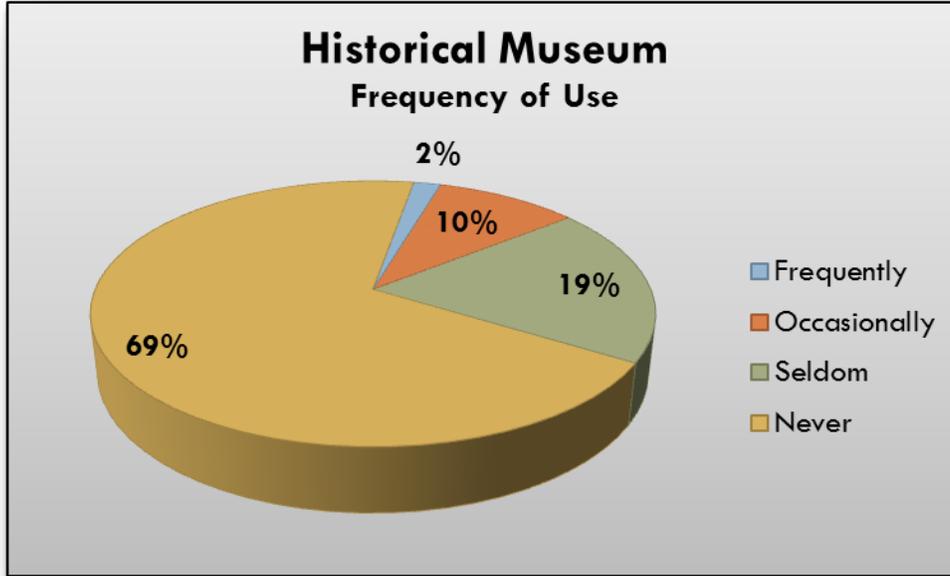
**Figure 10: Frequency of Calls to Police Department**



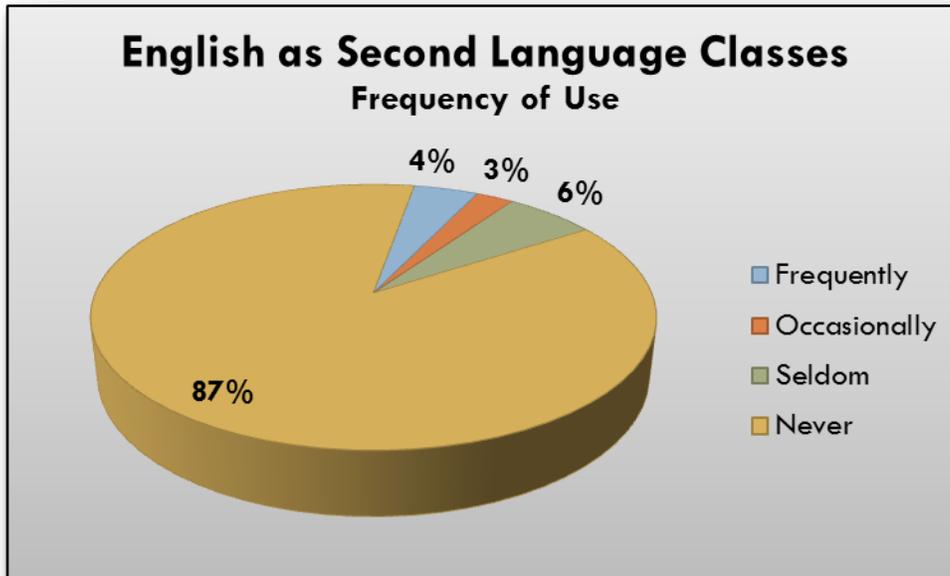
**Figure 11: Frequency of Use – Town Website**



**Figure 12: Frequency Use - Historical Museum**



**Figure 13: Frequency of Use - ESL Classes**

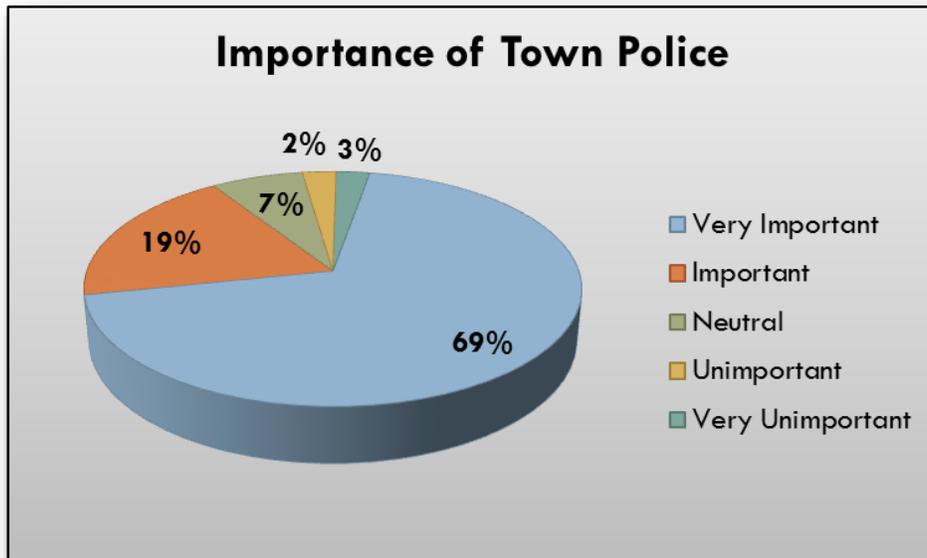


### 3.4 Importance of Existing Services

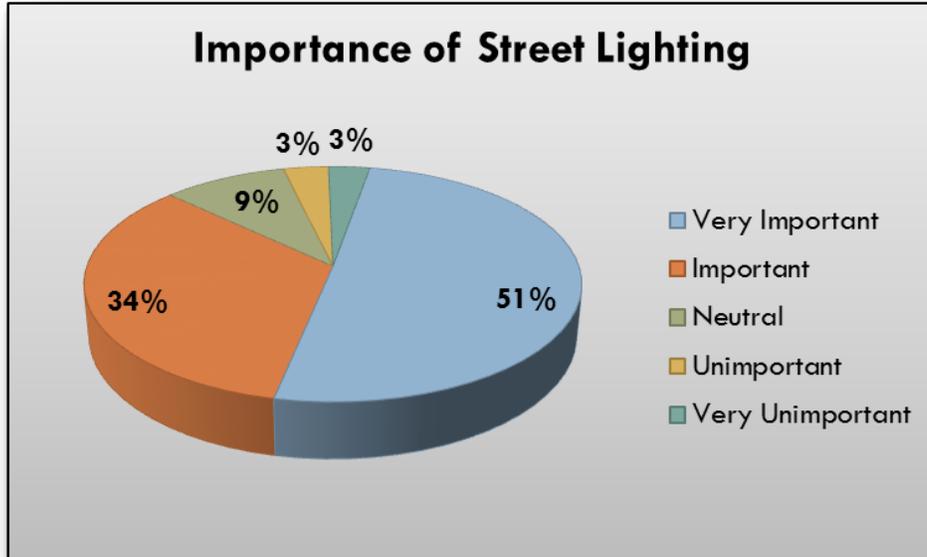
All of the services currently provided by the Town are important to the residents with police protection being the most important.

- Eighty-eight percent (88%) feel it is important the Town provides police protection with 69% stating it was VERY important.
- Half of the respondents reported street lighting as very important (51%) and street maintenance was very important to 48% of the respondents.
- More than a 1/3 of the respondents felt the maintenance of parks (38%) and alleys (35%) were very important.

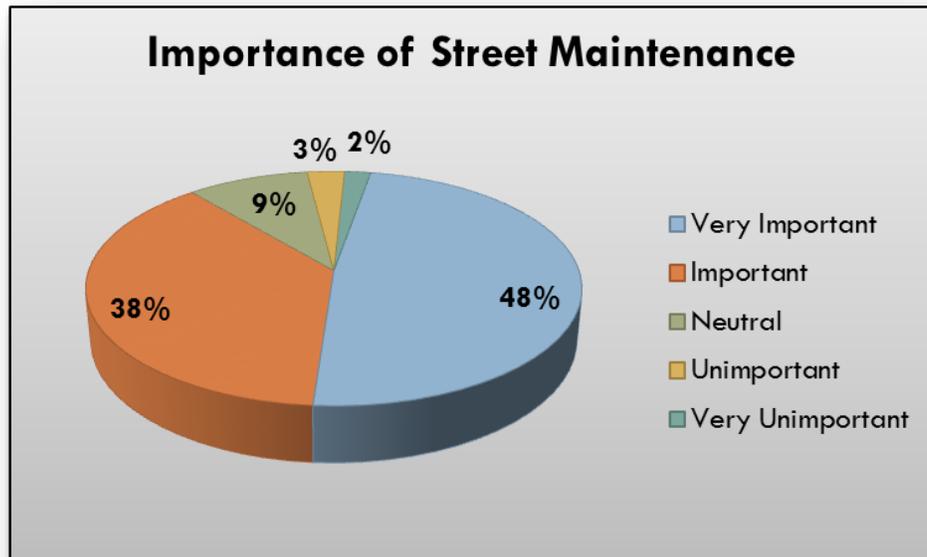
**Figure 14: Importance of Town Police**



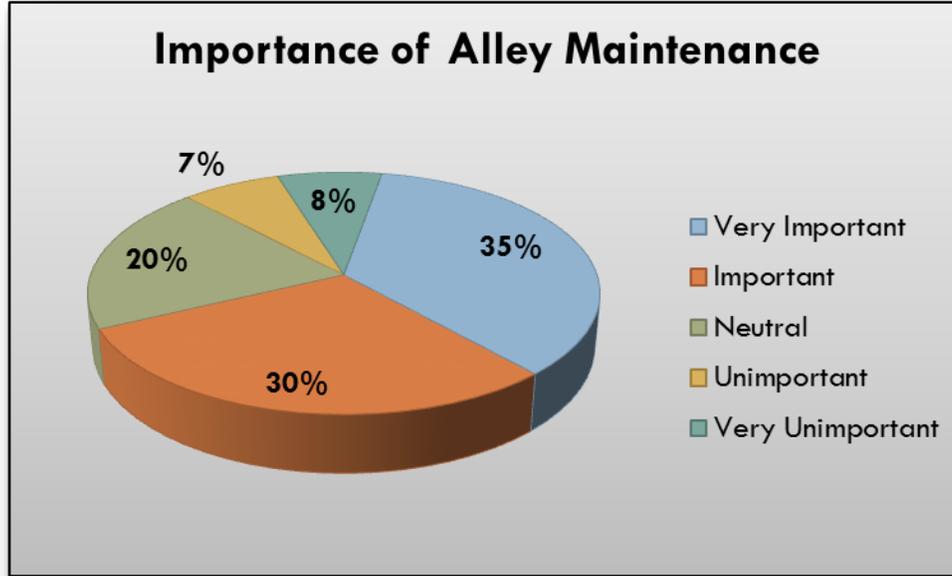
**Figure 15: Importance of Street Lighting**



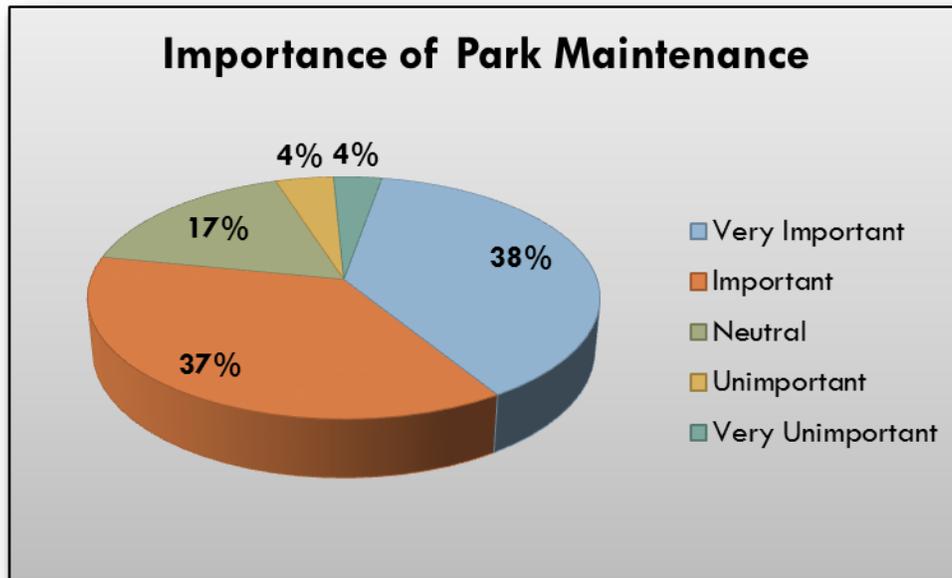
**Figure 16: Importance of Street Maintenance**



**Figure 17: Importance of Alley Maintenance**



**Figure 18: Importance of Park Maintenance**



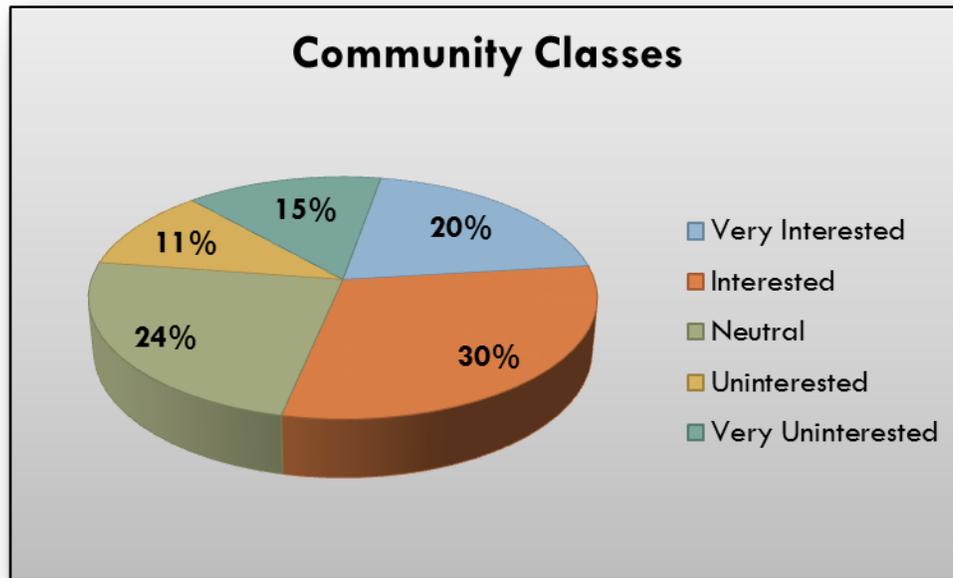
## 4.0 Youngtown's Future

### 4.1 New Programs and Services

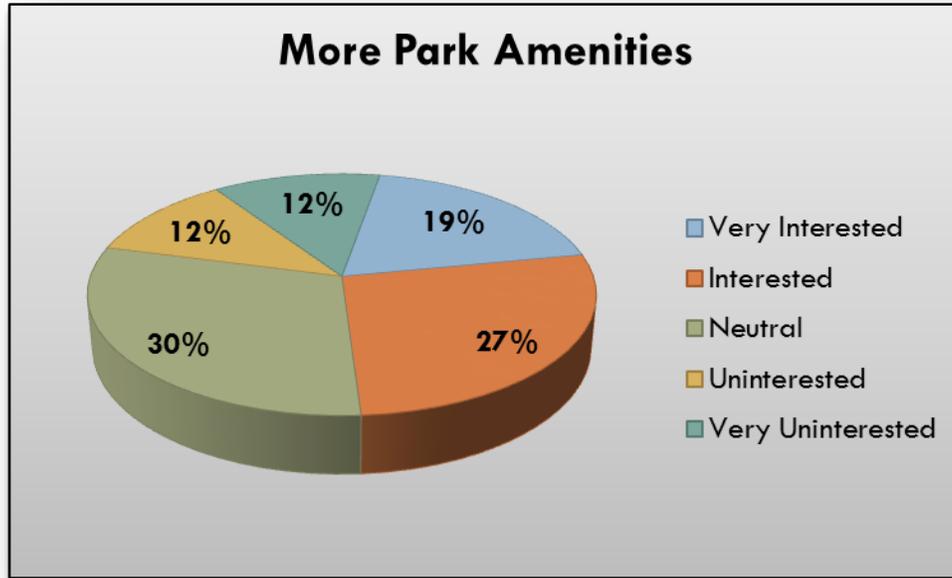
Residents were asked to determine how interested they or someone in their household would be in several new programs and services being considered by the Town. Half of the respondents (50%) are interested in new community classes with 20% being very interested.

Interest in the other proposed services ranged from 46% for more park amenities to 36% interest in a community garden.

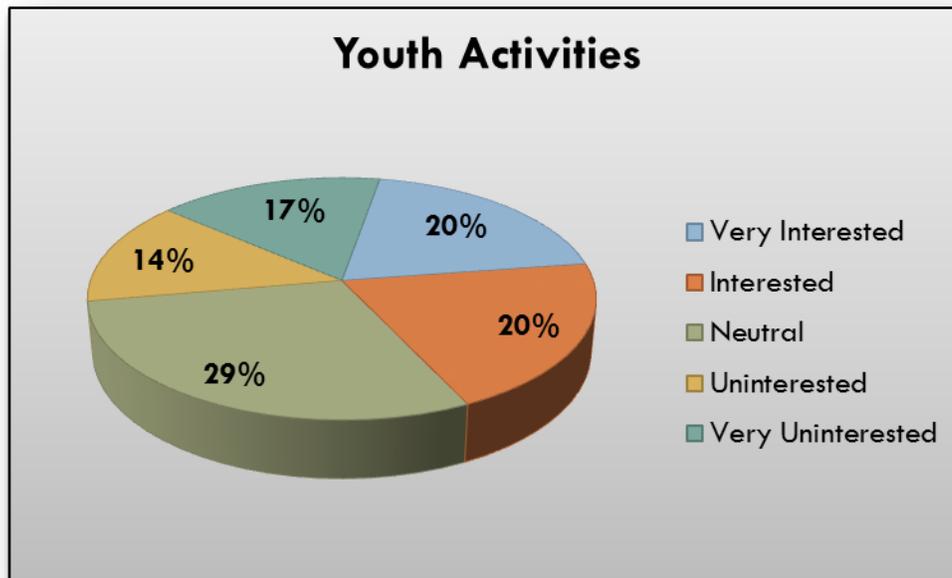
**Figure 19: Interest in New Community Classes**



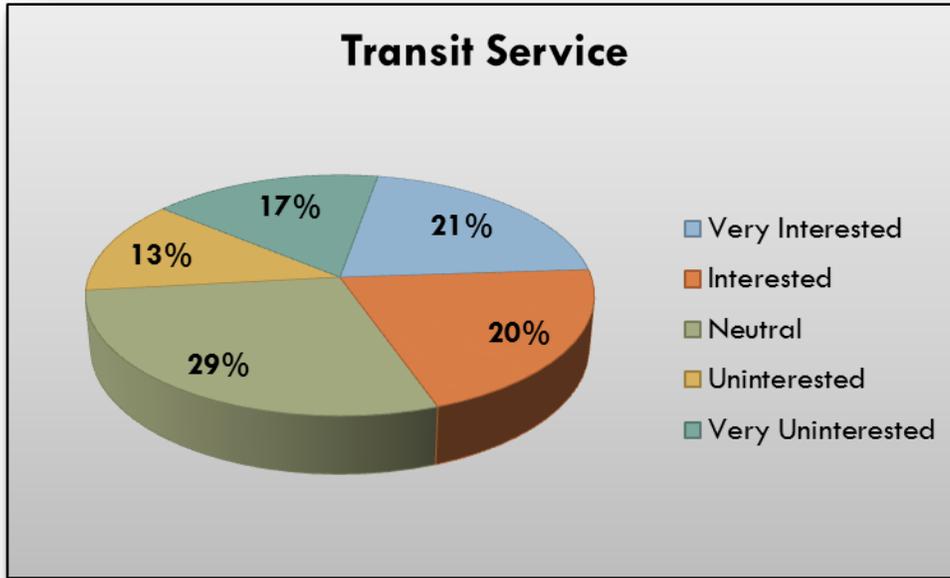
**Figure 20: Interest in More Park Amenities**



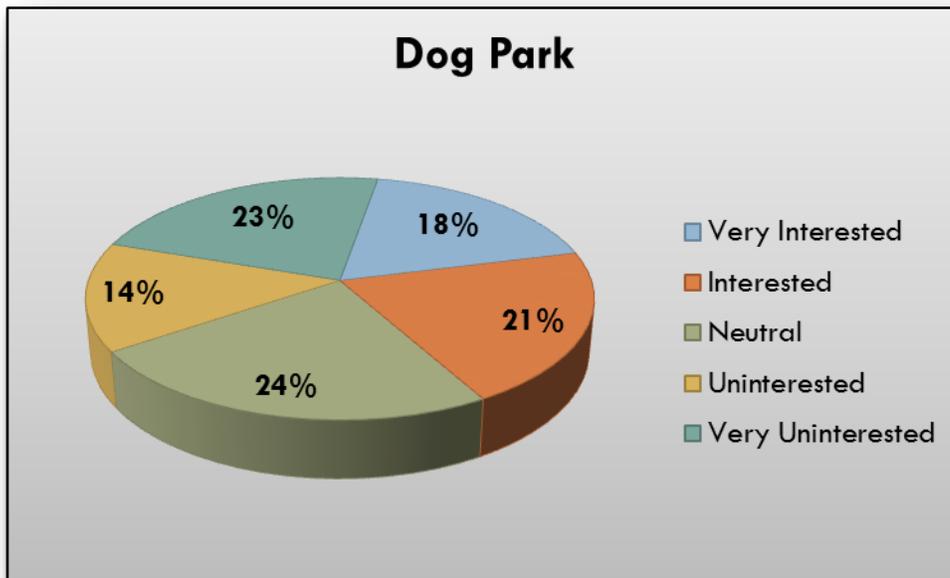
**Figure 21: Interest in Youth Activities**



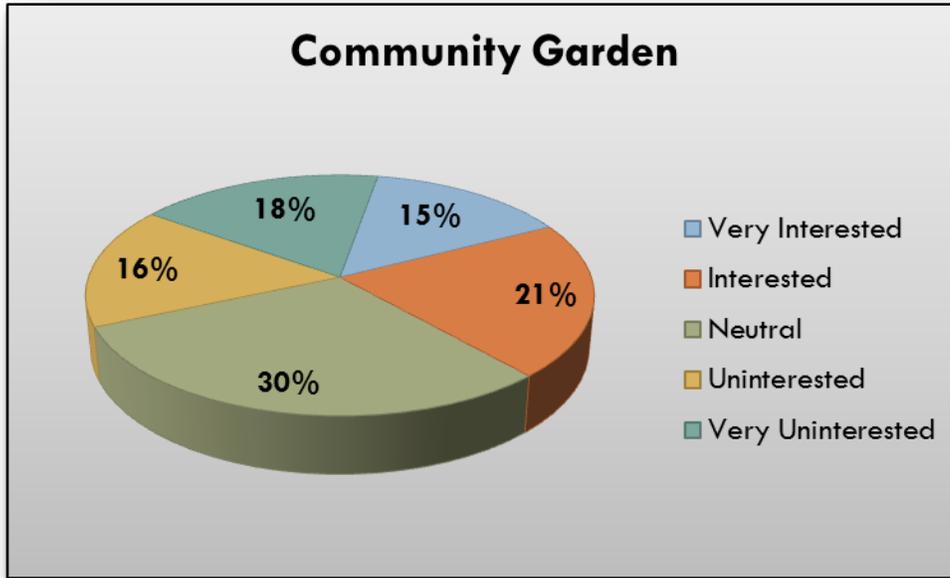
**Figure 22: Interest in New Transit Service**



**Figure 23: Interest in Dog Park**



**Figure 24: Interest in Community Garden**

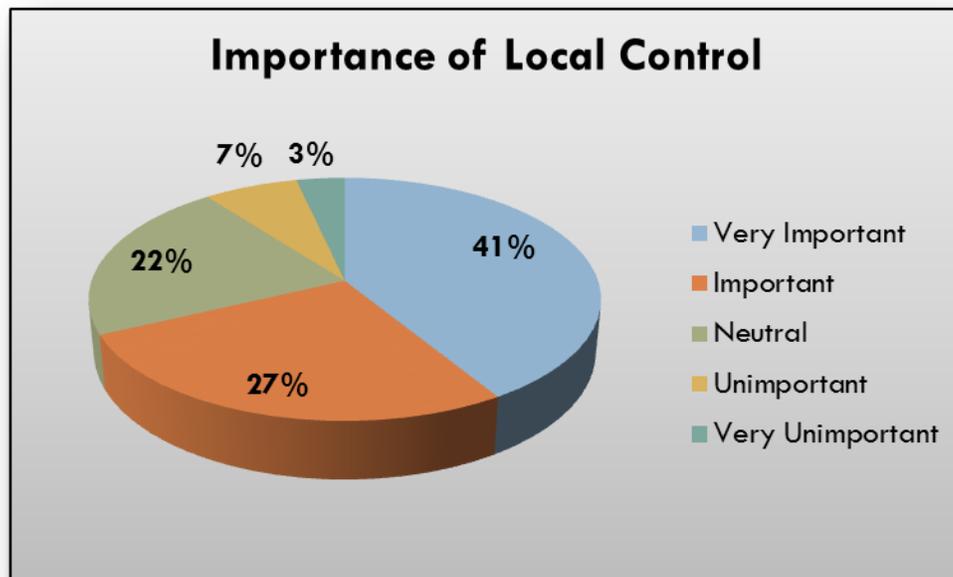


Residents talk about the future during a Speak Up! Town Hall meeting.

## 4.2 Importance of Local Control

Residents were asked how important local control was to them. Local control was defined as the ability to elect council members and a Mayor and maintain Town staff to make local decisions on providing services to Youngtown residents. Two-thirds (68%) of the respondents stated local control is important with 41% rating it very important.

*Figure 25: Importance of Local Control*



## 5.0 Options for the Future

The Town Council has identified five possible options for the future of Youngtown. As part of the survey, residents were asked which of the options they were willing to support. They were also given an opportunity to suggest other options to the Town Council. The five options were:

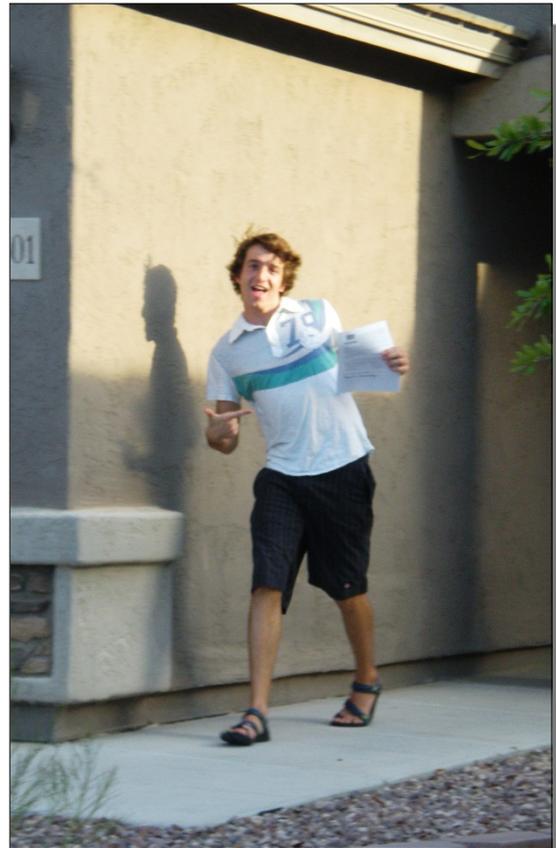
- Disincorporation
- De-annexation
- Municipal Bankruptcy
- Eliminating Services
- Property Tax

### 5.1 Support for Future Options

Survey respondents indicated modest support for a property tax and for elimination of services and very little support for municipal bankruptcy. One-fourth to one-third of the respondents selected “neutral” for each of the options potentially indicating a lack of understanding of the options or being unsure of which direction is best for the community’s future. These residents could be described as the “undecided”.

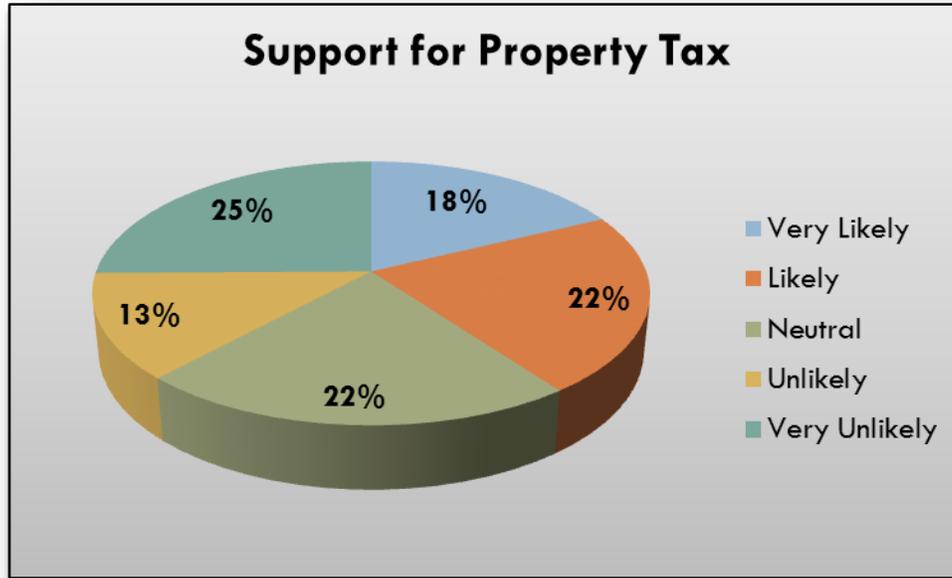
A property tax is likely to be supported by 40% of the respondents with 18% stating they were very likely to support. Twenty-two (22%) remain neutral, and 38% are unlikely (25% very unlikely) to support a property tax. Based on the survey results, it appears there is an equal amount of support for and against a property tax with about one-fourth of the population undecided.

The least favorable options are municipal bankruptcy and de-annexation with more than half of the respondents unlikely to support bankruptcy (58%) and de-annexation (50 %).

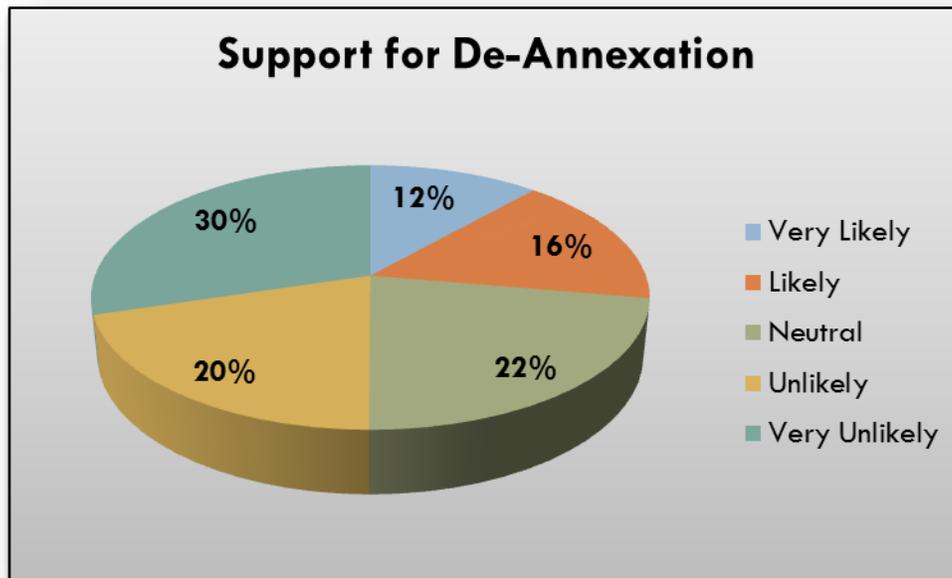


Surveys were collected door-to-door in Agua Fria Ranch on September 24, 2011.

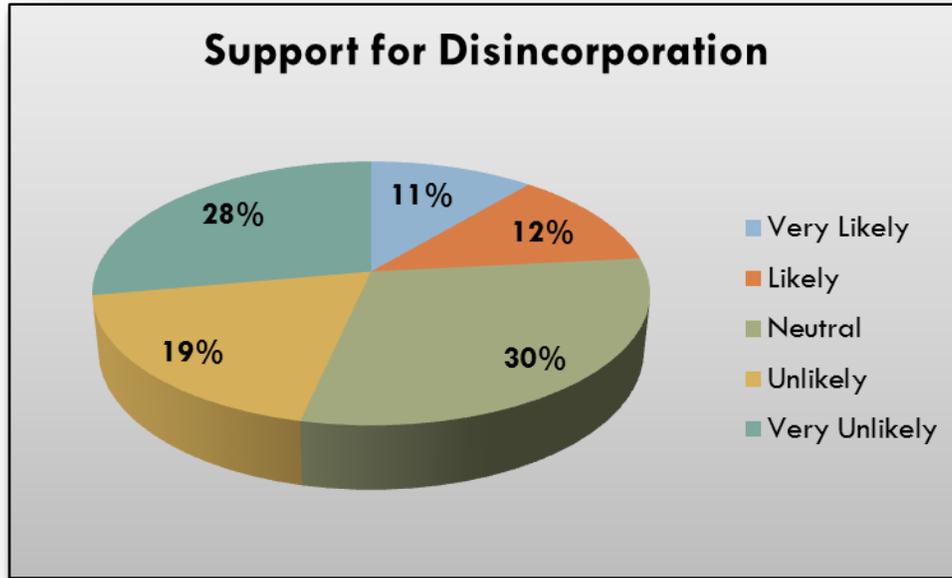
**Figure 26: Support for a Property Tax**



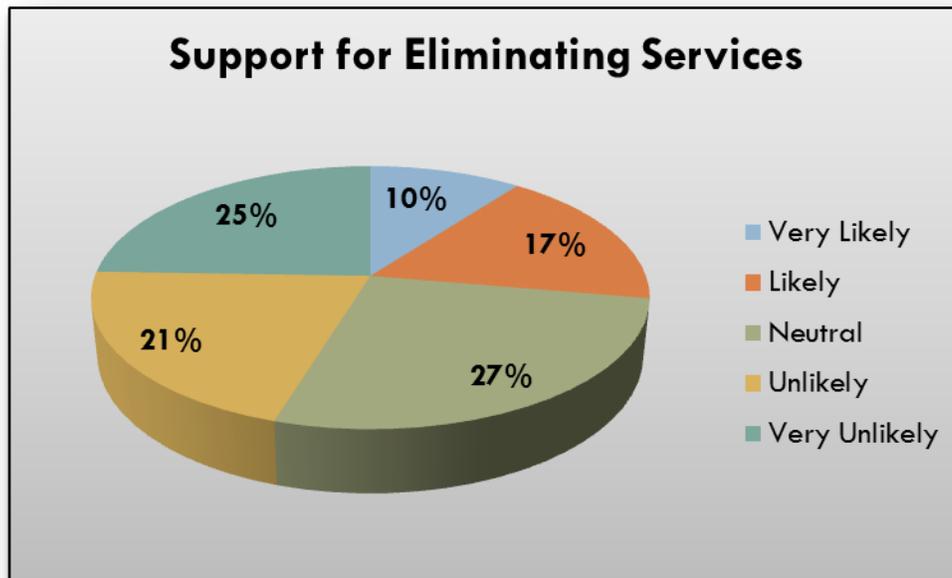
**Figure 27: Support for De-annexation**



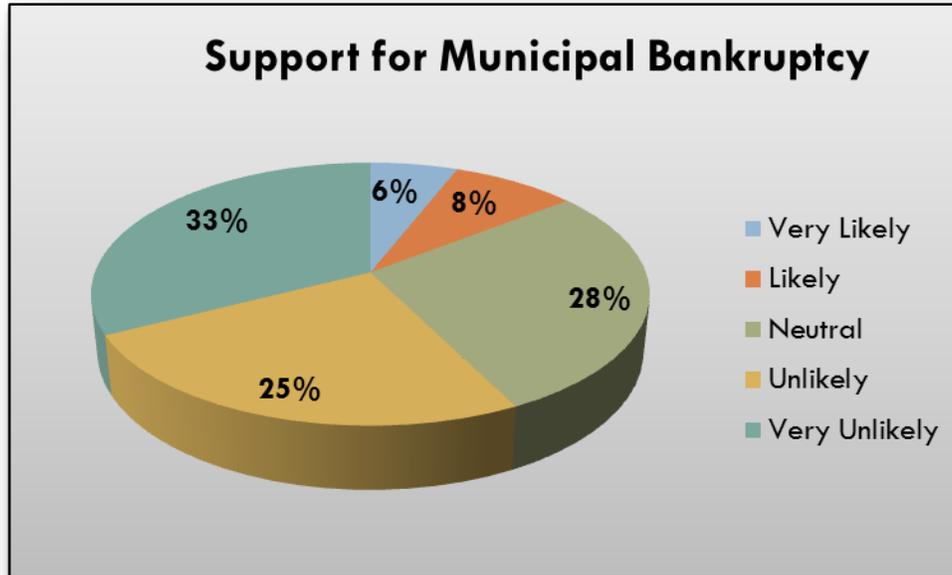
**Figure 28: Support for Disincorporation**



**Figure 29: Support for Eliminating Services**



**Figure 30: Support for Municipal Bankruptcy**



## 5.2 Demographic Analysis of Support for Future Options

To better understand which portions of the population support the various options, a series of crosstabs were created showing support by age group, home ownership, location, and length of residency. The  $\pm 4\%$  margin of error was used to determine if any of the variations were significant.

### 5.2.1 Variation by Age

Respondents **under the age of 24** were **more likely to give neutral ratings** to the property tax, disincorporation, and municipal bankruptcy options indicating a fairly high level of uncertainty. In addition, this age group was the **least likely to support a property tax** (12% compared to 40% for all respondents) and are **more likely to support de-annexation** (44% likely or very likely compared to 28% for all respondents).

Survey participants **age 25-39** are **less likely to support a property tax** (31% likely or very likely compared to 40% for all respondents). This age group is slightly underrepresented in the survey sample (22% of sample compared to 29% of population); therefore, the actual support for a property tax may be lower than reflected in the survey results.

Respondents **age 55-69 (46%)** and **over the age of 70 (48%)** were **more likely to support a property tax** than 40% of all respondents.

<b>Support for Future Options by Age</b>						
Age	All	0-24 Yrs	25-39 Yrs	40-54 Yrs	55-69 Yrs	Over 70 Yrs
# of Responses	777	25	151	175	195	149
<b>Disincorporation</b>						
Very Likely	11%	4%	12%	11%	10%	10%
Likely	12%	20%	13%	10%	16%	8%
Neutral	30%	44%	30%	31%	26%	32%
Unlikely	19%	12%	25%	15%	19%	17%
Very Unlikely	28%	20%	21%	33%	28%	33%
<b>De-annexation</b>						
Very Likely	12%	8%	17%	13%	9%	6%
Likely	16%	36%	17%	19%	14%	11%
Neutral	22%	24%	23%	22%	21%	26%
Unlikely	20%	8%	21%	18%	25%	19%
Very Unlikely	30%	24%	23%	29%	31%	38%
<b>Municipal Bankruptcy</b>						
Very Likely	6%	0%	5%	6%	6%	5%
Likely	9%	12%	9%	9%	8%	8%
Neutral	28%	40%	26%	27%	29%	28%
Unlikely	25%	24%	30%	22%	25%	25%
Very Unlikely	33%	24%	30%	37%	32%	34%
<b>Eliminate Services</b>						
Very Likely	10%	4%	8%	11%	14%	7%
Likely	17%	24%	17%	13%	21%	18%
Neutral	27%	24%	27%	31%	25%	27%
Unlikely	21%	24%	26%	18%	20%	19%
Very Unlikely	24%	24%	22%	27%	21%	29%
<b>Property Tax</b>						
Very Likely	18%	4%	10%	21%	16%	25%
Likely	22%	8%	21%	18%	30%	23%
Neutral	22%	40%	24%	27%	15%	19%
Unlikely	13%	12%	17%	13%	13%	10%
Very Unlikely	25%	36%	29%	22%	25%	23%

### 5.2.2 Variations by Home Ownership

Renters were slightly more neutral on de-annexation, municipal bankruptcy, and property tax. They were also less likely to oppose a property tax 30% vs. 42% homeowners.

<b>Support for Future Options</b>			
<b>Homeowner vs. Renter</b>			
	<i>All</i>	Homeowner	Renter
# of Responses	777	439	207
<b>Disincorporation</b>			
Very Likely	11%	13%	7%
Likely	12%	12%	14%
Neutral	30%	27%	35%
Unlikely	19%	18%	20%
Very Unlikely	28%	30%	24%
<b>De-annexation</b>			
Very Likely	12%	13%	8%
Likely	16%	16%	15%
Neutral	22%	18%	30%
Unlikely	20%	20%	21%
Very Unlikely	30%	33%	25%
<b>Municipal Bankruptcy</b>			
Very Likely	6%	6%	3%
Likely	9%	9%	9%
Neutral	28%	24%	36%
Unlikely	25%	25%	27%
Very Unlikely	33%	35%	25%
<b>Eliminate Services</b>			
Very Likely	10%	13%	7%
Likely	17%	18%	18%
Neutral	27%	25%	30%
Unlikely	21%	21%	22%
Very Unlikely	24%	24%	23%
<b>Property Tax</b>			
Very Likely	18%	17%	18%
Likely	22%	23%	24%
Neutral	22%	18%	27%
Unlikely	13%	12%	16%
Very Unlikely	25%	30%	14%

### 5.2.3 Variations by Location

Respondents **south of Peoria Avenue** are **more likely to support de-annexation** (39% compared to 21% residents north of Peoria) and are **less likely to support a property tax** (29% compared to 46% of respondents north of Peoria Avenue).

<b>Support for Future Options</b>			
<b>By Location</b>			
	All	North of Peoria Avenue	South of Peoria Avenue
# of Responses	777	411	220
<b>Disincorporation</b>			
Very Likely	11%	11%	12%
Likely	12%	13%	10%
Neutral	30%	28%	33%
Unlikely	19%	18%	20%
Very Unlikely	28%	30%	26%
<b>De-annexation</b>			
Very Likely	12%	7%	21%
Likely	16%	14%	18%
Neutral	22%	21%	24%
Unlikely	20%	21%	19%
Very Unlikely	30%	37%	18%
<b>Municipal Bankruptcy</b>			
Very Likely	6%	5%	6%
Likely	9%	11%	7%
Neutral	28%	27%	29%
Unlikely	25%	26%	24%
Very Unlikely	33%	31%	34%
<b>Eliminate Services</b>			
Very Likely	10%	11%	10%
Likely	17%	18%	18%
Neutral	27%	23%	32%
Unlikely	21%	21%	21%
Very Unlikely	24%	27%	20%
<b>Property Tax</b>			
Very Likely	18%	20%	12%
Likely	22%	26%	17%
Neutral	22%	17%	28%
Unlikely	13%	13%	14%
Very Unlikely	25%	24%	29%

### 5.2.4 Variations by Length of Residency

The longer the person has lived in Youngtown, the less likely they are to support de-annexation as an option. Sixty-two percent (62%) of respondents who have lived in Youngtown 10-14 years, 73% of residents who have lived in Town 15-24 years, and 63% of those who have lived in Youngtown more than 25 years are unlikely or very unlikely to support de-annexation compared to 40% of those who have lived in Town less than one year. Also, those who have lived in Youngtown more than 25 years are the most unlikely to support disincorporation as an option (39% very unlikely to support compared to 28% for the group). The most likely to support a property tax are residents who have lived in Youngtown 15-24 years (27% very likely to support) compared to residents who have lived in Youngtown 14 years for which only 10% are very likely to support a property tax.

Support for Future Options by Length of Residency								
Age	All	< 1 Yr	1-4 Yrs	5-9 Yrs	10-14 Yrs	15-24 Yrs	25 Yrs or More	Non-Resident
# of Responses	777	56	186	182	100	70	41	60
<b>Disincorporation</b>								
Very Likely	11%	12%	9%	9%	15%	14%	10%	7%
Likely	12%	11%	15%	12%	13%	11%	7%	12%
Neutral	30%	30%	37%	29%	20%	24%	29%	35%
Unlikely	19%	21%	18%	18%	20%	20%	15%	20%
Very Unlikely	28%	25%	22%	32%	32%	30%	39%	27%
<b>De-annexation</b>								
Very Likely	12%	12%	15%	15%	7%	3%	5%	5%
Likely	16%	14%	17%	20%	15%	6%	12%	22%
Neutral	22%	34%	26%	19%	16%	19%	20%	30%
Unlikely	20%	20%	20%	19%	18%	26%	22%	23%
Very Unlikely	30%	20%	22%	27%	44%	47%	41%	20%
<b>Municipal Bankruptcy</b>								
Very Likely	6%	4%	5%	4%	7%	9%	5%	5%
Likely	9%	9%	10%	9%	9%	10%	5%	2%
Neutral	28%	30%	32%	25%	26%	23%	29%	32%
Unlikely	25%	25%	29%	24%	27%	24%	15%	22%
Very Unlikely	33%	32%	24%	37%	31%	34%	46%	40%
<b>Eliminate Services</b>								
Very Likely	10%	4%	11%	14%	11%	9%	7%	3%
Likely	17%	27%	20%	14%	17%	20%	12%	10%
Neutral	27%	25%	29%	26%	24%	19%	29%	40%
Unlikely	21%	21%	20%	21%	22%	23%	15%	22%
Very Unlikely	24%	23%	19%	24%	26%	30%	37%	25%
<b>Property Tax</b>								
Very Likely	18%	20%	10%	23%	14%	27%	12%	23%
Likely	22%	20%	24%	19%	30%	23%	32%	13%
Neutral	22%	25%	24%	24%	15%	17%	12%	28%
Unlikely	13%	5%	19%	11%	16%	6%	15%	12%
Very Unlikely	25%	30%	24%	24%	25%	27%	29%	23%

### 5.3 Other suggestions for the future direction of Youngtown

Survey participants submitted more than 300 suggestions for improving Youngtown and its future direction. A review of the comments indicates a high level of polarity among residents. There is no clear direction. Some want to keep the town and police department and others want to disincorporation or contract with Sheriff's Office for police protection. Some like the town management and elected officials, others want to fire the town manager and replace the council and Mayor. Some support a tax and others think taxes are already too high. Some like the young family lifestyle and others want to return to a retirement community.

The following is a summary of the common themes and illustrative comments. A full list of the comments and suggestions received to question 12 is located in the Appendix.

#### Proposed New Programs and Services

- Public transportation similar to SCAT or Tempe and Scottsdale Trolley. Also need taxi service.
- More social/community events
- New community facilities/amenities such as more parks, community garden and playground equipment
- Recreational/youth amenities: skate park, racquetball, tennis courts, swimming pool
- Partner with Peoria, El Mirage and Glendale (i.e. swimming lessons, community center access, etc.) to provide additional services to Youngtown residents without the full cost to the town
- Community classes such as woodworking
- Dog Park (Some consider a great idea – others think it is a waste of money)
- Do not add new programs and services until economy recovers

#### Improve Town and Existing Programs and Facilities

- Better maintenance of existing parks, clean the duck pond and keep restrooms open longer
- Street Improvements such as better and brighter street lights and speed bumps as well as complete sidewalks
- Better and brighter lights on streets and highways and apt. buildings
- Clean up the Town

#### Reduce/Eliminate Town Services

- Don't need parks or the lake and should close restrooms
- Do not need new street lights
- Eliminate the court, street sweeper, maintenance, code compliance, public works (sell property), library, ESL classes
- No new capital improvements including sidewalks, fire flow and alley pavement
- Contract out non-essential services
- 4-day work week
- Suspend fun activities
- Keep Only Priority Services such as police, library, building and code enforcement, street and sanitation

### Code Enforcement

- Eliminate code enforcement
- Enforce codes, clean up properties on occupied houses, and make the old Youngtown more presentable to potential buyers
- Sustain affordability of housing while maintaining and enforcing code to better quality standards of appearances, etc.
- Code enforcement to eliminate excess trash. Building appearances, and property maintenance. Too many vehicles in one property (excess vehicles have to park on street and yards give appearance of car lot and junk yard)
- Noise restrictions needs to be enforced
- Some of the properties are very run down. Codes should be enforced. People are too poor or too old to maintain their homes they should be able to get help
- More leniency towards code enforcement and restrictions

### Reduce Size and Cost of Town Government and Management

- Eliminate town manager
- Reduce town management and number of employees
- Pay cuts and reduce number of employees and benefits
- New mayor and town council
- Eliminate pay and reduce size of town council
- Run town like a business

### Disincorporation – Become a Part of Maricopa County

- Let county take over
- In my opinion, the easiest option is to simply become unincorporated like Sun City.
- If the Town cannot support itself...raising taxes is NOT the solution...drop back and become a part of the county again. STOP spending money we must all revisit a balanced future
- I think any disincorporation move would be premature.

### De-annexation – Annexed by another Jurisdiction

- Divide Youngtown – North of Peoria to Sun City or El Mirage, south of Peoria to Peoria
- Allow El Mirage or Surprise to annex the new part of Youngtown along Olive Avenue as it should have never been a part of Youngtown at all.
- De-annexation of Young-Agua Fria area only
- Support de-annexation to Peoria but not El Mirage
- De-annexation would be just as bad (or worse) as new taxes

### Property Tax

- Raise the tax Youngtown is a fine small town
- I believe that a property tax would be a great idea.
- A small tax increase would be ok,
- Support Property Tax with Restrictions such as an end date and limitations on increases
- Pay property tax with a reduction in sales tax
- Willing to pay property tax if didn't have to pay HOA fee too

- I wouldn't be opposed to having a property tax if equitable and the town has a plan for future prospects of producing new income sources for the town
- Can't afford new taxes on fixed income
- Taxes are already too high
- Tax would devalue property values
- Will Pay Someone, Prefer to Pay Youngtown to keep our Town
- Have older part of Youngtown start paying property tax
- People that have children should have to pay more taxes
- People on disability should get a cut on taxes
- People in Agua Fria already pay most of their way. It's about time that the folks in the older part of town pay their fair share. But we want our town

### Use Volunteers

- Oversee Town Operations and Governance
- Volunteer Posse
- Volunteer Provide Services such as park maintenance, community activities, and library

### Business Development

- More economic development - Incentive to bring in more businesses
- More businesses (i.e. Grocery, restaurants, retail, anchor store) to increase tax revenue
- Lower Sales Tax
- Establish a more business friendly environment in Youngtown
- Move the Food Bank- trash maintenance in parking lot is not existent

### Youngtown Police Department

- Suggestions for improving the department include hiring more police, have a bicycle patrol, continue to monitor for drugs and better community relations
- Better stop sign and speeding enforcement
- Concerns about increase in drugs and graffiti
- Keep local police force
- Reduce Police Expenses by reducing size of force and number of vehicles
- Contract with Maricopa County Sherriff's Office for police protection

### Other Revenue Generation Ideas

- Create Town Co-op shopping center
- Town Market or flea market
- Create nonprofit organization
- Hold community fundraising events
- I would also suggest having El Mirage pay for part of our police force since they like to use them so much.
- For unkempt lawns, if you want new revenues, give a citation
- Citations with fines for unkempt lawns
- Have an annual Youngtown arts and crafts sale for holidays in an outdoor setting.
- Community activities to raise money

- Go historic. Ask Gov. Brewer for some of the Federal money she is sitting on. Revenue possibilities city sticker fee for each vehicle
- Create a Youngtown bank following the model set by North Dakota Extremely profitable
- Income production by making Ethanol.
- Bingo sounds good for a money maker
- Buy back our water company
- Demolish condemned/foreclosed houses in older parts of Youngtown and sell the land to developers
- Youngtown should increase the 'Rental Property Tax' on single family homes from the current rate to 10% or more
- Increase the sales tax
- Our town could be making good profits just on tickets given to speeders
- Use some of the land we have available to maximize the town's income and offset the deficit we will be facing
- Use community gardens produce to sell as fresh and organic to the public
- Annex any land possible
- Institute social pet licensing fees

### Resident Participation

- Would the town have a brainstorming meeting only? Just to put ideas out there? You have so many people to draw from in the community
- Ask advice from other small towns not only in Arizona but in other states around the country. Act as an ambassador and communicate
- Get people more involved
- More communication between neighbors
- All work together
- The city needs input and assistance by all

### Ride Out the Storm

- Focus on minimal projects and safety in order to make the existing money last longer
- Cut all frills (put on hold) until our economy levels out
- Do not eliminate jobs/services for short term fix. We need to come up with a long term fix
- With the economy so uncertain in the U.S. and the world, I think it would be wise to wait and see what the next 18-24 months hold for the future and base our decisions for the town on that.
- Believe in the future. Ride this storm out 3 years, and things will improve.

## 6.0 Comment from Town Hall and Community Meetings

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To create a community dialogue and encourage residents to talk to each other about the future of their community, the Town hosted two Speak Up! Town Hall meetings (September 10 and 19) and a special meeting with business owners and operators (September 20.) Speak Up! Youngtown was also discussed during the September meeting of the Agua Fria Homeowners Association meeting.

GCI staff also participated in other community events such as the Jam Session, Sing a Long, Compass Bible church events, and Methodist church potluck. More than 250 people attended these events, and their comments were recorded. The following is a summary of the comments, and a complete list is included in the appendix.

### 6.1 Community Pride

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During the meetings, both new and long-time residents, both old and young people expressed the need for the residents to come together as a community and get involved to solve the challenges facing Youngtown in the future.

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*We lost our pride, human responsibility, pride of ownership, where is our pride?*

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*I am sick of hearing Youngtown is trash—still love my neighbors! Stand up in civil way not to let everything go.*

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### 6.2 You Get What You Pay For

Meeting participants discussed whether or not residents understand they are going to have to pay someone for local services. The money to operate the police department, light the street lights, maintain parks and streets, operate the library, and all of the other services comes from the people. With declining state shared revenues and lack of future Federal grant funds, the residents and business are the only source of revenue available to operate the Town.

As stated by some, the businesses are an important part of the Town, but they can't carry the full costs of the services.

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*I live in older part of YT, we have always had "free ride" – we need to start paying.*

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### 6.3 Property Tax Discussion

A majority of the discussions during the meetings was related to whether or not a property tax was a viable option for the community. People expressed concern about the increased costs and impact of increased taxes on the community. Some residents stated no matter which option is taken, sooner or later, the residents will have to pay a property tax to some jurisdiction, and they prefer it be to Youngtown. Others suggested the Town look for other

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*Property Tax will scare people off; increasing number of rental property and renters.*

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*Concerns about previous election for sale tax, no one campaigned for the tax and long term effects were not communicated.*

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opportunities to generate revenue such as Town-owned business ventures.

### 6.4 Keep Local Law Enforcement

Most meeting participants felt it was important to keep a local police department, and some expressed concern about the impact the recent cuts are having on the department and the safety of the community and officers. One resident felt a volunteer Sheriff Posse would be a more cost effective solution, but most stated they did not want to contract with the Maricopa County Sherriff's Office for police services.

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*I commend your town and police department. You have good leadership. Do not give this up.*

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### 6.5 Provide More Detailed Information

Several residents asked for more detailed information on how much of a property tax is needed and how much it will cost each homeowner. Other information requested included:

- Comparison of local sales taxes by jurisdiction
- Details on what services would be eliminated or cut back with no new funding

Residents suggested publishing this information in the newspaper and looking for other ways to share the information with the residents.

# Appendix

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1. Survey Instrument
2. Question 1: Why did you choose to live in Youngtown?
3. Question 2: What do you value about living in Youngtown?
4. Question 12: Other suggestions for the future direction of Youngtown
5. Comments from Town Hall and Community Meetings
6. Town Hall Presentation
7. Flyer
8. News Articles



The Town of Youngtown is at a crossroads. During the last five years, the Town has grown to over 6,000 residents and now has an average age of 37 years. This growth and transition to a younger, family oriented community, combined with a continued decline in state shared revenues, has put a strain on our resources. We have taken action to reduce expenses, but still the Town is unable to maintain a base level of services without using money in the savings account.

***At the existing level of service and without any new revenue, we will deplete the Town's savings account in approximately three years.***

For the last year, we have been discussing options for our future and have identified five possible options each with a different impact to you. To better understand what is important to you and to proactively address our revenues, we have launched a two-week community conversation about the Town's future.

Please take a few minutes to tell us why Youngtown is important to you and consider which of the five options you are willing to support. In addition to this survey, residents may attend the following meetings to talk about our future. All of the meetings will be held in the Youngtown Clubhouse, 12033 Clubhouse Square.

- **Council Meeting - Thursday, September 15, 6 p.m.**
- **Town Hall - Monday, September 19, 6 p.m.**

Thank you for speaking up!  
**Mayor Michael LeVault**

**THIS SURVEY CAN BE COMPLETED ONLINE -- GO TO [WWW.YOUNGTOWNAZ.ORG](http://WWW.YOUNGTOWNAZ.ORG)**

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**1. Why did you choose to live in Youngtown? Select all that apply.**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Safe, quiet and comfortable neighborhoods      | <input type="radio"/> Historical significance of the community |
| <input type="radio"/> Friendly people who have vitality for life     | <input type="radio"/> Affordable housing                       |
| <input type="radio"/> Close proximity to work                        | <input type="radio"/> Close to family and friends              |
| <input type="radio"/> Close proximity to sports/shopping/restaurants | <input type="radio"/> Other; please specify                    |
- 

**2. What do you value most about living in Youngtown?**

3. How often do you or someone in your household use the services or attend the events listed below?

	Frequently	Occasionally	Seldom	Never
Library	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Town Park(s)- Greer, Uribe, Schliefer, Beck Remembrance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Special Event(s) GAIN, Winter Event	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Read Village Reporter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ESL (English as Second Language) Classes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Historical Museum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Town website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Called the police	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. How important is it to you that the Town of Youngtown provides the following services?

	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
Street maintenance and repair	<input type="radio"/>				
Street lighting	<input type="radio"/>				
Maintenance of alleys	<input type="radio"/>				
Park maintenance	<input type="radio"/>				
Police services	<input type="radio"/>				

5. How interested would you be in using the following NEW services and programs?

	Very Interested	Interested	Neutral	Uninterested	Very Uninterested
More park amenities	<input type="radio"/>				
Transit service such as bus and dial-a-ride	<input type="radio"/>				
Youth activities	<input type="radio"/>				
Dog park	<input type="radio"/>				
Community garden	<input type="radio"/>				
New community classes (recreation, sports, computer, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>				

6. How important is local control of Youngtown to you? Local control includes the ability to elect council members and a Mayor and maintain Town staff to make local decisions on providing services to Youngtown residents.

- Very Important
- Important
- Neutral
- Unimportant
- Very Unimportant

7. The Town currently has enough money to operate for approximately three years. To be sustainable, the Town must obtain new revenues or consider a decision to greatly reduce services and/or no longer be a Town. How likely are you to support the following options?

	Very Likely	Likely	Neutral	Unlikely	Very Unlikely
<b>Disincorporation</b> - Become a resident of Maricopa County under the control of the Board of Supervisors.	<input type="radio"/>				
<b>De-annexation</b> - Be annexed by a neighboring community (El Mirage or Peoria) and become a resident of that community governed by their council and staff.	<input type="radio"/>				
<b>Municipal bankruptcy</b> - Town continues to operate with no changes until bankrupt. Maricopa County Board of Supervisors would assume control of the community.	<input type="radio"/>				
<b>Eliminate Services</b> - Eliminate or greatly reduce current services by closing facilities and make decision about future at a later date.	<input type="radio"/>				
<b>Property tax</b> - Pay a new property tax to sustain the Town of Youngtown and local delivery of existing and new services	<input type="radio"/>				

8. Do you have any other suggestions for the future direction of Youngtown? If so, please list below.

9. Where do you live?

- North of Peoria Avenue
- South of Peoria Avenue
- Don't live in Youngtown

**10. What is your age?**

- 0 - 24
- 25 - 39
- 40 - 54
- 55 - 69
- Over 70

**11. How long have you lived in Youngtown?**

- Less than 1 year
- 1 - 4 years
- 5 - 9 years
- 10 - 14 years
- 15 - 24 years
- 25 or more years
- Don't live in Youngtown

**12. Do you own or rent the home you are living in?**

- Homeowner
- Renter
- Don't live in Youngtown

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***OPTIONAL***

*If you would like to be added to the Town's email and mailing list to receive updated information on our future, please provide your contact information below:*

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return your completed survey to one of the locations below:**

- Town Hall, 12030 Clubhouse Square, Youngtown
- Youngtown Library, 12035 Clubhouse Square, Youngtown
- Ace Hardware, 11125 Arizona Avenue, Youngtown
- 4 Paws Animal Rescue, 11129 W Michigan, Youngtown
- Brenda's Kitchen, 13200 N 113th Ave, Ste 4, Youngtown
- Compass Bank, 12026 N 111th Avenue, Youngtown

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*For more information on the five options for our future check out the fact sheet on the Town's website: [www.avondaleaz.org](http://www.avondaleaz.org).*

## Question 1: Why did you choose to live in Youngtown?

### Other Responses (*verbatim*)

#### Safe Neighborhood/Small Town

- Quiet neighborhood (5)
- Used to be safe.....not any more
- It seemed like a great place to call home
- Limited crime
- Liked the neighborhood, perfect for our first home
- Safety
- Well patrolled
- Being able to walk at night and feel relatively safe
- I like the businesses on 111th and Alabama area - feels like a small town
- Hoped traffic was less than in Phoenix
- I like the pond with fish and ducks
- Love it here

#### Age Restricted Community

- Age-restricted community (13)
- No children
- Thought it was a retirement community.
- Ideal retirement facility (3)

#### Own Business/Work in Youngtown

- Purchase of a building for business purposes (2)
- Don't live here – a business owner (3)
- Work in Youngtown (3)
- I work in Youngtown for the Youngtown Shopping Center
- Husband worked for Pulte
- Great location for our business, located very close to Sun City, Sun City West, Surprise, Peoria and the West Valley
- Own a business in Town (2)
- Affordable commercial real estate
- Work in Youngtown but do not live here

#### Affordable Housing

- Affordable (3)
- Couldn't afford any other house in the valley (Five times more than they were worth and Youngtown was three times more than it was worth)
- Purchased our condo in 1980 for father from NH to have in winter, moved permanently in 2004
- Affordable housing within Peoria School District boundaries
- No HOA
- New house built
- Liked the house
- Bought house from friend
- Home is worth half what is owed now when bubble burst
- No HOA, all ages
- Inherited home (5)
- Alley access

### Proximity to Services/Work/Church/Freeway

- Close to Luke AFB
- Close to medical services (4)
- Close to church we attend in Youngtown (5)
- Close to Loop 101 (2)
- Close to Sun City
- Close to shopping
- Peoria school district (4)

### Assisted/Independent Living Options

- Baptist Village (9)
- Needed independent living
- Assisted living Ventana Winds (2)

### Low/No Property Taxes

- Low property taxes (4)
- No property tax

### Previous Resident

- My family has owned our home for 26 years. We came back to live in a home we were not allowed to live in during the 80's because of children in the family.
- Lived here previously
- Grew up here since 1983

### Non-Resident

- Not a resident (8)
- Don't live in Youngtown – attend church in Youngtown (3)

### Dissatisfaction with Community

- Now, it's becoming a trashy Town, with young, white, trashy residents.
- Friendly, are you kidding?
- Need a grocery store
- Taxes getting to high for small Town
- Apartment too high in rent
- It used to be a safe quiet and comfortable place... no longer that way
- Like living here except for drugs, speed dealer comes here at Eddie's window
- Thought it would be a great place to live until the end, but I'm ready to move to retirement community

### Other

- Moved from out of state
- Familiar with area, used to live in Peoria
- Only place we could find
- November - April weather (2)
- Girlfriend made me

## Question 2: What do you value about living in Youngtown?

### Responses (*verbatim*)

#### People/Community

- Friendly people, family, friends (55)
- People watch out for each other (4)
- Most residents enjoy their privacy and try not to meddle in others affairs
- I value the small town feeling where people are outside, walk to neighbors' houses and all people talk to each other
- It's not a do undue others before they do undue you but it is going the other way
- People watch out for each other but keep to themselves
- The feeling that the small things to matter and availability to get things done rather quickly.
- Interconnectedness of the people (3)
- The interconnectedness of the people. We work together and can even grow in this area
- Not a lot of trouble makers/young kids looking for trouble and "wanna be" gangsters
- Residents mind their own business, not intrusive on neighbors
- Friendly people and peaceful community (2)
- I consider two aspects in conjunction a safe place to live that has affordable housing. Without the two together neither would be worth living in any town. I searched for a while and decided Youngtown has the best of both worlds
- Dog-friendly
- Community pride (2)
- Community not city
- I value the look and feel of Youngtown. I value the local businesses and gladly support them. I value the neighborhood
- Glad all the neighbors look out for each other
- The neighbors are one of a kind, everyone knows everyone, our kids are able to go outside and play and all of the neighbors hang out, having this bond is very rare

#### Police

- Safe (92)
- I value the Youngtown Police Department (12)
- Low crime (8)
- Youngtown has its own Police Department (9)
- Police presence/response time (12)
- Used to value the safety until the decline of the economy and the seriously shocking decision of my fellow neighbors to vote against the police finance issue a little while back
- Maintain the balance of keeping a watchful eye on their neighbors in order to keep a secure and safe
- Our own Police Department and not Sheriff's Dept. I lived where they covered and it was a disaster. It's nice to have that piece of mind
- Prompt police service, paramedics also
- Close proximity of police department. I sometimes don't feel a quick response if it's a problem that you went to report on the weekend
- Pro-active police department as opposed to MCSO deputies in Sun City who constantly rotate around and never learn the community
- Work hard with less pay and every time there's a cut they get hurt
- If it came down to losing our police force, we feel it would be disastrous to the community.
- When I worked, I did evening shift work as a nurse. Our police dept. knows when I would come home and often there would be someone at the corner to make sure I got home safe. One night they had someone down. There was squad car in front on my condo in sight on my back door when I went into my home safely, it took off. That is something you don't in a large city
- Youngtown police department that was the best. Plenty of officer's, they worked hard to keep the criminals out. Now however, we have 1 officer per shift with no backup. The criminals are moving back in and

Youngtown is rapidly turning into the ghetto. Relying on the MCCSO for any assistance is like believing in Santa...a nice dream. It's not safe here anymore and I'm looking to move my family out as soon as I can afford to. It makes me sad. I loved living here; I have put a lot of money into my home...all for nothing... now I can't wait to get out. It's no longer safe, we have virtually no PD. The drug dealers, tweakers, gang bangers are all moving in. So very sad for those who can't get out. What we're people thinking when they voted out our Police?!

- When we bought here, it was an age-restricted community; the needs of the community were few. A small police force was all that was necessary. But unfortunately all that changed. Now, graffiti is everywhere, some crime is evident, and Youngtown has become a very noisy community
- Not infested w/gangs, convenient to library and police are very nice. Love being close to Sheriff Department
- NOT having Maricopa County Sheriff's office
- At first it was a safe area. Since we have lived here though our home was broken into, car was broken into and another car vandalized. It's still not that bad but it is getting worse

### Aesthetics/Environment

- Pretty area/View/Aesthetics (9)
- I like the citrus trees
- Open space (4)
- Wide streets (2)
- Great for walking (2)
- Clean air and less noise
- Clean (7)
- Comfortable (8)
- Great for a walk (4)
- The river bottom on the West side of Town

### Satisfaction with Youngtown

- Can't imagine living elsewhere
- I like the area/Youngtown (8)
- Everything
- I greatly appreciate the fact you go the public for input
- It's a place I would call home for many years to come.
- Riding bike around Town
- Quality of housing and lifestyle
- 10 years ago, I was told not to buy in Youngtown so ended up in Sun City. I know that Youngtown has improved in these last years. I look forward to your future
- A place of peace to retire in
- Peace of mind
- Retro-neighborhood
- We are disabled and so are many others here - we feel like we fit in here
- I love the neighborhood, the small shops. We have lived here almost two years and have loved it

### Property Tax

- Not what was offered last time when you can raise the tax without any consent of the people. I really don't want to be annexed by Peoria or anyone else.
- I have lived here for 11 years and I really hope that we can figure this out. I would not mind some sort of a property tax but with strict limits and guidelines not to raise it, just because you want to buy something

### Real Estate

- My home (5)
- Good lot size
- I like living in the Agua Fria Ranch Subdivision (4)

- Newer neighborhood
- Convenience of apartment living in a duplex
- Baptist Village (4)
- Recent move , have not lived here long (2)
- Not sure yet.... it's a test and winter escape
- At this time I am only a seasonal resident, but will be living there full time in the future

### Business

- Brenda's Kitchen (2)
- I like the businesses... that stay here... and try to use them whenever possible
- We moved to Youngtown in 1988 because of all the above. We sold our home and moved to S.C. when Youngtown lost its retirement status. I still own and operate my business in Youngtown, have been here about 18 years. I was very active in the community (events, etc.) when I lived here
- I have offered my "save your life - wilderness survival skills" to neighborhood youth and there has been good interest
- QT is a good addition
- We value the food bank!!
- We own a business here and value it for central location to Sun City, Surprise, Wadell, Glendale, and Peoria
- Quiet place to do business, not busy streets, just a nice friendly location, somewhat off the beaten path, but once our clients discovered that we are here, they continue to return

### Town Services/Government

- Library (4)
- My music at the Clubhouse
- I don't like restrooms at the parks are NOT available in the afternoons or weekends when we are actually able to use the park
- Parks/Lake (12)
- My voice is heard
- Accessible government (5)
- Street lighting do not need new
- If the library were open later I would use that more often. If we had a rec center with wifi internet, I'd gladly pay for membership and use it.
- Will some of the services include raising special kids?
- I like the Town, but Town can't afford itself/services
- Used to Volunteer at Historical Museum
- The service of ESL classes is very important; Town is concerned about their community (2)
- Good Town government (5)

### Dissatisfaction with Youngtown

- It was a good community at first, then came the renters and H.U.D. housing
- Neighbors are not with communication, friendship compared to my living places in the military 23 yrs. and not like my 24 yrs. in Grand Junction, CO
- Used to be quiet
- Used to value more. Now too many kids, too many dogs, too many dead trees. Dead tree enforce the code compliance with fines, good revenue
- Now there is not much value to living in Youngtown
- A lot of crazies in the area
- Used to be a Place to live. Do not believe the age states
- You have the council and its management only considered yourselves. You cut programs and raise taxes and business fees, but you never took a decrease anyone's salaries. Instead you give raises, when Americans are losing their jobs and homes, leadership starts from the top, you give up as others had to do to keep a job,

but Town Manager Robinson, Mayor LeVault and the rest of staff and council voted to give a raise, that is poor leadership, and now you want the residents to pay for your bills. NO!!

- Right now nothing (9)

### Family

- Good to raise family and friendly neighborhood
- Lack of traffic on our street, so the kids can play
- Neighborhoods for kids
- Family-oriented
- Great place for my kids to grow
- Younger neighborhood
- I actually am quite disappointed I didn't look into going into a bigger city to buy my house. There are no community pools in Youngtown and not really any kid activities

### HOA-Related/Town Codes

- Good HOA (2)
- I would never live in an area that has an HOA because I value my privacy and right to do what I want as long as it does not infringe on anyone else's rights. When I purchased this home six years ago, I felt that the price was reasonable. Unfortunately the value of it has declined dramatically but I understand this has happened everywhere else also
- I wanted to have a HOA so the neighborhood would always look nice.
- No HOA (2)
- Reasonable HOA
- Lots of open space can have RV's on property Can hang out laundry.
- When I came to live in Youngtown, it was a lovely place to live. Now property is neglected and no longer up kept
- Having our own code enforcement
- What I value most about living in Youngtown is that neighbors are nice and they keep their yards nice
- We can have a small vegetable garden and can use "solar drying" - hang laundry outside if we choose!
- Code enforcement care if clean or not for alleys
- Fewer regulations than most other places around
- Place to park our RV = large back yard (2)

### Small town community

- Quiet and peaceful neighborhoods (124)
- Small town atmosphere (82)
- Feeling of close-knit community
- Slower pace
- The small town feel in a big part of the city
- Being a "Town" and not a crowded city where nobody knows anybody or has pride in where they live
- Less traffic (7)

### Age

- Moved here because it used to be a retirement community (2)
- Not many children
- A great place to live until we lost our age restriction in the 1990's. Wish I would have sold my house then and moved elsewhere
- At 90 years of age having independent apartment in Arizona Baptist Retirement Center
- Not a senior only 55 Town
- Senior community/Senior services

### Affordability/Economics

- As we are Senior Citizens, we value the ability to live comfortably and affordably
- Affordable housing (18)
- No property tax/Low taxes (13)
- No association fees (2)
- Low income rate, cheaper auto insurance
- At present it is the affordable housing. Can't say I venture past Peoria into the older sections of Youngtown
- Why not tax "old Youngtown" at the same rate Agua Fria is taxed at?
- Raise the rental tax, change the tenant to revenue. Raise city tax.
- No condo fees
- A house that's paid off
- Cheap rent

### Location

- Close to everything/small town but away from the hustle and bustle/big city (17)
- Close proximity to Freeways (3)
- Good location/Convenience (10)
- Close to work, entertainment, shopping, medical services (31)
- Close to family and friends (5)
- Close to church (10)
- Within walking distance to the volunteer opportunities I enjoy.
- Being close to Sun City (4)
- Love the location, being close to the lake, great feel
- Close to preferred bus line (2)
- Close to schools/Peoria School District (2)
- For our business it is an easy to find location and great to be around many other businesses.
- Being near my family, esp. my mother who is 80 yrs. old.
- The Dysart School stinks!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- It's in Arizona - native of Tolleson

### Other

- Annex to Peoria (2)
- Historical
- Drive our golf cart
- Legally blind, not able to drive

## Question 12: Do you have any other suggestions for the future direction of Youngtown? If so, please list below.

### **Proposed New Programs and Services**

#### **Public Transportation**

- Access to affordable transportation for the seniors and disabled, not just for medical but shopping, banking, something similar to what SCAT was. For us Youngtown people, I had served on the board of SCAT for their last 4 years. 2 years as vice president. And willing to help in any way for this purpose.
- Community should have public taxis
- Investigate possibility of a voucher system or trolley similar to the one in Tempe and Scottsdale

#### **More Social/Community Events (1)**

- Meeting rooms accessible at community center for residence
- To build neighborhood rapport try a sunset/sunrise bike ride and tour of our parks. I don't even know where half of them are
- More things to bring people out of their house and help with

#### **New Community Facilities/Amenities**

- More parks (5)
- Community Garden
- Add on to existing parks with playground equipment

#### **Recreational/Youth Amenities**

- Would like to see more services for kids (2)
- Skate park would be great, more community
- I would like to see more recreation facilities for example: Racquetball, tennis, dog park
- Municipal Swim Pool Rec center i.e. Sun City Rec Centers
- More sports for children and other activities to play a sport we have to pay out of area frees because nothing else offered in the town for them to do
- Need safe lighted places for kids/youth to play ball or skateboard etc.
- Partner with bordering towns for services to reduce costs. Peoria, El Mirage and Glendale all have a wide array of services that it would be nice to take part in since they aren't offered in our town (i.e. swimming lessons, community center access, etc.) A partnership would provide additional services to Youngtown residents without the full cost to the town

#### **Community Classes**

- Woodworking classes would be good

#### **Dog Park**

- Dog Parks!!
- Dog parks should be the responsible for the dog owners...no town money should be used. I have 3 indoor cats I'm responsible for them. Youngtown is already a dog park with the dogs running loose and all the barking with owners not responsible and now you want to reward them with a park. If you have a dog that's your responsibility not the towns
- Sorry Peg dog park great idea just not right now
- El Mirage has a dog park near Youngtown that is seldom, or very lightly, used. Buy an option or lease
- Cut services no need for a dog park
- Pet park would be another great way to get our community together
- The service mentioned earlier, such as doggie yard is not the responsibility of government, but individual dog owner

#### **Do not add new programs and services until economy recovers (3)**

- Eliminate library (2)
- Forget about dog parks, additional park amenities, youth activities...for now
- No new services, we apparently can't afford the ones we have now
- Quit adding all those new services people don't use

## **Improve Town and Existing Programs and Facilities**

### **Existing Parks**

- Keep restrooms in the park open later hours (until dark) and on weekends (4)
- Clean up the duck pond (2)
- Finish the park at the north side of Agua Fria ranch: parking lot, out building, trees (same as other)
- Stock the pond with fish
- I'd rather see the 'park maintenance' funds go to making the pond like the original from the 50's which was a swimming and boating place for entertainment
- Plant shade trees and make the park off Connecticut a 'real' place to go to. The trees are not for shade, they block the view there are hardly and benches and it's uninviting. Similar to the pond
- Desert park needs work

### **Street Improvements**

- Better and brighter lights on streets and highways and apt. buildings
- Maintain present facilities
- Needs a speed bump on Connecticut and a storm drain. Signage is impeded by trees and shrubbery.
- Finish the sidewalk please

### **Clean up the Town**

- Be quiet and safe!
- Neighborhoods also to clean up around there properties
- Try to reclaim. Amount of empty houses in Youngtown, also empty buildings that reflect the city has wasted away and is no longer a desire to live in
- I would like to see the parking lot by Compass (used car lot) area be cleaned up. Maybe plants/trees, facelift? Same across the street - just a stark area. The park, library (nice one, by the way) and other business areas are tidy and upgraded... would be nice to carry that on

## **Reduce/Eliminate Town Services**

### **Existing Park Facilities**

- Really don't need a lake or park
- Get rid of green grass patch that doesn't get used transform into Dog Park/ splash pad that will be used. (Off Peoria btw old/ new young) get rid of trees/ bushes and maintenance on Agua Fria
- Close the restroom in the parks. That way you would not have to replace them all the time. Let people go home
- I would eliminate non-essential services, such as your more park amenities
- We really do not need so many the parks to maintain in such a small town. All homes in Youngtown have town have back yards
- Stop wasting money on restrooms

### **Street Lighting**

- Don't add services such as the new SLID (3)
- I currently work outside of the Youngtown area but have lived there since 2006. I enjoy the town as it reminds me of a small town I grew up in back in Michigan. I do have a question about the proposed street lights. If we are broke or soon to be why are we spending money to improve lights? I like the fact that I can sit out in my back yard and see the stars instead of having it lit up like a baseball park. Please reconsider street lights!! We don't need more or to spend the money on more.
- The newly proposed street lights are a waste of money. We have lights on most to all the streets, there aren't enough people out late to warrant the cost of new lights on all the streets

### **Existing Services to be Eliminated**

- Cut/close court (4)
- Eliminate the street sweeper (3)
- Cut unessential offices (3)
- Reduce money wasted on high expenses (2)

- No capital improvements at this time (2)
- Contract out non-essential services
- Eliminate maintenance department and code compliance
- Sell property on Wisconsin Ave
- Reduce and close public works and sell the property
- Close the library; we already have a Maricopa County Library Branch at 107 Ave & Peoria
- Stop unnecessary services used only to appropriate jobs to certain people i.e. street washing, sweeping
- End the ESL program
- Possibly turn over library to County system
- Do you really believe GAIN and ESL and a dog park and a historical museum are really necessary during this time??? Now granted, savings may be minimal on those projects alone but the fact of the matter is that every PENNY must be found wherever it can be found. We all have to live with less revenue than we did before the bubble - what the town government is suffering is NO DIFFERENT than what it's residents are suffering - trust me
- NO thoughts of increasing services and programs during this period!!!!
- Eliminate services other than Public Works and Police/Safety Dept.
- Stop any unnecessary project which residents don't want i.e. street lighting, water flow
- Do not put in sidewalks, we are doing fine without them, and to save money for parks and library
- Get rid of lawn service for parks let public works do it they did before
- Don't pave the alleys again
- Volunteer Fire Department

### **Existing Services to be Reduced**

- Operate the log cabin center fewer hours if you must
- Go to a 4 day work week for all personnel except Police Dept.
- Some decrease in services
- Suspend City fun activities that cost money until we get back on our feet

### **Keep Only Priority Services**

- Prioritize services/Focus on essential services (2), cut less important
- Look for options to cut from budget
- Bare bones of services
- Look at the basic services that are needed for the time being and as the economy improves services can be added
- Loss of parks would be sad
- We all are feeling the effects of the recession that seems to have no end in sight we all have to tighten our belt buckles
- Keep Police department and library and contract everything else out
- Basic services, such as sewer, electric, water and roads need to be maintained by a body other than individuals, such as homeowners. Anything beyond this is not for government to tackle and should be left to the individual to obtain on their own
- Keep building and code enforcement, fire and Police Street and sanitation
- Live within our means (we have to)
- It looks like to me, Youngtown is in the same boat as our government is in, spending more money than taking in. We have to live within be means. (making tough choices)
- Stick to the basics (police, maintenance of streets & alleys). Stop with the "nice to have" including the lighting improvements
- Reduce current services by closing facilities and maybe in the future things will be better, however the most important part of this is that we remain as Youngtown
- Focus on neighborhoods and police, cut unneeded programs
- Cut outsourcing of street maintenance
- Quit aspiring to "champagne taste on a beer budget"

## **Code Enforcement**

### **Eliminate Code Enforcement**

- Get rid of code enforcement - let public work take it (2)

### **Better Code Enforcement**

- Put parents responsible for damage done by kid's make people keep yards and street clean the law is for all not just a few
- Fine cars parked on the wrong side of the street
- Disgruntled on code enforcement policies. \$500 fine by the enforcement officers. Fell like they pick and choose on enforcement
- Enforce codes, clean up properties on occupied houses, and make the old Youngtown more presentable to potential buyers
- Sustain affordability of housing while maintaining and enforcing code to better quality standards of appearances, etc.
- Code enforcement to eliminate excess trash. Building appearances, and property maintenance. Too many vehicles in one property (excess Vehicles have to park on street and yards give appearance of car lot and junk yard
- Noise restrictions needs to be enforced
- Code inspectors are not applying the codes properly
- Issues with kids throwing stuff in pool. Speed bumps in the alley behind 112th Ave S. Tennessee
- Some of the properties are very run down. Codes should be enforced. People are too poor or too old to maintain their homes they should be able to get help

### **More leniency towards code enforcement and restrictions**

- Code enforcement is out of control (2)
- Need to stop harassing small businesses (selective enforcement)

## **Reduce Size and Cost of Town Government and Management**

### **Eliminate Town Manager**

- Get rid of gigantic bureaucracy e.g. \$90k + salary town manager all depts. management heavy
- Not have a town manager that would give more money to other departments
- Lloyce Robinson gets what she does to run a town of this size??????
- Fire City Manager & office & City employee. They are all way over paid and do not do their job
- Eliminate Town Manager
- As a small town, years ago we didn't have a town manager- now that the town is cutting back. This might be a good place to eliminate that position. That would save money and could be used someplace else.
- Release Robinson from her job and reduce the salary to about 42,000.00 and take the town clerks job and combine both as one. Hire a recent grad from a business college, can't do any worse than those there now
- Get rid of the Town Manager and save money to be used elsewhere.
- Eliminate town manager will save on salary
- Hire a town manager who will get off their rear and get out and find new sources of revenue for the town. Youngtown needs a professional town manager!
- Fire town manager
- The council and mayor and town manager's salaries are eating up the resources
- Get rid of vice mayor and town manager

### **Reduce Town Management and Cut Employees**

- City Proper Management- lay off workers (manager's not actual workers)
- Reduce management staff and their high salaries
- Eliminate some management and hire more workers increase mayors salary and responsibilities

### **Pay Cuts and Reduce Number of Employees and Benefits**

- Salary classifications and in line adjustments for staff
- Reduce staff and the existing salaries and benefits for staff

- Payroll must be SLASHED
- Reduce payroll for board and police
- employees that drive around the town all the time... waste time at Denny's talking with the manager for hours on end.... eliminate employee's that don't work
- Reduce pay to emp. 50%
- Furlough days, wage reduction of city government
- Reduce work week of town facilities. Pay cuts like every other citizen to reduce the huge portion of budget this has engulfed. Furlough days
- How does our town's employee salaries compare to other communities on a per resident basis? Does our town have too many employees? (Top heavy or over paid)
- Cut the fat in government wages and benefits-don't cut personnel that work hard like our police officers
- Maybe you people that work for Youngtown (all of you) need to not get a raise in salary to help the cause.
- I think we have too many chiefs doing jobs that could be done by someone else for a lot less money
- Review town government expenses; i.e. need for /compensation of town manager compensation of council members
- Pay cuts for town mayor and staff then, hire back the 5 police officers that were laid off or fired
- No overtime and double time weekend work pay

**New Mayor and Town Council**

- Get a new mayor, vice mayor and committee board (2)
- New town council! Quit this manipulation and start representing these problems truthfully
- Cut the town Council and put Mayor on no pay make it a low income job. The town wastes too much money. This City is 57 years old. We've had our problems in the past, but never to the point of discussing shutting down the whole City. What's the matter with the Mayor(s) and the Council Members to have let the City budget fall into such a state of disrepair? If you people are not smart enough to turn this situation around, then you should resign your posts
- Elect entire "New" Gov. from Mayor on down. No one from old regime. Especially Mayor Jack Duran
- Put honest people that are willing to serve instead of steal

**Eliminate Pay and Reduce Size of Town Council**

- Pay cut and benefits elimination for council and mayor
- Quit attending state brainwashing seminars
- Cut down the # of members on the Town Council
- Council - cut your own pay and benefits first
- Get rid of mayor (paid) and other officials that cost town money
- Fire the Vice Mayor. I know of no other city, in Arizona, that has a Vice Mayor. You would be saving a paycheck that could be paying bill for the Youngtown
- How much of a salary is the mayor pulling in for not even being a resident of Youngtown? I think that if he isn't even going to live here, that it should be a volunteer position
- Stop paying the mayor and council members so much
- Stop paying council
- Get rid of 2 council positions and vice mayor position. You should have done this before instead of eliminating police. They do vital jobs. If we incorporate with another town or the county, the elected politicians of this town will have to get real jobs instead of staying on the public dime! But #6 it is time to get rid of 3 elected positions of current and future "roaches"

**Run Town like a Business**

- Consult businessmen in Youngtown- start running town responsibly like a business not a government trough
- Spend money foolishly on things they don't need

**Disincorporation – Become a Part of Maricopa County**

**Support for Disincorporation**

- Let county take over (3)

- In my opinion, the easiest option is to simply become unincorporated like Sun City. We already pay for fire service from Sun City FD, trash from Parks & Sons, water/sewer services from AZAM
- Go under the County where management is already in place
- De annexation or un-incorporation will be the best decisions for the future
- Un-incorporation to become a county island would be the closest to what we have now with the MCSO serving the area and surrounding Sun City. I am in favor of either but definitely NOT being annexed by El Mirage
- Would like to see the town of Youngtown run by the county. The county services Sun City very well, with police protection, street maintenance, and all the while keeping property taxes very low
- If the Town cannot support itself...raising taxes is NOT the solution...drop back and become a part of the county again. STOP spending money we must all revisit a balanced future
- Submerge with Peoria and have Maricopa County Board of Supervisors control
- Well Youngtown doesn't offer fire/ trash or water services. Our police don't do much being short staffed. We don't even have a 911 dispatch that goes through county. We need to incorporate with Peoria or the county
- Also disband the city council & Mayor's offices have the Maricopa County Board of supervisor run the town. We already pay county taxes, and don't need new ones. End the Town Of Youngtown playing like a big player when in fact it is a small town

### **Opposition to Disincorporation**

- I think any disincorporation move would be premature. I believe that if Ali Bama and the 40-thieves (czars) are given the boot in 2012, the economy will almost immediately begin to turn around. Yes, I know that Youngtown's problems stem from revenues. But when the economy turns around and people are back to work, revenues will increase. The bottom line is that this recession is temporary. It's not going to last forever. We just need to weather it.
- Do something so under no one's control e.g. new country?

## **De-annexation – Annexed by another Jurisdiction**

### **Support de-annexation**

- Divide Youngtown – North of Peoria to Sun City, south of Peoria to Peoria (2)
- Allow El Mirage or Surprise to annex the new part of Youngtown along Olive Avenue as it should have never been a part of Youngtown at all.
- Annexation or un-incorporation will be the best decisions for the future
- I suggest from Peoria Ave south to Olive, to become a part of the City of Peoria. North of Peoria Ave, become a part of County or El Mirage
- I say annexation into another town or let the county take over. Sorry I don't have the sentimentalism for the town, but I believe that a lot of towns would be better off joining together to pool resources. As it stands now, every town maintains separate governmental entities that are duplicated at the county, state, and federal level. It's wasteful and we pay for it.
- De-annexation of Young-Agua Fria area only. Houses should have never been built there in the first place. Give that section to El Mirage or Peoria. Keep the original Youngtown together.
- Disincorporation/de-annexation sound great just hurry the process this town sucks big time

### **Support de-annexation to Peoria but not El Mirage**

- De-annexation to Peoria (13)
- If the decision to De-annex is selected it would be wise to be annexed by a successful neighboring community such as Peoria. It would be unwise to be annexed into a community with worse problems than us, such as El Mirage (2)
- I would just become part of Peoria not El Mirage
- Local stores don't want to be a part of El Mirage
- Become part of Peoria, we practically already are
- Joining with the City of Peoria would greatly help everyone
- Annexation by Peoria would be welcomed. I do not support many decisions made by the leadership of El Mirage, and annexation by El Mirage would be a negative. While supportive of the leadership of

Youngtown, the redundancy of officials and government services is not cost effective if the town could be absorbed by Peoria

- Let Peoria annex Youngtown, forget El Mirage. Too anti everything, including Luke Air Force Base and bad politicians
- It would be great for Youngtown to remain a small town; if enforcements on code violations (such as property up keep can be done) but without revenue, annex to Peoria would be better.
- Annex to Peoria or Glendale- we are so small with typical small town politics. Plus, then our kids (all kids) can attend better schools which are actually closer to our homes
- Being annexed by Peoria is preferable as my child is currently on a variance to go to a Peoria school
- I do not want to be annexed by El Mirage. It has a very poor reputation of being a rundown community and I do not want my property associated with it. I would be ok with Peoria though.
- Let Peoria govern Youngtown. It is no longer a retirement community

**Opposed to de-annexation**

- Being annexed by El Mirage would be a terrible decision (2)
- De-annexation would be just as bad (or worse) as new taxes
- You will be sorry if you go with El Mirage or Peoria and add property taxes

**Property Tax**

**Support Property Tax**

- Residents would pay more taxes to keep minimal services longer I believe
- I don't oppose property taxes- causes Youngtown probably have the cheapest taxes in the state.
- PROPERTY TAX!!
- Raise the tax Youngtown is a fine small town with a good police department and with good codes that are not being enforced if can remain a Youngtown, AZ. How rent -how tax you what we get - raise tax raise may be they who don't comply will move back to El Mirage
- I believe that a property tax would be a great idea. Hopefully other residents will be willing to pay for services
- A small tax increase would be ok, on a fixed income of only social security does not leave much for increases

**Support Property Tax with Restrictions**

- I would like to have a tax that ends when it is no longer needed. A specific date for the end of the tax would be needed to satisfy my desires. How much would the estimated taxes be per week?
- I would like to see a much needed property tax with a specific moratorium date for that tax. Should the state and county restore the funding that we've lost in the recent past, I would expect the property tax to end. All the other options listed above will require a tax hike of some type; I think we should keep it in house until it's no longer needed
- There is no clear way. This community like so many other communities across the United States is in the same state of affairs and no solution. If you could have a property tax without raising it at a moment's notice without the consent of the people I would support that. If it was a fixed amount and live within that budget. Or like the Fire dept. and access the home say 200.00 per year? Is that legal?
- I wish I could come up with ideas to increase revenue but I don't know what to do. If we go with a property tax please use the money wisely
- If the HOA was willing to disband and our money wasn't flowing there, I would consider a property tax to assist the city. So would most others in the Agua Fria Community I bet. The city is fully capable of maintaining the standards through zoning ordinances and those jobs and the fines and fees would be better off in the city's coffers. What does the HOA do for us? The city maintains the streets, lights, and park. You, Mr. Mayor, saw to that as HOA president. So aside from the landscaping crew (do we pay for that or the city?) all the HOA does is assess fees and fines
- I wouldn't be opposed to having a property tax if equitable and the town has a plan for future prospects of producing new income sources for the town. If this were not likely

- We need another bond election - this time off duty cops should be encouraged to canvas the city and we have to make a big all-out effort to let people know that Joe Araipo will run the show and won't respond in a timely manner. The last effort was half assed

**Opposed to Property Tax**

- No New Taxes! (2)
- Our property values have dropped to \$25,000; nothing to value property tax increase on. No new taxes on property
- My property is worth \$24,000. How can you suggest another new property tax? You must be kidding. We like the idea of being a separate town. We have been in library once. We also like the lower taxes
- Increase Property Tax and Decrease Sales Tax
- Too little too late, foreclosure has just begun on these 60 year old houses that have mortgages three times as much as they worth, with jobs being cut and social security cut, where are we supposed to come up with money for food, gas, utilities, must less a tax, most of the people living on my street are well over 40 living on a single income or both
- Property taxes are already too high and there is not much in return! Raising the taxes will bankrupt the people living here. Unfortunately due to the poor decision making of the Youngtown councils we are in this position. If necessary we should charge property taxes or find other ways that Youngtown services can generate income
- I think raising taxes would be a big mistake. Because of the economy, I am under water in my home and am unable to sell. I like it in the newer section of Youngtown, but if services were cut and the taxes were raised, I would consider letting my house go back to the bank. Having one more foreclosed house in Youngtown would not be healthy
- Does Not Support Property Tax
- In 2000, my taxes were \$270; by 2008 they were \$700. In comparison, my brother lives in North Peoria in a \$260K house and paid \$1500 in taxes in 2008. For 2011, his bill is \$928; mine is \$505. Now we are going to have school taxes added onto that bill. If the SLID is approved, that will be added as well. I will be paying a property tax bill close to or higher than his and I have a home that would sell for 1/4 or less than his. Folks examine property taxes when they look for a home. When they see they can live in a nice, newer area and pay the same or less property taxes, they won't move here to Youngtown in a 40-60 year old house
- Would devalue property prices
- It sounds like the council wants to raise taxes when my house is only worth \$32,000. I am retired and only make \$1000.00 a month. People in my situation will not have the money to pay higher taxes

**Will Pay Someone, Prefer to Pay Youngtown to keep our Town**

- Point out to home owners that they will end up paying a property tax, no matter what happens. Point out advantages of a small town, ability to meet with your personnel to express any concerns, act
- Feel that we need to have a property tax. We'll have one any way if we get annexed
- We need a property tax. If Peoria or El Mirage annexes us, I am sure the property tax would be higher
- If we as fellow neighbors like our town and the small-town feel of Youngtown we should understand it will be worth a tax investment for the future of the town we love and raise our families in
- Need to have a property tax which is going to sustain the infrastructure of the town. Keep the community a small town feel but with some charm
- I am confused with all of the options at this time. I hope we will vote for property tax and sustain the town as is

**Some should pay tax and some shouldn't**

- Have older part of Youngtown start paying property tax
- People that have children should have to pay more taxes. We paid when we rose are children.
- People on disability should get a cut on taxes
- I would suggest the older part of Youngtown pay more. The newer section of Youngtown is paying at least three times what they pay in the older part. I was under the impression when we paid off the new streets, lights and other infrastructure our taxes were to go down
- People in Agua Fria already pay most of their way. It's about time that the folks in the older part of town pay their fair share. But we want our town

## Use Volunteers

### **Oversee Town Operations and Governance**

- Need an independent group of residents that can truly observe and audit current operations and expenses and then make informed suggestions. Anyone can criticize how things are done but there is opportunity for good suggestions when all is out in the open
- Recruit volunteers for city council; employ a primary for the office with remaining office staff being either volunteers or part time thereby eliminating cost of salaries and benefits

### **Volunteer Posse**

- A volunteer posse force to drive streets call police to come out when warranted. If we must be annexed to another city please let it be Peoria. Our houses are worth nothing now. With El Mirage address it will be worse
- Volunteer posse no police

### **Volunteer Provided Services**

- Never like to see people lose their jobs, but what if you came up with a park maintenance program made up of volunteers.....that would save some money
- Become a city of Volunteers
- Have more community activities, chances to volunteer, more events, help at food bank
- The Library has been a good source for the community. Need advertising for a book fair. Really make it something special. "Friends of the Library" are a group of volunteers that annually have book sales that are well known and look forward to by the public. I love the community spirit the library has promoted.
- Employ volunteers, retirees, unemployed. Can have youth get training by having them volunteer

## Business Development

### **More economic development - Incentive to bring in more businesses**

- More businesses (i.e. grocery, restaurants, retail, anchor store) to increase tax revenue (19)
- Try to get more retail vendors interested in occupying empty store fronts.
- Bring in new businesses for younger families
- Maybe a neighborhood Wal-Mart?
- We need economic development involving new and desirable local businesses. The majority of currently available businesses and services are not attractive enough to patronize. Shopping, dining and entertainment are better in the surrounding communities than in Youngtown. Also a tax base is needed to support the future of Youngtown. People cannot expect the services of a municipality without paying for them. There is no free lunch!
- Encourage local businesses
- Something needs done with downtown to attract businesses
- Make incentives for businesses to come into Youngtown instead of making it so hard for businesses that do pay taxes
- Bring new business to the area. Lot of space for something next to the QT on Olive!!
- Bring in some businesses like fast food, etc. to raise revenue especially along Northern Ave. In the future use USPS to send this as they need the money too
- Encourage new business off Olive and Aqua Fria. Have the old town shopping center rebuilt with more business/residence (small town) large medical center in downtown
- We seem to have quite a few empty place of small business. Try to get more people into them. If would increase tax revenue
- We are paying taxes to another city because we do not have place to shop here
- Encourage more fast foods to move in
- There are no anchor stores with respect to shopping. Shopping is disjointed unknown shopping possibilities. 111th Ave gets a lot of traffic but nothing draws them in to stimulate businesses. International pharmacy is not as outside business draw but the only visible store that looks like one could shop at but of course you cannot since it is a mail-order operation for pharmaceuticals.

- Since the town is operating on strictly sales tax and permits. We should try to get named brand business to locate in Youngtown, and talk to the commercial property owners to anything they can to accommodate said businesses
- Businesses are locating in Peoria and even in a hole like El Mirage. Who is responsible for failing to recruit these businesses to locate in Youngtown? We have all kinds of business space along Grand Avenue, and we have adequate space for a fast food franchise on Olive Ave. Someone should be working 40 hours a week recruiting new businesses for our town that would generate tax revenue!! I blame the council for failing to hire a professional, experienced town manager
- We have much Potential here in this town. Look at old Glendale downtown. Approach the Disney corp. to put in a "land" or "world" in beautiful downtown Youngtown- see what happened to Anaheim and Orlando
- Have land available for a large chain supermarket to pay taxes and help people in back areas of Youngtown

### **Lower Sales Tax**

- Sales tax is too high (2)
- If you would raise property tax and lower sale tax there are more people likely you support Youngtown business instead of going down the street for lower prices. Sales tax is too high and our town should be supported by those who live in it not those who shop in it. This would likely increase income from consumers outside our community
- Keep businesses and homes with low taxes
- Get rid of city sales tax is the highest in the county

### **Business Relations**

- Allow more signs and advertising for business
- The current town management is very unfriendly to a business environment
- No delivery of restaurants (tax involved)
- Be more open for contractors
- Keep ace hardware and other small businesses
- Close the gynecology center, raise sales tax by 1%

### **Food Bank**

- Move the Food Bank- trash maintenance in parking lot is not existent
- The Food Bank has brought in a lot more indigent people

### **Create Co-Op**

- Have you thought about a Co-op for food and for the town coffer?
- How many talents do our residents have? Have them Offer paying Classes to the public, recruit people that can add to a Town Co-op Shopping Center with their talents. Such as electricians, carpenters, interior designers to create shops or area for art, antiques, bakery goods, books, cafe, internet cafe, etc.
- Have the town sponsor a co-op shopping center/art center/cafe/bakery/produce shops

### **Town Market / Non-Profit**

- What about a Farmer's Market? Leasing out the parking lot by Ace once a week for individuals to set up vegetable, fruit, nut, breads, beef jerky, olive oils & vinegars, crepes, kettle corn, pasties, jewelry etc. (2)
- Create a Town Market or Town Cafe
- Why not host a monthly 'flea market' in the Ace parking lot to raise revenue?
- Create a Non-profit organization for the community. Something like what 4 Paws has done. Maybe a Bike repair or bike donations and to have community refer them and offer them at low prices to the public

## **Youngtown Police Department**

### **Suggestions for Improving**

- Hire more police (3)
- To feel safer try police on bikes. Many towns have that
- Please have the police continue to monitor drugs in our neighborhoods and enforce code and noise violations. Having lived where the Sheriff's Office used to patrol, I would say that losing our Police

Department would be a HUGE MISTAKE for the town. The end results were not exactly...positive. Also, having the Police Department patrol the whole town and not just the precious new part would be good

- Clean it up! Improve the image of the town. Police need to do a better job of policing. Kick the druggies out!
- Police - better community relations
- Charge for unnecessary police calls such as dog barking
- Form some type of bike patrol. Too much danger without lights. Curfew for 18 and under. Fine lights-headlights- fine- no age limit. Form citizen police academy patrol schools especially drug use. Explain to start using English. Point out danger of drinking. Watch out for new blend of tobacco, says legal; then why can't teenagers it there some ingredient like there is worth whiskey; beer; wine; did they add something to give same results as the real marijuana? I come from a large family 3 out of 4 brothers have been in rehab, AA meeting in clubhouse? Or close location; that can't afford a car or bike with impounded bikes have a police action with them. To people who work and have limited income, keep close eye on fountain springs. Managers allow bars to open earlier (more revenue, DUI, DUI revenue. Lower speed limit down 113th Ave.

### **Stop Sign and Speeding Enforcement**

- Enforce stop sign laws for vehicles coming out of Sun City and Youngtown side streets and businesses onto 111th Avenue.
- Too much speeding allowed on 114th Ave 25 MPH disregarded for most passersby
- Stop sign stopping needs to be enforced, speeders are frequent
- This is a very nice and quiet city to live in however the lack of police is very disturbing where I live. Agua Fria Ranch Parkway is like a race track and there's NEVER any police on it. There are many school bus stops on this road and people ignore the speed limit on it all the time and the neighborhoods the cars speed also so if you're short on cash send the police to write tickets

### **Concerns about Current Police Enforcement**

- Eliminate police that sit and talk to complaining neighbors
- Get rid for police department (you call 911 and you get sheriffs dispatch, never see them patrol my neighborhood
- Drugs and crime are rampant in the county; I feel the primary focus should be resident protection before any other services
- Crime is getting worse

### **Keep Local Police Force**

- We need to boost out police dept. When the economy gets bad, crime goes up plus it puts humans back to work. (Not camera systems). With the "gangs" spreading to our community - we need our police departments increased to protect our way of life here.
- Keep the police department
- Let the less important things go and keep police services
- I would not want to live in a town where services like the police are eliminated. I would not feel safe

### **Reduce Police Expenses**

- Cut back on police expenses, reduce police force (2)
- We don't need as many police officers or police vehicles. Any time there is a call for police, 2 officers always show up. Why do they then need to be in separate cars? We are only a community of 6000, there are sheriffs patrolling along 111th so we only need a few officers to patrol and respond to emergencies, which can't happen that often in such a small town

### **Contract with Maricopa County Sherriff's Office for Police Protection (3)**

- Get rid of police dept. the sheriff dept. does a better job. Sheriff is the only one that responds in an emergency (2)
- Get rid of the police department and contract out with MCSO. The police department is what's killing our budget with their wages, operating expenses, former chief's lawsuit etc.!!! GET RID OF IT, GET RID OF IT, AND GET RID OF IT!!!

### Other Revenue Generation Ideas

- Why doesn't the town host community fundraising events? (5)
- I would also suggest having El Mirage pay for part of our police force since they like to use them so much.
- For unkempt lawns, if you want new revenues, give a citation (a week to pay) to all owners of property and if not paid put liens on property
- There are many opportunities for the town to gain income besides closing too many facilities or becoming annexed within the three years
- Some increase in tax
- Have an annual Youngtown arts and crafts sale for holidays in an outdoor setting. We sure could get the help of the churches in our community who know how to make an area festive for selling things.
- The federal government is closing post offices. I would hate to see it close but if it does is that property the city owns or can use as source of revenue. If the city gets money from speeding tickets you should have an officer sit along 111th...it has become a raceway
- Community activities to raise money
- Go historic. Ask Gov. Brewer for some of the Federal money she is sitting on. Revenue possibilities city sticker fee for each vehicle
- Create a Youngtown bank following the model set by North Dakota Extremely profitable
- Income production by making Ethanol. This light industry which could be owned by Youngtown is easy to set up, loved by federal government regulations and very profitable as the source of fuel is free from landscaping debris
- If homeowners/ renters are not paying a school tax, that is the first place to start. As a retirement community, Youngtown had no school taxes
- Bingo sounds good for a money maker
- Buy back water, fewer taxes
- Buy back our water company
- Demolish condemned/foreclosed houses in older parts of Youngtown and sell the land to developers
- Youngtown should increase the 'Rental Property Tax' on single family homes from the current rate to 10% or more
- Over the past few years the Agua Fria Ranch subdivision has become a 'rental community'. The vast majority of the homes on my street have become rentals. New "For Rent" signs pop up on a weekly basis. These homes were purchased by speculators for pennies on the dollar in hopes of turning a quick profit. There's no doubt that rental properties require additional City services over owner occupied homes. Increasing the Rental Tax would have an added benefit of incentivizing these so called speculators to sell their property to a family that will become a member of our community. At these rental / owner ratios; I don't see how this community can maintain the same quality of life over the long term without the need for increased City services and expenditure
- Another suggestion would be to increase the sales tax
- Also, I have driven on 111th in the early morning and in the late afternoon, and have been passed up by speeders. Some were going 50 to 55 MPH and no cop is to be in sight. How come our police department does not have cops sitting on the side streets, waiting for speeders to go by??? Our town could be making good profits just on tickets given to speeders?
- Use some of the land we have available to maximize the town's income and offset the deficit we will be facing
- Use community gardens produce to sell as fresh and organic to the public
- Rental Tax
- Annex any land possible
- Fine people who rent who don't rake yards. Require landlords to pay tax on rentals
- Institute social pet licensing fees if allowable. Try to bring sustainable income (vendors, mfg.)

### Resident Participation

- Half the time I don't know what Town Meetings I'm allowed to go to. What meetings are for public input? Would you make that clear in the town paper? I found the example of the Daily News Sun so informative and straight forward. See wed Sept 7th paper
- Would the town have a brainstorming meeting only? Just to put ideas out there? You have so many people to draw from in the community
- Residents would also keep alleyways and streets maintained to keep Youngtown clean and serviceable. They just need some direction on these subjects and notification
- Use the resources of the community. Let them know out loud they are needed for their input. Post times encourage town meetings by describing them as a place people will want to go to because they will be heard and appreciated. That it is a friendly place to be. Maybe offer coffee? Have a good attitude to welcome the community to its place to share ideas and suggestions
- Ask advice from other small towns not only in Arizona but in other states around the country. Act as an ambassador and communicate
- Get people more involved
- Town people should know why we are doing things, too many people don't act like a community
- More communication between neighbors
- More neighborhood awareness
- All work together
- Note - The city needs input and assistance by all
- Just waiting to see what solutions/suggestions the ELECTED officials come up with.
- I pray for wisdom for all council members, but I hope Youngtown does not dis-incorporate, de-annex, or especially go bankrupt. This community has survived almost 57 years of change of all types (including economic, overturning age overlay) that has severely changed the community. Please do not throw in the towel. Be still for the next three years - Don't panic - wisdom/direction will come! Ask, seek it
- I have not been living here that long to know
- Town survived since 1958. Who is responsible for running the grounds? Now

### Ride Out the Storm

- Focus on minimal projects and safety in order to make the existing money last longer
- Cut all frills (put on hold) until our economy levels out
- Do not eliminate jobs/services for short term fix. We need to come up with a long term fix
- With the economy so uncertain in the U.S. and the world, I think it would be wise to wait and see what the next 18-24 months hold for the future and base our decisions for the town on that. The options presented now will be there in the future. Based on the average income of town residents, I don't see how "more tax" will ever be successful. Our town is a fixed/low income community, has been and probably always be
- Believe in the future. Ride this storm out 3 years, and things will improve. You will see. And another thing, it seems to me that small towns rely on multi-generational loyalty and hard work. Give this town a chance to raise a generation or two, and you will see more income and hard work poured out here. I mean, you haven't been raising kids here for very long, if I understand correctly. You only recently allowed them. They will grow up and some will be clamoring to return here, work here, volunteer here, etc. That's what my little hometown back in Illinois was like. It never had an age ban. The age ban was a bad tradition. It reminds me of the movie Chitty-chitty Bang Bang, where kids were banned. You get the idea. Don't do that again. Your "dividend" will be in those kids being loyal to their hometown, Youngtown, much how I felt towards mine (which was Glen Ellyn, Illinois)

### **Aqua Fria Ranch Homeowners Association**

- Eliminate Aqua Fria HOA (3)
- What does the HOA do for us? The city maintains the streets, lights, and park. You, Mr. Mayor, saw to that as HOA president. So aside from the landscaping crew (do we pay for that or the city?) all the HOA does is assess fees and fines
- Keep our HOA

### **Age Restricted vs. Family Community**

- Go back the way it was years ago "senior only" (3)
- The town seems to be split between old generations with outdated services and new generations with no updated services, restaurants, businesses, etc. for them to want to spend their money in. The ideal plan would be to pick few of the old services to stay but invest the rest into newer money making services. The surveys are also good ideas
- We need to focus on our children's future as well as the town. I don't want MC or another city to take over Youngtown. YT has become our home and I don't want my children getting a 2nd look with us falling under "el Mirage". It could be racial profiling and we don't need that in YT. Let's keep YT for our children
- Something needs to be done with kids and teens that have no regard for others personal property. They act like they own the whole neighborhood

### **OTHER**

- Youngtown ALREADY has a high Sales Tax rate. Where is THAT Money going? With THIS economy, and already all-time high prices, People just cannot see MORE Taxes, in their Budget
- I am not for the let's wait 2 years and worry then. I will most likely still be here and want this
- Get rid of the idea of being 'land locked' a negative thing. It could be a very positive protected town that it once was
- Solve this now while we can think it through
- Remain a city
- I am not interested in new services for the town because I do not have time, now I need a second job to afford my house
- I just like living here!
- Neutral because I don't understand what it all means
- I am really surprised at the lack of USA flags on homes during the holidays
- Compass Bible Church community events
- I am praying for this matter
- Moved across street to Sun City but may move back. Was resident 1994-1998 and 2005- 2011
- I moved to this town because at one time this town was a retirement area. Get respectable people to move in to our town, instead of all the white trash and trashy young people that are moving in. They are here today and gone tomorrow. They don't care about Youngtown
- Advertise for a great philanthropist
- Wilderness
- Give back to the people that were here first
- Don't live in Youngtown but came from small town. Miss closeness of neighbors that know you
- Small town should be kept alive. I live in Sun City though I support Youngtown when need arises

## Comments from Town Hall and Community Meetings

### Need to come together as a community

- Need to become closer together as a community so we can get more involved to solve problems
- Have a community move night and other activities like bingo
- Nice place, quiet, like to keep it that way
- We lost our pride, human responsibility, pride of ownership, where is our pride?
- I am sick of hearing Youngtown is trash—still love my neighbors! Stand up in civil way not to let everything go
- Keeping Youngtown is important
- Have been praying, thank you for all you do. Please do not disincorporation, deannex, or declare bankruptcy
- Each of us needs to do our share
- Do not throw in the towel
- Proud of current leadership

### Suggestions for new programs/services

- Establish a renter committee
- Create a Facebook and social media
- Don't have an event to draw people
- Have another Town Hall to review results
- Use survey to brainstorm creative solution, implementation part of conversation

### Property Tax Discussion

- Property Tax will scare people off; increasing number of rental property and renters
- Lot of good renters in Town
- Property tax – going to pay someone
- Show what the impact will be
- Who was biggest opposition to tax? WMAR
- Concerns about previous election for sale tax, no one campaigned for the tax
- Long term effects were not communicated
- Previous tax assessment issues with potential increase overtime (concern of back door increases like an A.R.M.)
- If we are annexed, we absorb their debt. We have none now. Tax is only way YT will survive.
- I am new resident, we need property tax to increase our home values & to pay for more services.
- Is property tax based on current value or what we paid?
- Sooner or later, will pay property tax, rather pay to Youngtown

### Youngtown Businesses

- Businesses can't carry the Town
- I am against \$30k spending by Town to advertise for more business to YT
- We need more economic development to help get more business here
- We need more revenue generating business
- Anyway more businesses to come to Youngtown?
- Businesses in Town are important to this process
- Youngtown has been known for cheap retail rent (not good)
- Need to get other businesses involved

### You get what you pay for

- Need to show what you'll pay in YT, Peoria, El Mirage
- Residents don't understand residents are going to have to pay someone
- You get what you pay for
- Fiscally is irresponsible to do nothing. We will be taxed by someone/with other options we cannot continue down road we are on

- Must have budget like a business. We need invest for our future. I am here for YT
- I live in older part of YT, we have always had “free ride” – we need to start paying
- We are going to have to pay with other options besides property tax
- I pay HOA \$800/year
- El Mirage Mayor and Councilmember – We decided not to sacrifice public safety (after major cuts). Do not go bare bones on your Town. Do not skimp on your services and amenities. We do not want to see you fail and do not want to annex Youngtown.
- There are certain costs to keep Town
- You get what you pay for

### Local law enforcement

- Keep the Town, PD, not going forward by moving back
- Getting a lot of tagging
  - Lack of enforcement with increase in youth
  - Bicycle patrol worked well
- Want customers to feel safe to come to store
- Michigan Ave – concern about soup kitchen; fire going to give to food bank (contact SUFD)
- Concern about deannex (law enforcement MCSO)
- Keep our police department stay as we are
- YTPD is important!
- MCSO – likes sheriff posse – enforcement. They do a good job.
- I commend your Town and police department. You have good leadership. Do not give this up.
- You need your own police department. County will not support you but you will still get a bill.
- World of difference between policing and being a sheriff

### Other options

- Tiered sales tax based on sales amount
- Are home taxes tiered
- Model city tax code
- Will you consider lowering sales tax if property tax is approved?
- We have 3 years of money, maybe we can get grants, more options by the
- Federal government may reduce/eliminate CDBG money, could go away
- Can we (non AFR) get HOA? We would have resistance to HOA
- Is there a facility in Town to accommodate bingo hall?
- City-owned business? To generate more revenue, use city property
- Legal, moral, ethical solutions, residential overlay (example bus ads at stops)

### Provide more information about the options

- Put what is going to happen in newspaper
- Need to publish in Spanish
- What is % of renters? Can they vote?
- Publish the numbers related to the options
- Compare sales tax by jurisdiction
- What would be property tax increase?
- If we did deannex, what is increase?
- Lack of communication, go door to door
- Are you prepared today to state what services will decrease, ramifications of options...want details
- Get message out – promote this campaign to let people know options/understand these options

### Existing Town Services

- Library is a great place
- Code enforcement – where is consistency? Call Town – we rely on you for code enforcement

### Other Comments

- Who pays for the education Peoria & Dysart
- No longer a retirement community
- South of Peoria – more in common with El Mirage – will other Town want us?
- What is difference between 2 Youngtown's? We are all YT
- Why were nonresidents allowed to participate in survey? Nonresidents include Youngtown business owners and out of state property owners both of which have a stake in the future of the Town.
- Filling out survey was difficult, I have changed my mind after listening to options today
- Process is not biased
- Is part of reason for survey to help ask residents about options?



**Engage in the Community Conversation**  
September 7 – 23, 2011

### Our Past . . . .

- Important role in USA history
  - Developed in 1954 as first age restricted community
  - 1<sup>st</sup> AARP Chapter
- Incorporated as a Town in 1960



### Past Events . . . .

- Youngtown Water Company sold in 1995
- Loss of the Age Overlay in 1998
  - Rapid transition to a younger, family oriented community
- Development of Agua Fria Ranch Subdivision 2003-2005



### Our Present . . . .

- Small town atmosphere
- 6,200 residents
- Average age 37 years
- 7 parks
- 41 miles of paved streets and alleys
- 30 employees
  - 24 full-time and 6 part-time
  - 13 employees in police department with 7 sworn officers



### Our Challenges . . . .

- Landlocked – no opportunity for expansion
- Very few revenue streams
  - State shared revenues – *lost \$500,000*
  - Local sales and rental tax – *maintaining*
  - Improvement districts – *limited use*
  - Grants – *difficult to obtain must pay local match*
- Unable to bond for large projects

### Our Fiscal Responsibility . . . .

- Annual budget - \$4 million
  - \$50 per month per resident
  - Litchfield Park spends 3x more per resident
- \$2 million in savings
  - \$630,000 needed this year maintain existing level of service
- 1/3 of budget is for police protection



### Cost Reductions . . . .

- Reduced staffing by 8 positions
- Realigned Police and Public Works Departments
- Analyzed operational functions for efficiency and savings
- Implemented new efficiency processes
- Reduced budget by \$330,000



### Our Current Goals . . . .

- Infrastructure
  - Complete 4 year fire flow project
  - Maintain facilities and streets
- Economic development
  - Analyze commercial aspects
  - Create public-private partnerships for parks, businesses
- Quality of life
  - Increase recreational opportunities for all ages
  - Sustain small town atmosphere

### Our Crossroads . . . .

- At current level of service, the Town will deplete the savings account in about 3 years
- Town Council is the caretaker only
- Residents, businesses and council must work together to determine future direction



### Our Options . . . .

- **Disincorporation**
  - Become a resident of Maricopa County under the control of the Board of Supervisors.
- **De-annexation**
  - Be annexed by a neighboring community (El Mirage or Peoria) and become a resident of that community governed by their council and staff.
- **Municipal bankruptcy**
  - Town continues to operate with no changes until bankrupt. Maricopa County Board of Supervisors would assume control of the community.
- **Eliminate Services**
  - Eliminate or greatly reduce current services by closing facilities and make decision about future at a later date.
- **Property tax**
  - Pay a new property tax to sustain the Town of Youngtown and local delivery of existing and new services
- **Other Options ??**

### What does this mean to me?

- Residents would become residents of either Maricopa County or an adjacent city/town
  - Governed by those elected officials
  - Pay taxes and fees of the new jurisdiction
  - Zoning, building codes and ordinances governed by new jurisdiction

### Time to Speak Up!

- What does Youngtown mean to you?
- How important is local control to you?
- Which of the potential future directions are you willing to support?
- Is there another possible option?



The Independent  
Sept. 21, 2011

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## LETTERS To The Editor

### Better path to follow

I don't think so. As of today, there's \$1.8 million savings in the Youngtown general fund, \$1.4 million in other funds — for a total of \$3.2 million in savings. The August budget print-out shows general fund spent \$2.3 million in the last 12 months. Revenue shows \$2.6 million, a surplus of \$300,000. So what's the deal about going broke? Can the town function on around \$3 million? The new budget was increased to \$3.1 million.

For three years we've heard the same story about the town going broke because 75 percent of the voters said no to the property tax. Back then, the tax was for \$500,000. Now, the mayor says he wants \$1 million. Well, what chance is there that the voters will approve this? It would almost double our tax bill. It's a dead issue!

I was involved in town finances a few years back, and went through a worse financial crisis than the supposed crisis of today. Maybe with a change in management, the town would find a better path to follow, and continue on.

The threat in the latest survey information is that savings will only last three years. Well, this year's budget was increased to \$3.1 million, supposedly the lowest the town can function on. Administration payroll is increased \$50,000, public works payroll is lowered \$15,000.

You will notice that no budget numbers are given in the survey to back up their prediction of failure in three years.

If anybody wants to see a budget print-out, I have one.

**Jim Trolen**  
Youngtown

## OUR VIEW

# Youngtown future is up to you

Rarely is there a survey in a community more important than the one at the ballot box. But a major push in Youngtown to get the pulse of residents about the town's future carries a sense of urgency that rivals an election.

Youngtown launched an initiative last week that prompts residents and business owners to think about what the town means to them. At the heart of the effort is a survey that addresses the core question about whether Youngtown should cease to exist.

Town officials aren't being dramatic. These are questions that need answers sooner rather than later.

Financial realities have put Youngtown at a crossroads.

It is drawing down its savings account to make ends meet. Town officials estimate that account will be depleted in about three years.

Youngtown must take action in the next few years to bring in new revenue to pay for services already cut significantly during the recession or it will cease to exist as the incorporated town that it has been since 1960. Both choices have major ramifications that justify the flurry of activity — town halls, neighborhood meetings, business confabs — occurring in the community over two

weeks.

Options include Youngtown being annexed by El Mirage or Peoria or becoming a county island controlled by the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors.

A survey posted online ([www.youngtownAZ.org](http://www.youngtownAZ.org)) and published last week in the town's official publication, the *Youngtown Village Reporter*, is the central focus of that conversation.

The surveys and boxes for responses also are scattered around town.

Town officials hope to receive 1,000 responses from a community of 6,000 residents.

Residents need to listen carefully to the facts clearly laid out before them, consider various scenarios for dealing with the truth and to talk among themselves and with their leaders, as they did Saturday morning during a productive town hall.

More opportunities to speak about the future will occur at 6 p.m. Thursday at a Town Council meeting and at 6 p.m. Monday at a second town hall. The Speak Up Youngtown survey ends Sept. 23 and the council is expected to review the results in October.

Don't be shy, apathetic or resigned, Youngtown. Speak up.

## ANOTHER VIEW

BECAUSE  
YOU  
WIT



WAYNE BLANEY

## YOUR VOICE COUNTS

E-mail: [wvalley.letters@ariz.com](mailto:wvalley.letters@ariz.com)

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Please include your name, address, and phone number. Limit to 200 words and columns to 1 column.

NEWS

MAIL SUNCITYNEWS@NEWSZAP.COM

September 14, 2011



Independent Newspapers/Rusty Bradshaw

Youngtown Mayor Mike LeVault emphasizes a point about the town's community input campaign to determine the best direction town officials should take to face the ongoing economic downturn.

## Youngtown wants resident direction

By Rusty Bradshaw  
Independent Newspapers

Youngtown can cease to exist, or find ways to address challenging economic times.

That is the range of options, with several in between, residents will have to select in a community survey during a 2.5-week community input campaign. The effort started Sept. 7 and will conclude Sept. 23. Residents will get a snapshot of how the campaign is going will be presented 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 15 at Town Hall, 12030 Clubhouse Square at the regular council meeting.

"We want to know what residents and business owners believe is the best direction for the town to go," said Theresa Gunn of Gunn Communications, a consultant hired by town

officials to coordinate the campaign.

A survey is available on the town website, [www.youngtownaz.org](http://www.youngtownaz.org); in the September Youngtown Village Reporter monthly publication; and hard copies at Town Hall, the Youngtown Library, 12035 Clubhouse Square, Ace Hardware, 11125 Arizona Ave., and 4 Paws Animal Rescue, 11129 Michigan Ave.

Surveys must be turned in by Sept. 23 and a final report of its results will be made 7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 6 at Town Hall during the council meeting.

"We wanted this campaign to be short and intense so people would pay attention to it and respond," Ms. Gunn said.

The options for the town include establish-

See Input — Page 6

## Input

Continued From Page 2

ing a primary property tax, service reductions, siphoning from the town's reserves, disincorporation, annexation into a neighboring community or municipal bankruptcy, according to Mike LeVault, Youngtown mayor.

"My intent and style of government, along with this council's, is to be as open and transparent as possible," he said. "What option we take will be the council's decision, but we want to hear from residents and business owners."

Ms. Gunn said the town's campaign is not an attempt to convince residents to vote for a property tax.

"We are putting all the options out there," she said.

Ms. Gunn said town officials' goal is to get at least 1,000 responses to the survey. The campaign, which also includes banners and signs throughout town, e-mail blasts, electronic messages on Relay Outdoor sign, a letter to businesses and visits to major destinations by student interns asking residents to complete the survey.

"We're trying to keep the cost of the campaign under \$10,000," Ms. Gunn explained. "If people respond to the survey by e-mail or on the website, that will help keep the cost down."

Lloyce Robinson, town manager, said officials need to address the town's direction now while it has the funds and time to adjust to different options.

"We're not going down the cliff yet, but we can see the cliff down the road," Mr. LeVault said.

He noted all municipalities will have to look at operating differently than they have before to survive the ongoing economic turmoil. He explained Youngtown officials have gone to a zero-based budgeting option.

"We have done more with less, and sometimes gotten something from nothing," he said.

News Editor Rusty Bradshaw can be reached at 623-445-2725 or [rbradshaw@newszap.com](mailto:rbradshaw@newszap.com).

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ARIZONA EYE INSTITUTE  
& COSMETIC LASER CENTER

## Youngtown leaders: Town will go broke without service cuts

by *D.S. Woodfill* - Sept. 15, 2011 12:00 AM  
*The Arizona Republic*

Youngtown will go broke within three years if officials don't drastically cut services or find new sources of revenue, town leaders say. Options include becoming a Maricopa County, merging with El Mirage or Peoria or shutting down its police force.

Or, instituting the first property tax in the community's 51 years. Youngtown voters last year rejected such a tax.

The town, like other municipalities across the state, is suffering declining revenue from the recession and additional costs passed down by the state Legislature.

"I'm not trying to scare people," Mayor Michael LeVault said. "If I chose to react like a typical politician, I would just tell the town manager we're going to continue to kick the can down the road. I don't think that's why I was elected."

Officials, who are hosting two public meetings this month on the town's dwindling resources, rolled out a public survey, "Speak Up! Youngtown," with those options.

The community's 6,163 residents have about two weeks to turn in the survey, which the Town Council will discuss on Oct. 6.

LeVault said a decision is expected by the end of the year. He said there will always be "diehard skeptics" who think the officials are simply trying to scare residents into passing the town's first primary property tax. "But

the numbers are pretty telling, I think," he said.

The council recently approved a \$4.7 million budget for fiscal 2011-12. It's more than last year's \$3,983,000 budget because of incoming grants and unspent money from last year.

Officials say they drew \$630,000 from a rainy-day fund to balance this year's budget. If that continues, assuming no additional revenue streams are obtained, the savings will last until 2014-15, barring a major emergency expense that could hasten its depletion.

Such an emergency could include serious flood or storm damage to a street or public facility.

"I go home every night and pray that it doesn't happen, but you can't say with certainty that it won't," LeVault said.

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# Youngtown polls residents about community's future

By ZACH COLICK, DAILY NEWS-SUN | Posted: Wednesday, September 7, 2011 4:15 pm

Declining state-shared revenues and economic conditions in Youngtown have forced town officials to look toward the future and determine how a depleting rainy-day fund will affect services down the road.

Rapid growth in the landlocked community has put a strain on the town's resources and the ability to cater to a growing population of younger families.

Youngtown is at a crossroads of sorts, and rather than sugarcoat its financial condition, Mayor Michael LeVault said town officials are laying out all the facts in order for the community to take an active lead in determining what steps should be taken to get on better financial footing.

"All cities are struggling with the same sets of issues like Youngtown," LeVault said. "Smaller cities and towns have their own sets of challenges and could become endangered species."

Town officials hope to engage the community through its "Speak Up!" survey campaign, a two-week effort that will attempt to collect feedback from residents and the business community about how they believe the town should be run and governed.

The survey, which asks questions relating to possible new governance and operations, is available at [www.youngtownaz.org](http://www.youngtownaz.org) and inside the Village Reporter, the official town newsletter published monthly and mailed to all residences.

The survey provides five options for Youngtown residents to mull: annexation by other surrounding municipalities; unincorporate into a county island; assess a property tax; declare bankruptcy; and/or eliminate essential town services, including police, fire and water.

Town officials could have a hard time convincing the town's roughly 6,500 residents to support instituting a property tax. About 73 percent of Youngtown voters overwhelmingly defeated a ballot proposition in May 2010, asking them whether they would support such an initiative.

Town officials insist the survey isn't an attempt to institute a property tax.

The grassroots campaign is being coordinated through Gunn Communications Inc. for about \$10,000.

During his past four years as mayor, LeVault said Youngtown has continually made decisions on residents' behalf by "trying to do more with less."

"Our way of life and how we go about making decisions is different in Youngtown than it is in Phoenix, Glendale and Peoria," he said. "I love living in a small town, but it presents some very unique challenges in regard to finances."

Despite Youngtown being able to balance its budget each year, the town's reserve funds sit at about \$1 million, which Town Manager Lloyce Robinson said can last only another three years.

Robinson concedes these and other actions to reduce expenses haven't been enough.

At present, Robinson said Youngtown's \$4 million operating budget for Town Hall and the Youngtown Police Department is enough to get by. Robinson said the town's operating budget provides roughly \$50 a month per resident for essential town services.

The town doesn't have enough funding to maintain a base level of services without dipping into its savings account or seeking state and federal grants for capital improvement projects, officials said.

Services have been cut and a number of Town Hall employees and police officers have been let go during the past several years. The police department, for example, employs three patrol officers, two sergeants, a chief of police and front office administrator.

The most recent U.S. Census figures peg Youngtown with a population of about 6,500 residents, half of whom are renters, although Arizona's first retirement community now has an average age of 37. It's a far cry from neighboring Sun City with its age overlay still intact.

With the growth and transition to a younger, family-oriented community during the past decade, Youngtown, which lost its age overlay status in 1998, has been unable to offer younger residents and families any true form of entertainment, parks, retail and restaurants that other neighboring communities can offer along major thoroughfares.

Yet, in some respects, the town is on better financial footing than neighboring municipalities as it has no outstanding municipal debt obligations.

In fact, Youngtown couldn't declare bankruptcy because of its financial position and is in somewhat of a precarious position as it, on one hand, can balance its books, but cannot realistically sustain itself for the foreseeable future, according to officials.

LeVault said "a whole new business model" could be needed for smaller municipalities to succeed in today's economic environment, but admits he wants to see Youngtown maintain local control and not become "a smaller piece of a larger puzzle" to neighboring El Mirage or Peoria.

"We have to be proactive and can't be shortsighted into thinking that conditions will turn around overnight," he said, noting Youngtown isn't in a crisis mode, but rather looking at what's best for the future. "Tough decisions have to be made at difficult times."

*Zach Colick can be reached at 623-876-2522 or zcolick@yourwestvalley.com.*