

Summaries of Important Themes

Ludlow Community Stakeholder Interviews

- **Affordable Housing**. Chapter 40B plan needed to prevent developers forcing hundreds of units on the town. Housing committee needs to be reactivated. Some misunderstanding about the differences between “affordable” and “low-income.”
- **Center Street Bridge**. Concern about traffic back-ups and the ability of the bridge to handle an increase in traffic.
- **Changing Demographics**. People moving from Indian Orchard, often young families. New low-incidence ethnic populations challenging to serve in schools.
- **Community Preservation Act**. Many feel that the town missed out on CPA when it was voted down in 2001.
- **Conservation**. Development encroaching on wetlands and wildlife. Farms and farmland in danger of development. Possibly too many homes relying on well water.
- **Downtown/Town Center**. Not too concerned about the traditional downtown. Residents have several different ideas about the location of the center of Ludlow.
- **East Street**. Confusion and dissatisfaction toward bulb-outs, specifically regarding snow plowing. Lack of cohesiveness among storefronts.
- **Elderly Housing**. Need for more elderly housing options, both subsidized and market-rate. Skepticism toward plan to repurpose Stevens Memorial Building. New housing should be in walkable locations.
- **Energy**. Excitement and interest toward renewable energy. Would like a small wind bylaw. Look into solar energy potential at former dump. Reduce energy use in schools.

- **Historical Preservation**. Possible issues maintaining two historic districts. Need for cell tower bylaw. Residents value their history as a mill town.
- **Jobs and Industry**. Town losing jobs and industry-friendly workforce. Lack of locations for industry to develop. Meaningful work more difficult to find with change to more chain-based business. Residents are proud of their hard-working middle-class reputation.
- **Ludlow is a Family Town**. Safe town, good schools, family-oriented. Town needs to make decisions that continue these qualities.
- **Ludlow is a Soccer Town**. Town residents enjoy and support soccer. Still, many feel other sports neglected. Town needs additional playing fields and needs to ensure continued maintenance on existing fields. Desire for a large, consolidated sports complex.
- **Ludlow is an attractive community**. Residents who grow up in town either stay or come back later in life.
- **Ludlow is an ethnic town**. Portuguese, Polish, and other groups generally get along well with the rest of town. Diversity well celebrated at annual festivals.
- **Ludlow Mills**. Excitement about the potential for jobs, retail, passive recreation, and aesthetic enhancement to the downtown area. Concern about traffic volumes and delays.
- **Master Planning Effort**. Respondents generally seemed enthused that the Town is willing to create an official plan for the future. Respondents seemed uncertain if the town will follow through with implementation of the plan. Seniors feel left out of implementation in plans.
- **Mistrust of Town Government**. Important decisions made at town meeting and within other boards and committees become popularity contests. Need for fewer elected officials and more appointed professionals. Not a good working relationship between different boards and even town staff. Better accountability needed. Public debates become too nasty. Town needs a central authority figure. The town should have adopted a mayoral form of government. Town employees sabotaged this initiative.

- **Neighbors**. Concern about how population increases in Belchertown, Granby, Palmer, and Wilbraham affect Ludlow. Too much through traffic.
- **Parking**. Many desire more parking, especially in the downtown. Parking for the Senior Center especially lacking. Town should buy up properties to build lots or a garage.
- **Passive Recreation**. Facilities lacking for walking, hiking, running, bicycling. Access to the river desired, worry about continued access to reservoir.
- **Police and Fire**. Overextended, but services receive very kind remarks.
- **Population Growth and Housing Unit Increase**. Town is growing too fast. Some interviewees noted that the population has not substantially increased; rather it has been the number of housing units that has increased.
- **Public Library**. Advocates are very passionate. Current building full with no room for expansion. Animosity towards town for lack of adequate financial support.
- **Public Schools**. Keeping-up quality of schools important. Ludlow H.S. graduates need to be competitive in global market. Not enough students attending and finishing college. School department gobbles up too much of town budget. Overcrowding of elementary schools indicates a need for a new school. Recent reorganization a very controversial issue. One resident said he found it difficult to give money and time to start a new after school program.
- **Public Transportation**. Service infrequent and unhelpful. PVTA not used by many and its improvement not much of a concern.
- **Quality of Development**. Large single-family homes praised but may not fit with town's character. Lukewarm feelings toward condominiums. Need for greater context and aesthetic concern for new business structures.
- **Religious Community**. Ludlow is a predominately Catholic town. Five parishes, each with its niche. Attendance hurt by popularity of sports.

- **Senior Center**. Offers very comprehensive services. The staff is extremely enthusiastic and dedicated. The building is large but could be in better condition and have more parking.
- **Sidewalks and Walkability**. Only East Street good for walking. Poor mobility for young people and seniors. Sidewalks inadequate and under-maintained. Residents dislike the lack of connectivity.
- **Smart Growth**. Interest in how neighboring towns are dealing with development. Residents like cluster zoning. Only a few specific mentions of the concept by name, but proponents very motivated.
- **Taxes**. Great value for the amount of services. Seniors wanting to stay in town may have to leave because of increases.
- **Title V**. Seniors who want to or must sell their homes face costs of \$8,000-20,000 to replace their septic systems. Many of these homes are across from new subdivisions with public sewer connections.
- **Town is Not Business Friendly**. Town permitting system is not clear and transparent. Would like some form of permitting guidebook. Communication between various town departments and boards needs to be clearer. Personal agendas of town staff and town committees often overweigh how the town rules.
- **Traffic**. Traffic back-ups, high speed of traffic, Ludlow's main routes used for pass-through traffic to Ludlow's neighboring communities. Businesses, though, desire traffic coming through town. Several intersections create many frustrations.
- **Utilities**. Sewer expansion not keeping pace with development. Too many houses and subdivisions on septic tanks. DSL access desired in rural areas of town.
- **Young People**. Youth lack a gathering place. Difficulty in accommodating for their wide variety of interests. Adults feel that young people are strong contributors to the community.
- **Zoning & Land Use**. Zoning is outdated. Land uses scattered throughout town, which has resulted in incompatible uses adjoining one another. Need for designated commercial and industrial districts. Town needs a plan! Development patterns and densities do not make sense. Town needs planned growth.