

EDC SURVEY SUMMARY

General summary Q1-Q5: Most respondents were between the ages of 35-54, Non-military, homeowners in Ledyard (vs Gales Ferry) who have lived in town more than 25 years, but not their whole lives.

Generally, those who responded work in NL County, are active on social media and utilize town services but are not involved in Town Government nor interested in doing so. They are active outdoors, go to the farmers market, still use the library, and miss the Fair. They want to see more businesses in town, particularly a wider variety of restaurants including more upscale options. They do or want to support local businesses and services and support allowing accessory apartments. Respondents value open space and trails and want more social opportunities and entertainment options.

Survey Summary Q2

Desired Businesses for Ledyard/Gales Ferry

Restaurants	Ledyard	GF	Goods & Services	Ledyard	GF
More Restaurant Variety/ options	14	10	Larger Grocery/ Retail	8	3
<i>Diner/Breakfast/Brunch</i>	6	3	<i>Stop & Shop</i>	1	
<i>Kitchen Little</i>	1		<i>Trader Joe's</i>	2	5
<i>Coffee Shop/Sandwich Shop</i>	3	1	<i>Aldi's</i>	3	1
<i>Bakery</i>	1	2	<i>Best Buy/Apple</i>		1
<i>Sift</i>	1		<i>Home Depot/Low's</i>		2
<i>Arremonys</i>	1		<i>Van Wilgen, Garden Center</i>		1
<i>Ethnic Food</i>	1		<i>Hobby Lobby</i>	1	
<i>Asian</i>	1		<i>Walmart</i>	1	1
<i>Mexican</i>	4		<i>Target</i>	1	1
<i>Thai</i>	1		More Shops General	3	1
<i>Italian</i>	2		<i>Velvet Mill</i>	1	
<i>Indian</i>	1		<i>Cowbell Trading Post</i>	1	
<i>Ice cream</i>	3		<i>Clothing/Shoes</i>	4	4
<i>Buttonwoods</i>	1		<i>High-end Boutique</i>	1	
<i>Sushi/Seafood</i>	1	1	<i>Thrift Store</i>	1	
<i>Fast Food/Franchise</i>	5	1	<i>Book Store</i>	2	
<i>Sonic</i>		1	<i>Grocery Store</i>	4	15
<i>Cracker Barrel</i>		1	<i>Seafood Store</i>	1	
<i>Denny's</i>		1	<i>Craft/Fabric/Yarn Store</i>	3	
<i>Jersey Mike</i>	2		<i>Technology/Electronics Store</i>		1
<i>Dominos</i>	1		<i>Pet Store</i>	2	
<i>Chik Fila</i>	2		<i>Convenience Store</i>	1	
<i>Moe's</i>	1		<i>Home goods/Gifts</i>	1	1
<i>D&D</i>	7		<i>Pharmacy</i>	5	1

Starbucks		1	Walgreen		1
Junk N Java		1	Medical/Dental Office/Walk-in	5	1
Dairy Queen		1	Gym/Personal Trainer	2	
Chipotle	1		Physical Therapist	1	
McDonalds	2		Attorney Office	1	
Vegan/Vegetarian	1		Shipping Store	1	
Breweries/Bars/Pubs	7	3	Eyebrow Place (?)	1	
Jealous Monk	1		Dry cleaner	3	
Food Truck Park	1		Auto Repair	2	
Restaurant along River	1	2	Auto Parts	1	
Recreation/Entertainment/	Ledyard	GF	Car Wash	3	1
Bike trail	1		CBD Store	1	
Kids'/ Family Activities	3	1	Bike Shop	2	
Movie Theatre	1	1	IT/Computer repair	1	
Community Theatre/Center	1		Computer training	1	
Skating Rink	1		Tutoring	1	
Indoor Sports Center		1	Roofing Company	1	
Dog Park		1	Solar panel retailer/installer	1	
Town Swimming Pool		1	Custom Home Builder	1	
Bars/Nightlife	1	1	Yard Care	1	

It was an almost equal number of respondents from Ledyard and Gales Ferry who would be unwilling to travel to the opposite side of town to visit a “desired” business.

Many expressed the feeling that there were too many Pizza and Chinese Restaurants and Liquor Stores and felt that maintaining the local feel, farms and New England style was important. Having more of a variety of restaurants and mor upscale restaurants certainly ranked high in this survey.

Question 3: When asked what businesses could do better to attract local shoppers, it mainly came down to convenience, pricing, sales, quality, and service. Respondents offered the following suggestions:

- Improve roadside and directional signage to identify Business
- Offer a wider variety of products and higher quality of goods and services at a competitive price.
- Be more upscale and improve customer service. Leave Politics out of the business image
- Improve the curb appeal - Businesses need facelifts
- Advertise more. Increase on-line presence. Offer longer hours
- Offer Curbside Pick-up and Outside Dining and discounts or rewards for residents. Hold special events/promotions.

Suggestions directed more toward the “Town” verses the businesses themselves included:

- Encourage Mixed-use, walkable commercial areas that are connected to the surrounding neighborhoods. Attract businesses to Route 12 corridor. Attract a greater variety of stores
- Provide better exposure for businesses - feature at events or on website; publish a Business Directory; host a Town-wide Open House/Block Party.
- Address the blighted properties or those in need of some better curb appeal.

Survey Summary Q6: Willingness to drive across town: Many respondents live more than 10 minutes away from most businesses they frequent, but the businesses in town that respondents were most willing to drive more than 10 minutes for were Job Lot and the CVS in Gales Ferry and Holdridge’s True Value in Ledyard. One “write in” comment was that there is no place to buy “stuff” in Ledyard.

	Ledyard	GF
Pharmacy	3	
CVS	16	1
Bank		
People's	1	
Charter Oak	1	
Ocean State Job Lot	24	1
Dollar Tree	6	
Village Market	5	6
Catalina's Asian Groceries		1
Shears and Gears		1
Holdridge's True Value	2	17
2 Gals		1
Full Heart farms		1
Sweet Hill Farm	1	
Pops Ice Cream	4	
Holmberg's Orchard	3	3
Foxwoods		2
Restaurants in General	3	
Zest	1	4
Dunkin Donuts	3	
Better Buzz Coffee	1	
McDonalds	3	
Village Pizza	2	
Yoko Loko	4	1
Fireside	1	
Ming Moon		1
Valentinos		3
Hairdresser	2	
Mirror Image Salon	2	
Fryes Barber Shop		1
GOAT	1	
The VAT		1
Church	1	
Senior Center	1	

Library		1
United Way	1	
Transfer Station		1
GF Pediatrics and Dentistry	1	
All of them!		1
Yes, would travel > 10 minutes to shop local	7	2
No, wouldn't travel > 10 Minutes	6	7
Every Business is >10min away!	1	3

Survey Summary Q12: The 3 most **underutilized resources** were the Town Green, the parks and trails throughout town and the waterfront location along the Thames which is barely utilized. Respondents identified the need to eliminate the blighted parcels in the two commercial district and breathe new life into the Rte. 12 Corridor through new development or redevelopment of empty buildings. As people and community events were also identified as underutilized resources, an opportunity to utilize the Town Green for more community events seems obvious. Concerts in the Town Green was suggested as well as allowing recreational activities on town water bodies and creating a Community Garden.

Underutilized resources	
GF Community Center	1
Ledyard Town Green	8
Libraries	2
Yale Harvard Regatta	1
Community Events	3
"Its People"	1
<i>Kindness of Neighbors</i>	1
<i>Senior Citizens</i>	1
<i>Youth and Volunteers</i>	1
Vacant and Town-owned Lots	4
Location near Casino	2
Route 12 in GF	5
Vacant and Underutilized Space in Both Business centers	2
<i>Seas of parking lots</i>	1
<i>Vacant Kartway parcel</i>	2
<i>Ledyard Center School and blighted property next to it</i>	2
<i>Vacant storefronts</i>	4
Open Space/Natural Beauty	5
Parks and Trails	10
Highland lake	4
Long Pond	1
Thames River - Riverfront Access	10
Groton Reservoir	2
Stoddard's Park	1

Historic Resources	1
<i>Nathan Lester House</i>	1
Farms	1
Holmberg's	1

Other general comments:

- Taxes too high with nothing to show for it; Reduce government spending by 5%
- Population willing to buy local – but no options to do so. Prices too high.
- Need land to build housing (particularly rental units) and infrastructure necessary to support growth. Water and sewers needed to support more dense housing and business development. Lack 5G service; Town needs sidewalks and bike lanes; EV Charging stations.
- Zoning Regulations do not allow enough uses – they do not support growth; Encourage smaller houses to attract new families and empty-nesters; allow an indoor sports complex (like Hill House in New Haven); allowing detached Accessory Apartments and allowing Airbnbs would help homeowners generate income.
- 25% of the EDC members should be business owners. Should be positive people that thrive on coming up with new ideas about making the community better.; Should be doers; should host a business round-table to learn how to better promote the businesses.
- Need to work to beautify this town; Town should invest in its parks – they need upkeep. Collaborate with local businesses to have more Town-sponsored events.
- Increase the frequency of recycling pick-up to once a week; aid residences at the Transfer Station.
- More should be done for the Senior Citizens; Put a light in or better lighting on Van Tassel Dr/entrance to Senior Center
- More opportunities and services needed for the youth; Allow Bill Library to expand; add seating or gazebo to town green area; need a *town gathering space* like a brew-pub.
- Ledyard Center gets more attention than Gales Ferry; Rte. 12 corridor needs to be redesigned to be more car and pedestrian friendly; Add more bike and running paths.
- Losing potential good candidates for local governance; People vote blindly; same candidates win over and over again and do nothing.
- Something needs to be done about the vandals and speeding motorcycles; First responders needed in town; People on Social media sites can be nasty at times

Questions to ask in the next survey:

- Would you be willing to support necessary infrastructure upgrades like water and sewer to bring businesses to town? (I would add- If yes, would you still support this if it meant an increase in taxes?)
- Should the Ledyard Fair be brought back?
- Should Ledyard:
 - adopt a Noise Ordinance?
 - Require sidewalks?
 - Have a policy of more streetlights?
 - Have more bicycle/walking paths?

- Require New England Architecture designs for new homes or commercial buildings?
- Prohibit storage sheds in front yards?
- Prohibit Accessory Apartments in front and/or rear yards?
- Adopt regulations to allow larger multi-family developments?
- Allow duplexes and single-family residents comingled in the same neighborhood?
- Adopt a policy of no public sewers to intentionally limit growth?
- Require underground utilities, narrower roadways, only one entry/exit point, and houses to be closer to the road in new subdivisions?
- “gift” vacant town-owned land to developers to build affordable housing (100% affordable) or grant temporary tax breaks to encourage the development of affordable apartments?
- Require new homes to have a solar orientation for solar panels?
- Do you follow Mayor Fred on Facebook?
- Add questions about current and future status/plans (Military? Have children or planning to have children? Retired? Planning to move out of town and why? Etc.)
- Are the taxes too high for the services provided? Are you satisfied with the current budget/taxes?; Are you satisfied with the School System?
- What do you like most about Ledyard/Gales Ferry? What made you choose Ledyard/GF over another town?
- Should we seek more public open space?
- What needs the most improvement? (I.e. parks, services, government, etc.)
- Questions about affordable housing? Where should multi-family units be built?
- Questions about Home Occupations or desires to start a business in town.
- Give more options for write-in comments; Make survey shorter.

POSSIBLE STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS/ACTIONS TO CONSIDER BASED ON SURVEY RESULTS:

Current regional goals in CEDS that relate:

- *Create a more resilient, inclusive and evolving, vibrant economy by focusing on innovation, competency, connectivity, flexibility, preparedness, diversity, collaboration, and sustainability.*
- *Strengthen and promote the Town’s assets so that the quality of life for residents becomes rooted in a strong sense of place and civic pride.*

Potential New Goals:

1. **Facilitate the creation of new businesses and community amenities identified as being desirable to residents (and potential new residents) through zoning reform and targeted investment.**
 - Align regulations with existing market conditions and emerging trends.
 - Reduce regulatory barriers to investment and uncertainty for developers to facilitate all forms of new investment (residential and commercial).

- Utilize land use regulations to emphasize desired uses and facilitate the development of a wider variety of businesses along the Route 12 corridor and in the Ledyard Center area.
- Ensure sufficient funds for ongoing maintenance and upkeep of Town Parks, trails and waterbodies suitable for recreation.

2. Enable the transformation of the physical environment into one that inspires continued investment.

- Focus on removing negative externalities that impact commercial areas such as blight, vacant buildings and storefronts, large empty parking lots, and outdated facades and signage.
- Encourage Mixed-use, walkable commercial areas that are connected to the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Adapt existing physical infrastructure to accommodate all forms of transit.
- Permit the development of more rental housing/Multi-family
- Ensure commercial areas are connected to neighboring residential areas with sidewalks and other multi-function paths.
- Redesign Rte. 12 corridor to be more car and pedestrian friendly; Add more bike and running paths.

3. Facilitate new commercial development and provide better exposure and support for existing businesses.

- Feature local businesses at events or on website; publish a Business Directory; host a Town-wide Open House/Block Party.
- Invest in programs that provide assistance to businesses to improve curb appeal (landscaping, lighting, structural updates and repair, underground utilities, sidewalks etc.)
- Invest in the infrastructure needed to support business growth and greater density residential development including water, sewer, and broadband (5G) capacity
- Capitalize on opportunities to use town-owned properties for possible affordable housing developments, or to provide connections between existing open space parcels (increase network of trails and parks etc.)

4. Build social capital – “cultivate” community leaders – engage citizens.

- Increase community involvement in government and provide more opportunities for *positive* social engagement and interaction such as the farmer’s market, Flea Market, Community Garden, Concert series on Town Green, and recreational activities on the rivers and lakes.
- Utilize the Town Green for more community events
- Utilize technology to increase participation in local government.
- Host community events to increase opportunities for interaction between residents and businesses and/or community leaders, volunteers and elected officials etc.

- Host a Celebrate Ledyard event to showcase local businesses and organizations, historic, cultural, and natural assets, and volunteer opportunities.
- Appoint more business owners and “doers” to the EDC.

Need a mission statement and broad goals... (NoSto example below)

North Stonington will work to attract capital investment while maintaining the distinctive small-town character that attracts residents, businesses and visitors.

The Town will use its resources efficiently, maintain transparency with strong communication, and continue to focus on quality of life and sustainability.

1. Create a unifying community identity by emphasizing our attributes and agricultural heritage.
2. Continually strengthen communication to ensure that the public is well informed on town business and initiatives.
3. Support the development of infrastructure necessary to create a sustainable local economy.
4. Promote and actively facilitate the development of diverse housing types.
5. **Develop fiscal policies that directly correlate to land use strategies.**
6. Streamline development processes and increase efficiency. Land use code will reflect community values and desire for new development to increase tax revenue

Defined goals can only be accomplished through strong community leadership. We will work to attract, retain, and empower committed leaders.