



# VINAL SQUARE STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN



April 13, 2015

# Committee Members

- William J. Gilet, Jr., Resident and Committee Chair
- Ryan Donaher, Resident and Committee Vice Chair
- Karen K. Mahoney, Business Representative and Committee Secretary
- Dr. John P. Crane, Business Representative
- George R. Dixon, Jr., Board of Selectmen Representative
- Robert P. Joyce, Planning Board Representative (March 2013 – April 2014)
- George Zaharoolis, Planning Board Representative (April 2014 – plan completion)
- Laura A. Lee, Historical Commission and North Town Hall/Community Center

# Vinal Square Strategic Action Plan

- Master plan for the Vinal Square Area
- Provides vision and direction for future development and improvements in the area



# Vinal Square Strategic Action Plan

- Neighborhood has a diverse population with differing needs
  - ▣ Many young adults (ages 20-45) and older adults (80+)
  - ▣ Many families with children
  - ▣ Many local businesses



# Study Area



# Key Committee Findings

- Need to address and define historic preservation goals
- Lack of visual markers or signs to indicate historic or important properties
- Capital improvements are necessary for both Varney and Southwell



# Key Committee Findings

- Lots of support for new and expanded recreational programming
- Need to develop and define economic development goals
- More branding and marketing initiatives are needed to keep residents involved and aware of what Vinal Square has to offer



# Recommendations

- 30 Recommendations in five categories
  - Historic and Cultural
  - Recreation and Programming
  - Economic Development and Revitalization
  - Regulatory and Procedural
  - Traffic and Infrastructure
- Recommendations developed by Committee with community input

# Historic & Cultural

- Document historic resources
- Encourage the use of historic signs
- Further investigate the establishment of a National Register Historic District that includes Vinal Square as well as surrounding residential and industrial areas
- Pursue the Cultural District Application

# Historic & Cultural

Promote the area's heritage and culture through collaborative activities with local businesses and organizations

*Vinal Square has a rich cultural and commercial character. The Town, local businesses, and organizations need to work together to further enrich the community's heritage and culture as well as bring more events and excitement to the neighborhood.*

# Recreation & Programming

- Update and distribute a self-guided walking tour brochure for Vinal Square
- Implement the Varney Playground Master Plan and explore additional programming at Varney Park
- Investigate the possibility of charging resident and non-resident fees for use of Varney Park and the beach at Freeman Lake
- Increase utilization of the North Common for community events and for marketing the businesses and cultural resources within Vinal Square
- Establish a collaborative focus on improving water quality in Freeman Lake

# Recreation & Programming

- Work with community organizations and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to improve Southwell Field, including the boat ramp located on the Merrimack River
- Link community events at the North Town Hall/Community Center, the North Common, the MacKay Library, local parks, and the Senior Center to businesses within Vinal Square

# Recreation & Programming

Organize special events similar to Doors Open Lowell and Art, History, Architecture in New Bedford and take advantage of the MA Historical Commission's On the Road Program

*Events and trainings encourage people to spend time in the area and learn more about the community. They also bring more customers and improve local business.*



REVITALIZING A CITY THROUGH ART



# Economic Development & Revitalization

- Review potential revitalization programs, such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Program, and determine the level of interest among the various potential stakeholders
- Seek technical assistance through available state programs such as the Department of Housing and Community Development's Massachusetts Downtown Initiative
- Forge a strong partnership between the local business community and the Town

# Economic Development & Revitalization

- Create and implement targeted economic development and marketing initiatives, partly focused on services for young adults and young families
- Work with area businesses to establish a local business association
- Pursue Community Development Block Grant funding for housing and business improvement projects within the study area

# Economic Development & Revitalization

Establish a façade improvement and streetscape program



# Regulatory & Procedural

- Modify the Community Enhancement and Investment Overlay (CEIOD) Bylaw to include requirements and design criteria specific to Vinal Square
- Refine and adopt the Mixed Use Overlay Zoning Bylaw and Design Guidelines for Vinal Square
- Consider amending the Zoning Bylaw and/or Regulations to guide the character and appropriateness of single-family residential construction
- Investigate the creation of a Neighborhood Conservation District Bylaw

# Regulatory & Procedural

**Retain the existing Vinal Square Strategic Action Plan Committee to serve in an advisory capacity**

*The residents and businesspeople in Vinal Square are its best and strongest ally. This committee should be retained and transformed into an advisory committee to assist with the implementation of these recommendations and serve as an advocate for Vinal Square and surrounding neighborhood.*

# Traffic & Infrastructure

- Permanently secure the public parking area located at 40 Vinal Square and improve signage for the parking areas
- Improve pedestrian facilities and connectivity within the study area
- Work with MassDOT to optimize the phasing and timing of the Princeton Street/Wotton Street traffic signals
- Continue to monitor the proposed commuter rail extension project

# Traffic & Infrastructure

Study the possibility of assuming local ownership and control of the state-owned roadways within Vinal Square

*Currently, the roadways within Vinal Square are owned and maintained by the state. It is possible for Chelmsford to take ownership of the roadways, but there are many positives and negatives so the idea needs to be thoroughly studied before any recommendation can be made.*

# Vinal Square Strategic Action Plan



Questions  
And  
Discussion

