

Vinal Square Strategic Action Plan Committee



Public Input Session – November 7, 2013

Bill Gilet, VSSAP Committee Chair

Beverly Woods, NMCOG

Agenda



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- I. Ground Rules, Committee and Objectives
 - II. Project Approach and Timeline
 - III. Study Area
 - IV. What We've Heard
 - V. Initial Ideas
 - VI. Public Input – SWOT
 - VII. Next Steps and Q&A

Ground Rules



- Keep it short – provide everyone with an opportunity to speak
- Keep it original – please do not repeat comments or thoughts
- Tonight’s session is not a debate – it is to share your ideas
- Let your creative thoughts flow – this is your community and you have a chance to help set the tone for the next 10-20 years
- Be respectful to others ideas – everyone’s opinion matters
- Set cell phones to vibrate

Committee



1. **Bill Gilet** – *Chairman*
2. **Ryan Donaher** – *Vice Chairman*
3. **Karen Mahoney** – *Secretary*
4. **Dr. John Crane** – *Committee Member*
5. **Laura Lee** – *Committee Member, Town Meeting Rep*
6. **George Dixon** – *Board of Selectmen Liaison*
7. **Bob Joyce** – *Planning Board Liaison*

Beverly Woods – *Northern Middlesex Council of Governments*

Evan Belansky – *Community Development Director*

Alison LeFlore – *Conservation Agent/Planner*

Committee Objectives



- Residents expressed to the Town an **interest in initiating a planning process to focus on moving the recommendations** of the 2010 Master Plan forward
- **Create an implementation strategy** (the “Plan”) based on town policy documents, including:
 - 2010 Master Plan
 - 2011 Affordable Housing Plan
 - 2012 NMCOG Vinal Square Traffic and Circulation Report
 - 2013 Historic and Cultural Preservation Plan
- The Plan will address **economic development, land use/zoning, traffic/circulation, open space, recreation, historic preservation, and housing**
- This Plan will **build on existing investments in Vinal Square**, such as the renovation of the North Town Hall and Varney Park/Playground improvements

This is the first Town created Committee that has exclusively focused on Vinal Square and the surrounding area

Project Approach & Timeline



Timing	Mobilize Committee	Interview Key Stakeholders	Public Input Sessions	Recommendations & Report	Phase II
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Committee roles Create study area Review existing studies of area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with town boards/committees that have an impact or interest in changes to the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand public's ideas and vision for revitalizing area Residents and business owners will be solicited separately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop report of recommendations and present to Town government Report should include short, mid and long term recommendations Report should focus on topics including land use/zoning, traffic/circulation, open space, recreation and historic preservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain additional state funding to continue project Develop plan to move forward Work with Mass DOT Work with NMOG on available funding
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master Plan Vinal Square Traffic Study Historic and Cultural Preservation Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Mgr Town Engineer Community Development Dir Planning Board Economic Development Comm Conservation Comm Historical Comm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents – Oct 3rd Business – Nov 7th 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine “quick wins” Begin to formulate longer term recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Execute “quick wins” Establish façade program Understand available sources of funding
Timing	Jan'13 – Mar'13	Mar'13 – Sep'13	Oct'13 – Nov'13	Nov'13 – Dec'13	FY'14
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Vinal Square Study Area



What We've Heard



Pro

"We are ready for change...it's long overdue"

"Chelmsford Center looks beautiful, why can't we do that here"

"I would like to see my property value go up, I am all for change"

Neutral

"We need to attract more vibrant people to Vinal Square"

"I would like to see a another restaurant" "I would like to see a bakery shop" "we need a liquor store"

"We need to change the traffic patterns and parking situation"

Con

"I don't want change, I want it to stay a scruffy old mill town"

"I like the cinder blocks, it's historical"

"I want to invest and develop in the Square, but I can't until I know there will be change"

Feedback to date has primarily supported change, however there are those with concerns and we must balance that....**we want to hear more from you!**

Project Phasing



The Committee's recommendations will be phased based on a number of factors, including cost and town/state approval. Some of the **initial ideas** are below.

Short Term (1-2 years)	Mid Term (2-10 years)	Long Term (10-20 years)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Park benches• Landscape buckets with flowers• Additional trees• Clean-up Southwell Park areas• Rezoning allowing for residential on top of commercial buildings• New business (e.g., pub, café, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brick walk-ways• Lanterns for street lights• Sidewalk along Tyngsboro road from Williamsburg to Square• Improved traffic design (work with Mass DOT)• Improved parking (work with Mass DOT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• TBD

The Town may be able to obtain grant funding to provide low/no interest loans/grants to help property owners pay for these improvements.

Your Perspective is Important!



- Local Businesses:
 - Provide jobs for the local community
 - Contribute to the Town's overall fiscal health
 - Provide valuable amenities and services
 - Control the most visible aspects of Vinal Square

What is a SWOT Analysis?



- SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.
- SWOT analysis is utilized by private industry and government agencies to collect the thoughts of all involved at the outset of a planning process.
- This exercise is designed to capture your personal thoughts about the Vinal Square area.

How Does The Process Work?



- There are no right or wrong answers and everyone is encouraged to express their thoughts and ideas
- As you express your thoughts about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to the Vinal Square area, we will record them on flip charts
- Please limit your responses to issues relevant to the Vinal Square area

What Happens Next?



- At the end of the SWOT Analysis, there will be a fifteen minute break so that you can place color coded dots on the flip chart sheets to prioritize those ideas which you feel are most important.
- Under this system, **RED** will represent your 1st priority, **GREEN** will indicate your 2nd priority, **BLUE** your 3rd priority, and **YELLOW** will indicate your 4th priority.
- Project staff will tally the results, which will be used by the Committee to better understand the priorities of the neighborhood.

What Are the Strengths of the Vinal Square Area?



- Overall
- Land Use
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Historical, Natural and Cultural Resources
- Open Space and Recreation
- Transportation

What are the Weaknesses of the Vinal Square Area?



- Overall
- Land Use
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Historical, Natural and Cultural Resources
- Open Space and Recreation
- Transportation

What Opportunities Are There to Improve the Vinal Square Area?



- Overall
- Land Use
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Historical, Natural and Cultural Resources
- Open Space and Recreation
- Transportation

What Are the Threats to the Vinal Square Area?

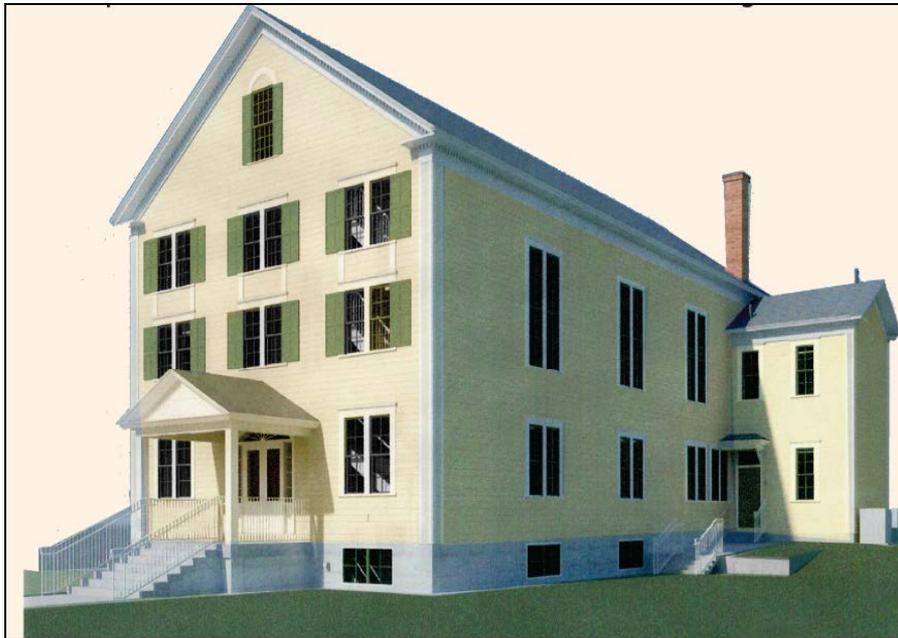


- Overall
- Land Use
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Historical, Natural and Cultural Resources
- Open Space and Recreation
- Transportation

Next Steps



The North Chelmsford Community has done some great things in the last few years....let's continue that momentum!



Renovated North Town Hall



Future Varney Park (\$496k grant)

Q&A



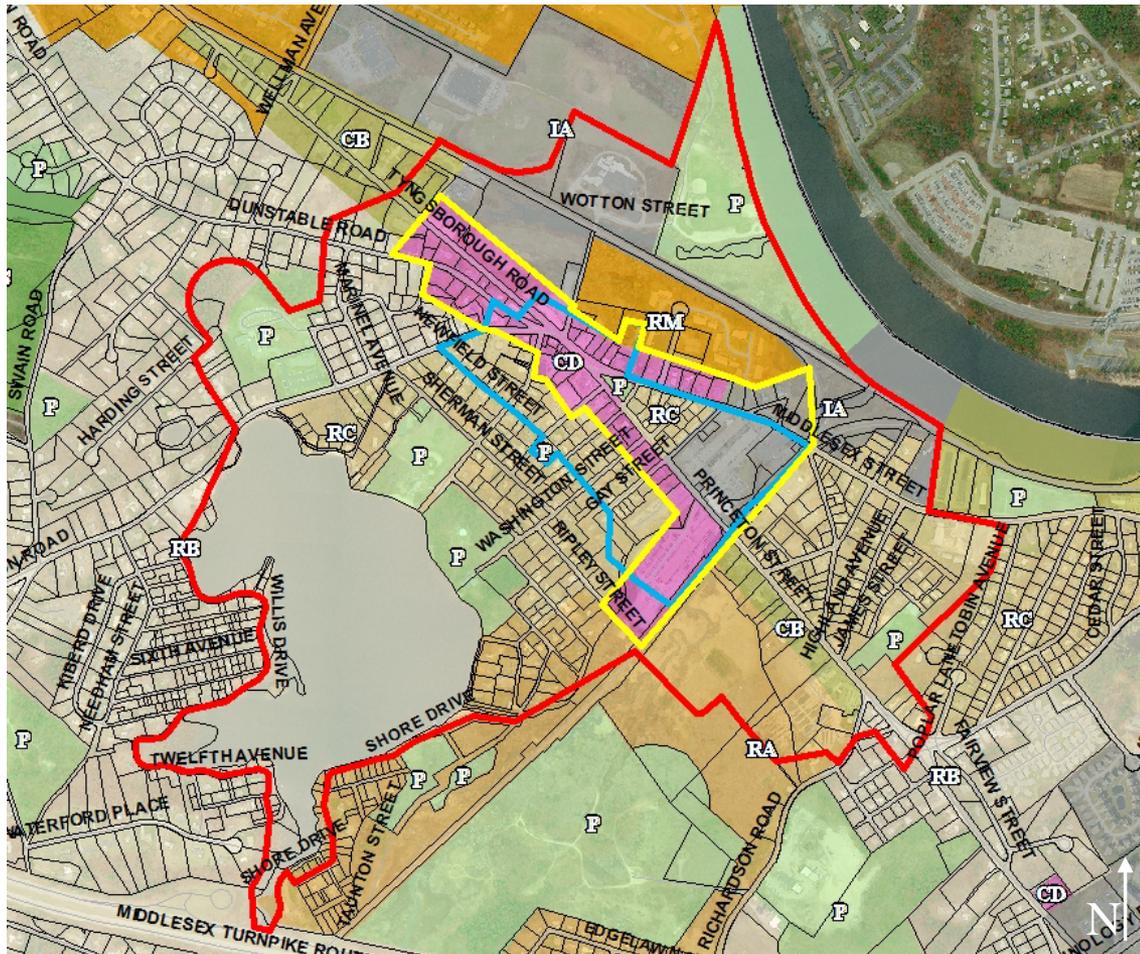
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND INPUT!

Appendix



Vinal Square Study Area

Current Zoning, Proposed Zoning and Proposed Cultural District



Zoning Districts

- CB Roadside*
- CD General*
- IA Limited*
- RA Single Residence
- RB Single Residence
- RC General Residence
- RM Multiple Residence
- P Public
- OS

* Community Enhancement & Investment Overlay District

- Proposed Village Center Overlay
- Proposed Cultural District
- Study Area

District Definitions



1 Overlay District	2 Cultural District	3 Study Area	4 Historical District
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Part of Master Plan• Creates new zoning by-laws• Primarily focuses on allowing residential over existing commercial/ industrial zoned buildings (multi-family)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Used to promote arts and cultural aspects within the community• No impact on zoning or historical resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Area the VSSAPC created to consider for this project• Does not include all of North Chelmsford, but extended beyond the Square itself	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More restrictive than National District• Local Historic Comm reviews and approves exterior changes• National<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allows owners of income producing properties tax incentives for rehab• Provides limited protection from adverse effects by fed/state projects