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TOWN OF CHELMSFORD  
VINAL SQUARE STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN  
COMMITTEE

Approved  
September 16, 2021

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Transportation Prioritization Presentation**  
**Northern Middlesex Council of Governments**

**July 15, 2021**

**7:00 P.M. CALL TO ORDER VIA ZOOM**

**Members Present:** Joe Tierney, Dan Rokas, Laura Lee, Bjll Gilet, Brian Creamer,  
Mike Walsh

**Others Present:** Evan Belansky, Director of Community Development  
Virginia Timmins, Select Board  
Colin Andrus, NMCOG

Mr. Tierney called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The purpose of the meeting is to present findings from the Town wide survey regarding transportation improvements in Vinal Square. Mr. Tierney thanked all who participated in the survey and those present for their participation in the survey.

**Background of the Committee's Work**

Mr. Tierney highlighted the work of the committee, such as Holiday tree lighting, Memorial Day parade and festivities, movie night, flower planters throughout the Square etc. He expressed appreciation to all who donate time to these efforts, and welcomes new volunteers. The Committee is also grateful for the assistance of the Police Dept. and the Dept. of Public Works at Varney Park. Milltown Plumbing donated volunteers and materials for clean up at the Park. Current projects include wayfinding signage, tree planters, and a new playground a Varney Park.

**Presentation**

Mr. Andrus of NMCOG stated that the goal of the survey was to gather feedback and develop a concept plan, with the public participation process documented. There were 148 responses.

Forty six percent cited roadway and traffic concerns, 23 percent parking problems, 10 percent walking and biking matters, 17 percent streetscape opinions, and the remainder citing recreation and general beautification/aesthetics

Hotspots named were needing a sidewalk on Tyngsboro Road, congestion and traffic exiting issues at the hardware store, Groton Road and Dunstable Road area; need for a better crosswalk at Wotton Street and at the North Congregational Church. Roadway problems were the amount of traffic through the square, the need to improve/modify traffic signals in the Square, improve traffic flow; redirect/reconfigure traffic and reduce ongoing truck traffic through the Square.

#### Dunstable Road Area

Specifically in the Dunstable Road area, many said there was a lot of congestion and backup entering Groton Road, poor visibility at the intersection, the timing of the signals is too short, and wrong way traffic on Adams Street.

#### Wotton Street

On Wotton Street, drivers experience long traffic backups after games at Southwell, too much truck traffic, and this truck traffic causing damage to the roadway.

#### Middlesex Street

Congestion at the Princeton Street/Middlesex Street merge; vehicles do not stop at the Middlesex Street traffic signal. Solutions would be to realign Prince Street and no left turn from Middlesex Street to Princeton Street.

#### Tyngsboro Road

Long traffic lines in morning rush hour traffic. Too much truck traffic.

#### Parking

More parking in general is needed, and more should be added for disabled people

#### Cut Through Traffic/Parking Lot Exits

There is lot of cut through traffic on Newfield Street, Sherman, Washington, Wright and Shaw Streets. Exiting the two parking lots in the Square is unsafe.

#### Streetscape

More neighborhood appeal is needed, possibly renovated buildings and coordinated storefronts. Would like to see street trees, benches, wider sidewalks, removal of overhead power lines, and better street lighting. Crosswalks should be high-visibility, and adjust all traffic signals to accommodate them. Sidewalks need widening in general and designed for outdoor dining. Sidewalk maintenance and snow clearing are ongoing issues experienced in the Square.

#### Summary

The most pressing problems in the Square were named as follows:

- Dunstable Road at Groton Road.
- Roadway and traffic flow

- Pedestrian safety/bicycle accommodation
- Poor condition of the pavement
- Vehicle access from side streets
- Traffic flow and signal times
- Not enough parking in Square or off street
- Poor management of existing parking supply
- Insufficient bus service

#### Wish List

Respondents reported as follows:

- Commuter rail stop in Vinal Square
- Additional parking for disabled persons
- Add benches
- Better sidewalks
- Increase bus service and availability of schedules
- Street trees and landscaping
- Widen sidewalks
- Utilize local art for beautification of the Square

#### Public Input from Participants

There were questions as to the maintenance of the sidewalks, the overgrown grass in some area, and that there is no sidewalk snow removal. These are all the Town's responsibility.

Other questions included the possibility of a commuter rail in the Square, and would noise control and other environmental factors be evaluated. Such issues would definitely be studied as part of the process.

Another resident noted that sidewalks are not ADA compliant and wanted to bring this to the Town's attention.

The meeting concluded at 8:15 p.m. Mr. Tierney thanked everyone for their participation.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Murphy