



## **MAYOR DAVID J. NARKEWICZ**

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**For Immediate Release – May 28, 2020**

### **City of Northampton Receives \$10k Grant To Design Safe Outdoor Dining and Curbside Shopping in Downtown Districts**

NORTHAMPTON - Today, Mayor David J. Narkewicz announced that the city received a \$10,000 design grant from the Lawrence & Lillian Solomon Foundation to encourage outdoor dining and easy curbside purchases on Main Street in Northampton and Florence, consistent with COVID-19 safe distancing practices.

“Expanded outdoor dining has long been a desired addition to the downtown experience, and many see it as a critical component of economic redevelopment in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. This design will help us provide safe social separation, serve our residents’ needs, and help begin the business recovery process,” said Mayor David J. Narkewicz. “We are working closely with the business community to convert parts of downtown into attractive streetscapes for dining, pickup, and easy access. While there are still a lot of details to work out, the city is united around a desire to make this happen.”

The Downtown Northampton Association (DNA) and the Florence Civic Association are actively surveying their members to identify needs, which vary from outdoor dining space, curbside pickup space, less congested sidewalks, and easy parking.

“The Downtown Northampton Association strongly supports this idea, which arose almost simultaneously from the city and from local restaurants,” shared Amy Cahillane, Executive Director of the DNA, “We’re working together to make sure that once we have the green light from health and safety experts, we’re ready to open for business on the streets.”

Toole Design and Street Plans, already under contract by the city for another long-term project related to downtown Northampton, will be hired with the Solomon Foundation funding to design the Main Street plan. The grant is specifically intended for Main Street in downtown Northampton, as it is the most complex system part of this initiative, but both Central Business Districts are open for consideration for expanded outdoor uses.

Many city departments are working together on this effort. The Health Department has endorsed outdoor dining to ensure social separation in unconfined space. The Police Department has committed to help with security, noting that an active downtown has less vandalism and other negative behaviors than an empty downtown. The Department of Public Works will deploy necessary barriers and provide

labor. Planning & Sustainability and the Mayor's office have secured the funding and are coordinating efforts.

Tax deductible donations in support of this project can be made payable to the City of Northampton ('Tourism Gift Account' on the memo line) and be mailed to Planning & Sustainability, 210 Main Street, Northampton, MA 01060. Donations by credit card or debit can be made to <https://tinyurl.com/Northampton-streetscape> (select donation and note streetscape).

For more information, please contact the Mayor's Office at 413-587-1249 or [mayor@northamptonma.gov](mailto:mayor@northamptonma.gov).