



**CITY OF NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS
URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION
125 Locust Street
Northampton, MA 01060-2066
413-587-1570**

Main Street Redesign Statement

August 3, 2021

The City of Northampton Urban Forestry Commission strongly favors a redesign of Main Street that prominently features public shade trees. Our recommendation is that there be a continuous tree canopy on both sides of Main Street for the entire affected construction area, from Elm Street in front of St. Mary's Church to the Market/Hawley Street intersection.

The recent Picture Main Street survey demonstrated overwhelming public support for new public shade trees on Main Street. Increasing the urban canopy mitigates the effects of climate change and protects public health. Additional known benefits of a robust tree canopy are reductions in the urban heat island effect, reductions in air pollution, and mitigation of precipitation from storm events. The urban canopy further creates a more beautiful, people-friendly environment that contributes to both commercial and cultural richness.

We recommend improving Northampton Main Street Redesign Alternative #3 in order to provide sufficient space for a continuous canopy on both sides of Main Street by considering the following:

1. Increase the number of tree planting locations on the existing plan. While the present plan does increase the overall tree canopy, we recommend a full reevaluation of all locations on Main Street with the goal of closing gaps in canopy coverage.
2. Implement a design which uses the appropriate soil substrate from the street curb edge to existing building façades in order to create the optimum rooting space for the proposed canopy while supporting the required hardscape features, as soil volume and soil characteristics are directly correlated to a tree's health and longevity.
3. Involve the Tree Warden and Urban Forestry Commission at all stages of the design and construction to ensure proper identification of proposed planting locations, soil substrate and tree species. Construction will need to be closely monitored to ensure proper installation.

We recognize that in achieving the goal of creating a continuous canopy on both sides of Main Street that some or all of the existing public shade trees may require removal, given the level of construction. The Urban Forestry Commission fully supports this approach in order to achieve a continuous canopy on Main Street.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Urban Forestry Commission,

Richard C. Parasiliti Jr., Ex-officio Chair

Voting Members: Richard C Parasiliti Jr, Ex-officio Chair • Sue Lofthouse, Vice Chair • Marilyn Castriotta • Molly Hale • David Lukens • Rob Postel • Jen Werner •