

**INITIATIVE PETITION TO THE NORTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL FOR THE
REPEAL OF RESOLUTION 23.389 “A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF PICTURE
MAIN STREET”**

Be it resolved by the People, and their authority:

WHEREAS the cost of the Picture Main Street Project [continues to rise exponentially without any clear and viable plan to cover the gap between state and federal funding and the City’s burden](#); and foreign and economic policy is already inflating the cost of key building materials, fuel and other energy prices, and [stalling other building projects](#) with no indication this will reverse course;

WHEREAS the project is already [twice delayed before it has even started](#) (which increases project costs by the day, as well as losses, hardships and inconveniences to local and small businesses and residents, and proves true their publicly stated and well documented concerns about the same);

WHEREAS the City and this administration now has a [demonstrated track record](#) of ignoring widespread public opposition to undertake major purchases and development projects without concrete plans of execution or contingency, and based on insecure, unstable or as-yet-unmaterialized funding (in the form of the now-stalled “resiliency hub”);

WHEREAS the Picture Main Street project is predicated on justifications that arguably were never but in any event are no longer true (e.g., that the parking garage has [sufficient parking](#) to compensate for the loss of spaces along Main Street, as it too is now [mostly closing due to unsafe conditions](#) resulting from lack of proactive planning and maintenance);

WHEREAS the project makes the City of Northampton dependent on federal and state funding that is inarguably unstable and unreliable as long as federal funding is being politicized, and can be compromised in retaliation and without immediate recourse at any time during the project’s duration;

WHEREAS the actioned embodiment of the “No Kings” movement the City’s administration has publicly championed is to make the difficult and principled decision to *actually* reject or resist targeted attacks on immigrants, women and trans people who have made the city their home. The ability to meaningfully protect marginalized communities depends on Northampton’s level of sovereignty and independence from state and federal funding or other political leverage;

WHEREAS a large and growing number of residents are either rightly concerned or outright opposed to the project (as evidenced by countless social media posts and comments, [a public petition that already has almost 3,000 signatures](#) [12% of the voting population], many op-eds and letters to the editor [e.g., [Herrell](#); [Herrell, Winston, Welch and Mager](#); [Stahlberg](#); [Ahrens](#); [Addis](#); [Platt](#)] [media reporting](#); the formation of public opposition initiatives like Save Paradise City, and the fact that the City has had to fund a lobbying/marketing campaign to convince the

citizenry that it wants or needs an unpopular major town redesign that is guaranteed only to benefit the developers, consultants and contractors that the funding will enrich directly with no certain return on the People's investment, business owners' ledgers, public safety, disability access or the City's economy;

WHEREAS continuing to extol the virtues of Picture Main Street's "[human-centered](#)" design while ignoring, dismissing or deflecting the common-sense and lived-experience objections of the *actual humans* at the center of the project's effects is misguided at best, patriarchal and condescending at worst; but in any event is the hallmark of policy designed by those who are paid or otherwise incentivized to beg a question;

WHEREAS the City's policy of deferring routine street and [sidewalk maintenance](#), especially its failure or refusal to paint standard lane lines down the center of Main Street is dangerous and expensive to its residents' and visitors' health, safety and property, and introduces the town and its taxpayers to liability in the event of a serious accident or injury where the town's negligence at the most basic of highway safety measures can be proven (and is herein alleged as public record);

WHEREAS reducing traffic lanes and making it more difficult for residents and visitors to travel by car will have an almost-nil causal effect on encouraging more people to travel by foot or bicycle as their primary mode of transportation, especially in winter or rain. It will simply further discourage them from shopping and doing business in downtown Northampton, opting instead to shop, run errands or eat in places where they can park easily in closest, most convenient proximity;

WHEREAS focusing an entire town's design on a minority population of users is neither equitable nor will it improve accessibility for people who require automobile transportation for wheelchairs and other ambulatory devices;

WHEREAS serious issues of transparency and potential conflicts of interest have been raised in multiple forums both online and in person, [not only by the public but by duly elected officials](#), the People are duty-bound and entitled to the appropriate time and processes to undertake objective public oversight before any such project of this cost, scope and potential for catastrophic loss can proceed.

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED that the material conditions and underlying premises of the Picture Main Street project have changed substantially since the adoption of the resolution in support.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that although the Council's resolution in support claims an inclusive process and that "ideas, goals, and suggested compromises" were "considered," the large and growing number of voters, residents, taxpayers, small and local business owners who still oppose it nearly three years later prove that such consideration has been insufficient and ineffective.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that despite the Council's resolution for the community to "come together" around the project, in the time since its adoption, it has become the most divisive issue facing Northampton, and would almost certainly be struck down by the People if taken to a public referendum.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in view of the foregoing, it would be irresponsible, potentially negligent and could constitute a breach of trust under M.G.L. 268A for members of the Council to continue endorsing it or using taxpayer money to fund it.

The following registered voters subscribe to the above initiative petition:

Sign: _____ Print: _____ Address: _____