

# CITY OF KINGSTON

## Office of the Mayor

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Steven T. Noble  
Mayor



### **Statement from Mayor Noble Regarding the Pike Plan:**

Tonight, I am meeting with the Common Council's Finance and Audit Committee to request \$1 million to remove the City-owned sidewalk canopies along portions of Wall Street and North Front Street, known as the Pike Plan. This funding will include the removal of the structure, which is at the end of its useful life; repairs to building façades where the Pike Plan was attached; and new lighting that will better illuminate the sidewalks and storefronts.

Since I first issued a joint statement with Council President Andrea Shaut in April, our City Engineer spent three months conducting multiple inspections of the structure. I now better understand the concerns and liability risks this structure imposes on Kingston taxpayers, business owners and customers. This severely limits our options. We must remove the Pike Plan as soon as possible for the well-being of all concerned. There is no option to repair—the current structure must be removed entirely due to its declining structural integrity and deteriorating condition.

If the Council acts as quickly as I feel is necessary, the Pike Plan removal would begin in January 2025 and take approximately 3-6 weeks. This would allow the holiday shopping season to take place Uptown without the headaches of construction work.

After the removal, I believe we should return the historic facades underneath the Pike Plan to their original form and leave the beautiful architecture exposed. Studies have shown that similar canopies in other parts of the U.S. have limited visibility to storefronts and hindered security. Once the canopies were removed, merchants and patrons reported a brighter downtown with increased visibility to stores, greater security, increased prominence for historic architectural details, and a generally more open and pleasant environment. For these reasons, we will see higher foot traffic into our tourism-dependent shops and restaurants.

In a 2009 letter from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the OPRHP called the Pike Plan a “non-contributing or non-historic” feature of the National Register-listed Stockade Historic District and recommended, “to demolish the Pike Plan and to restore the historic storefronts rather than extend the life of the non-historic feature.”

I believe the City should support all our historic buildings in this city, regardless of the neighborhood and so I am also proposing that the Council set aside up to \$2M for a citywide Façade Fund, which would provide grants for any low- to moderate-income building owners across Kingston-- not just Uptown-- funding to revitalize their storefronts and commercial spaces.

An estimate from 2020 to rebuild the Pike Plan was approximately \$8 million. Factoring inflation, this construction project could cost taxpayers \$10 million. I believe we should instead invest in our business community throughout the City of Kingston and ensure that all businesses have the same opportunities for improvement.

Our small businesses, our vibrant arts scene, our many festivals and community events, and most of all, our *people* are what make Kingston unique. The Pike Plan has served its purpose. It is time to move on. I am resolute that this path is in the best interest not only of the Uptown businesses but the City of Kingston as a whole.