



City of Northampton and UMassFive College Federal Credit Union Bring Soofa Signs to Northampton to Increase Street-Level Democracy

Cambridge, MA, August 4, 2021 – The City of Northampton, in partnership with UMassFive College Federal Credit Union (UMassFive), is bringing Soofa technology to its downtown area to keep residents informed with up-to-date city information, community resources, and local events. Northampton is the second community in Western Massachusetts to implement Soofa technology into its smart city infrastructure, following nearby Amherst.

Northampton is located in what is known as the “Knowledge Corridor”, a region that is home to several universities, including Smith College and the University of Massachusetts Amherst, the flagship and largest campus in the University of Massachusetts system. The City of Northampton is known for its bustling arts, culture, and academic scenes. Pedestrians in the downtown area will find restaurants, shops, cafés, and the newly-installed Soofa Signs. The Soofa Signs can be found along Main Street in Downtown Northampton, with one near the recently-renovated Pulaski Park.

The City of Northampton has partnered with Soofa in an effort to increase street-level democracy in their community. The Soofa Signs will share relevant local news and municipal updates. By making this information available on the street level, the City is helping to ensure all constituents have access to critical updates.

“Whether it's sharing events going on in our downtown area or alerting Northampton residents about changes to public health guidelines, communicating with our residents is as essential as it's ever been,” said Northampton Mayor David Narkewicz. “By bolstering our communications infrastructure with Soofa's technology, we are able to bring important information into Northampton's outdoor areas and public spaces, making this information readily available to all residents. We're looking forward to our partnership with Soofa.”

The Signs are wrapped in a full-color vinyl sticker, featuring UMassFive's signature purple. The back of the solar-powered Sign highlights the Credit Union's solar financing program and displays a city map directing residents and tourists to nearby sights. The back also directs passersby to visit the City's website and social media channels to learn more about what's happening in their community.

“UMassFive is thrilled to support the City of Northampton in leveraging 100% solar-powered electronic displays in the downtown area to better communicate local events and resources, and to help promote our local businesses,” said Craig Boivin, VP of Marketing at UMassFive. “We're a financial institution that's committed to sustainability, so helping our communities finance and embrace green technologies—especially in public spaces where everyone can benefit—is a natural fit for us.”



Media Release

“We are thrilled to partner with the City of Northampton and UMassFive to support the city’s communications efforts and ensure that all residents have access to important city updates,” said Sandra Richter, CEO and co-founder of Soofa. “We look forward to our Signs becoming a part of the fabric of this wonderful community.”

About Soofa:

Soofa, a female-founded startup out of the MIT Media Lab, builds the first of its kind, solar-powered digital sign with e-ink display. The Signs display a combination of city updates, community-generated content, and local business information. The Sign also updates passersby on real-time transit information and local events while engaging users with poll questions relevant to their community. The [Soofa Sign was featured by Engadget](#) as a finalist for Best Vision for the Future at CES and was [described by Curbed as the Facebook wall for the real world](#).

About UMassFive:

UMassFive College Federal Credit Union (UMassFive) was established in 1967 and serves the University of Massachusetts, as well as the Five College System and over 50 other local organizations that share their community-based values and vision for a sustainable local economy. As a non-profit financial cooperative, UMassFive’s earnings are returned to their membership in the form of better rates, lower fees, and improved services and banking technology. The Credit Union offers a full range of financial products, including personal and business banking and lending, retirement planning and investments, and insurance. UMassFive has over 42,000 members, six branches, and assets of over \$600 million. For more information about UMassFive, please visit www.umassfive.coop

Media Contact:

Allyson Noonan

Email: allyson.noonan@gmail.com