



Sept. 18, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Please accept this letter of strong support for the Maine Department of Transportation's grant application under the **2023 U.S. Department of Transportation Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Program**. The application outlines important plans to significantly improve the Libbytown neighborhood in Portland, Maine, via the elements included in the *Reconnecting Our Villages: Historic Libbytown* ("Project") to revitalize and reconnect this area as a result of the construction of Interstate 295 in the late 1960's. The work will improve connections throughout the community by:

- Reconstructing numerous streets to include traffic calming features and ADA-compliant sidewalks and crosswalks;
- Installing sidewalks and bikeways to encourage active transportation along right-of-ways that are safe and modern;
- Improving transit stops to support stronger community-wide accessibility; and
- Constructing a roundabout that is safe and improves traffic flow for drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians.

The Project will lift burdens and support accessibility to housing, employment, retail, healthcare, tourism and recreation – including the state's \$14 billion tourism industry critical to Maine's economy.

As the largest hospital in Maine and the state's only Level-One verified trauma center, Maine Medical Center takes care of critically injured and acutely ill patients from across the state and throughout our region. Our hospital is a large part of the neighborhood where these improvements would be taking place, and is tremendously impacted by the current transportation layout, which is a confusing mix of antiquated one-way streets.

Simplified and improved transportation corridors leading to our hospital would dramatically and positively impact emergency medical transport vehicles that come to our facilities every day, at all hours, from all parts of Maine, potentially shaving life-saving minutes from their critical trips to our emergency department.

In addition, as I've stated, we treat patients from throughout the region at our hospital, with the most acute medical cases coming to Portland for care. Because of this, we often have already stressed and often overwhelmed patients and their families attempting to navigate a confusing



array of one-way streets in Maine's largest city – which is vastly different from their small hometowns. Any efforts made to improve their literal and physical access to care would significantly improve their experience.

And as one of the largest employers in the city, it is important that our care team members can easily get to work so they can provide care to all who seek it. Improving traffic flow with targeted, strategic investments will help our teams help our communities.

We are pleased MaineDOT in coordination with the City of Portland are seeking assistance from USDOT for this very important Project and hope USDOT is able to assist funding these improvements. We recognize the importance of supporting USDOT merit criteria and providing equitable transportation options. Modernizing neighborhood transportation leads to safe and efficient connections and a better quality of life for all.

Sincerely,

Jennifer McCarthy
Chief Operating Officer
Maine Medical Center