



September 6, 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* plan (the "Project") to revitalize and reconnect this area following the construction of Interstate 295 in the late 1960s. 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 rights-of-way 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 restore neighborhood connectivity and support accessibility to housing, employment, retail, healthcare, tourism, and recreation – including the state's \$14 billion tourism industry critical to Maine's economy. Furthermore, the Project will directly enhance bicycle and pedestrian safety and transit accessibility for the more than 170 low- and moderate-income households that reside in our five properties located within two blocks of the proposed improvements.

We are pleased that MaineDOT and 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,

Rebecca Hatfield  
President & CEO