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September 13, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

The Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce represents over 1,300 members in eight communities in Greater Portland, employing over 65,000 Mainers. Please accept our 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.

Located at the confluence of our downtown and residential neighborhoods along a critical east-west transportation corridor, the Project will support accessibility to housing, employment, retail, healthcare, tourism and recreation – including the state's \$14 billion tourism industry critical to Maine's economy. Introducing purpose-built multimodal options and enhanced connectivity and traffic flow will undoubtedly assist those getting to work in whatever mode best fits within their schedules and budget. Additionally, a central component of our policy agenda at the Chamber is supporting public transportation. Currently, our region's largest bus and Amtrak station at the Portland Transportation Center (PTC) is located on the opposite side of I-295 from our downtown core. Traversing to the PTC on foot, bike, or transit is currently a challenging endeavor. Creating better connectivity between our downtown and the PTC is critical for encouraging use of intercity bus and train options for workers, residents and businesses alike to reach major destinations in Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Quincy Hentzel'.

Quincy Hentzel
President & CEO