



September 7, 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 leading Bicycle and Pedestrian safety organization in the state, we know the enormous value of and need for improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. With rising traffic fatalities and the need to move away from single-occupancy vehicles, we need better bike/ped infrastructure now more than ever. This project will be an important step in that direction for the city of Portland.

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,

Jean Sideris
Executive Director

