

February 23, 2024

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of Greater Portland Metro, I write to express our support of the *Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity* (RAISE) Program application submitted by the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) for the *East Deering: Pathways to Bridge the Gap Project* (Project). This application is submitted in partnership with the City of Portland and the Initiative for Digital Engineering and Life Sciences (IDEALS).

The Project will expand, redesign, and improve active transportation and roadway infrastructure in the East Deering neighborhood of Portland, Maine—creating a critical link between East Deering and the Old Port section of downtown Portland. The Project will improve community connectivity by:

- Creating new and restoring existing multi-use bike and pedestrian pathways that are safe and modern to encourage active transportation;
- Upgrading neighborhood roads and intersections to conform with Complete Street principles; and
- Adjusting an interstate off-ramp to improve campus, transit and neighborhood traffic flow and alleviate impacts to a historic neighborhood and nearby disadvantaged communities.

The East Deering neighborhood, including existing residents and businesses as well as future development that may be enabled by this Project, would reap the benefits of these improved multimodal options. For Metro's part, we have already committed to improving service to the East Deering neighborhood. This spring, Metro is planning on adding even more service to the East Deering neighborhood, further enhancing the area's propensity for transit and other active modes of transportation.

The improvements proposed by the Project will help reduce individual dependence on automobiles even further, by providing safe and accessible connections to transit, inviting folks to walk and bike to local destinations, and ensure that the neighborhood is not overburdened by traffic from the interstate highway. As the East Deering neighborhood develops, this Project will encourage new residents and commercial to get around without using a car.

We are supportive of this transformational Project to support important neighborhood connections throughout Portland.

Thank you for your strong consideration of MaineDOT's RAISE proposal.

Sincerely,

Greg Jordan

Greg Jordan, Executive Director, Greater Portland Metro