

December 11, 2024

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

RE: **Maine Department of Transportation's** application to fund the *Sparkling New Life into Maine's Star City Project* under the **FY 2025 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program**

Dear Secretary of Transportation,

Please accept this letter of strong support for the Maine Department of Transportation's ("MaineDOT") application for an FY 2025 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant. The *Sparkling New Life into Maine's Star City Project* ("Project") consists of significantly improving multimodal infrastructure and increasing safe access to businesses along Main Street/U.S. Route 1 through downtown Presque Isle.

The City of Presque Isle is a significant regional service center in rural northern Maine. U.S. Route 1, which bisects downtown, has long been the sole freight route in the region, serving the area's important forestry, agriculture, and military industries and is a vital trade lane with Canada. Because of growing freight and regional traffic, the city's downtown transportation infrastructure experiences significant deterioration and contributes to unsafe conditions for users of all transportation modes.

The Project includes:

- Redesigning numerous streets to include safe traffic calming features, sidewalks, and crosswalks;
- Repaving or rebuilding roadways, sidewalks, and pathways to address structural deficiencies; and
- Reconfiguring a dangerous five-way intersection to reduce crashes and increase multimodal safety.

The University is investing millions of dollars in upgrading and improving its infrastructure, including classrooms, dormitories, and our own walkways and roadways in its efforts to accelerate the enrollment growths we have experienced since 2020. But the University will only be fully successful in our goals to attract more residential students and retaining them as citizens following graduation if Presque Isle continues to move forward in its infrastructure and community revitalization efforts, ensuring a municipality that is attractive both to recent graduates and long-time community members.

The Project will return transportation in Presque Isle to a state of good repair while maintaining the character of the community through safe mobility options and connectivity to employment and businesses. Improving multimodal access through a critical regional service center results in safer connectivity and promotes stronger economic development in rural Maine. In light of these considerations, we respectfully request the Office of the Secretary of Transportation give favorable consideration to the *Sparkling New Life into Maine's Star City Project*.

Sincerely,



Raymond J. Rice, Ph.D.
President
University of Maine at Presque Isle

EXPECT

An education that defies expectation.