

Department of Public Works

Mike Murray

Director

September 13, 2024



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

RE: Maine Department of Transportation's application to fund the *Franklin Street Redesign Planning Project in Portland, Maine* under the FY 2024–2026 Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of the City of Portland Department of Public Works, I write to express support for the Maine Department of Transportation's ("MaineDOT") Planning Grant application under the FY 2024–2026 Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program. *The Franklin Street Redesign Planning Project in Portland, Maine* ("Project") presents a critical opportunity to reconstruct the Franklin Street corridor in Portland, Maine in order to reconnect communities impacted by past transportation decisions.

Franklin Street has a long and complex history that mirrors the urban renewal challenges faced by many American cities. Until the 1960s, Franklin Street was a two-lane city street, home to thriving communities, including several immigrant and diverse populations. Through the 1970s, Franklin Street was rebuilt as a swift connection between I-295 and Portland's downtown and waterfront. The dramatic realignment resulted in the displacement of residents and business owners. That redesign also severed the neighborhood, cutting off connectivity to neighbors and everyday needs as well as preventing safe active transportation as an option.

The Project consists of completing the final phase of planning activities to reconstruct this critical corridor. The plans will expand upon two decades of conceptual planning and community engagement to re-envision Franklin Street. Project benefits include:

- Strengthened community connections through a restored street grid,
- Improved safety and accessibility for all transportation types,
- Enhanced climate resiliency through reduced car dependency and integrated green street infrastructure; and
- Increased opportunities for new mixed-use development and affordable housing.

The Department of Public Works has been focused on the revisioning of this important corridor for some time. It served as the Project Lead for the Franklin Street Feasibility Study, which resulted in a concept for a more urbanized Franklin Street in 2015. In more recent years, our Water Resources Division has identified this location as an important corridor for future stormwater and resiliency outcomes to aid in adapting our 17th through 19th-century City to 21st-century climate change. The Department has been, and remains committed to these outcomes.

Thank you for your strong consideration of the *Franklin Street Redesign Planning Project in Portland, Maine*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mike Murray', followed by a large, stylized flourish that loops around and extends to the right.

Mike Murray
Director