



Commissioner Bruce A. Van Note
State of Maine Department of Transportation
16 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0016

RE: Local funding for the Federal Highway Administration FY 2023 & FY 2024 National Scenic Byway Program Grant
Application project titled: **Schoodic National Scenic Byway Discovery & Recreation Hub**

Dear Commissioner Van Note,

The byway project will create a Discovery & Recreation Hub located at the existing Sorrento-Sullivan Recreation Center on Rt 1 at the start of the Schoodic National Scenic Byway. The project will become a multi-faceted welcome center for visitors. It will be a safe place to pull off the highway and find general byway travel information, recreational activities on site and across the region, and amenities to make the stop more pleasant. The proposed site improvements will coexist with the recreation center's library, historical society, event space, playground, skate park and exercise path. The project will provide everyone with recreational, social, equitable and economic benefits all in one place.

The project will include access to an ADA restroom in the existing building, an outdoor pavilion for shade and bike groups to gather, a bike repair station, EV chargers, a new visitor parking area, a regional transit bus stop, connections to nearby recreation areas, improved access to the site's recreation facilities, byway maps and signage for wayfinding, local business information, interpretive exhibits, site amenities like benches and picnic tables, coastal outdoor art, a pollinator learning garden, children's granite block "discovery" area, improved landscaping along Route 1, and a new exhibit for the award winning Kids Quest program. The exhibit will be "Coastal Forests" and include a discovery trail in the wooded area of the property.

The byway's vision for this project has been in the works for years and we are excited to make it happen! We have collaborated with many individuals, local organizations, and several municipalities and have their general and financial support to proceed. For our part in this cooperative effort, the Schoodic National Scenic Byway is committing \$10,000 in cash to the project. The committee has the funds in hand and will convey them to the town of Sullivan if the grant is awarded. All matching funds committed to the project by stakeholder organizations will be given to the Town of Sullivan who will work closely with the Maine Department of Transportation to complete the necessary agreements to undertake the design and construction of the project.

This National Scenic Byway grant is the perfect opportunity for the Byway Community to develop a significant visitor facility focused on immersing people in the local history & culture of the Schoodic Peninsula. Traveling families and people of all ages and economic backgrounds will have free access to the building's restrooms, site amenities, a bike hub, and numerous site activities. The redesigned parking lot, new visitor-specific parking area, and new sidewalks will allow everyone to use the site more efficiently and safely. In closing, this significant byway project will be key to both improving the byway and the town's comprehensive plan to rebuild a historic village center with safe non-motorized connections between public parks, waterfront access sites, schools, and Route 1 businesses.

Sincerely,

Barbara Shanahan, Chairperson
Schoodic National Scenic Byway
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