



Town of Windham

Fire - Rescue Department

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February 16, 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 ("MaineDOT") and the Town of Windham's grant application for a 2023 U.S. Department of Transportation Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity ("RAISE") Grant. The application outlines MaineDOT's important plans to significantly improve North Windham, Maine via the *North Windham Moves: Regional Mobility - Local Access Project* ("Project"). The Project will implement numerous required safety and mobility improvements by:

- Reconstructing U.S. 302 and State Routes 35 and 115 to implement **numerous roadway and active transportation safety improvements**, including the elimination of left turns, the addition of traffic calming features and new ADA-compliant sidewalks and crosswalks
- Constructing local connector roads – an **East Connector Road, Middle Connector and West Connector** – that will provide drivers with easier access to the region's commercial center and significantly reduce congestion and crashes on busy U.S. Route 302 and two high-volume state roads
- Adding **multi-use pathways** that provide a safe route to encourage walking and biking to and from the commercial district
- Improving **sight distance, lighting, streetside utility easements, drainage and greenspace**

These improvements will improve safety, reduce inefficient roadway bottlenecks and increase accessibility to the rural region's retail and employment centers as well as vital tourism and recreation points critical to Maine's economy.

As the commercial hub for the lakes region this area of town is our busiest single response district. Emergency response in this area is highly challenging and especially dangerous for our first responders and the public. The traffic congestion often requires that emergency responders are traveling against the flow of traffic in "grid lock" conditions. This area of town is a high crash area with no ability to safely re-route traffic around emergency scenes. Unfortunately this one mile stretch of road has been subject to three pedestrian fatalities in as many years. The new access roads will provide for alternative traffic routing as well as control intersection access for emergency vehicles operating in emergent and non-emergent situations.

We are excited that MaineDOT and the Town of Windham are seeking assistance from USDOT for this very important Project which will improve safety for all roadway users and greatly reduce U.S. highway and state road congestion. We hope USDOT is able to assist in funding these improvements which cover all aspects of USDOT's merit criteria for funding. Modernizing rural towns to make them safe, efficient, walkable and better connected to shopping, employment, housing and tourism helps improve the quality of life for residents and creates a safe and enjoyable experience for visitors to Maine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brent J. Libby".

Brent J. Libby
Chief of Department