

February 1, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590



Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of Northeastern University, I write to express the university's 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.

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 and neighborhood traffic flow and alleviate impacts to a historic neighborhood and nearby disadvantaged communities.

Northeastern University—which operates The Roux Institute at Northeastern in the Old Port—has identified the East Deering neighborhood for future expansion of its graduate school campus on a repurposed former manufacturing site. Since its inception in 2020, the Roux Institute has established itself as a trusted economic development partner of the state of Maine and its education, research, and entrepreneurship programs have helped hundreds of learners grow Maine's technology-driven workforce of the future. The Project will eliminate burdens for individuals and support safe accessibility to education, workforce development, tourism, and an extensive network of active transportation pathways.

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

Sincerely,



Jack Cline  
Vice President for Federal Relations  
Northeastern University