



February 7, 2024

Secretary Pete Buttigieg  
US Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Secretary Buttigieg:

Portland Trails enthusiastically supports the Maine Department of Transportation's RAISE grant application for infrastructure improvements in the East Deering neighborhood. We particularly support the proposed bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure connecting the East Deering neighborhood to the Portland peninsula and Back Cove, as well as improved bike and pedestrian access on Sherwood Street. These improvements would be transformative for active transportation in Portland.

As an organization devoted to active transportation and neighborhood scale connections, we strongly support the bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements that are proposed in the RAISE grant application. The neighborhood of East Deering is currently challenged by major road thoroughfares—Route I-295 and Washington Avenue—making it difficult to safely walk or bike to other parts of the city. The emerging Roux Institute will increase the number of people (and cars) traveling through the neighborhood. The bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements in the grant application would better connect the East Deering neighborhood to downtown Portland, making it much safer for people to enjoy all the benefits of walking, biking, and being outdoors, as well as reaping the environmental benefits of reduced vehicle trips.

Tukey's Bridge is at the core of this project proposal, and it currently passes significant vehicle traffic both through the city as well as locally within the city. However, the bridge also provides significant pedestrian and bicycle access for transit between downtown and the East Deering neighborhood and beyond. Portland Trails maintains a permanent trail counter in this location, which averages over 1,000 pedestrians and bicyclists per day. The proposed project would greatly enhance existing access and create new bicycle and pedestrian access at Tukey's Bridge. This improved access and increased safety would also enhance a critical connection to the envisioned Casco Bay Trail that would provide a regional trail connection between Portland and Auburn.

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**Executive Director**

Jon Kachmar

Portland Trails maintains 80 miles of trails in Portland, Westbrook, and Falmouth. Our goal is to provide walkable, bikeable, and sustainable transportation to connect people with work travel routes, recreational opportunities, neighborhood school access, and other daily interactions within the city and surrounding communities. We are deeply committed to ensuring equitable access for all including native Wabanaki peoples, new Mainer communities, public housing residents, LGBTQ+, and other underserved populations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jon Kachmar".

Jon Kachmar  
Executive Director