



September 15, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

The Portland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee strongly supports the Maine Department of Transportation's grant application under the **2023 U.S. Department of Transportation Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Program** which will improve the built roadway and sidewalk infrastructure in the Libbytown neighborhood in Portland, Maine. These changes included in the *Reconnecting Our Villages: Historic Libbytown* ("Project") revitalize and reconnect this area that was divided as a result of the construction of Interstate 295 in the late 1960s. The work will improve connections throughout the community by:

- Reconstructing numerous streets to include traffic calming features and ADA-compliant sidewalks and crosswalks;
- Installing sidewalks and bikeways to encourage active transportation along right-of-ways that are safe and modern;
- Improving transit stops to support stronger community-wide accessibility; and
- Constructing a roundabout that is safe and improves traffic flow for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians.

The project will be transformative for our city. The implementation of new infrastructure, built to design standards as set forth in the project, will not only increase safety and accessibility for all road-users, but also demonstrate how these standards could be mirrored across Portland in future projects.

This Project is necessary in alleviating the barrier and harm caused by the construction of Interstate 295 through the Libbytown neighborhood. Restoration of two-way traffic will reduce speeds and improve safety, making journeys through and to the neighborhood more pleasant by foot, bicycle, and motor vehicle alike. In addition, the Project appeals to the Portland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee for its opportunity to improve connectivity between other existing infrastructure in Portland.

Investments in new housing options are in motion for the Libbytown neighborhood, including a new development that will add 120 units of affordable housing. With these much needed additional units on the horizon, the time is right for investing in safe, welcoming road design and improving access for all Libbytown residents and visitors to travel safely through this historic neighborhood.

The Project will lift burdens and support accessibility to housing, employment, retail, healthcare, tourism and recreation – including the state’s \$14 billion tourism industry critical to Maine’s economy.

We are pleased MaineDOT in coordination with the City of Portland are seeking assistance from USDOT for this very important Project and hope USDOT is able to assist in funding these improvements. We recognize the importance of supporting USDOT merit criteria and providing equitable transportation options. Modernizing neighborhood transportation leads to safe and efficient connections and a better quality of life for all.

Sincerely,

The Portland Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

<https://www.portlandbikeped.org>

Winston Lumpkins, Chair

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The Portland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PBPAAC) is an ad-hoc group of Portland area residents who work to make the city a better place to walk, bicycle and wheelchair. We advocate and educate on bicycle, transit, and pedestrian issues, including handicap accessibility, in collaboration with city offices and outside organizations.