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January 14, 2021

The Honorable Ben Carson
Secretary
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Secretary Carson:

I write in support of the application submitted by the City of Lewiston and Lewiston Housing Authority (LHA) to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant program. As part of the LHA and City of Lewiston's "Growing Our Tree Streets Choice Transformation Plan," this proposal, if awarded funding, will focus on three areas: housing, people, and neighborhoods.

As you will recall from our visit to Lewiston in 2019, the "Growing our Tree Streets Choice Transformation Plan" seeks to convert the Tree Streets area in Lewiston, Maine, from a neighborhood with the highest concentration of childhood lead poisoning and families in poverty and Maine's lowest performing schools to a lead-free, economically diverse, and ethnically and socially welcoming community. The grant proposal seeks to redevelop and construct 185 mixed income units on three sites that are fully controlled by the LHA and properly zoned for the multifamily development proposed for each. The Choice Target Sites represent 100 percent of the family housing controlled by the Lewiston Housing Authority in downtown Lewiston, with all of the housing being severely distressed and two-thirds of the housing originally constructed in the 1880s through 1920s.

With the remaining 30 percent of funds requested in this proposal, Community Concepts (CCI), which was a co-grantee of the FY 2017 Choice Planning and Action Grant, will work to improve outcomes related to employment and income, health, and children's education in households living in the target housing units. CCI will partner with liaisons in the areas of workforce, education, and health to ensure that residents are connected to the resources needed to achieve the desired outcomes. Meanwhile, the City of Lewiston and LHA will work to replace obsolete lead-poisoned units, build neighborhood energy independence, create a housing opportunities fund, and expand and improve early learning resources and community health and wellness to achieve results for the neighborhood strategy. Overall, the combined focus of this project on housing, people, and neighborhoods will greatly improve the Tree Streets neighborhood and the lives of the families that call it home.

Thank you for your time and effort on behalf of the City of Lewiston and Lewiston Housing Authority. I encourage your careful review of this application, in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations, and ask that your staff please notify [REDACTED] when a final decision is made.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator