



# Town of Brunswick, Maine

INCORPORATED 1739

OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

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Deborah Johnson, Director  
Office of Community Development  
Department of Economic & Community Development  
59 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04330-0059

Dear Ms. Johnson:

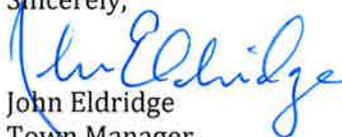
The Town of Brunswick benefits greatly from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs administered through your office. The Economic Development and MicroEnterprise Assistance grants and the Maine Downtown Center initiative contribute to the vitality and growth of our community and businesses. We appreciate the access to and availability of these programs, especially as overall resources to support municipal enterprises have dwindled.

It is my understanding that the CDBG funds to support the Downtown Revitalization Program and the Maine Downtown Center have been eliminated in the 2016 Program Statement and the funds redirected to a new Safe Neighborhood Program. While the goals of that new program are laudable, the elimination of the Downtown Revitalization Program and Maine Downtown Center is troubling. I recognize the need to periodically shift program goals and the Governor's Office authority to redirect CDBG funds. However, I would hope the performance and strong return on investment characterized by these downtown programs could be preserved. I respectfully suggest that perhaps a more palatable option would be to reduce the Revitalization program funds, leave the Maine Downtown Center funds intact, and make up the difference for the remaining funds through a small percentage reduction of other CDBG programs.

The Maine Downtown Center provides critical technical assistance, linkage to a national model and a "tool box" that assists towns like Brunswick to implement a high quality, high functioning Main Street program, without wasting resources in trial and error tactics and ineffective implementation strategies. While our Brunswick Downtown Association has been in place many years, the adoption of the Main Street program model has increased its effectiveness and concomitant membership dramatically. Brunswick's downtown is recognized statewide as a vibrant, dynamic and thriving downtown area. I believe the Maine Downtown Center's model and services have contributed strongly to our success.

I hope that your Office will take this feedback into account as you make your final determinations for the 2016 CDBG program. Again, I thank you and your team for your valuable assistance and willingness to consider our feedback.

Sincerely,

  
John Eldridge  
Town Manager