



November 4, 2015

Deb Johnson, Director
Office of Community Development
Maine Office of Economic and Community Development
59 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0059

Dear Ms. Johnson:

My colleagues in Waterville from Waterville Main Street, the Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce, and the Central Maine Growth Council write to you today in support of Community Development Block grant funding for the Maine Downtown Center and the Downtown Revitalization Grant program.

The stated funding sources are a central and critical local economic development instrument for our communities engaged in downtown development and revitalization. Similarly, with downtown localities as flagships to our economic development strategy, elimination of funds will have a direct impact on retaining, growing, and attracting businesses to our town and city center districts. Further, additional economic development and employment opportunities will be eroded without these critical municipal resources. What makes Waterville such a unique place is its vibrant city center, and it is through the Maine Downtown Center's Main Street Maine Program that valuable volunteer training, technical assistance and collective impact strategies have improved Waterville over the past 15 years. Waterville has been able to fill most first floor vacancies, advocate for thoughtful downtown design, and attract new investment as seen at Hathaway Creative Center, Maine Film Center, and support the planning around Colby College's recent purchase of 3 buildings downtown. The Downtown Revitalization funding is a tool to aid the process of improving Maine's downtowns, where the tax revenue per acre is the highest, and therefore goes the furthest.

With these funds cultivating focus areas on healthy lifestyles and destination development in Maine's historic downtowns, the more opportunities we have to initiate broader-reaching regional strategies all along the Kennebec, and growing the ten (10) Main Street communities that use this economic development method, and assisting twenty (20) additional Network communities currently participating in this program, eliminating downtown resources can only serve to weaken the State of Maine. We have seen how this program can help communities help themselves, whatever size they are, whatever shape they're in, and whatever affiliation they choose to have with the Maine Downtown Center.

I urge you to support the Maine Downtown Center and the Downtown Revitalization grant funding as we continue to bring this demonstrated successful program to as many communities as we can here in Maine.

All our best,

Charlie Giguere
Chair of the board
Waterville Main Street

Christopher Gaunce
Chair of the board
Central ME Growth Council

Jeff Corey
Chair of the board
Mid-ME Chamber of Commerce