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Transportation choices play a major role in quality of life, influencing everything from access to economic opportunities to environmental quality and community safety. Congressman Blumenauer is a tireless advocate for increasing the number and variety of transportation choices available to Americans. Providing safe, convenient, and user-friendly transportation options gives Americans alternatives to help save money, improve their personal health, decrease their impact on the environment, promotes community economic development, and creates family wage jobs.

Congressman Blumenauer advocates for federal policies that provide communities with the flexibility to design the transportation systems that fit their needs. This includes adequate funding and technical assistance for transportation planning, light rail and streetcar transit systems, infrastructure to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety, high-speed rail, and capacity for freight and highway needs.

For more specific information on federal transportation funding and project opportunities, visit the U.S. Department of Transportation. For more information on Oregon transportation policies, programs, and funding, visit the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Use the following menu to learn more about Congressman Blumenauer's transportation priorities:

[Streetcar and "Small Starts"](#) : Congressman Blumenauer is a strong advocate for increased

federal investment in streetcars and local transit projects that spur community investment and economic redevelopment.

[High Speed Rail and Freight Rail](#) : In order to develop a 21st century intercity transportation system, Blumenauer believes the United States must invest in high speed rail and freight railroads, to allow our citizens and our goods to move quickly and inexpensively across the country.

[Bike and Pedestrian Issues](#) : Congressman Blumenauer is a national champion for bike and pedestrian issues. He knows that bicycling and walking are important not only as basic transportation modes, but for individual health, our environment, safe streets, and increasingly for the economic vitality of our communities.

[Transportation Highlights from Portland, OR](#) : The growth in transit ridership and system construction in the past decade is truly impressive.

Streetcar and “Small Starts”

Communities around the country are expressing an interest in small-scale rail based transit lines – similar to the Portland Streetcar – to create jobs and redevelop central city areas and to connect neighborhoods. Portland, Oregon is pursuing additions to the current streetcar network on the Eastside and to Lake Oswego. Not only has the investment in streetcar projects resulted in increased economic development around the city, Portland’s streetcars are manufactured by a local company, Oregon Ironworks.

Congressman Blumenauer is a strong advocate of the streetcar as a transportation and community revitalization tool, and founded the “Small Starts” program, which matches local funds to provide capital and start up costs for streetcar development and expansion. The program is aimed at smaller projects than traditional light rail projects and emphasizes economic redevelopment as an important aspect of each qualifying project.

High Speed Rail and Freight Rail

As a vice-chair of the Intercity and High Speed Rail Caucus and chair of the Livable Communities Task Force, Congressman Blumenauer is a strong supporter of high-speed rail. He has helped obtain funding to improve the rail line between Portland and Seattle, and encouraged communities around the country to plan and prepare for rail lines to improve their commuter transportation and freight capacity. In addition, Blumenauer supports the creation of a national office to oversee rail planning, development and operation, to ensure that our rail system serves all users as efficiently as possible.

Blumenauer is also focusing on for the needs of our freight system. Freight railroads are a critical part of the transportation system, carrying over 40% of all goods moved in this country. Rail provides an important alternative and in many cases, a compliment to moving freight by air or highway, often moving goods more cheaply and with fewer environmental impacts. Congressman Blumenauer supports the expansion and modification of the current railroad track maintenance credit to (1) increase the allowable amount of the railroad track maintenance tax credit; (2) extend such credit through 2010; and (3) allow such credit against alternative minimum tax liabilities. These changes will facilitate the expansion of short line railroads and support small businesses.

Transportation Highlights from Portland, Oregon

In Portland, ridership has steadily increased on both rail and bus routes. This increase is a reflection of substantial investment by the region and the federal government in providing high quality transit service. In the last decade, Portland has expanded its MAX Light Rail system throughout the region. The early 2000's saw the expansion of the MAX system to the Portland International Airport and along Interstate Ave. into North Portland. The most recent Light Rail project opened in Fall 2009 and expanded the system to Clackamas County to the southeast of Portland.

Tri-Met, the region's transit agency, has utilized a strong regional process of long-term planning, negotiations among regional partners, and the active engagement of the business community and those neighborhoods served by transit lines. Consequently, Portland has developed innovative approaches for funding rail extensions that can be built more quickly and at a fraction of the price. A great example is the Portland Streetcar—the first modern streetcar line in the United States—that opened in July, 2003. This 2.4 mile alignment connects Portland State University with thriving business, retail and entertainment districts as well as the highest density neighborhood in the city. Portland's streetcar line will expand east across the river and create a loop connecting central Portland on both sides of the Willamette River. The majority of the streetcar loop will open in 2012. The federal government contributed over \$75 Million to the loop

expansion.

The southern end of the streetcar loop will cross a new transit bridge with construction beginning in the summer of 2011. This transit-only bridge will also accommodate the region's latest Light Rail project that will stretch from Portland State University, across the river, through southeast Portland and into Milwaukie in the northwest corner of Clackamas County. Portland's newest light rail project is set to open in 2015 and will receive nearly \$700 Million in federal investment.

In the next decade, Portland will continue to be a national model for innovative transit options.