

Portland, Ore. - Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) joined streetcar enthusiasts, Eastside Portland business leaders, local developers and Congressmen Jim Oberstar (D-Minn.) and Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) for a streetcar celebration and press conference today in the Lloyd District. Blumenauer unveiled his "Streetcar Revitalization Act," legislation he introduced to return the streetcar to American cities. Oberstar, the top ranking Democrat on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and DeFazio, a senior member of the Committee, announced their support of the legislation at the press conference.

"The Streetcar has been an enormous success in Northwest Portland generating over \$1 billion in economic development locally," Blumenauer said. "I was proud of my work on this project as a City Commissioner. I'm thrilled to launch this effort to bring the Streetcar to the Eastside and expand our success story to neighborhoods in Northeast and Southeast. My bill will help Portland and communities all across the country go back to the future with streetcar projects."

Until the 1950's, many communities had extensive streetcar systems connecting neighborhoods to central city jobs, shopping and cultural activities. Portland had one of the most extensive networks in the country. With the increased reliance on automobiles, neighborhood streetcars have all but disappeared. Blumenauer's bill, "The Community Streetcar Development and Revitalization Act," would build on the Portland Streetcar's success by establishing a pilot grant program to provide funding for capital and start up costs of streetcar development and revitalization. Expansion of Portland's streetcar to the Eastside would be eligible for funding. As part of today's celebration, one of Portland's streetcars was brought to the Eastside for the first time in more than 40 years.

Blumenauer hopes to include his streetcar bill in legislation authorizing highway and transit projects for the next six years, which is due for consideration in Congress this year. The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, led by Chairman Don Young (R-Alaska) and Oberstar, is responsible for drafting the legislation. DeFazio and Blumenauer are both members of the Committee.