

WASHINGTON, DC -- Today, Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) attended a press conference and luncheon to celebrate the release of a new survey on Smart Growth issues by the National Association of Realtors and National Association of Home Builders.

Congressman Blumenauer released the following statement on the survey:

"I would like to commend the National Association of Realtors and the National Association of Home Builders for the release of this new survey asking homebuyers what they value in homeownership. This survey should lead us all to the realization that we need to do things differently and more intelligently to create homes and communities that people want.

"At the core, what is being discussed at its most elemental level is how to have livable communities. My interest is in making a federal government a better partner in that process. I am struck by conversations with people from coast to coast of different parties, political persuasions and walks of life, how there is increasing consensus about the problems and ultimate solutions. Today's event with the Realtors and Home Builders marks another milestone in helping us get this story straight and carry it throughout the land. We can have government at all levels lead by example. We can coax more value out of infrastructure investments. It will not require huge amounts of money if regulation is done correctly and in a way that makes sense for the local region. The federal government must play by the rules, clean up after itself, and be the best possible partner to the private sector and local governments. The federal government must reform massive and outdated spending programs from agriculture to water infrastructure to our flood insurance program. We must work together to make all our families safer, healthier and more economically secure.

"It also shows that we are all of two minds: we want to live closer to work, but want to live where houses are more spread out; we want to be able to walk to stores and restaurants, but want to live in less developed areas; we want less traffic in neighborhoods, but want to have highway access. With such conflicting desires, this survey exposes a tremendous opportunity for public education and for elected officials and planners to work together with their communities. I have worked on legislation that would make the federal government a better partner by providing resources to state and local governments and making institutions such as the Postal Service play by the same rules as everybody else. The Community Character Act (H.R. 1433 and S. 975) would provide funds to state and local governments to update planning statutes that hinder localities and the private sector from creating neighborhoods people want. The Post Office Community Partnership Act (H.R. 1861 and S. 897) would require the Postal Service to obey local land use laws and planning regulations and involve the public in its location and closing decisions.

This survey opens the dialogue for better communication and partnerships between homebuyers, private industry, and government to create communities people want to own homes in. I look forward to continuing our work with the Realtors and Home Builders in accomplishing our common goals of creating livable communities."

****Congressman Earl Blumenauer is a Democrat from Portland, Oregon. He is the congressional leader and spokesman for the Livable Communities movement, which helps ensure that communities are safe, healthy and economically secure through policies that encourage smart growth, environmental responsibility, economic vitality, and more diverse transportation and housing choices. He serves on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the House International Relations Committee and is active on trade, technology, defense and environmental issues.**

For more information on Congressman Blumenauer's work on building livable communities, visit his web site at <http://www.house.gov/blumenauer/>.