

LIVABLE COMMUNITIES E-NEWS

April 6, 2011 VOLUME 10 NUMBER 1

livablecommunities@mail.house.gov This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it www.blumenauer.house.gov/livablecommunities

Livable Communities Task Force Members introduce legislation to support livability goals

- On January 11, 2011, LCTF member Rep. Albio Sires (D-NJ) introduced H.R. 260, the “Commute LESS” (Leveraging Employer Support and Successes) to provide commuters with real options to conserve fuel, reduce congestion, and increase overall investment in transportation. LCTF member Russ Carnahan (D-MO) is an original co-sponsor. “Commute LESS” would give employers the tools and resources they need to provide their employees with alternative forms of transportation such as transit, carpooling or teleworking. Metropolitan planning organizations would be required to include strategies for outreach and input from employers into the development of long-range transportation plans.

- On February 15, Sires introduced H.R. 709, the “Urban Revitalization and Livable Communities Act,” which will invest in the health and well-being of communities across the nation by creating four grant programs that all require a local match. Rehabilitation grants would be used for purposes of remodeling or rebuilding recreational areas and facilities. Innovation grants would be used to cover costs of personnel, facilities and equipment designed to demonstrate innovative and cost-effective recreation opportunities. At-risk youth recreation grants would support new or existing programs support for existing programs that provide alternatives to at-risk youth. Lastly, recovery action program grants would be used for the development of local park and recreation programs, including citizen involvement and planning.

- On February 17, LCTF member Tim Ryan (D-OH) introduced H.R. 790, the “Community Regeneration, Sustainability and Innovation Act,” which will help communities address the growing problem of abandoned properties and urban blight. LCTF member Earl Blumenauer is a co-sponsor. Vacant land and buildings harm residents and municipalities through reduced property values, safety and health risks, and reduced tax revenue. The Community Regeneration Act would create a new pilot program within HUD to fund innovative solutions by communities experiencing large-scale property vacancy and long-term population losses. This bill would build the capacity of local governments to prevent, demolish, manage, and reclaim

vacant and abandoned properties through an array of effective strategies and tools.

- On April 1, Sires introduced the “Focusing Resources, Economic Investment, and Guidance to Help Transportation (FREIGHT) Act of 2011” to create a national multimodal freight program to improve efficiency, operation, and security. LCTF members Steve Cohen (D-TN) and Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) are original co-sponsors. The FREIGHT Act will ensure our nation’s transportation system is able to remain globally competitive by establishing a national freight transportation policy and creating a dedicated Office of Freight Planning and Development within the Department of Transportation. Additionally, national freight infrastructure grants would be awarded on a competitive basis to improve the efficiency of the national transportation system.



2011 National Bike Summit National Bike Summit advocates for Transportation funding

From March 8-10, more than 800 advocates came to Capitol Hill to defend programs that support bicycling and other livability goals, including the Transportation Enhancements and the Safe Routes to Schools program. Rep. Blumenauer addressed participants and encouraged their advocacy on behalf of the role that alternative transportation can play in solving energy, health and environmental problems faced across the nation.

LCTF defends Partnership for Sustainable Communities funding

On March 15th, twenty eight members of Congress, led by the LCTF, forcefully defended funding for the Partnership for Sustainable Communities and the HUD Challenge Grants.

[The letter](#)

urged the House and Senate Leadership to reject the elimination of the Partnership’s discretionary grant programs, as was proposed in H.R. 1, the Continuing Resolution passed by

the House. These grants are enabling communities across the country to envision and implement coordinated, sustainable growth and development plans. This integrated planning process can stimulate job creation and help to lower housing and transportation costs, which are all the more important in times of economic distress.

Secretary Ray LaHood in Portland with Rep. Blumenauer

On March 22nd, Secretary Ray LaHood joined LCTF Chairman Earl Blumenauer in Portland to break ground on the SW Moody Avenue project, which received a \$23 million TIGER grant from the US DOT. This project will stimulate economic development and improve the environment of a Brownfield while creating an array of new transportation options.

While he was in Portland, Secretary LaHood and Rep. Blumenauer also took the opportunity to tour the United Streetcar factory—the sole American manufacturer of modern streetcars. Portland’s streetcars are connecting residents to jobs, education and shopping without leaving them dependent on driving.

Rep. Blumenauer Emphasizes Livability’s Role in Energy Plan

High gasoline prices have consumers looking for new solutions, and on March 30th, President Obama responded to concerns with a speech outlining new goals for oil imports and alternative fuel vehicles. Rep. Blumenauer [responded](#) by reminding his colleagues of the central role that livability and land use can play in helping our nation become less reliant on oil. The path to independence from oil has to involve transportation alternatives such as those available in livable communities.

###

Learn More

We appreciate your interest in the LCTF's work, and will keep you informed of happenings both on and off Capitol Hill. For more information, feel free to visit the LCTF website.

Sincerely,

Rep. Earl Blumenauer and Members of the Livable Community Task Force

livablecommunities@mail.house.gov wThis e-mail address is being protected from spambots.
You need JavaScript enabled to view it www.blumenauer.house.gov/livablecommunities