Congressman Blumenauer spoke to an enthusiastic young crowd Saturday at the Institute for a Democratic Future's annual transportation policy weekend. The Washington state-based organization visited Portland to study the region's history of transportation policy and planning, meeting with policymakers and touring facilities.

Blumenauer spoke about the current debate surrounding the reauthorization of the transportation bill currently making its way through Congress, detailing his opposition to the Republican's House bill that cuts funding for Amtrak and ends the thirty year agreement for dedicated funding for mass transit.

"The American public is a vast kaleidoscope of beliefs and opinions--but I've never met anyone who is against the Safe Routes to School program ," Blumenauer said, citing attacks in Congress on this and other popular programs that encourage bicycle and pedestrian transportation. "There are those around the country who know that the cheapest way to get highway capacity is to put more people on light rail and streetcar, to encourage bicycling, and to build inner-city and high-speed rail."

The audience, primarily college students and young professionals working in policy, asked questions about the Obama Administration's push toward high-speed rail and the future of transportation funding at the federal level.

"There are movements taking place for livability, increases in cycling, an agriculture policy for the future and for farmers markets." Blumenauer said. "I am excited that these things are moving forward with your generation. We can really work out the dynamics and provide justice for all communities without the immediate knee jerk reaction some have towards rebuilding and renewing America."