



December 10, 2009

Dear Congressman Blumenauer,

We are writing in support of the **Active Community Transportation Act of 2009**. Shifting trips from driving to walking and bicycling delivers substantial benefits to economic development, public health, energy security, mobility and the environment, making active transportation one of the most strategic and cost-effective Federal transportation investments available. To shift trips, we must provide safe and convenient places for people to walk and bike. This requires concentrated, focused federal investments to build integrated active transportation systems. We applaud your leadership in pursuing these goals.

Providing communities across the country with the means to shift trips to bicycling and walking will have far-reaching consequences. The federal government has built a robust highway system, but investments in public and active transportation have been insufficient to meet the need for clean, healthy and affordable mobility choices. Your forward-thinking proposed legislation takes a necessarily bold step toward a system that serves all citizens in their various trip needs.

As a nation, we stand to gain greatly from more active transportation. Current levels of walking and bicycling-- about one in ten trips nationally-- already save us more than four billion dollars annually through decreased health, gasoline and environmental costs. Yet, estimates indicate that many tens of billions of dollars could be saved *annually*, dwarfing the initial infrastructure investment that such a shift would require.

The primary source of funding for walking and bicycling, the federal Transportation Enhancements program, has and continues to excel at constructing a skeleton upon which integrated systems can be constructed. Its dispersed nature of funding allocations, however, has minimized its role in facilitating substantial mode shift. Your proposed legislation addresses this complementary missing piece of concentrated funding.

Low-income communities, the elderly and children are just a few of the populations that benefit on a large scale from improved walking and bicycling infrastructure, as they are the most likely to be stranded by a system that provides for just one mode of transport. Providing alternatives like walking and bicycling to automobile travel is critical to the large numbers of households in cities like Washington, D.C. (37 percent), and Camden, N.J. (40 percent), who do not own automobiles.

Local examples unequivocally show walking and bicycling to be a very wise investment. The 300-mile bikeway system in your home district of Portland, Ore., has cost \$57 million—about the cost of a single urban highway interchange—and has yielded the nation's foremost bicycle network. Plans are underway to invest another \$100 million to complete the system. Estimates indicate that by 2040, net benefits from fuel savings and health care costs alone will amount to \$1.2 billion, or a return on investment ratio of 8.3 to 1.

Having recognized the boon that active transportation represents to their communities, local officials are leading the growing call for more and better walking and bicycling infrastructure. A national transportation poll¹ found that Americans would like to see 22 percent of federal transportation funds—about 15 times current levels—invested in walking and bicycling. Literally hundreds of local government agencies and businesses from across the country have written letters of support and passed resolutions in support of an active transportation program along the lines of what you have proposed in this legislation.

Thank you for proposing such necessary legislation. We look forward to working with you and Congress to pass this bill and assist in its implementation.

Sincerely,

¹ Commissioned by Transportation for America, designed by Collective Strength and fielded by Harris Interactive in December 2007.