



**FOR PLANNING PURPOSES
TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 2010**

CONTACT:
PAULA CHRIN DIBLEY, 202-478-6138
PCHRIN@MRSS.COM
KATLYN CARTER, 202-478-6176
KCARTER@MRSS.COM

*****MEDIA ADVISORY***
*TELEBRIEFING***

**ANALYSIS REVEALS TRUE COST OF LOCATION FOR 337 METRO AREAS:
HIDDEN COSTS OF TRANSPORTATION PUT HOUSEHOLDS & COMMUNITIES AT RISK**
U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer, Center for Neighborhood Technology, Rockefeller Foundation to discuss federal action to redefine affordability, call for disclosure and smarter investment in transportation choice

WHAT: On Tuesday, March 23, Representative Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) will join experts from the Center for Neighborhood Technology and the Rockefeller Foundation to discuss the findings of the new Housing + Transportation Affordability Index and its accompanying report, *Penny Wise, Pound Foolish*. The Index for the first time examines 337 metro areas across the country—encompassing 161,000 neighborhoods and 80 percent of the U.S. population—to provide the only comprehensive snapshot of neighborhood affordability by taking into account the transportation costs associated with neighborhood location and design.

The H+T Index is an innovative tool that allows users to view maps and statistics for 337 metro areas, revealing where transportation costs have the greatest impact on affordability within each area. The H+T Index shows that once transportation costs are factored into the definition of “affordable housing,” the number of affordable communities drops in almost every metro area in the country, putting a total of 48,000 American communities out of reach for the typical family.

WHO: **U.S. Representative Earl Blumenauer** (D-OR)
Deputy Secretary Ron Sims, U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development
Under Secretary of Policy Roy Kienitz, U.S. Department of Transportation
Scott Bernstein, president of the Center for Neighborhood Technology
Randy Blankenhorn, executive director of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
Nick Turner (moderator), managing director of the Rockefeller Foundation

WHEN: Tuesday, March 23, 2010
11:00 AM EST

RSVP: Contact Paula Chrin Dibley, pchrin@mrss.com, 202-478-6138, for call-in information.

WHY: For most families, transportation is the second largest household expense. The new analysis shows that for many families in “drive ‘til you qualify” zones, savings realized from lower cost housing are eliminated by unexpectedly high transportation costs. This lack of information can lead families to unknowingly make housing decisions that cause them to live beyond their means as gas prices rise and commutes grow longer. A typical household’s transportation costs can range from 12% of household income in efficient neighborhoods with walkable streets, access to transit, and a wide variety of stores and services, to 32% in locations where driving long distances is the only way to reach essential services. Despite this expense, it is difficult for consumers and policymakers to estimate the full costs of a location, including the cost of both housing and of transportation. The H+T Index fills the void, giving an accurate assessment of affordability in 337 metro areas for the first time.

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Since 1978, the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) has been a leader in promoting urban sustainability – the more effective use of existing resources and community assets to improve the health of natural systems and the wealth of people, today and in the future. CNT is a creative think-and-do tank that combines rigorous research with effective solutions. We have tackled a wide range of issues, always with an eye toward simultaneously improving the environment, strengthening the economy, and advancing equity. We work across disciplines and issues, including transportation and community development, energy, natural resources, and climate change. CNT is one of eight nonprofits selected from around the world to be recognized by a 2009 MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions, from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. More information is available at www.cnt.org.