

Portland, Oregon, and United Streetcar: Americans innovating, building for Americans

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I've mentioned before in this blog how important President Obama's bold vision for the future of American transportation system is. Out-innovating and out-building the rest of the world provides a clear path toward winning the future. And it's exciting for me to see that vision already coming to life in Portland, Oregon.

By adding innovative transit opportunities, Portland has become a model livable community, a city where public transportation brings housing closer to jobs, schools, and essential services. And perhaps nothing symbolizes Portland's livability better than the [modern streetcars](#) operating on its streets and the streetcars being built right in Portland at [United Streetcar](#).



United Streetcar is the only manufacturer of modern streetcars in America. They built the first modern Buy America compliant streetcar for use in Portland, and they are currently building additional streetcars for Portland's East Side Loop Extension and for [Tucson, Arizona's](#) new streetcar system.

And, let me tell you, the Americans who are manufacturing those streetcars could not be more humble about the incredible work they're doing. I saw this firsthand yesterday when I toured United Streetcar and met the workers crafting these modern cars.

A century ago, streetcars were a common sight in cities across America. But, by the 1960s, most communities had phased them out--to the great detriment of neighborhoods and downtowns.



Today, thanks to President Obama's vision, [streetcars are coming back](#). They're reviving the same neighborhoods they once helped create. They're creating jobs, creating ripple effects that benefit other businesses, and laying the foundation for economic development. And they're helping people get where they need to go.

Because of United Streetcar, Portland is the [heart of America's streetcar renaissance](#). So, when the Portland Business Journal said recently that "LaHood seems to (heart) Portland," I think they understated the case. As I told the workers at United Streetcar, there's no "seems to" about it.

So, yes, for its hard work innovating in transportation and building streetcars *for* Americans *by* Americans, this Transportation Secretary *hearts* Portland 100 percent.

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