In the Denver Metro Region, gentrification and displacement are critical issues. With investment in development of our urban core, along transit lines and in other areas of opportunity, skyrocketing rents, rising property taxes and cultural disruption of neighborhoods means that communities in which there has been historic underinvestment are now being pushed out of neighborhoods at the very moment they stand to reap the greatest gains of employment opportunities, services and other amenities.

AS A MULTI-SECTOR COLLABORATIVE committed to ensuring our region’s transit system fosters communities that offer all residents the opportunity for a high quality of life:

Mile High Connects calls on our regional and local elected and appointed leaders to act now to implement policies to stem the tide of gentrification and displacement occurring in force in our Denver neighborhoods and spreading to our inner ring suburbs.

We call on our business community, which knows that vibrant, diverse neighborhoods and the ability of the local workforce to live near employment centers is critical to a thriving economy, to stand with us in tackling these critical issues.

We call on philanthropy to make collective and meaningful investments with us in community organizing, policy advocacy and directly in neighborhoods to support community and cultural preservation.

We call on community residents, activists, advocates and service providers working on these issues in individual neighborhoods to come together with us and promote collective strategies that will change the face of our region.

There is no single silver bullet to address gentrification and displacement pressures. Instead, a package of policy alternatives that protect current renters and homeowners, preserve and create affordable housing stock, support economic opportunity and earning potential for lower-income people and uplift and preserve the unique culture of place and community should be implemented together.

While all of these interconnected strategies are critical, with the immediacy of the crisis, Mile High Connects believes that \textit{affordable housing preservation} and \textit{enhanced protection for renters} are the two most immediate areas of high priority for the region. The time to act is now.

Mile High Connects defines gentrification as the arrival of more affluent and less racially and ethnically diverse people in an existing neighborhood or district historically underinvested in, which results in a related increase in rents and property values and changes the district’s character and culture (PBS).

We believe gentrification is the result of both market driven and public sponsored investment and policies that change neighborhood characteristics in both economic and cultural ways. MHC is concerned about both direct displacement of current residents and changing neighborhood character over time that create conditions that make it difficult for low-income people and people of color to live and work in neighborhoods throughout the region, as well as receive the benefit of the new development in their communities.
**PRESERVE** affordability of current housing near transit and in historically underinvested neighborhoods experiencing revitalization

- Establish adequate permanent revenue source/s dedicated to affordable housing preservation and creation for the region
- Require one-to-one replacement of housing units affordable at the lowest income levels (0-30% of area median income) being lost to new development
- Pass affordable housing preservation ordinances to include meaningful rights of first refusal for local jurisdictions
- Incent conversion of unsubsidized housing properties to ensure long-term affordability
- Provide proportional tax abatement to partially and entirely affordable properties

**STRENGTHEN** policy and enforcement of protections for renters throughout the region

- Limit the amount that landlords/property managers can charge for an application fee for people seeking housing
- Limit criminal background checks for housing to seven years
- Implement enforcement mechanisms to ensure that those using housing vouchers are not discriminated against when searching for housing
- Strengthen safeguards to allow tenants to hold landlords accountable for deficiencies within rental units
- Develop and adopt a good cause eviction policy and create a more thorough process for review
- Place limits on landlords' ability to use month to month leases
- Strengthen protections against retaliation for tenants in manufactured housing communities
- Require a reasonable notice period to tenants before conversion and an opportunity for right of first refusal when a unit is being converted from rental to condo
- Strengthen and better resource programs that educate tenants about their rights and provide dedicated legal advocacy for tenant issues

**SUPPORT** programs that assist in the purchase of homes and land by and on behalf of low-income people and people of color

- Support development of community land trusts and cooperatives that put ownership of land and property into the hands of the community
- Offer property tax abatement near transit stations or in low-income neighborhoods to enhance affordability of home ownership
- Support first time home-buyer programs and programs to strengthen financial literacy and credit
- Include manufactured housing options in zoning and master plans
- Provide mechanisms and support for manufactured housing communities to form home owners associations and cooperatively purchase communities at risk of being sold for redevelopment
- Ensure that zoning codes allow for reasonable multi-unit and accessory dwelling unit options

Mile High Connects
Opportunity for all through transit

ADDRESSING DISPLACEMENT & GENTRIFICATION THROUGH

HOUSING

milehighconnects.org          facebook.com/milehighconnects          twitter.com/MHConnects

(303) 865-4609
CREATE new affordable housing near transit and in neighborhoods of opportunity

- Encourage creative housing options that meet the needs of large families, multigenerational households, and communities that live collectively such as co-housing
- Prioritize use of undeveloped public land for building new affordable housing near transit
- Tie community benefits requirements around creation of affordable housing units to public subsidy awarded to developers, including tax increment financing
- Provide increased incentives around development of affordable housing, including waiving of municipal fees for developers
- Implement linkage fee programs to ensure that expanding economies and communities have adequate resources to meet affordable housing and service demands being placed on communities as a result of growth
- Strengthen enforcement and implementation of documented Consolidated Plans/Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing in entitlement jurisdictions
- Utilize zoning options to achieve higher density, mixed income housing near transit stations, incented through expedited permitting, decreased parking and impact fee flexibility

ADDRESSING DISPLACEMENT & GENTRIFICATION THROUGH PLACE, CONNECTEDNESS AND COMMUNITY

SUPPORT organizing and engagement of community residents to participate in planning and other processes that shape the character of the neighborhood and development projects

- Invest in ongoing place-based community organizing and community engagement efforts
- Build local and regional groups of residents and organizations to ensure community voice is at the front of development processes
- Identify priority issues and target areas based on feedback from residents most vulnerable to displacement
- Work with residents to identify and create targeted business recruitment strategies that meet direct need of existing communities
- Offer affordable fares and passes for low-income transit riders
- Preserve and/or enhance bus service for low-income communities and communities of color
- Develop first and last mile solutions that are relevant and affordable across income levels

UTILIZE arts and culture as a framework to address gentrification

- Support initiatives creating short term, pop up and permanent arts and culture uses near transit station areas and in revitalizing neighborhoods
- Support resident driven place making efforts that mark the history of a particular transit station area or neighborhood
- Recognize and uplift the importance of food production and sale within communities, supporting retention of ethnic hubs and small business development
- Endorse arts and culture as a mechanism for community driven business development and expansion

MAINTAIN affordable, accessible and safe transit that is meaningful to low-income communities and communities of color
CREATE jobs for residents in the development occurring in their neighborhoods and with the businesses that locate in the neighborhoods

- Place local hire requirements on all construction projects receiving public subsidy
- Encourage local hire provisions in all new developments receiving public subsidy with a commercial and retail component
- Support intentional programming to connect residents, workforce development and training opportunities and local businesses
- Create pipelines for low-income residents and residents of color into apprenticeship programs
- Ensure job growth is focused on living wage and family supporting employment, prioritizing middle skilled jobs
- Implement “Ban the Box” policies that remove employment barriers for people with past convictions
- Support development of economic cooperatives or Employee Stock Ownership Plans that allow employees an opportunity for ownership or meaningful profit-sharing

PROVIDE incentives for local and culturally relevant businesses providing good jobs and needed services to remain and/or locate near transit and in revitalizing neighborhoods

- Offer right of first refusal and other prioritization for existing community-serving and culturally relevant businesses to locate in transit oriented development and revitalizing neighborhoods
- Reduce property taxes or freeze property valuation for a time period to allow existing locally-owned businesses to adjust to rising property values in transit areas and other revitalizing neighborhoods
- Offer tax incentives for community-serving and culturally relevant locally-owned businesses to locate in transit oriented development and revitalizing neighborhoods
- Provide support in the form of lease guarantees and funding for tenant improvements to smaller, locally-owned businesses interested in locating in transit oriented development and revitalizing neighborhoods

CREATE targeted opportunities for support and growth for locally owned and culturally relevant businesses near transit and in revitalizing neighborhoods

- Deliver training and business support counseling around key station areas and in targeted neighborhoods to build capacity for sustained growth and access to capital
- Work with existing incubator/accelerator operators to create satellite facilities near key transit station areas and in revitalizing neighborhoods
- Provide support to businesses in areas where substantial development is occurring to stay open and cope with construction disruptions
- Implement a low interest-loan programs for existing businesses to grow and/or make improvements in order to remain competitive in a changing market
- Encourage creation of intentional supply chains with locally owned businesses
- Partner with anchor institutions to support procurement from locally owned businesses

ADDRESSING DISPLACEMENT & GENTRIFICATION THROUGH ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Mile High Connects (MHC) is a multi-sector collaborative ensuring the Denver region’s transit system helps people access opportunity by connecting to affordable housing, healthy environments, quality education, and good-paying jobs.

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