2016 STEERING COMMITTEE AND STAFF

Monica Abrahams, The Colorado Health Foundation
Paul Aldretti, Mile High Connects
Matt Barry, Gary Community Investments
Debra Bustos, Urban Land Conservancy
Lucy Cantwell, New Belgium Family Foundation
Rob Chaney, First Bank
Catherine Cox Blair, Natural Resources Defense Council
P.J. D’Amico, The Buck Foundation
Davian Gagne, Mile High Connects
Anne Garcia, Rose Community Foundation
Jaime Gomez, Colorado Jobs with Justice
Tom Gougeon, Gates Family Foundation
Felicia Griffin, FRESC: Good Jobs, Strong Communities
Patrick Horvath, The Denver Foundation
Candace Johnson, The Colorado Trust
Madeline Keating, Natural Resources Defense Council

Neha Mahajan, 9to5 Colorado
Shelley Marquez, Wells Fargo
Aaron Mirioli, Urban Land Conservancy
Laia Mitchell, Gates Family Foundation
Jennifer Newcomer, Gary Community Investments
Tiana Patterson, Enterprise Community Partners
Melinda Pollack, Enterprise Community Partners
Amy Pulver, Kaiser Permanente
Maria Sepúlveda, Wells Fargo
Linda Tinney, U.S. Bank
Brad Weinig, Enterprise Community Partners
Dace West, Mile High Connects
Desiree Westlund, FRESC: Good Jobs, Strong Communities
Zoe Williams, 9to5 Colorado
Deyanira Zavala, Mile High Connects

2016 GRANTEES

Cultivando (formerly Community Enterprise)
Colorado Jobs with Justice
Colorado People’s Alliance
Colorado Cross Disability Coalition
GES Right to Live Well
Growing Home
Los Gables (resident group)
Montbello Organizing Committee
Project VOYCE
Streetsblog Denver

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

A collaborative ensuring our region’s transit system helps people access opportunity by connecting to affordable housing, healthy environments, quality education, and good-paying jobs.
AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

This priority area is focused on ensuring that the development near our regional transit system provides enhanced access to opportunity for individuals and families. This means promoting policies and leveraging resources to ensure high quality affordable housing, employment centers, educational facilities, fresh food access, healthcare, and other needed services are created and sustained where there are easily accessible by bus and rail.

Key Accomplishments:

- Supported the passage of Denver’s first (and Colorado’s largest) dedicated revenue source for affordable housing, which will generate approximately $150M in new resources for the preservation and creation of affordable housing and critical services over the next 10 years.
- Worked with CHFA to create a new permanent position dedicated to the preservation of existing affordable housing. The CHFA Preservation Program Manager now leads a state-wide, multi-agency preservation partnership initiated by Mile High Connects.
- Released a Regional Call to Action to address our gentrification and displacement crisis, which includes several practical and feasible solutions.
- Established a Planning Group, comprised of community investment leaders from throughout the region, to build out the concept for a “Community Investment Platform” which will facilitate investment by social impact investors into equitable transit oriented development projects.

BUSINESS, LOCAL WORKFORCE, AND MIDDLE SKILL JOBS

This priority area recognizes the intersection of a region’s economic vitality and an individual’s ability to access quality employment. In 2016, Mile High Connects and its partners focused efforts on the enhancement of skills through technical training and minimizing barriers to employment opportunities as well as creating a bridge out of poverty through higher wages and achievable career paths. This was accomplished through connections to local anchor institutions, workforce development organizations, and the greater community wealth building network.

Key Accomplishments:

- Surveyed 524 residents in Globeville-Elyria Swansea about their employment status and needs, interests, and barriers to employment.
- Hosted and participated in 9 in-depth conversations with stakeholders, including municipal governments, to advocate for local hire initiatives and training fund allocations.
- Engaged in advocacy with Denver Urban Renewal Authority (DURA) on the use of Enhanced Training Opportunity funds, supporting the redesign of the program to support an increase in local hiring and training opportunities in the construction industry.
- Co-hosted gathering of anchor institutions, resulting in 8 institutions attending and committing to participate in a yearlong learning cohort.

AFFORDABLE FARES AND MEANINGFUL SERVICE ROUTES

While transit can be a more affordable option than car ownership, for many the cost of fares and passes are out of reach. This can cause people to make difficult choices between transportation and other basic necessities, including food and medical care. In 2016, Mile High Connects continued to work with its Affordable Fares Task Force to promote fare affordability for low-income riders and students and advocate for bus access for low-income communities.

Key Accomplishments:

- Continued to work with RTD to develop a 50% income-based discount fare and pass program for riders at 150% of the federal poverty level or less, with a focus on the details of program administration and funding.
- Hosted expert on low-income fare programs from King County, Washington to provide technical assistance to the Denver region, reaching over 80 stakeholders and 20 elected officials.
- Supported the City of Denver’s Women’s Commission, Mayor’s Office of Children’s Affairs, and Denver Public Schools to further explore a transportation benefit in the MyDenver card for high school students.
- Worked with the Montbello Organizing Committee, Denver City Councilperson Debbie Ortega, RTD, Denver Public Works, Denver Police, and Denver Fire Department to implement safety and accessibility improvements for a new bus replacing the park-and-ride that was closed due to the opening of the Peoria A-Line station.

FIRST AND LAST MILE CONNECTIONS

The First and Last Mile Connections (FLMC) priority area recognizes that the ability to physically get to transit is vital to a system that adequately serves the needs of everyone in the region. Many low-income communities lack sidewalks, adequate bus stops, and have unsafe infrastructure conditions making bus and rail access challenging. In 2016, Mile High Connects focused on enhancing its understanding of the planning and financing strategies to improve FLMC to achieve the benefits of a robust transit system. Mile High Connects also supported local government and neighborhood-led efforts for direct improvements in communities.

Key Accomplishments:

- With Regis University, Adams County, and the Tri-County Health Department, MHC helped to secure the national Invest Health grant for the City of Westminster that will focus on infrastructure projects that improve health, equity, and transit access for communities along North Federal Boulevard.
- Initiated a study of the geographic distribution of public investments in FLMC projects in the region to identify underfunded communities and a white paper identifying methods to measure the return on investment of FLMC projects.

With Regis University, Adams County, and the Tri-County Health Department, MHC helped to secure the national Invest Health grant for the City of Westminster that will focus on infrastructure projects that improve health, equity, and transit access for communities along North Federal Boulevard.