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RECONNECTING AMERICA WELCOMES FORD FOUNDATION GRANT TO ENSURE EQUITABLE TOD IN THE DENVER REGION

(May 17, 2011) Reconnecting America today welcomed a new Ford Foundation grant to a dozen organizations in Denver to ensure that low-income communities "don't miss the train" as FasTrack's transit expansion delivers economic growth opportunities to the region.

With the help of the Ford Foundation's grant, Reconnecting America, Enterprise Community Partners, FRESC, the Urban Land Conservancy, and eight foundations will spend the next year making the case for why equitable transit-oriented development (TOD) is important to the Denver region, emphasizing how transit increases people's access to affordable housing, employment opportunities, education and essential services.

Reconnecting America has been working in the Denver region for more than five years. Reconnecting America has a local office with longstanding ties to the region and extensive knowledge of and experience with the Denver region's transit expansion and TOD planning efforts.

"We are already aware of many of the challenges and opportunities that the FasTracks investment will bring, and we have documented these in our work on the West Corridor TOD Implementation Strategy and the city and county of Denver's TOD strategic plan," explained Catherine Cox Blair, Reconnecting America's program director. Cox Blair, who leads the Denver office of Reconnecting America, is a former TOD Program Manager for the city of Denver.

Over the years, Reconnecting America has partnered with or provided technical assistance to several other equity-focused collaborative efforts around the country, including the Great Communities Collaborative in the San Francisco Bay Area, the One Region Funders Group in New York City, and the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative in the Twin Cities in Minnesota. Innovative models of cross-sector collaboration developed from that work will be applied to the efforts in Denver.

“The role of the Ford Foundation in helping to bridge relationships with local foundations in the Denver region, and in showcasing the important role that foundations can play when they work in concert with nonprofit partners, will be critical to our success,” said Allison Brooks, Reconnecting America’s chief of staff.

Activities funded through the grant and local organizations’ matching resources include: the formation of the collaborative, educational events for regional stakeholders, the creation of a regional equity atlas, exploration of the expansion of the existing Denver TOD Fund to a regional acquisition finance resource for community development, and funding for local community development corporations to develop their role in the effort.

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About the Collaborative

The collaborative is comprised of regional and national organizations Reconnecting America, Enterprise Community Partners, FRESA and Urban Land Conservancy; and eight foundations including The Anschutz Foundation, Colorado Health Foundation, Gates Family Foundation, Kaiser Permanente Colorado, The Piton Foundation, Rose Community Foundation and U.S. Bank’s foundation. As the collaborative picks up momentum, it is expected that other organizations will join as well.

About Reconnecting America

Reconnecting America is a national nonprofit that is helping to transform promising ideas into thriving communities - where transportation choices make it easy to get from place to place, where businesses flourish, and where people from all walks of life can afford to live, work and visit. Reconnecting America is the managing partner of the Center for Transit-Oriented Development, the only national nonprofit effort funded by Congress to promote best practices in transit-oriented development. Reconnecting America is also a founding partner of Transportation for America, a broad coalition of housing, environmental, equal opportunity, public health, urban planning, transportation and other organizations focused on creating a 21st century national transportation program. For more information visit our website, www.reconnectingamerica.org.