Livable & Sustainable Communities: FTA investments in the Fairmount/Indigo Line Transit Corridor

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Fairmount/Indigo Line Corridor Characteristics

- The corridor follows the ROW of an existing Commuter Rail Line, the Fairmount Branch, which connects 3 urban Boston neighborhoods (Dorchester, Mattapan & Hyde Park) to Boston CBD
- The corridor is 9.2 miles in length
- 160,000 residents live in the corridor.
Fairmount/Indigo Line Corridor Demographics

- Low-income area—HH income $17,000 less than regional avg.
- 63% minority population (91% between Uphams & Morton)
- Transit ridership 4X regional avg.
- 29% of HH do not own a car (40% between Uphams & Morton)
- Longest average commute times w/in City of Boston—1 ¼ hrs
Fairmount/Indigo Line History

The Early Years (19th Century)

• 1855: service begins on “Midland RR”

• Service suspended that same year, due to concerns over grade-crossings

• 1856: Service re-opened with no grade crossings (21 new bridges built in a yr!)

• 11 intermediate stations

• ‘TOD’ patterns established by early station sitings

4 Track ROW

Remnants of abandoned Mt. Bowdoin Station at Four Corners
20th Century

- 1944: Passenger service discontinued
- 1979: Service restored from South Station to Readville with a stop at Fairmont but with no stations in Dorchester or Mattapan
- 1987: Two new stations opened at Uphams & Morton due to community activism
From What …

- Area between Red & Orange Lines in Boston unserved by Rapid Transit
- Current Line bypasses key neighborhood centers
- Poor frequency of service
- Limited evening service
- No weekend service
- “Flag stops”
- No fare integration with Subway
- Primitive, unattractive stations
• 4 New Stations at key neighborhood nodes:
  - Newmarket/South Bay, 4 Corners, Talbot Ave & Blue Hill Ave
  - Four Corners Station projected to have the highest ridership in the entire Commuter Rail system (1,900 boardings/day)
  - Talbot would be 12th highest (1,090 boardings/day—tied w/ Providence RI)
…to What

- Run it **as if** it were Rapid Transit (**Indigo Line**):
  - Evening & weekend service
  - Rapid transit–like headways
  - Fare integration w/ MBTA system
  - Put it on the map!
- “Railroad Rapid Transit”
- Former GM Mulhern: “*Think Rapid Transit, use Commuter Rail*”
Map B1
Median Household Income &
Recent and Proposed Speculative
Development Projects
Fairmount/Indigo Line
Boston, MA

Legend
- Existing Commuter Rail Stop
- Proposed Commuter Rail Stop
- Development Project
- Heavy/Light Rail Transit
- Commuter Rail Transit

Median Household Income $52,792
Percent of Regional Median Income
- 0-30%
- 30-60%
- 60-80%
- 80%+

MBTA Existing/Planned Station Areas
Locally Planned Station Areas
Some projects may not show up
due to overlapping dots
Known completion dates for projects date as far back as 2001; completion dates were not available for all projects.

Source:
Reconnecting America
Boston Redevelopment Authority
Case Study:
Fairmount/Indigo Line Boston MA

Uphams Corner Station Area
Before Investment

Uphams Corner Station Area
After Investment
FTA Investment

- **$37.3M initial infrastructure investment:**
  - Station rehab at Uphams & Morton including construction of high level platforms
  - Rehab/replacement of 6 functionally obsolete bridges

- **FTA’s initial investment is leverage for an additional $135M in State Funds for construction of 4 new stations:**
  - 4 Corners: Scheduled Completion: 7/2012
  - Talbot Ave: Scheduled Completion 10/2012
  - Newmarket: Scheduled Completion 12/2012
  - Blue Hill Avenue/Cummins Highway Station currently in design

  - Community is also seeking to add a fifth new stop at Columbia Road
FTA Investment

- FTA Planning funds used by MBTA to conduct fare study to examine feasibility of flattening fare
- MBTA is also exploring expanding the frequency and days of service
Project Lessons

- Type of Transit Service/LOS Matters
- Project does not reinvent the wheel—consists of improvements to an existing capacity
- Bottom-up project driven by involvement of community groups
- Anti-displacement is a priority for project advocates
A Circle of Support

...and FTA’s investments are helping to spur the economic development of the corridor, supporting EPA & HUD investments, which in turn support the transit service...