

# Livable and Sustainable Communities

Regional Case Studies – Region I

Summer 2010

## Fairmount/Indigo Line, Boston, MA



Fairmount/Indigo Line Corridor Uphams Corner Station Area Before Investment  
(Source for all three images: Fairmount/Indigo CDC Collaborative)

Uphams Corner Station Area After Investment

**Location:** Dorchester, Mattapan & Hyde Park neighborhoods of Boston, MA (*Urban*)

**Project Type:** Upgrade urban commuter rail stations and service to rapid transit-like levels of service; operated by Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)

### Funding:

- FTA: \$37.3M for infrastructure
- MBTA: \$135M for the construction of four new stations
- EPA: \$720K ARRA for Brownfields cleanup
- HUD: >\$57M for housing, preservation, economic development

### Federal Partners:

Federal Transit Administration (FTA)  
Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)  
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

### Project's Livability Goals:

- ✓ Provide more transportation choices
- ✓ Promote equitable, affordable housing
- ✓ Support existing communities:
- ✓ Coordinate policies and leverage investment
- ✓ Value communities and neighborhoods

### Project Description:

The Fairmount/Indigo Line project consists of the reconfiguration of an existing, underutilized commuter rail line (Fairmount Branch) running through underserved urban neighborhoods into a “rapid transit”-like service (Indigo Line). The project includes new and upgraded transit stations, housing and retail development, Brownfields cleanup, and service improvements along the entire rail corridor. The upgrade will greatly increase access to jobs in Downtown Boston and throughout the corridor among transit dependent, low-income, and minority communities.

Thanks to coordination between FTA, HUD, EPA, local community development corporations (CDCs) and neighborhood groups, the corridor will include four new mixed use station areas with affordable housing and Brownfields cleanup.

The project will improve frequency and span of service to “rapid transit”-like levels, including nights and weekends. The new service will also offer fare integration with the rest of the rapid transit network.

The Federal agencies will continue to work together to coordinate development along this corridor such that new development will continue to support the principles of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities.



# Fairmount/Indigo Line, Boston, MA

## Community Outreach:

Community groups have been strongly involved in initiating and shaping the project from the start. The groups are responsible for bringing together the various Federal agencies to collaborate on the project.

## Key Community Partners:

- Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation
- Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation
- Mattapan Community Development Corporation
- Southwest Boston Community Development Corporation
- Boston Redevelopment Authority
- Greater Four Corners Action Coalition
- The Boston Foundation

## Livability Highlights:

*Provide more transportation choices:* The project includes transit level of service improvements producing more responsive rail operations, coupled with additional transit stops to provide residents with an accessible, faster, and more reliable transit system that can support the development of more livable communities.

*Promote equitable, affordable housing:* Development includes public housing and rental subsidies that are linked to transit. With assistance from HUD, the 4 Community Development Corporation (CDCs) partners will develop 15,000 new affordable units in the corridor, all facilitated by the transit investment. By acquiring and developing small sites along the corridor now, the CDCs are proactively addressing gentrification and maintaining affordability.

*Enhance economic competitiveness:* Service upgrades and new station areas significantly reduce the commute time and improve access to key employment centers. Redeveloped station areas increase opportunities for new businesses and support the local economy.

*Support existing communities:* The transit centers are located within existing urban neighborhoods that have experienced significant disinvestment and have been historically underserved by the regional transit system. The communities also benefit from EPA-funded clean-up of several Brownfield sites and HUD homeownership and rental preservation programs, consistent with Environmental Justice principles.

*Coordinate policies and leverage investment:* FTA, HUD, and EPA have worked together to focus investments in the same areas to provide increased benefit to the neighborhoods.

*Value communities and neighborhoods:* Existing and new affordable housing units are located within walking distance of the new and renovated stations. Transit investment is being used by the community as a vehicle for greenway development, which would connect small neighborhood parks and open space.

## Early Insights:

This project has highlighted the importance of bottom-up project development by community groups and collaboration with Federal partners to ensure that proposed projects serve community needs. It has also shown the importance of the type and quality of transit service provided to the community. Involvement of neighborhood groups and local development corporations has helped to prevent widespread displacement of existing communities so that the transit investments will benefit all residents.

## For More Information About this Project Contact:

Mary Beth Mello  
Deputy Regional Administrator  
617-494-2055  
[Mary.mello@dot.gov](mailto:Mary.mello@dot.gov)

Noah Berger  
Program Manager  
617-494-2100  
[Noah.Berger@dot.gov](mailto:Noah.Berger@dot.gov)



Rapid Transit Map showing Indigo Line  
(Source: MBTA Advisory Board)

Prepared for FTA by the U.S. DOT Volpe  
National Transportation Systems Center

This case study, and others related to Livable  
and Sustainable Communities, is available at:  
[http://fta.dot.gov/publications/publications\\_10991.html](http://fta.dot.gov/publications/publications_10991.html)