

City of Boston Community Challenge Planning Grant Application For The Fairmount Line Smart Growth Corridor Project

The purpose of the proposed planning grant is to facilitate smart growth and transit-oriented development projects in conjunction with improvements to existing stations and the addition of several new stations along the Fairmount Commuter Rail Line in Boston. The Fairmount Line is a 9.2-mile commuter rail service running from downtown Boston (South Station) and terminating at the Readville section of Hyde Park. The trip takes about 30 minutes and currently makes stops in only four Boston neighborhoods (see map).

The City of Boston's Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) is the lead applicant requesting a total of \$2.4 million in HUD Community Challenge Planning Grant Funds and providing \$5.8 million in leveraged resources. We are proposing to use the fund for three types of activities: (\$1.5 million) for acquisition and pre-development activities that are either difficult to fund with other sources or that cannot be capitalized as part of the normal development costs of the project; \$750,000 for planning activities and \$150,000 for the City's administrative costs. Through the many efforts already underway by the City of Boston, neighborhood CDCs, and other interested stakeholders, the Fairmount Line Corridor is poised to produce outstanding quantifiable results. In the next three years, the development pipeline potential for 315,000 square feet of commercial space and 700 new or rehabilitated units along the Fairmount Line Corridor, the Fairmount Line Corridor has the potential to be the flagship project for the Community Challenge Planning Grant. A highlight of just two of the planned projects:

- Readville Station in Congressional District 9, state owned 16-acre parcel with a development plans for 300 housing units and 20,000 feet of commercial space
- Blue Hill Ave/Cummins Highway Station in Congressional District 8, a MBTA parking lot with a mixed use development plan for 125 rental units and 20,000 feet of commercial space

The Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) is currently constructing four new stations strategically located at Four Corners (in construction), Talbot Avenue (construction start fall of 2010), Newmarket (construction start Spring 2011) and Cummins/Blue Hill Avenue (in design). [MBTA Fairmount Line Improvements](#) These four new stations will significantly expand transportation options (both rail and bus) for these lower-income and predominantly minority neighborhoods. Two additional stations (Columbia Road and River Street) may be added in the future. The attached map shows the locations of the existing, funded and proposed stations and the overlay of two Massachusetts Congressional Districts (8 & 9).

The addition of the new stations provides the City of Boston and its partners with a unique opportunity to plan and carry out a comprehensive corridor-wide smart growth, transit-oriented development strategy. The project will provide more transportation choices, promote equitable affordable housing, enhance economic competitiveness, support existing communities and coordinate policies and leverage investment

This proposal builds on the work already done and detailed "[Boston Newest Smart Growth Corridor: A Collaborative Vision for the Fairmount/Indigo Line](#)" and is consistent with the implementation strategy identified in Metro Future (Metro Future), the regional plan prepared by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) for the Greater Boston Metropolitan Area. The City of Boston is a lead consortium partner with MAPC; MAPC is preparing to submit an application under HUD's Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program. Additional support for the Fairmount Corridor initiative will be included in that application and in a TIGER-II Planning Grant application for a separate but related service-planning project for the Fairmount Line to be submitted by the MBTA.

The City of Boston is the nation's leader as a 21st century city; Boston is the first city in the nation to require a green building standard through zoning requirements and by creating the Boston Innovation District, initiated the nation's first designated innovation and entrepreneurship district. Boston is continually pushing the boundaries of what it means to be a city and has delivered results to back it up.