Boston – Fairmount Corridor Inventory
Data Guidelines

INVENTORY

The Fairmount Corridor Inventory was developed to identify all parcels within a one half-mile radius of the Fairmount Rail Corridor in Boston, Massachusetts. These sites are compiled from multiple data sources described below and represent potential redevelopment opportunities along the Fairmount Corridor. This inventory does not represent a brownfields inventory, as parcels on the list may or may not have brownfields characteristics. The inventory strictly identifies the location of the parcel within the defined one half- mile radius around the Fairmount rail line and lists data for certain parcel attributes.

The inventory will help the Fairmount Collaborative make strategic decisions about the acquisition and development of parcels along the Fairmount Corridor. The inventory can be used to search by specific parcel attributes (e.g., distance to parks, rail stations, property acreage) and identify opportunities for development projects.

The inventory provides a snapshot in time. The data provided can change or be updated at any given period. Hence, the inventory should be considered a living document, which will need to be maintained to enhance the understanding of the parcels and the area. Updates and maintenance might include adding additional parcel attributes (e.g., demographic information when 2010 Census data is released), updating parcel information, or adding additional parcels. The inventory will be used to identify parcel ID numbers which match specific criteria requested by the user. The parcel ID value will be the only unique outcome of any search within the inventory (i.e., other search fields will produce numerous outcomes, including address). Information on each data field source and data point are described further in this document.

The inventory includes parcels within one half-mile of the Fairmount Rail Line, which is approximately nine miles long. The entire buffer zone encompasses a little over 6,500 acres. The current inventory represents 25,533 parcels (approximately 5,760 acres). Remaining acreage within the buffer zone can be explained by infrastructure usage (e.g., roads) or parcels where information was not available.

The Fairmount Collaborative will be able to add or delete parcels, data attributes, or specific data points from the inventory. Additional data will be required to continue to define each parcel and understand the opportunities associated with the parcel level data. For instance, populating the column on ownership will help further define city owned parcels, which might be a priority attribute for development projects.

DATA SOURCES

The inventory is built as an Excel file, which can be updated and expanded as progress in the corridor continues. The inventory includes data from several sources, compiled to present a complete snapshot of individual parcels within the Fairmount Corridor. The following descriptions provide background information on the data sources used to compile the inventory.

Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS)

Several data layers were downloaded from MassGIS on November 1, 2010 to use as base files and add attributes to the inventory (http://www.mass.gov/mgis/massgis.htm). For a complete list of layers available from MassGIS please see: http://www.mass.gov/mgis/laylist.htm. The following layers were used to compile this inventory:

- *MassGIS Assessors' Parcels* – Data was downloaded from http://www.mass.gov/mgis/parcels.htm on November 1, 2010 in order to populate the Parcel ID and Address as well as zoning information on primary use, generalized use, and date of last edit (http://www.mass.gov/mgis/zn.htm). While acreage information is available from the database, the accuracy of the data was a concern for the inventory. Therefore, the acreage for each parcel was calculated using a GIS overlay of the parcel boundaries.
- *Mass GIS Zoning* – Data was downloaded from http://www.mass.gov/mgis/zn.htm on November 1, 2010 in order to populate zoning information on primary use, generalized use, and date of last edit.
- *MassGIS Train* – Data was downloaded from http://www.mass.gov/mgis/trains.htm on November 1, 2010. The Fairmount Line was identified from this layer as well as information about station status (Active, Special, Proposed), distance from parcel to nearest rail station, and identification of an Amtrak station were populated from this data set.

Fairmount Corridor

This existing data set was provided by the Fairmount Collaborative. Whether a parcel is located as part of this sub-corridor is identified as a 'yes' or 'no' response within the overall inventory. Additional data populated from this data set include whether the parcel is designated as a greenway parcel, whether the parcel is city owned (as indicated by the Fairmount Collaborative), the agency involved with the parcel, the use for the parcel, and general comments about the parcel. All information in the data set from Fairmount Collaborative as of October 26, 2010 (date data set received by SRA) was included in the inventory. This data is specific only to the Fairmount Collaborative and was not altered in any way, outside of combining the worksheet tabs and combining duplicate information into a single row per parcel ID.

Boston Department of Neighborhood Development (DND)

Data was provided by the City of Boston on November 9, 2010. The data was used to populate the property type (building or land), the program action (city specific data category), and the site type (city specific data category). The information from the City DND list was only used to add to the parcels included in the corridor, not to populate other data sources.

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
The Massachusetts DEP database was accessed on October 29, 2010 to identify whether Mass DEP documented an action on the property. Populated data indicates whether the parcel has a DEP action associated with the Parcel ID. Inclusion in the DEP database is not an absolute indicator that the parcel is contaminated or had contamination. For specific information about the environmental information and DEP actions, users should visit:
http://db.state.ma.us/dep/cleanup/sites/SearchResults.asp.

U.S. Parks
Data about park location in relation to parcels along the corridor was pulled from Esri data disks Tele Atlas North America, Inc (ESRI 2008). Data was used to populate the distance from a parcel to the nearest green space, the green space name, and the square miles of green space.

City Assessment
City provided data was used to populate data fields for the assessed property value total, assessed property value land, assessed property value building, current tax value, and date of assigned value. Data is valid as of November 30, 2010.

METHODS

The inventory was developed by combining data sources using either a common parcel ID number or geospatially. Using data provided by the Fairmount Collaborative (Greenway data) and the Boston Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) (city owned parcel information), a preliminary excel file was developed. Duplicate parcel ID numbers were removed, and data was combined for any duplicate ID numbers.

> **Please note:** *It is important to highlight that all parcel ID's are unique numbers and do not duplicate within the inventory. However, a site address may have duplicate listings. This may indicate that a property is a collection of several parcels, or the parcel was assigned a generic site address value (0 X Street) in records reviewed for this inventory.*

Geospatial data for parcels, zoning, and rails was downloaded from MassGIS . The MassGIS parcel data was used as the base file for the project. The Fairmount Collaborative and DND data were incorporated into the MassGIS parcel data using Parcel ID. Zoning, city assessment values, and DEP actions were added to parcels as applicable. Distance to rail lines, rail stations, and parks were calculated for each parcel.

> **Please note:** *The MassGIS parcel data set is not without limitations and data gaps. This data set provided acreage values but these values did not agree with what was being displayed geospatially. The MassGIS parcel acreage values were discarded and new acreage values were calculated using ArcGIS. In addition, several of the parcels did not have a parcel ID number and/or addresses. This was the only publicly available parcel data set that could be identified for Boston. As with any study, additional site specific research is needed to verify or complete information provided in this inventory. Please see http://www.mass.gov/mgis/parcels.htm for more information on the MassGIS parcel file and the limitations of its use.*

Environmental data was downloaded from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for neighborhoods near the Fairmount Rail Line Corridor. This data set contained no coordinates or parcel ID. Some DEP data was provided in a geospatial format: MassDEP Oil and/or Hazardous Material Sites with Activity and Use Limitations (AUL) and MassDEP Tier Classified Oil and/or Hazardous Material Sites (http://www.mass.gov/mgis/aul.htm and http://www.mass.gov/mgis/c21e.htm); however, these two data sets do not represent the full suite of sites in the DEP sites and locations database. DEP site identifiers (RTN values) were used to associate the DEP sites geospatially to the AUL and Tier Classified sites, and the remaining DEP data was geocoded based on addresses provided. These DEP actions were plotted for association to parcels in the inventory.

> ***Please note:*** *These plotted locations are "best guesses" of where the DEP Action occurred and do not indicate that an actual action took place on the parcel nor does the absence of a plotted DEP point indicate that no DEP action has occurred at the site. The only way to accurately assess if a DEP action has occurred is to search DEP's database using the parcel address (http://db.state.ma.us/dep/cleanup/sites/search.asp).*

The inventory includes parcels within one half-mile of the Fairmount Rail Line, which is approximately nine miles long. The entire buffer zone encompasses a little over 6,500 acres. The current inventory represents 25,533 parcels (approximately 5,760 acres). To compile the inventory, all parcels that intersected or were located within this corridor were identified and represent the final list of parcel ID numbers. In addition to these parcels, there were several parcels identified by the Fairmount Collaborative as parcels of interest which were not inside the corridor. These parcels were included in the final inventory and it is noted that they are outside the one half-mile corridor. These parcels were organized into a searchable Excel file.

DATA FIELDS DESCRIPTION

The following section provides definitions for each of the data fields (columns) contained in the accompanying Fairmount Collaborative Inventory (Excel file):

CITY LEVEL SITE
Development Potential
This column will be populated by the final owner of the inventory and used to help create another filter for site development potential. The field should be populated with "Y", "N", or blank to indicate if it has development opportunities associated with it (e.g., if there is a viable use on the property currently, then "N" should be filled in; if it is a good site for development, then "Y" should be filled in).

Parcel ID
The common element across all data sets, and the unique identifier, is the parcel ID number. The parcel ID number is usually a unique number assigned by municipalities to track all information associated with a specific parcel of land. The parcel ID was used to identify parcels and populate all other data for a specific parcel.

Site Address
The site address is provided by the MassGIS Assessors' Parcel data. Note, one site address might correspond with several parcel numbers.

Acres
Acres data were calculated using the GIS overlay to get an estimate of the parcel acreage by parcel ID number. As a property could be made up of several parcels, acreage may not match specific property address data.

RAIL LINE
Station
Station data identifies which rail station along the Fairmount Corridor is closest to the parcel identified. The station name corresponds to specific points on the rail line.

Station Status
Station status data indicates if the station is active (Y), proposed (P), or Special (S). Currently, no stations along the Fairmount Corridor are identified as special stations.

AMTRAK
Data in the Amtrak column identifies if the station is served by an Amtrak line. A "Y" in this column indicates an Amtrak station.

Distance to Nearest Station
The distance to the nearest station is a calculated value from ArcGIS to identify (in miles) how far away the nearest rail station is to a specific parcel.

In Corridor
This data identifies whether the parcel falls within the one half-mile radius of the Fairmount Corridor (using the Fairmount Rail Line as the center line). Nearly all sites will be populated with Yes (the exceptions are sites provided in the spreadsheet from the Fairmount Collaborative); however, if the Fairmount Collaborative chooses to add additional parcels, it is possible for the parcel to fall outside the designated corridor.

ZONING FAIRMOUNT COLLABORATIVE

Primary Use

This data is populated from the zoning records and identifies the specific zoning level for the parcel. There are 19 potential zoning uses available for the parcels:

- R1 - Single Family Residential, >= 80,000 sq. ft.
- R2 - Single Family Residential (40,000 - 79,999 sq. ft.)
- R3 - Single Family Residential (20,000 - 39,999 sq. ft.)
- R4 - Single Family Residential (15,000 - 19,999 sq. ft.)
- R5 - Single Family Residential (5,000 - 14,999 sq. ft.)
- RA - Residential/Agricultural Mix
- ML - Multi-family, low density (3-8 dwelling units/acre)
- MM - Multi-family, medium density (9-20 dwelling units/acre)
- MH - Multi-family, high density (> 20 dwelling units/acre)
- MU - Mixed Use
- IN - Institutional
- HC - Health Care
- OP - Office Park
- HB - Highway Business
- LB - Limited Business
- GB - General Business
- CB - Central Business
- LI - Light Industrial
- GI - General Industrial
- CP - Conservation/Passive Recreation
- NZ - Not Zoned

Generalized Use

This data is populated from the zoning records and identifies the general zoning use for the parcel. There are five general use codes:

- 1 - Residential (R1-R5,RA,ML,MM,MH)
- 2 - Commercial (OP,HB,LB,GB,CB)
- 3 - Industrial (LI,GI)
- 4 - Conservation (CP)
- 5 - Other (IN,HC,MU,NZ)

Date of Last Edit

This field identifies the date the zoning data was last updated by the MassGIS database in order to help information current. Any time zoning information is updated or populated, the date should be updated in this column to help track any potential zoning updates.

FAIRMOUNT COLLABORATIVE

Fairmount Parcel

The Fairmount Collaborative had a small inventory of parcels already identified, which were merged into this inventory. If the parcel had previously been identified by the Fairmount Collaborative, this column will be populated with a "Y". Any other inventories or databases should be archived and all updates should be captured in this larger inventory.

Designated Greenway Parcel

The Fairmount Collaborative had a small inventory of parcels already identified, which were merged into this inventory. If the parcel had previously been identified by the Fairmount Collaborative as a designated greenway parcel, this column will be populated with a "Y". Any other inventories or databases should be archived and all updates should be captured in this larger inventory.

City Owned

The Fairmount Collaborative had a small inventory of parcels already identified, which were merged into this inventory. If the parcel had previously been identified by the Fairmount Collaborative as city owned, this column will be populated with a "Y". Any other inventories or databases should be archived and all updates should be captured in this larger inventory.

Agency

The Fairmount Collaborative had a small inventory of parcels already identified, which were merged into this inventory. If data had previously been populated by the Fairmount Collaborative about agency information related to a parcel, this column captures that data. Any other inventories or databases should be archived and all updates should be captured in this larger inventory.

Use

The Fairmount Collaborative had a small inventory of parcels already identified, which were merged into this inventory. If data had previously been populated by the Fairmount Collaborative about parcel use, this column captures that data. Any other inventories or databases should be archived and all updates should be captured in this larger inventory.

Comments

The Fairmount Collaborative had a small inventory of parcels already identified, which were merged into this inventory. If data had previously been populated by the Fairmount Collaborative about comments on a parcel, this column captures that data. Any other inventories or databases should be archived and all updates should be captured in this larger inventory.

DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT (DND)

City DND Parcel

The Boston Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) had an inventory of parcels already identified, which was merged into this inventory. If the parcel was identified by the DND, this column will be populated with a "Y". Any other inventories or databases should be archived and all updates should be captured in this larger inventory. Additional information can be found at: http://www.cityofboston.gov/dnd/rems/REMSfind/FindProperty.asp?cmdSubmit=Run+Query.

Property Type

The Boston DND had an inventory of parcels already identified, which was merged into this inventory. If data had previously been populated by the DND about property type, this column will be populated with Land or Building. Any other inventories or databases should be archived and all updates should be captured in this larger inventory. Additional information can be found at: http://www.cityofboston.gov/dnd/rems/REMSfind/FindProperty.asp?cmdSubmit=Run+Query.

Program Action

The Boston DND had an inventory of parcels already identified, which was merged into this inventory. If data had previously been populated by the DND about a program action on the parcel, this column will be populated with the data. Any other inventories or databases should be archived and all updates should be captured in this larger inventory. Additional information can be found at: http://www.cityofboston.gov/dnd/rems/REMSfind/FindProperty.asp?cmdSubmit=Run+Query. Data options include:

- ABUT-BILD
- BHC
- BuildHome
- GrassRoots
- HOLD
- MBTA
- MUNICIPAL
- Neighbrhd Hsng

- PARKS
- REDI-L
- YARD
- URBAN WILDS
- SLIVER
- REMS-Commercial
- REMS-Housing

Site Type

The Boston DND had an inventory of parcels already identified, which was merged into this inventory. If data had previously been populated by the DND about site type, this column will be populated with the data. Any other inventories or databases should be archived and all updates should be captured in this larger inventory. Additional information can be found at: http://www.cityofboston.gov/dnd/rems/REMSfind/FindProperty.asp?cmdSubmit=Run+Query. Data options include:

- BILDABLE
- COMMSITE
- LARGSITE
- MUNICPAL

- OPNSPACE
- PROBLEMS
- WETLANDS
- YARDSALE

DND or Fairmount Collaborative Site

This site pulls data from **City DND Parcel** column and the **Fairmount Collaborative** column in order to create a record of parcels that were previously identified by these two entities. This column can be filtered to find all sites within each of these entities previous records.

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (DEP)

DEP Presence

This data was populated from the Massachusetts DEP database. If the parcel was identified in the DEP database, then the data field will be populated with "MASS DEP." For additional information about the parcel, please visit: http://db.state.ma.us/dep/cleanup/sites/SearchResults.asp and search by parcel address. A parcel or property could have multiple records at Mass DEP and will help identify any actions previously taken on the parcel/property or action needed on the parcel/property.

> **Please Note***: DEP records should be reviewed to help understand what type of DEP action is recorded on the parcel, if a parcel has contamination, if contamination is present, cleaned up, or needs cleaned up, and if there is potential DEP involvement in the future on the parcel. Additional information about the potential contamination, severity, and cleanup costs can be determined in partnership with DEP.*

PARKS AND GREENSPACE
Green Space Name
This data identifies parks and forests at national, state, and local levels by the unique park or greenspace name. The data is populated from Tele Atlas North America, Inc., ESRI. Data in this field will identify the name of the closest park or greenspace.

Green Space Size in Square Miles
This data identifies parks and forests at national, state, and local levels by the unique park or greenspace name. The data is populated from Tele Atlas North America, Inc., ESRI. Data in this field will identify the size of the closest park or greenspace in square miles.

Distance to nearest GS
The distance to the nearest greenspace is a calculated value from ArcGIS to identify (in miles) how far away the nearest greenspace is to a specific parcel.

CITY SITE INFORMATION
Assessed Property Value Total
This data was provided by the Department of Neighborhood Development and identifies city owned parcels with assessed total value. However, if a property has been owned by the city for some time (four or more years), no assessed value is given. The data populated in this field identifies the parcel total property value, which is the combined value of the land and any building(s).

Assessed Property Value Land
This data was provided by the Department of Neighborhood Development and identifies city owned parcels with assessed land value. However, if a property has been owned by the city for some time (four or more years), no assessed value is given. The data populated in this field identifies the parcel land value.

Assessed Property Value Building
This data was provided by the Department of Neighborhood Development and identifies city owned parcels with assessed building value. However, if a property has been owned by the city for some time (four or more years), no assessed value is given. The data populated in this field identifies the parcel building value.

Current Tax Value
This data was provided by the Department of Neighborhood Development and identifies the current tax value of city owned parcels.

Date of Value
This data was provided by the Department of Neighborhood Development and identifies city owned parcels current tax value date. This column represents the date the current tax value was calculated last (as represented in the previous column).