



I-84 Hartford...moving forward!

The State of Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) has begun a multi-year process to rebuild I-84 in Hartford.

Planning, designing and reconstructing the interstate will be a complex undertaking. This section of highway, the most heavily travelled in the state, comprises many elevated sections - viaducts - and winds through major employment centers and five city neighborhoods.

Discussion on how to rebuild I-84 began back in the mid 2000s among transportation planners, city residents and officials. In 2010, the City of Hartford, the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) and CTDOT completed a concept study that identified some options.

No engineering or environmental analysis was completed in that initial study. CTDOT and its consultant team are beginning this next step in the process by collecting data that will help us learn about travel patterns, traffic projections, employment trends, community impacts, and quality of life issues. The Project Team will use this information to develop and evaluate a series of options that are feasible and have broad public support.

Planning throughout *The I-84 Hartford Project* will embrace a collaborative approach – engaging stakeholders such as employers, neighborhood groups, commuters, businesses and government officials. It will be guided by a Public Advisory Committee, and there will be multiple opportunities and means for public input. (see “Hearing All Voices”, page 2)

The specific area of focus of *The I-84 Hartford Project* is the interstate corridor approximately between Flatbush Avenue (Exit 45) and the I-91 Interchange in Downtown Hartford. The corridor is very complex. Its narrow layout, surrounding land uses, and close proximity to several buildings,

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Project At-A-Glance

Built in the 1960s, the elevated sections of I-84 through Hartford are nearing the end of their intended life span.

- Costly repairs are routinely needed to control continued deterioration.
- Difficult-to-navigate interchanges and congestion contribute to more than 1 accident per day in this section of I-84.
- *The I-84 Hartford Project* will seek to:
 1. Address deficient bridge structures;
 2. Make operational and safety improvements;
 3. Reduce delays; and
 4. Enhance mobility and connectivity within the corridor.





I-84 HARTFORD PROJECT

From the Department of Transportation

Constructed in the 1960s, I-84 through Hartford carries approximately 175,000 vehicles/day—more than any other segment of highway in the state. The elevated sections have required much repair and rehabilitation over the years and must be replaced. While the cost to replace I-84 will be significant, the cost to maintain it is already so, and continues to increase.

But what should that replacement look like? If we were to build I-84 today, I feel sure that it would look quite different. More importantly, the process for reaching

decisions would reflect our changed understanding of how transportation facilities help shape our urban fabric and how they can connect (or sever) neighborhoods and communities. We have a changed understanding, too, of the vital importance of community involvement in helping to form a vision for the future and shape a project based on that vision.

And that, in a nutshell, is the focus of this important, exciting, and challenging project. We want to bring a wide range of stakeholders to the table, and to craft a project that will reconstruct I-84

through Hartford to better accommodate traffic, lessen the impact of the highway on businesses and residential neighborhoods, and provide opportunities for synergy and growth.

What will I-84 through Hartford look like when we are finished? We don't know yet. What we *do* know is that we are committed to engaging and listening to the community to help us clarify the criteria by which we will evaluate the options. That process will lead us toward a win-win solution for travelers, the city, the region, and the State of Connecticut.



Commissioner James P. Redeker

So, stay tuned. We're glad to have you aboard as we embark on this process, and we hope to hear from you when you have ideas or opinions to share.

Hearing all voices

One Hartford resident described the rebuilding of I-84 Hartford as a "once in a lifetime opportunity, so it's important to get it right".

The Project Team expects there will be a lot of different opinions about what exactly "right" means. Many opportunities for dialogue and engagement among all stakeholders and the public will be provided so that all views can be heard and considered throughout the project.

A public involvement plan has been developed, but the plan will be flexible so it can respond to public concerns that may arise. Special efforts will be made to reach those who may not usually participate in public projects.

The public involvement plan includes:

- A Public Advisory Committee comprised of neighborhood groups, city officials, advocates for bicyclists, pedestrian, motorists and truckers, employers and others;
- A website, www.i84hartford.com;
- Other online tools – Facebook, Twitter; and e-bulletins for real-time communication;
- Newsletters with feature stories on project elements and status updates;



See "Share your thoughts" on page 4



FOCUS ON...

the state of our bridges

The I-84 Hartford Project corridor from Flatbush Avenue (Exit 45) and the I-91 Interchange in Downtown Hartford consists mainly of long spans of bridge segments built in the 1960s. The corridor is less than two miles long, yet it comprises over four miles (about 25 acres) of bridges! Time and harsh New England weather have contributed to the decline of these bridges, which are nearing the end of their 50-year intended lifespan.

A bridge structure expands and contracts as the temperature changes. On long bridges, joints in the concrete compensate for this give-and-take, which would otherwise cause severe cracking. Joints are designed to prevent water and road salts from reaching the steel components beneath the bridge surface. However, as they have aged, these joints in the I-84 corridor through Hartford have begun to fail, allowing water and salt to penetrate to the exposed steel beams below. As a result of this exposure, the steel beams have deteriorated and need replacement. Some of the concrete bridge components have also deteriorated due to the freeze-thaw cycle.

Over the past 10 years, CTDOT has spent over \$60 million to repair the I-84 bridges, and plans to spend another \$45 million over the next three years to maintain the safety and continued operation of the interstate. This is quite a large sum! The goal of those repairs is to stop the deterioration from progressing, but they will not replace any of the major bridge components, which would be considerably more costly. Despite continual repairs and capital investment, the condition of the bridges will continue to worsen over time due to their advanced age. For this reason, CTDOT has embarked on ***The I-84 Hartford***

Project in order to seek the best long-term solution for travel in the I-84 corridor.

Replacing the I-84 bridges and ramps in their existing configuration is one option; however, after additional study and community input, CTDOT wishes to further assess the corridor to see if other solutions exist which could be more beneficial to travelers, businesses, and the surrounding neighborhoods than the existing layout. Continued input from many stakeholders will be sought to help make this determination.





I-84 HARTFORD PROJECT

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Moving forward

the rail line, Park River conduit and the new CTfastrak busway combine to provide challenges aplenty.

To manage **The I-84 Hartford Project**, CTDOT has hired a team of consultants headed by TranSystems, a transportation planning firm with extensive experience in Connecticut and nationally. Other key firms assisting are Parsons Brinckerhoff, Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc., Goody Clancy, and A. DiCesare Associates. Additionally, a team led by AECOM will prepare environmental documentation and CDM Smith will study the feasibility of instituting tolling in the corridor.

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Share your thoughts

- Periodic public meetings at community locations where the public can have face-to-face contact with the Project Team; and
- A project mailing list to keep the public informed on project activities.


We encourage you to check out the website, sign up for the mailing list, and share your thoughts at public meetings or on Facebook and Twitter. We now have more than 450 people on our mailing list. Please help us reach 1,000 by the end of 2013.

We also ask you to let us know the best way to reach out to you and your community. Please contact outreach coordinator Mike Morehouse, mmorehouse@fhiplan.com, 860-256-4912.

www.i84hartford.com

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