U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

I-84 HARTFORD PROJECT
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT
SCOPING INITIATION PACKET

December 2014

Introduction

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) is investigating the need to rehabilitate, reconstruct or replace Interstate 84 (I-84) through downtown Hartford. CTDOT has initiated the environmental review process as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and has begun coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in accordance with Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU, as codified in 23 U.S.C. §139) for the I-84 Hartford Project. FHWA is serving as the lead federal agency for this project, and CTDOT is serving as a joint lead agency. The environmental documentation for this project will meet the requirements of both NEPA and the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA).

This scoping initiation packet is the first "official" step in the environmental review process. The purpose of scoping is to convey what the project is all about (purpose and need) and seek input on alternatives and environmental concerns. Agencies and the public are invited to participate in Agency and Public Scoping Meetings respectively and provide comments throughout the scoping process. This input will inform the entire Project Team and will provide an early stakeholder perspective on the development of alternatives.

What is Scoping?

Scoping is an opportunity for agencies and the public to help shape the study and its OUTCOMES.

Project Corridor and Study Area

The project corridor is approximately two miles in length and encompasses the interchanges and the elevated bridge sections of the highway from as far west as Hamilton Street to the I-91 Interchange in downtown Hartford to the east. Interchanges within the project corridor are from exits 46 to 51 and connect to Sisson Avenue, Sigourney Street, Capitol Avenue/Broad Street/Asylum Street, Ann Uccello Street/High Street, Main Street/Trumbull Street/Morgan Street, and I-91 Northbound. The study area includes a buffer around the project corridor to appropriately evaluate resources for the environmental review and extends from Flatbush Avenue to I-91.

Study Area – The geographic area within which project-related impacts on a particular resource are analyzed. This area is typically broader than the project corridor. The boundaries of the study area may vary depending on the resource of concern.

Project Corridor – The geographic area to be directly affected by the alternatives under consideration. For projects along a transportation corridor, the boundary of the project corridor can be defined by the end points of the transportation improvement, or project termini.

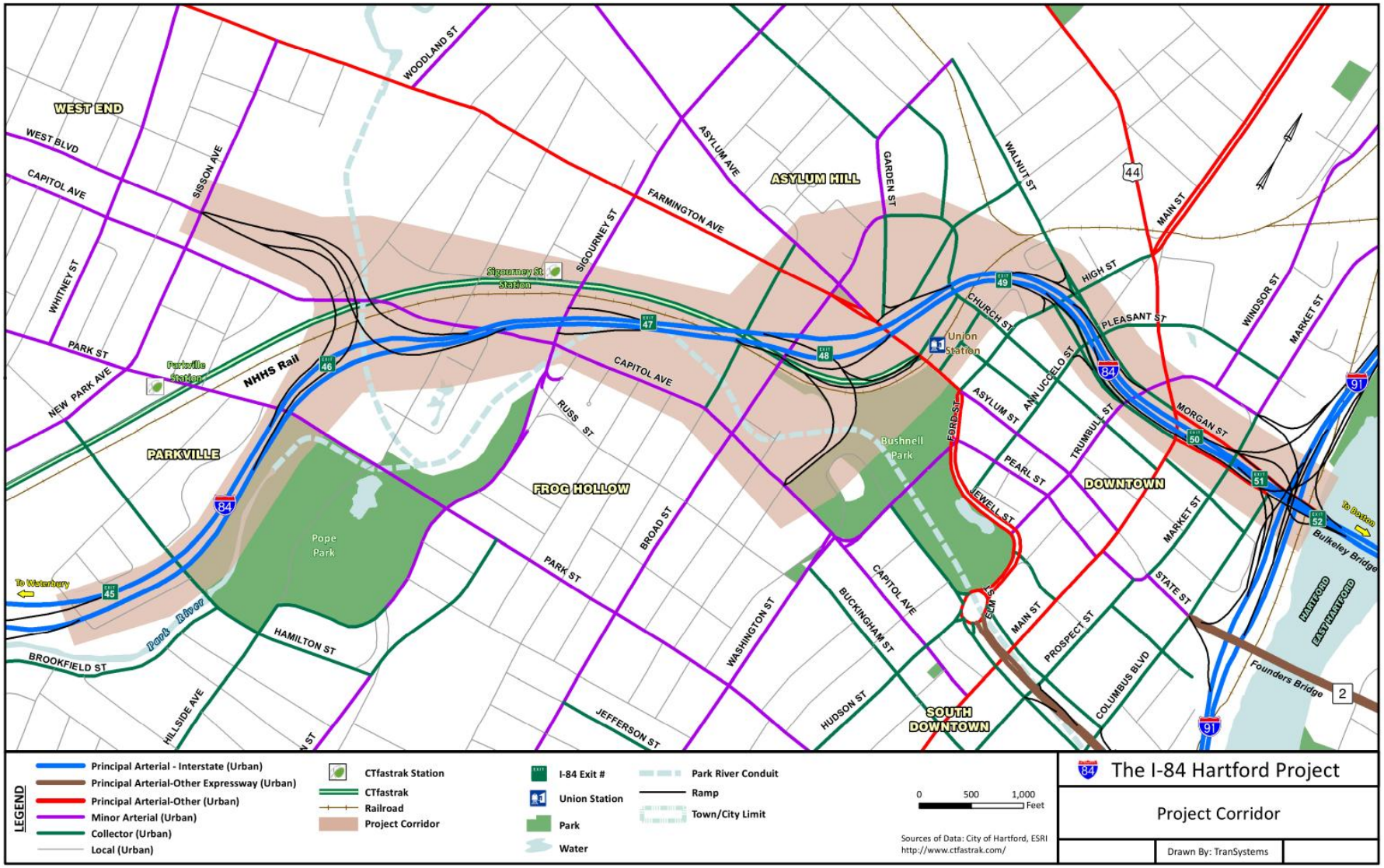
The City of Hartford is the capital of Connecticut and the largest employment center in the State. I-84 bisects the City, and within Connecticut serves as a critical east-west transportation link between New York and Massachusetts. It provides connectivity to and from I-91 in Hartford; and Route 2 in East Hartford, a major east-west expressway serving eastern Connecticut. Locally, commuters use I-84 and its interchanges to access Hartford's business districts, State Capitol and downtown areas. The study area contains a rich and diverse array of social, economic, and environmental resources. In addition, Amtrak serves the area, with the railroad lying adjacent to the I-84 corridor. Within the study area are many local streets, buildings, parks, several parking lots, Union Station, and the railroad. The study area also includes the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) high-speed rail corridor ("the Hartford Line") and the bus rapid transit system known as *CT fastrak*. It is anticipated that the *CT fastrak* should be in operation by early 2015 and the Hartford Line should be in operation by late 2016.

"Nicknamed the 'Insurance Capital of the World', Hartford houses many insurance company headquarters, and insurance remains the region's major industry."

City of Hartford History, Connecticut State Library

Land Use

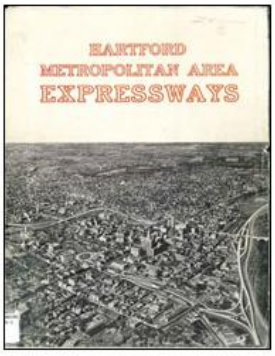
Land uses in the study area are characterized by a diversity of types: primarily, transportation and parking; residential; community, cultural and institutional uses; commercial uses; natural resource based land uses; vacant land; and industrial.

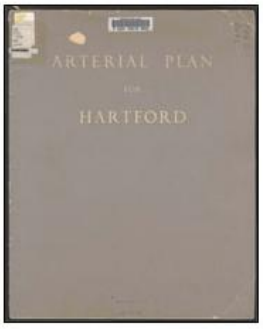

WEST END
WEST BLVD
CAPITOL AVE
WOODLAND ST
SISSON AVE
WHITNEY ST
PARK ST
NEW PARK AVE
Parkville Station
NHHS Rail
PARKVILLE
Pope Park
Park River
BROOKFIELD ST
HAMILTON ST
HILLSIDE AVE
To Waterbury
FARMINGTON AVE
ASYLUM AVE
ASYLUM HILL
GARDEN ST
WALNUT ST
SIGOURNEY ST
Sigourney St. Station
CAPITOL AVE
RUSS ST
FROG HOLLOW
BROAD ST
PARK ST
WASHINGTON ST
BUCKINGHAM ST
HUDSON ST
JEFFERSON ST
CHURCH ST
Union Station
HIGH ST
PLEASANT ST
MAIN ST
WINDSOR ST
MARKET ST
ANN UCCELLO ST
ASYLUM ST
TRUMBULL ST
FORD ST
Bushnell Park
PEARL ST
JEWELL ST
DOWNTOWN
MORGAN ST
MARKET ST
STATE ST
CAPITOL AVE
ELM ST
MAIN ST
PROSPECT ST
COLUMBUS BLVD
SOUTH DOWNTOWN
To Boston
Bulkeley Bridge
HARTFORD
EAST HARTFORD
Founders Bridge
LEGEND
Principal Arterial - Interstate (Urban)
Principal Arterial-Other Expressway (Urban)
Principal Arterial-Other (Urban)
Minor Arterial (Urban)
Collector (Urban)
Local (Urban)
CTfastrak Station
CTfastrak
Railroad
Project Corridor
I-84 Exit #
Union Station
Park
Water
Park River Conduit
Ramp
Town/City Limit
0 500 1,000 Feet
Sources of Data: City of Hartford, ESRI
http://www.ctfastrak.com/
The I-84 Hartford Project
Project Corridor
Drawn By: TranSystems

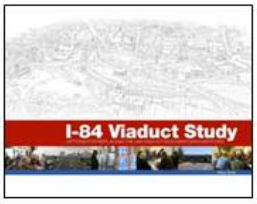
Population and Travel Projections

Between 1990 and 2010, the City of Hartford had a 10.7 percent decline in population, while over the same period of time; population in the State grew by 8.7 percent. For future projections, there are a variety of sources that provide population projections including the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC), and the Connecticut State Data Center (CSDC). Each of these sources has differing geographies, timeframes and methodologies. The projections from these sources show a limited range of population growth from a small annual gain of less than 0.1 percent through the year 2025 to as much as 0.2 percent annual growth in population to the year 2020. The data suggest that while the population of the City of Hartford, and comparably the study area, may experience some growth overall by the 2040 design year, as a whole it can be anticipated to remain essentially stable. According to the CRCOG, traffic is expected to grow by approximately 8.5 percent from 2012 to 2040, with roughly a 0.2 percent increase per year.

Background and Prior Studies







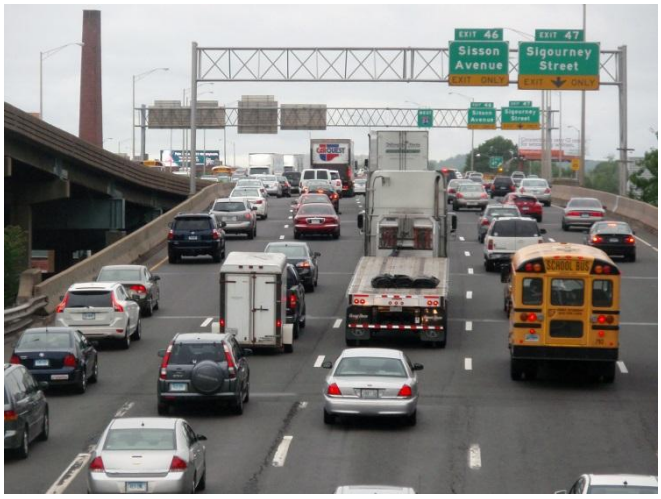
Construction of I-84 in Hartford began in 1959 and was completed in 1969. Its current alignment grew from various 1940s and 1950s studies of an "East-West Expressway," a freeway meant to relieve congestion on local streets and to provide fast and efficient travel between the west and southwest and the central business district of Hartford. Within Hartford, the highway alignment generally followed the corridor of the railroad and the Park River. The plan was solidified in 1956 upon the passage of the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, with the East-West Expressway included as a portion of I-84.

There was debate concerning the freeway's most suitable location; impacts and costs were weighed against maximum benefits to the traveling public, but without sufficient regard for the potential impacts the project would have on Hartford. When I-84 was constructed, it not only displaced many families, businesses and institutions, it created a lasting impact, especially on nearby neighborhoods. In the past, the Park River, the railroad, and the industries served as a physical demarcation between the north

and the south neighborhoods. The construction of I-84, with its massive interchanges, bridges and elevated structures has created a much more imposing and disruptive barrier within the City. The scale of the interstate so dominates the area that surrounding neighborhood communities have long insisted that the highway's physical and visual impact be lessened as part of any reconstruction plan.

I-84 was originally designed and built prior to the implementation of NEPA. Today, as part of the requirements prescribed through the NEPA and CEPA process, potential impacts on homes, businesses, neighborhoods and natural and social resources will be evaluated. Environmental laws such as the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, and Executive Orders on transportation and environmental justice, among others, must be followed. Adherence to these laws and their implementing regulations will ensure that project development is more efficient, programming is more realistic, and protection of environmental and socioeconomic resources is a priority. Today, with the passage of NEPA, as well as CEPA, transportation projects of this magnitude must have meaningful opportunities for the public and agencies to provide input on all aspects of the project.

When I-84 in Hartford was designed, it was originally anticipated that the interstate would be carrying between 50,000 and 66,000 vehicles per day by the year 1975; however, shortly after the highway opened in 1970, the actual volume was between 70,000 and 100,000 vehicles per day. Today, I-84 in Hartford is the most heavily-traveled section of highway in the State, with traffic volumes in excess of 175,000 vehicles per day.



Much of I-84 and its interchange ramps in Hartford are elevated on structures known as viaducts, consisting of several long, multi-span bridges high above ground level. Now near or past their anticipated 50-year service life, many of the viaducts are classified as either "structurally deficient," "functionally obsolete," or both, and are in need of rehabilitation or replacement. Despite continual maintenance, repairs and capital investment, the condition of these bridges will continue to worsen over time and lead to extensive rehabilitation and ultimately full replacement of many of the bridges.

"The HUB Study"

The most recent of the prior planning studies was completed by the CRCOG in 2010; the "I-84 Viaduct Study," also known as "*The Hub Study.*" The CRCOG is the MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) for the Capitol Region. Led by the Hub of Hartford Committee, the study explored a broad range of conceptual project alternatives that would improve the I-84 infrastructure, while considering economic development opportunities, neighborhood connectivity, community cohesion, livability and mobility.

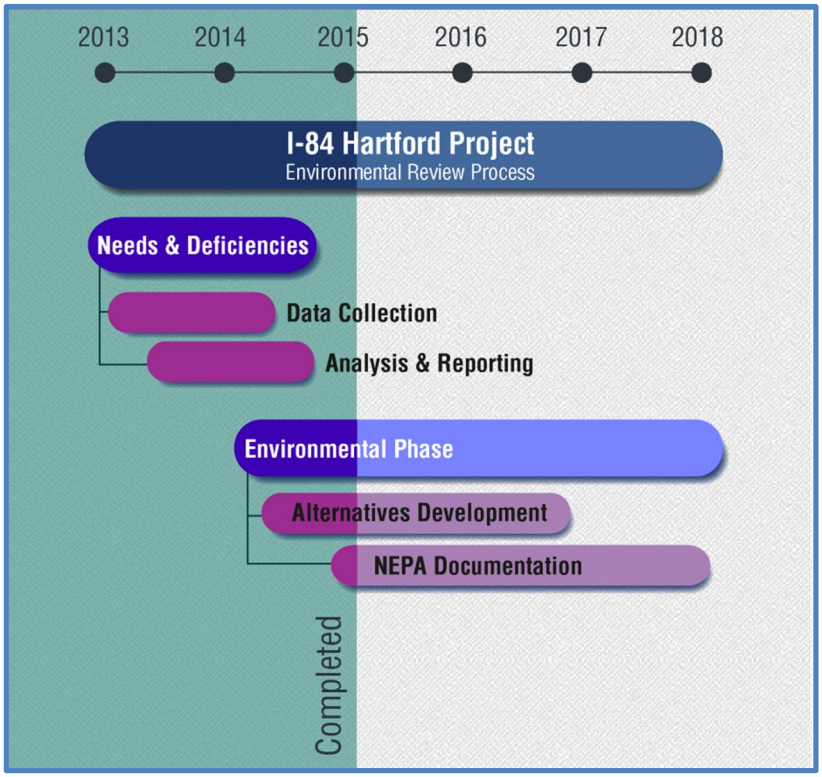
HUB Study Alternatives Evaluated

The Hub Study identified the following alternatives to be studied further.

Baseline-Enhanced Viaduct – Highway replaced with an enhanced viaduct structure.
Alternative Concept 1 – Highway replaced with an enhanced viaduct structure with improved connections across the highway.
Alternative Concept 2 – Viaduct replaced by a surface highway; rail line relocated to the north side of I-84; city reconnected across highway.
Alternative Concept 3 – Viaduct replaced by a tunnel; rail line relocated to the north side of I-84; city reconnected across highway.

The Environmental Review Process

Both the Federal government and the State of Connecticut have established environmental review requirements to ensure that agencies consider the potential effects of projects that they are undertaking or approving; NEPA and CEPA, respectively. This environmental review will be conducted in accordance with NEPA, as amended, with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) and with CEPA. In addition, the FHWA's NEPA Implementing Regulations (23 CFR Part 771), and FHWA's Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents (Technical Advisory 6640.8A, October 30, 1987) will be followed. The environmental review process will also be conducted in accordance with Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU. The environmental document will address, as necessary, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation (DOT) Act of 1966 (49 U.S.C. 303) and other relevant federal and state laws and regulations. The document will describe environmental conditions, analyze the possible social, economic, and environmental impacts and benefits of the project, and identify proposed mitigation measures as warranted. The document will be dually compliant with both NEPA and CEPA requirements.



A draft schedule has been developed for the project. The schedule anticipates that conclusion of the NEPA/CEPA process would take place towards the end of 2018, followed by final design of the Preferred Alternative and subsequently, construction.

Lead, Participating and Cooperating Agencies

FHWA will be the Lead Federal Agency for this project and has the overall responsibility for facilitating the expeditious completion of the environmental review process, reviewing and accepting environmental documentation, and ensuring that CTDOT complies with all federal and state requirements. CTDOT will act as Joint Lead Agency for this project and ensure that the requirements of CEPA are met.

As the lead agencies, CTDOT and FHWA have preliminarily invited federal, state, and local agencies/entities listed in the table below to partake in the environmental process as either participating or cooperating agencies, as defined by CEQ regulations and guidance on Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU. In addition, the FHWA has invited the sovereign Tribes with interests in the study area to participate in this project. The roles of these agencies will be further defined once it is determined what interests they have in the project.

The roles and responsibilities of cooperating and participating agencies are similar, but cooperating agencies have a higher degree of authority, responsibility, and involvement in the environmental review process. A distinguishing feature of a cooperating agency is that the CEQ regulations permit a cooperating agency to, at the request of the lead agency, assume responsibility for developing information and preparing environmental analyses, including

portions of the environmental impact statement, for which the cooperating agency has special expertise.

Agency	Contact
LEAD AGENCIES	
FHWA – Federal Highway Administration	David Nardone Eloise Powell
CTDOT – Connecticut Department of Transportation (Project Sponsor and Joint Lead Agency)	Richard Armstrong
COOPERATING AGENCIES	
FRA – Federal Railroad Administration	David Valenstein
FTA – Federal Transit Administration	Mary Beth Mello
ACOE – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Susan Lee
SHPO – State Historic Preservation Officer	Daniel Forrest
PARTICIPATING AGENCIES	
HUD – U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	Suzanne Piacentini
USEPA – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Timothy Timmerman
USFWS – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Tom Chapman
CTDEEP – Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection	Frederick Riese
TRIBAL NATIONS	
Mashantucket (Western) Pequot	Rodney Butler
Mohegan Tribe of Connecticut	Kevin Brown
Narragansett Indian Tribe	Matthew Thomas

An additional distinction is that, pursuant to 40 CFR 1506.3 "a cooperating agency may adopt without recirculating the environmental impact statement of a lead agency when, after an independent review of the statement, the cooperating agency concludes that its comments and suggestions have been satisfied."

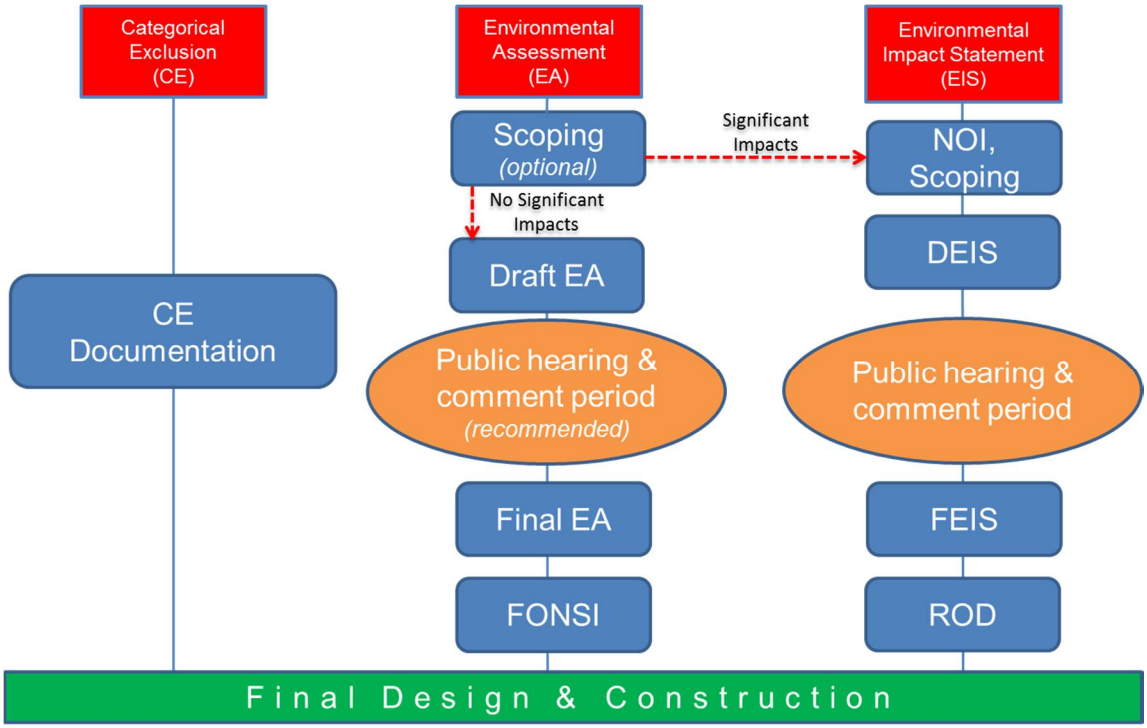
Participating Agencies are any agency with an interest in the project. The standard for Participating Agency status is more encompassing than the standard for Cooperating Agency status. Therefore, Cooperating Agencies are, by definition, Participating Agencies, but not all Participating Agencies are Cooperating Agencies. The Lead Agencies have considered the standards in deciding whether to invite an agency to serve as a Cooperating/Participating Agency or only as a Participating Agency.

An Agency Scoping Meeting is scheduled for January 20, 2015. All participating agencies are being invited to attend the meeting to participate in the Scoping Process.

NEPA Class of Action

Under NEPA, there are three classes of action for preparing environmental documentation on projects using federal funds as described in 23 CFR 771.115:

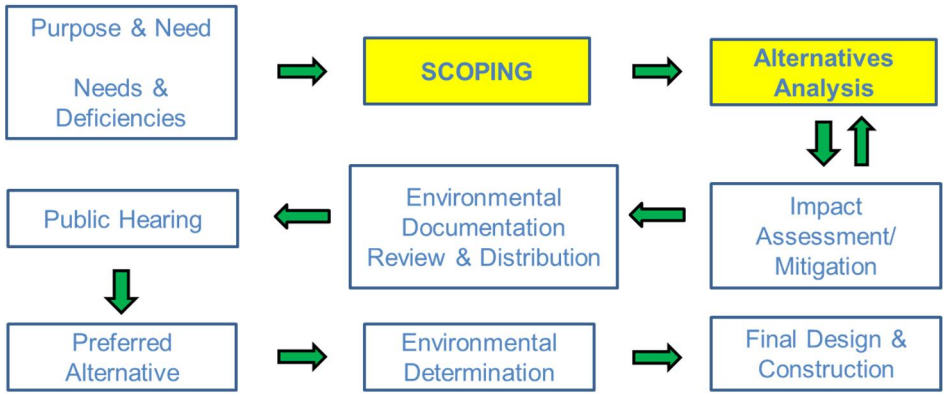
- Class I Action (Environmental Impact Statement): Actions that would significantly affect the environment require preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS); these actions require the highest level of detailed analysis. A Record of Decision (ROD) is prepared at the end of the NEPA process documenting the decision made by the federal agency.
- Class II Action (Categorical Exclusion): Actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant environmental impact require the preparation of a Categorical Exclusion (CE).
- Class III Action (Environmental Assessment): An Environmental Assessment (EA) is prepared for those projects where the significance of environmental impacts is not clearly established. The result of an EA is either a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or the determination that the preparation of an EIS is required.



NOI = Notice of Intent; DEIS = Draft Environmental Impact Statement; FEIS = Final Environmental Impact Statement

As the project is in the early phases of alternatives development, the significance of potential impacts in the corridor is not clearly established at this time. Therefore, an EA will be prepared for the proposed project, per 23 CFR §771.115(c), to determine the appropriate environmental document required. The EA will be prepared in accordance with the agency coordination requirements found in Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU, which are required for an EIS. The requirements are being followed so that if significant impacts are identified during the environmental review process, the anticipated Participating and Cooperating Agencies will have already been involved in the project in accordance with the law, resulting in minimal delay to the overall project schedule. If significant impacts are identified during the environmental review process, CTDOT and FHWA will take the necessary procedural steps to prepare an EIS.

In accordance with the spirit and intent of NEPA, the State of Connecticut enacted similar legislation. The I-84 Hartford Project is subject to CEPA; therefore the environmental document will be dually compliant with both NEPA and CEPA. The flow chart below illustrates the key elements of the NEPA/CEPA process, and highlights where we are in the overall process.

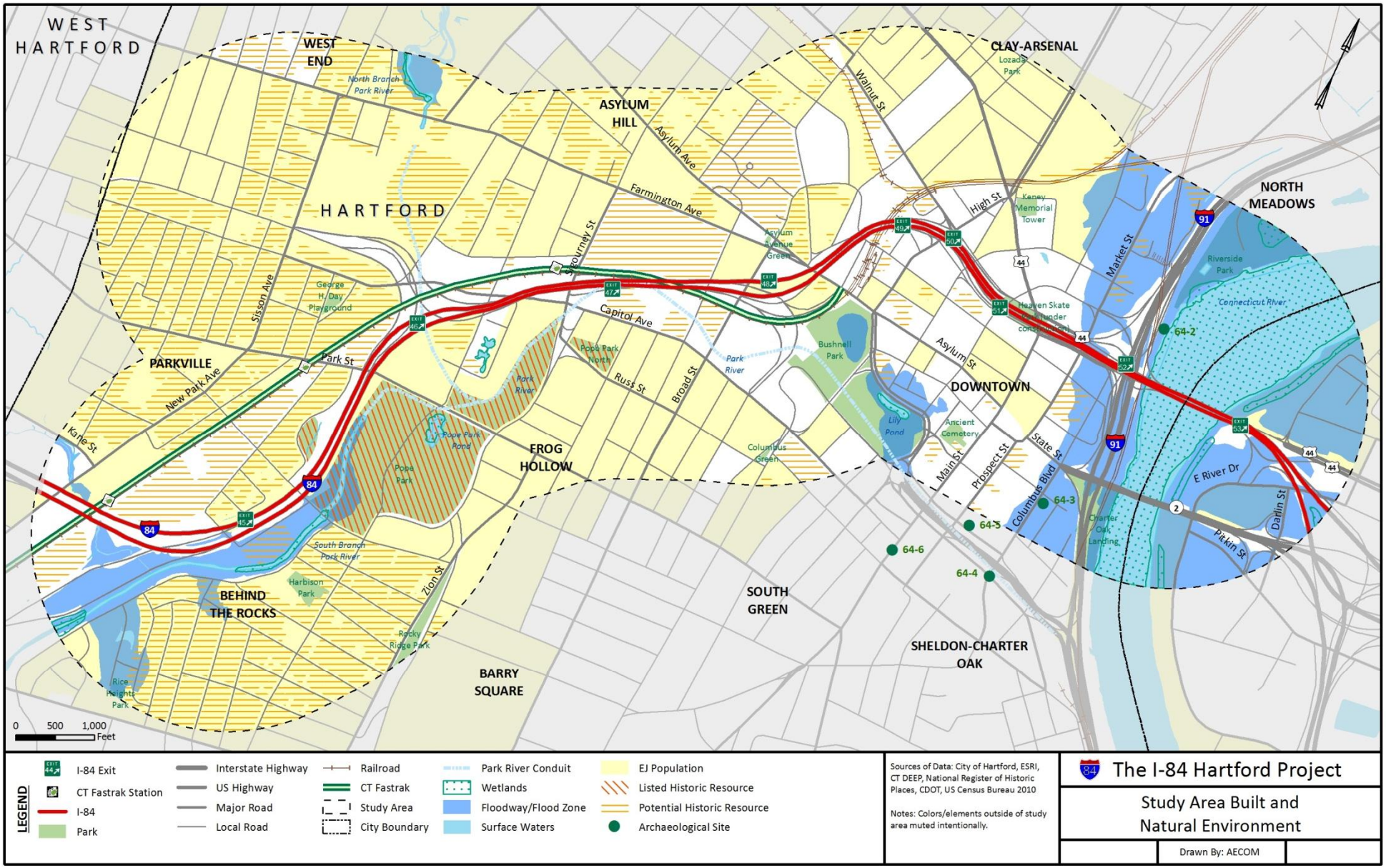


Potential for Environmental Impacts

Within the project corridor, there are historic and cultural resources, environmental justice communities, residences and businesses, parks, potential contamination sites, and water resources. As the project progresses and various alternatives are developed and refined, these resources will be evaluated. Where impacts cannot be avoided, impact minimization and mitigation will be analyzed. The potential social, economic and environmental impacts (beneficial and adverse) of the I-84 Hartford Project will be evaluated in an Environmental Assessment.

Environmental Resource	Analysis
Transportation	Consideration of all modes within the I-84 corridor and potential effects of the proposed action on those modes and affiliated services, as applicable.
Air Quality	Identification of attainment and non-attainment areas, as defined by the Clean Air Act.
Noise and Vibration	Identification of potentially sensitive land uses and receptors along the corridor that could be affected by noise and vibration from both the long-term operation and short-term construction activities.
Land Use	Identification of land use controls and comprehensive regional planning efforts that may be affected by the proposed alternatives.
Communities and Socioeconomic Conditions	Identification of communities, significant community resources and socioeconomic characteristics (demographics), including community cohesion, travel patterns, relocations, public facilities and services, and pedestrian and bike facilities.
Environmental Justice	Identification of minority, low-income, and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations which could be impacted by the proposed alternatives.
Parks, Recreational Areas, and Wildlife and Waterfowl Refuges	Identification of public parks and recreational areas, and designated uses and funding sources.
Visual and Aesthetic Characteristics	Identification of visually sensitive resources.
Contamination and Hazardous Materials	Identification of known hazardous waste sites and areas of contamination.
Cultural Resources	Identification of cultural resources listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, including architectural resources, archaeological resources, and sacred Native American grounds.
Hydrologic/Water Resources	Identification of surface waters, wetlands, floodplains and coastal zones.
Biological Resources	Identification of protected species and critical habitats.
Secondary and Cumulative Effects	Identification of potential secondary effects (indirect effects) and cumulative effects on applicable resources.

An early evaluation of the natural and built environment within the study area was conducted as part of the Needs and Deficiencies Analysis for the project. In order to sufficiently identify the resources that could potentially be impacted in the event that a new alignment and/or footprint were created, a buffer around the existing I-84 footprint in Hartford was applied. For most resources the buffer was 2,500 feet; however, the area may vary, depending on the resource. The figure below illustrates the resources within the study area buffer that will be evaluated as part of the environmental review process.


WEST HARTFORD
WEST END
ASYLUM HILL
CLAY-ARSENAL
NORTH MEADOWS
HARTFORD
PARKVILLE
FROG HOLLOW
DOWNTOWN
BEHIND THE ROCKS
SOUTH GREEN
BARRY SQUARE
SHELDON-CHARTER OAK
North Branch Park River
South Branch Park River
Park River
Connecticut River
Farmington Ave
Asylum Ave
Capitol Ave
Park St
New Park Ave
Broad St
Russ St
Walnut St
Market St
Asylum St
Main St
State St
Columbus Blvd
Prospect St
E River Dr
Pitkin St
Darlin St
Zion St
Sisson Ave
Karle St
High St
Trinity St
George H. Day Playground
Pope Park North
Pope Park
Pope Park Pond
Bushnell Park
Lily Pond
Ancient Cemetery
Columbus Green
Asylum Avenue Green
Keney Memorial Tower
Riverside Park
Charter Oak Landing
Harbison Park
Rocky Ridge Park
Rice Heights Park
Lozada Park
64-2
64-3
64-5
64-6
64-4
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LEGEND
I-84 Exit
CT Fastrak Station
I-84
Park
Interstate Highway
US Highway
Major Road
Local Road
Railroad
CT Fastrak
Study Area
City Boundary
Park River Conduit
Wetlands
Floodway/Flood Zone
Surface Waters
EJ Population
Listed Historic Resource
Potential Historic Resource
Archaeological Site
Sources of Data: City of Hartford, ESRI, CT DEEP, National Register of Historic Places, CDOT, US Census Bureau 2010
Notes: Colors/elements outside of study area muted intentionally.
The I-84 Hartford Project
Study Area Built and Natural Environment
Drawn By: AECOM

Purpose and Need

What is the Purpose of the I-84 Hartford Project?

This section of the Scoping Initiation Packet provides an abridged version of the Purpose and Need Statement along with a summary of the goals and objectives that will be used to determine the extent to which the actions under consideration achieve the goals. The Purpose and Need Statement plays a pivotal role in every stage of the I-84 Hartford Project. It presents a brief overview of the planning and regulatory environment in which the I-84 Hartford Project will be advanced by detailing the current structural deficiencies of the existing bridge components, the traffic operation and safety deficiencies, and the impediments to mobility for residents, businesses and visitors to the area. It also establishes the goals and objectives to be achieved in the selection of a preferred alternative. The Purpose and Need articulates the vital link that I-84 in Hartford plays in the Northeast interstate highway system, as well as providing a critical transportation element in the daily life of many commuters, employers and residents in Hartford.

Primary Goals of a Purpose and Need Statement are to:

- *Justify the expenditure of public funds*
- *Drive which alternatives are reasonable, prudent and practicable*
- *Demonstrate the problems that will continue / result if the project is not implemented*
- *Evolve as the project develops*

The purpose of the I-84 Hartford Project is to address the structural deficiencies of the existing highway, improve traffic operations and safety conditions, and reduce congestion on the I-84 mainline in Hartford and its interchanges from as far west as Hamilton Street to I-91 in the east. Addressing these deficiencies would allow I-84 to continue to serve as a vital link in the interstate highway system in the Northeast and provide needed access to Hartford business districts and the State Capitol. These improvements would also enhance access, safety and mobility for vehicular traffic, bicycles and pedestrians within the project area. At the same time, the I-84 Hartford Project would strive to reduce the highway's footprint on the City; lessen the highway's visual and physical impact on adjoining neighborhoods; better integrate the highway into the urban environment; create linkages to existing and proposed future modes of transportation; and support Hartford's economic development goals.

Why is it needed?

Bridge Structure Deficiencies

The bridge spans within this section of the highway are reaching the end of their intended life. While safe to drive over today, they are in a state of continuous deterioration. CTDOT has spent over $60 million on repairs since 2004 and will need to continue to repair and ultimately replace them.

Traffic, Operational and Safety Deficiencies

This stretch of I-84 has higher daily vehicle use than any other stretch of highway in the State, with approximately 175,000 vehicles a day, far in excess of the initial design capacity of 50,000 vehicles a day. Left-hand on- and off-ramps, weaving traffic and eight interchanges in less than three miles contributes to traffic jams stretching six to seven miles. The accident rate within the project corridor is four times the state average, with nearly two accidents per day.

Why is the I-84 Project Needed?

- *Bridge Structure Deficiencies*
- *Operational and Safety Deficiencies*
- *Traffic Congestion*
- *Mobility Constraints*

Mobility Constraints

On adjacent streets, the original downtown grid is impacted physically and visually with constrained connectivity between north and south side of the highway. In addition, there is poor pedestrian and bike accessibility on the adjacent local streets.

What are the Goals and Objectives of the I-84 Hartford Project?

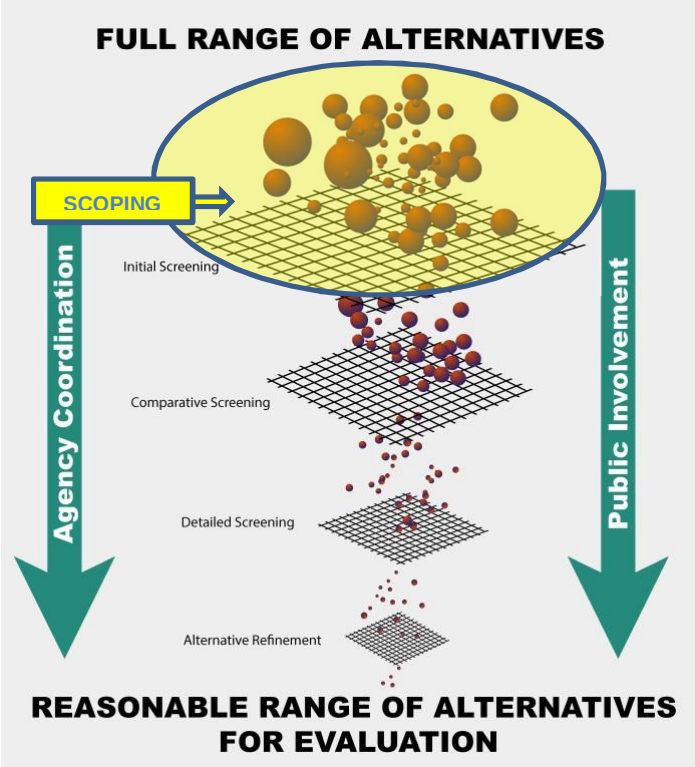
The I-84 Hartford Project Goals and Objectives will be considered in evaluating and screening alternatives, and eventually guide the recommendation for a Preferred Alternative.

Goal	Objective
Ensure the long-term serviceability of the corridor	• Create opportunities for connections to existing and future modes of transportation • Coordinate with the City of Hartford and CRCOG towards a workable solution that is compatible with City and regional initiatives
Maximize the public investment	• Utilize cost-effective solutions that maximize economic investment • Reduce maintenance and operations costs • Minimize the impact on the traveling public and the local community • Increase opportunities for economic development • Reuse existing materials on site
Ensure better integration of the interstate with the urban environment	• Reduce the physical impact of the interstate • Repair the visual and physical connectedness of the area • Improve the highway's aesthetic qualities • Create aesthetically pleasing spaces • Support the City's urban design goals

Alternatives Development

The I-84 Hartford Project alternatives development and screening process will be closely tied to the program's Purpose and Need Statement and associated Goals and Objectives. The alternatives will address structural, operational, mobility and safety deficiencies while striving to meet current design standards including design speed, shoulder widths, lane widths and median widths. All reasonable alternatives will be objectively evaluated and then selected for further study or be eliminated from further consideration. In order for an alternative to be considered reasonable, it must be technically and economically feasible, satisfy the primary objectives of the Purpose and Need Statement; connect logical termini; and not restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonable foreseeable transportation improvements.

The findings from two other ongoing studies currently being sponsored by CTDOT could influence the alternatives development process and possibly the choice for a preferred alternative. These studies include the *New Haven-Hartford-Springfield High Speed Rail Project: Hartford Rail Alternatives Analysis* (Rail Relocation Study) and the *CT Congestion Relief Study* (Value Pricing Study). These studies are due to be completed in early 2015.



A depiction of the screening process for the analysis and refinement of the alternatives as the project moves towards the identification of a Preferred Alternative is shown to the right. Due the nature of the I-84 Hartford Project corridor, it is likely that every alternative will have impacts. The nature, extent, and significance of potential impacts will be assessed and evaluated as part of the environmental documentation process.

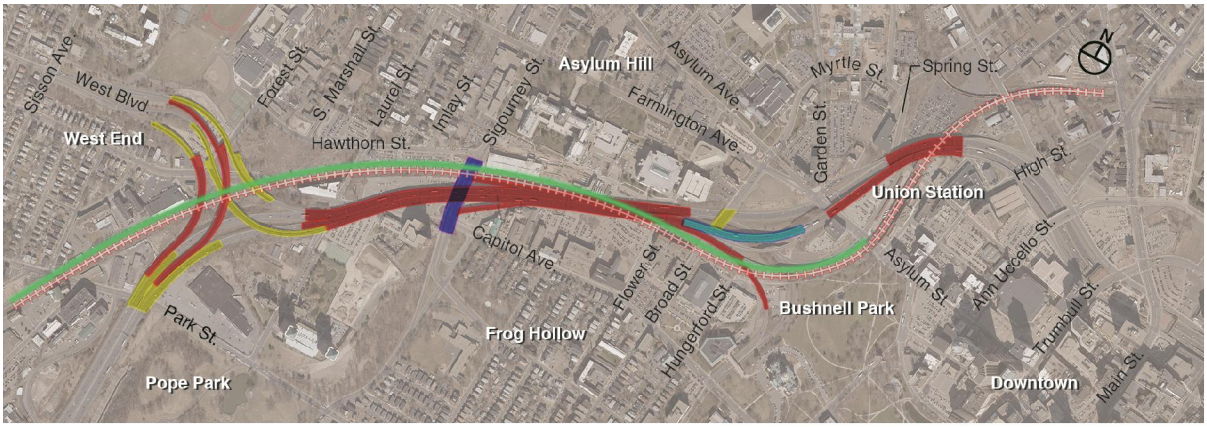
There are four preliminary alternatives currently being considered, as illustrated in the following figures. Some of these alternatives may have options or several iterations for intersection alignments or curvature alignments in one or more locations in response to the complexity of the local road network and the interchange layout. As the engineering for these alternatives is developed, these will become more precise; however at this time, the exact footprint of any of the preliminary alternatives is still in development.

Description of Preliminary Alternatives

At present, four preliminary alternatives have been identified, including the "No-Build" alternative and three "Build" alternatives. All four alternatives are briefly described below. These alternatives represent a broad range of possible options for rebuilding I-84 through Hartford.

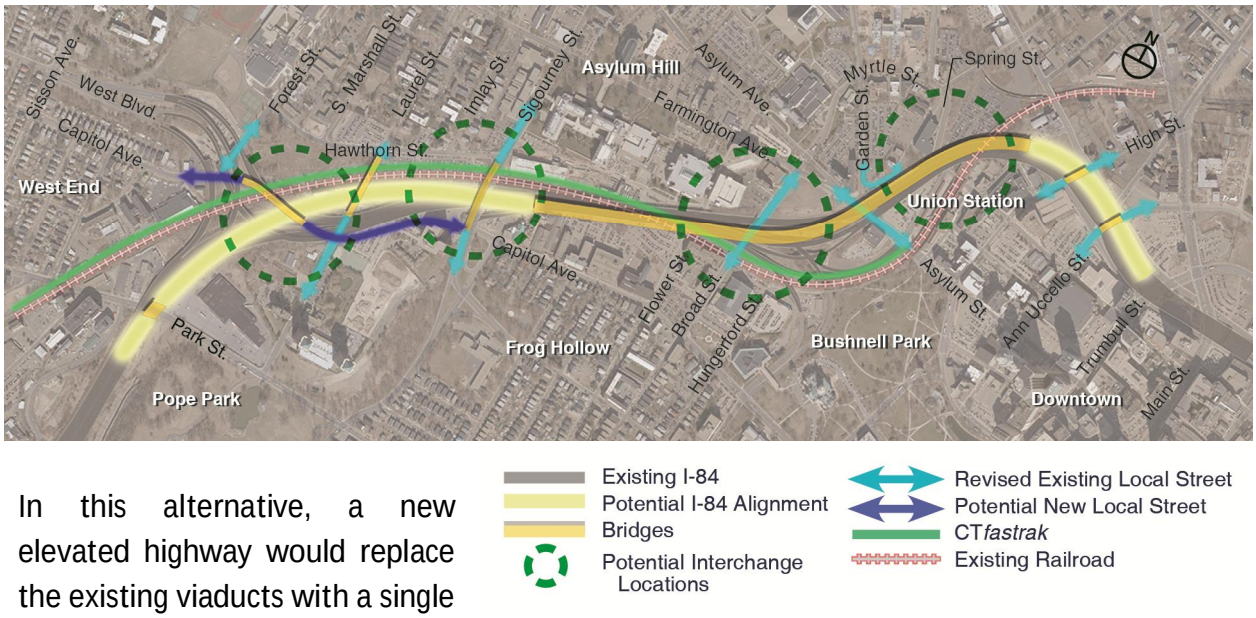
We are in the very early stages of evaluating these alternatives. As such, few details are yet established. As the project progresses we will continue to flesh out each alternative, as we begin the joint process of alternatives analysis and environmental impact documentation. Each option will have its own set of impacts and benefits. As we continue to assess the impacts and benefits of each, we will continue to seek input from the regulatory agencies and the public to help us better understand those impacts and benefits. At the end of the process, and with your help, we hope to select the option that best meets the project's purpose, needs, and goals, while minimizing socioeconomic and environmental impacts.

Preliminary Alternative 1: No-Build, *Existing Railroad Alignment*



The No-Build Alternative is required to be evaluated as part of the environmental review (under NEPA and CEPA). This is the baseline alternative to which all other build alternatives will be compared. In this project's case, the No-Build Alternative includes major rehabilitation and/or substantial replacement of several of the bridges that make up the viaduct to keep them operating safely. No alignment, width, geometric or operational improvements will be made. This alternative will not permanently impact or improve the existing interchanges or local streets.

Preliminary Alternative 2: Elevated Highway, *Existing Railroad Alignment*

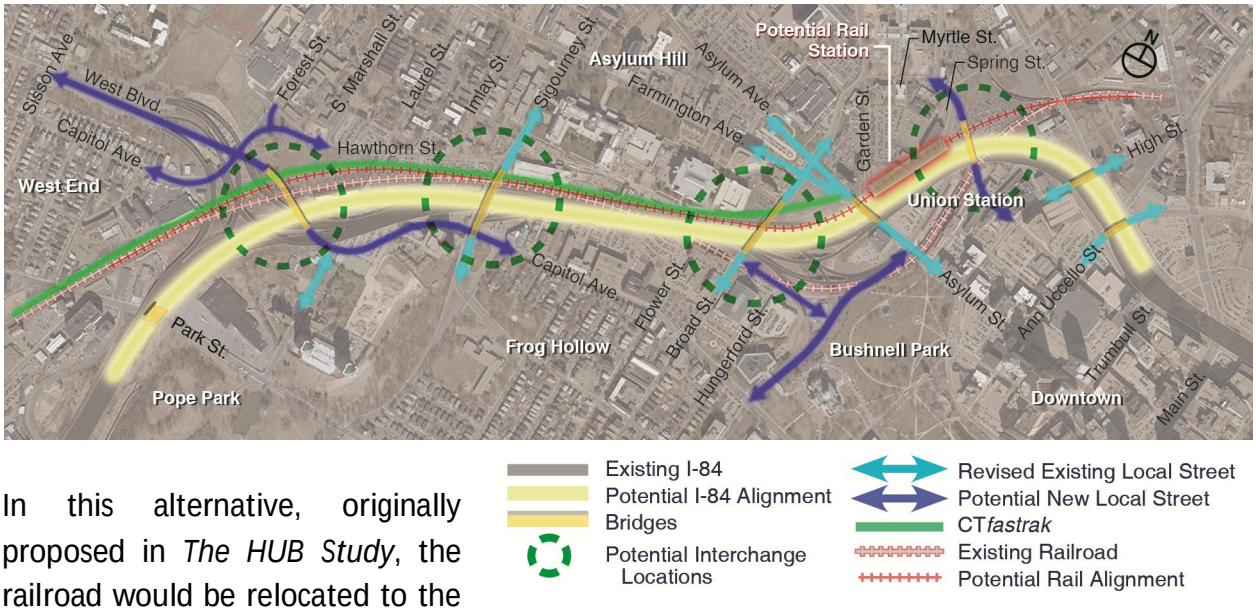


In this alternative, a new elevated highway would replace the existing viaducts with a single viaduct between Sigourney and High Streets. The new viaduct would be higher than the existing viaduct to provide minimum required vertical clearances over the railroad and local streets.

This alternative is driven by the presumption that the railroad would remain in its current location. If the railroad cannot be relocated, the highway will need to continue to be elevated to cross over the tracks in two locations.

Though still an elevated highway, this alternative would differ in several ways from the existing highway. I-84 in both directions would pass above Asylum and Broad Streets for this alternative. The High Street overpass would potentially be eliminated because of insufficient vertical clearance. The number of interchanges, currently at eight full or partial interchanges within the project corridor, would be reduced; exact number and locations yet to be determined. The specific number and location of interchanges will be evaluated for connectivity, traffic operations and feasibility.

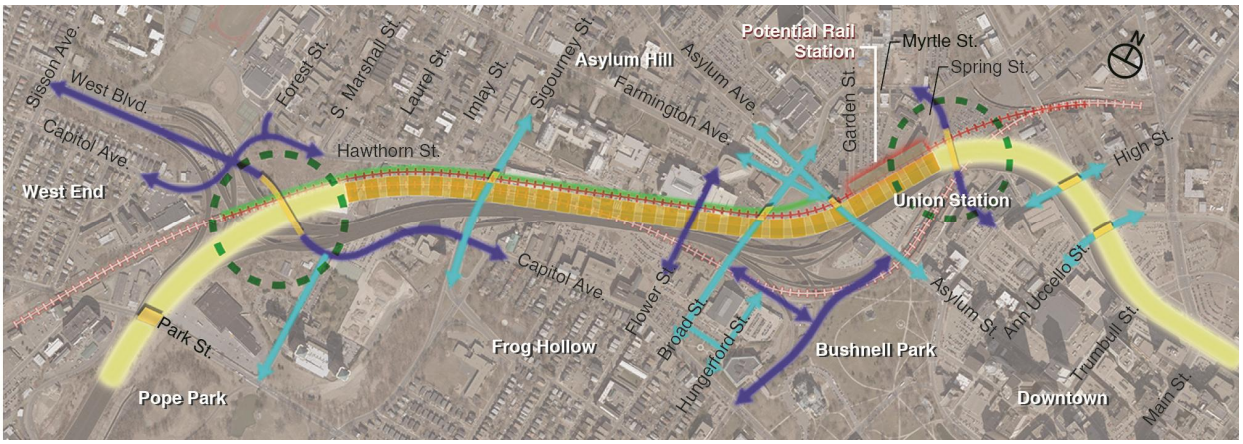
Preliminary Alternative 3: Lowered Highway, *Relocated Railroad Alignment*



In this alternative, originally proposed in *The HUB Study*, the railroad would be relocated to the north of the highway to allow I-84 to be lowered to, or below, ground level between Park and Trumbull Streets. Local roads crossing the interstate would all be bridges *over* the highway.

The number of interchanges, currently at eight full or partial interchanges within the project corridor, would be reduced; exact number and locations yet to be determined. The specific number and location of interchanges will be evaluated for connectivity, traffic operations and feasibility.

Preliminary Alternative 4: Tunneled Highway, *Relocated Railroad Alignment*



Existing I-84
Potential I-84 Alignment
Bridges
Potential I-84 Tunnel
Potential Interchange Locations
Revised Existing Local Street
Potential New Local Street
CT*fastrak*
Existing Railroad
Potential Rail Alignment

In this alternative, the railroad would again be relocated to the north of the highway to allow I-84 to be lowered below grade from Myrtle Street to Laurel Street in a tunnel.

The number of interchanges, currently at eight full or partial interchanges within the project corridor, would be reduced; exact number and locations yet to be determined. The specific number and location of interchanges will be evaluated for connectivity, traffic operations and feasibility.

Project Financing

Financing a project of this scale will be challenging, as traditional funding programs available to the State of Connecticut for transportation projects may be insufficient. Projects categorized by the FHWA as "Major Projects," such as this one, must have an approved Finance Plan that demonstrates how the project can be implemented. Financial studies for the project will help define the project's financing needs, identify a range of potential sources of revenue, including the use of electronic (open road) tolling as one potential funding source, and develop conceptual and preferred approaches to project financing. A potential strategy involving tolls includes “congestion pricing,” or “value pricing,” which can provide sustainable congestion relief by managing peak travel use even as demand grows. The Department of Transportation’s Value Pricing Study is expected to be completed in early 2015. Criteria used to analyze the alternatives include finding cost-effective solutions to maximize public investment. Other funding options may include public-private partnerships, the sale of bonds, and direct loans and lines of credit.

Public Involvement and Agency Coordination

The project will be driven by a robust public and stakeholder outreach program, guided by the Agency Coordination Plan along with the Public Involvement Plan (PIP), both of which recommend a wide range of strategies to engage interested parties. The Project Team seeks a project solution that best serves the needs of the State, the Capitol Region and the City of Hartford, as well as residents, businesses, commuters and through travelers. Public input is a crucial element in ensuring that the project address and support these needs while producing a suitable, workable, and cost-effective solution. A separate PIP has been developed for the I-84 Hartford Project; and is summarized in this section and found in its entirety on the project website at www.i84hartford.com.

Public Involvement Opportunities:

- *Scoping Meetings*
- *Public Hearings*
- *Environmental Document Review*
- *Public Comment Periods*
- *Public Information Meetings*
- *Website*
- *Newsletters*
- *E-bulletins*
- *Public Advisory Committee Meetings*
- *Working Group Meetings*

Public Involvement Context

The I-84 Hartford Project public outreach program will be conducted in compliance with FHWA policies and regulations, NEPA, CEPA, and related regulations, including the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR Section 1500-1508), Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, dated February 11, 1994, and the Final U.S. DOT Environmental Justice Order 5610.2(a), released on May 2, 2012. Public Involvement will operate continuously throughout the duration of the NEPA and CEPA process.

Scoping Involvement Opportunities

Consistent with the requirements of NEPA and CEPA, the goal of the scoping process is to involve and obtain input from the public and key stakeholders regarding the I-84 Hartford Project purpose and need, preliminary alternatives, and environmental impacts. The Scoping Comment period starts on December 18, 2014, and continues until February 20, 2015. However, during the entire course of the project, the public may continue to submit comments.

A Public Scoping Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 21, 2015, from 3:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the downtown branch of the Hartford Public Library. The purpose of the public scoping meeting is to inform the public about the project and provide a forum for the Project Team to hear the thoughts, concerns, and interests of the public regarding the I-84 Hartford Project. Those attending the Public Scoping Meeting will be able to view materials, hear a presentation, and present any comments in oral and/or written form. Stenographers will be available to record individuals' comments in private, if requested. A record of all meeting materials will be made available on the project website at www.i84hartford.com.

There will be an Agency Scoping Meeting held during the Scoping Comment period. Other stakeholder meetings will occur as needed.

Interested parties may submit comment cards or provide written or oral testimony at the scoping meeting or submit comments through the project's website at www.i84hartford.com. In addition, they may be sent to:

Mr. Richard Armstrong, Principal Engineer
State of Connecticut Department of Transportation
PO Box 317546, Newington, CT 06131-7546

Comments can also be sent by email to richard.armstrong@ct.gov. Use the subject line "I-84 HARTFORD Project." Comments must be postmarked by February 20, 2015.

As part of scoping, all comments will be compiled and responded to in the "Scoping Summary Report." This report will be developed over the next several months, will be available on the project website, and will make recommendations for next steps, after considering all comments.