



## Multi-Modal Station Planning: A Balancing Act

### CONCEPT E1



Northern Concept E1, so named due to its position north of Asylum Avenue, sites the multi-modal station as well as the bus and parking facilities, on capping north of an extended Garden Street.

Together with the City of Hartford, the I-84 Hartford Project Team is planning a new rail and bus station. It will serve not only as a gateway to the city, but as a link that helps mend the divide caused by the railroad and highway.

The multi-modal station planning process will determine a new station site and layout, and define the different modes of transportation that would use the station. From the outset, the facility has been envisioned as a civic space that meets the needs of all users while enhancing its surroundings.

Bringing I-84 to ground level requires untangling the railroad tracks from the highway. Although the

historic Union Station will remain, a new station is needed about 1,000 feet west of today's tracks. Several locations near the intersection of Farmington Avenue, Asylum Avenue, Broad Street, and Cogswell Street have been considered. Train platforms would be some 50 feet underground, built into Asylum Hill, and accessible by elevators and escalators.

*“The station will serve not only as a gateway to the city, but as a link that helps mend the divide caused by the railroad and highway.”*

Station concepts were grouped into those north and south of Asylum Avenue. Members of the public and the Public Advisory Committee (PAC) met throughout 2017 and early 2018 to review each concept and to suggest their own!

Three northern concepts and two southern concepts were presented to the PAC in March 2018. Each concept incorporates development and open space. The primary considerations in selecting a concept will be the new transit district's urban design, mobility, safety, engineering feasibility, and construction phasing. *(continued on page 3)*

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# A Tight Fit: Where Does CTfastrak Come In?

This March marked the third year of CTfastrak service between Hartford and New Britain. Since its inauguration, the Bus Rapid Transit system has taken passengers on over 15 million trips, won numerous national awards, and encouraged millions of dollars of private development. CTfastrak's next several years are closely tied to the I-84 Hartford Project.

Like the railroad (with which it shares a corridor), the Lowered Highway Alternative requires relocating a portion of CTfastrak, or bus only roadway, between the Parkville station and Downtown Hartford. The Project Team has spent two years exploring how to maintain CTfastrak service during I-84 reconstruction and how to serve the multi-modal station and downtown.

The I-84 reconstruction will realign CTfastrak, which is proposed to run alongside I-84 and pass under Laurel Street, Sigourney Street, and the railroad on its path to Asylum Street.

One of the goals of this new alignment is to improve existing bus services. CTfastrak would split between a relocated mainline and a spur to the Sigourney Street station, continuing to serve major employers, like Aetna, and the Farmington Avenue bus routes. The Sigourney Street station will be expanded to the south along the realigned CTfastrak route, resulting in expanding services to the local Capitol Avenue routes.

Getting CTfastrak into downtown poses the greatest design challenges—and opportunities! The Project Team is balancing how CTfastrak can serve the new multi-modal station northwest of Bushnell Park, as well as the central business district on Main Street.

One option brings CTfastrak up to Broad Street, where it would mix with local traffic before continuing east to the new Bushnell Park West boulevard and Asylum Street. A second option would continue CTfastrak below Broad Street directly to Bushnell Park West, and a third would utilize the historic rail viaduct and terminate at Union Station. Each option has strengths and weaknesses.



Another consideration is travel time and how well the new CTfastrak would serve existing routes. A major goal of the I-84 Hartford Project is to improve mobility for all users, including transit riders.

CTfastrak is a critical part of the I-84 Hartford Project puzzle. How might it serve you?



This graphic illustrates a section of the proposed CTfastrak alignment. View all draft concepts, presented at the March PAC meeting at <http://bit.ly/ctfastrakconcepts>.

## The CTrail Hartford Line Is Here!

Do you hear that? The CTrail Hartford Line has arrived. Do you see those passengers? They're traveling more efficiently to and from Hartford.

The long-awaited passenger rail runs between Springfield, MA and New Haven, CT on Amtrak-owned tracks. Connections in New Haven allow for easier transfer to New York City and beyond.

The new service provides a whopping 17 round trips daily south of Hartford and 12 round trips daily north of Hartford! The increase is a boon for I-91 commuters, regional job seekers, students, tourists, and of course, the environment, which benefits from fewer automobile trips.

Plans for Hartford's new multi-modal station will accommodate the Hartford Line and passenger amenities.

Check out the Trip Planner and other tools at [hartfordline.com](http://hartfordline.com). If you've already traveled on the Hartford Line, spread the good news to others!

# A Balancing Act, *continued*

(continued from page 1)

An important factor is how much of the highway is capped over. Urban designers and stakeholders generally agree: capping over the highway and railroad will help knit the city back together. To that end, the Project Team is weighing the added value of extensive capping against its expense, construction phasing, engineering challenges, and safety.

As illustrated, the northern concepts locate the rail station north of Asylum Avenue, but with differing location of bus and parking facilities and the amount of capping north of Asylum Avenue.

By contrast, the southern concepts locate the rail station between Farmington and Asylum Avenues. Both would require extensive construction on a cap over the highway. This is more expensive than construction on solid ground, and poses additional challenges to construction phasing.

In addition, the southern station sites do not perform as well for bus and vehicle access, potentially complicating traffic on Broad Street. Urban designers believe that the bus and parking facilities may negatively impact the character of the Broad Street connection between Frog Hollow and Asylum Hill.

As for the northern concepts:

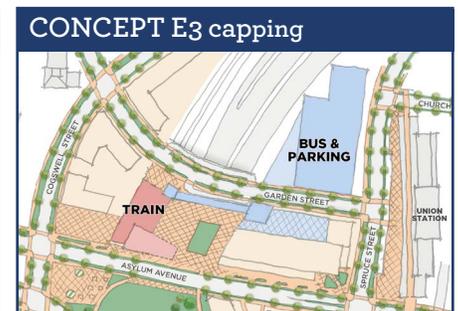
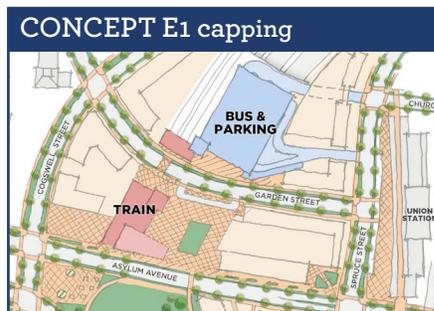
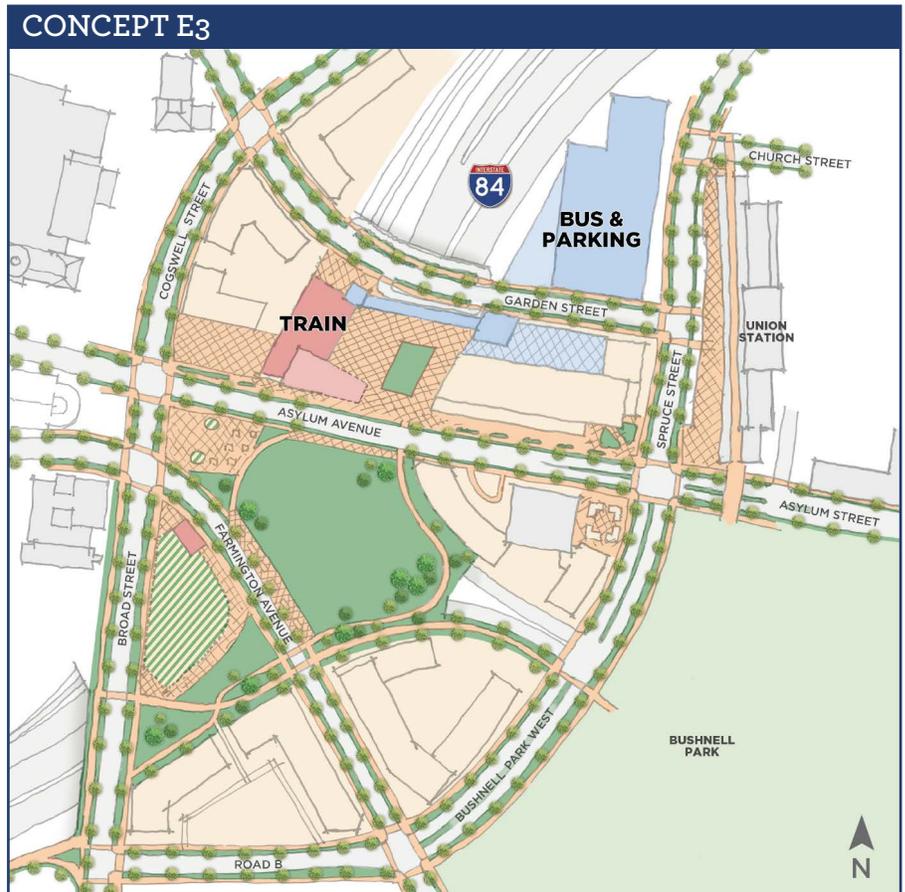
- **Concept E1** would locate bus and rail facilities closest together. It ranks the best for multi-modal functionality, as well as transit-oriented development (TOD) potential. It also requires extensive capping, making it the more expensive northern concept.
- **Concept E3** compromises the multi-modal functionality of E1 with constructability and cost savings. The bus station would be closer to the rail than E2 (not pictured), but would occupy land otherwise available for TOD.

Concepts E1 and E3 emerged as the favorites at the March 2018 PAC meeting. Some members of the public and the PAC support Concept E1 because it maximizes

developable land and highway capping. Although those features meet urban design criteria, their costs and engineering challenges must also be considered.

A final station concept is anticipated by fall 2018.

Please contribute to the design process, as more important decisions lie ahead! Review these concepts at [i84hartford.com](http://i84hartford.com) and share your thoughts.



Concept E3 (top) is an emerging favorite because of its functionality and cost savings in comparison to E1. Although both concepts include capping to accommodate open space and transit-oriented development, the comparison graphics (above) illustrate their differences.

# Faces & Places of the Corridor

Welcome to Faces & Places of the Corridor,  
profiles of notable people and places within the I-84 study area.  
Know someone or some place that should be featured? Share your ideas!

## Rich Armstrong: Let the Public Lead the Way

The former I-84 Hartford Project Principal Engineer reflects on a rewarding CTDOT career



*Rich Armstrong prioritized involvement with stakeholders. Above, he is interviewed by a student at Hartford's Parker Memorial Recreation Center.*

As a principal engineer for the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), Rich Armstrong stood at the helm of the I-84 Hartford Project from its beginnings in 2012 until his retirement from CTDOT in March. During his tenure, he built a legacy of open and inclusive public outreach campaigns.

Rich established his engineering roots as a University of Hartford student in the early 1980s. He was soon hired as an engineering intern at CTDOT, where he began his 34-year career with the state.

His first job as a project manager was the Founders Bridge/Riverfront Recapture effort.

Rich recalls that project to lower and deck over a section of I-91 in downtown Hartford as his *second* favorite of all time. Why? It was an early example where “the state had a job to do, but utilized the community and stakeholder outreach process to create a better product” for residents, visitors, and travelers.

The most valuable legacy improvement is access to the Connecticut River waterfront, long cut off from the city by flood walls and roadway barriers.



Similarly, we have a challenging job to do in the I-84 corridor. The bridges are reaching the end of their useful life and must be replaced. Early in this planning process, Rich questioned how the Project Team could utilize the community to solve the problem at hand.

On his quest for answers, he led the Public Advisory Committee (PAC) through historical corridor studies during an early meeting. He noted that both CTDOT and the Federal Highway Administration concluded that “the impact of the I-84 freeway upon the physical environments into which it was introduced has been both dramatic and overwhelming.”

It is one thing for residents to discuss how mid-century highways divided their neighborhoods and diminished the quality of urban life. It is another for a public agency to own this negative impact and commit to improving the situation.

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*“Do whatever it takes to get it right, rather than rush into failure.”*

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Rich believes that this early PAC meeting was a turning point. Members began to nurture hope for a better urban environment. Rich committed to fully utilizing stakeholders during the planning process, soliciting their input on the alternatives, greenway, potential capped areas, and more. He was willing “to do whatever it takes to get it right, rather than rush into failure.”

Did he envision 17 PAC meetings, 28 public forums, and dozens of stakeholder and school outreach meetings? Not exactly. “We couldn’t have envisioned those numbers, but we haven’t had to turn back,” says Rich. “And if we can’t get consensus on an aspect of the project, hopefully everyone can at least understand why a decision was made.”

When asked about his favorite all-time project, he answered, “This one, by far!” We wish Rich luck as he closes out this chapter of his career!