



# I-84 HARTFORD PROJECT

Winter/Spring 2018 Newsletter • Issue 18, The Jobs Issue

## Job Opportunities In Highway and Bridge Construction



Interested in a skilled trade? Prepare now to be ready when Connecticut's highway and bridge projects break ground.

### The State of Skilled Trades

Many of our nation's highways and bridges are aging and in need of repair or replacement. Some were built in the 1950s and designed to last for 50 years. As the steward of Connecticut's state roads, highways, and bridges, Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) oversees hundreds of improvement projects, including about a dozen large construction projects every year on its aging road network.

The nation's skilled trades workforce is aging. There is a need for young, talented workers today. This need will increase as large construction projects get underway in the coming decades.

These types of highway and bridge projects in Connecticut support thousands of jobs. Are you or someone you know looking to begin a career in the skilled trades?

### Prepare Today for Highway Construction Jobs

Carpenters build framework and forms for concrete. Ironworkers erect steel beams and reinforcing bars for retaining walls, bridges, and highway decks. Truck drivers deliver materials to job sites. And many more skilled laborers operate heavy machinery and perform tasks essential to each project's success.

Many of these workers spend years learning, training, and apprenticing. Investment in trade careers takes time.

If you are interested in a skilled occupation, start planning now, especially if you're in middle or high school! First, determine which trade you're interested in (see sidebar, or visit [i84hartford.com/jobs](http://i84hartford.com/jobs)).

*(continued on page 3)*

### Highway Construction Jobs in Demand

- Carpenter
- Cement Mason
- Electrician
- Heavy Equipment Operator
- Ironworker
- Laborer
- Truck Driver



### Inside The Jobs Issue

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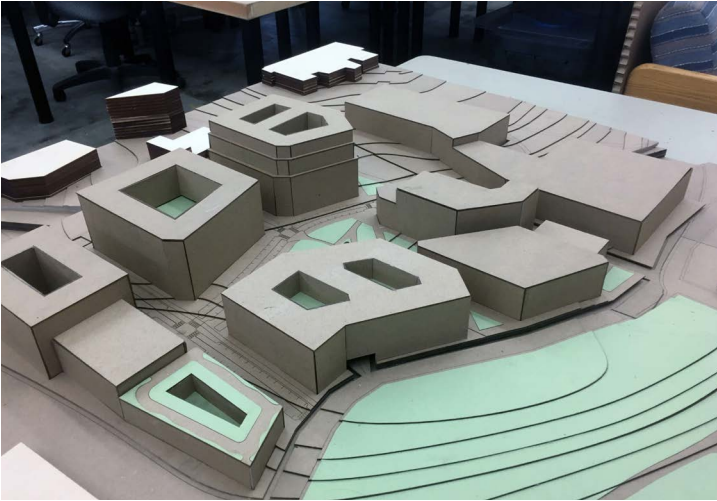
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¿Habla usted español? Una versión de este boletín está disponible en español a [i84hartford.com](http://i84hartford.com).

# University of Hartford Students Tackle TOD



University of Hartford architecture students Shyanne Sonnenberg and Cameron Gill produced the TOD designs that their peers ranked highest (model shown, left). At right, fellow students Katelyn Royce and Joseph Gokey display their work.

When University of Hartford Assistant Professor Seth Holmes was looking for a project for his third-year architectural studio class, he didn't need to look far. Familiar with the I-84 Hartford Project, Professor Holmes recognized the opportunity for students to tackle a design challenge in their own backyard.

Currently, the I-84 Hartford Project Team is working with the public to refine many of the details of the Lowered Highway Alternative. An element under consideration is whether and how much of the highway will be capped, and how the space over the cap might be used. These questions are being studied and discussed with stakeholders, and are similar to what Professor Holmes asked his students to address.

In addition, the Project Team is working with the City of Hartford to plan for a new rail and transit station. The joint effort is focusing on station location, amenities, aesthetics, and how the station area can best incorporate Transit Oriented Development (TOD).

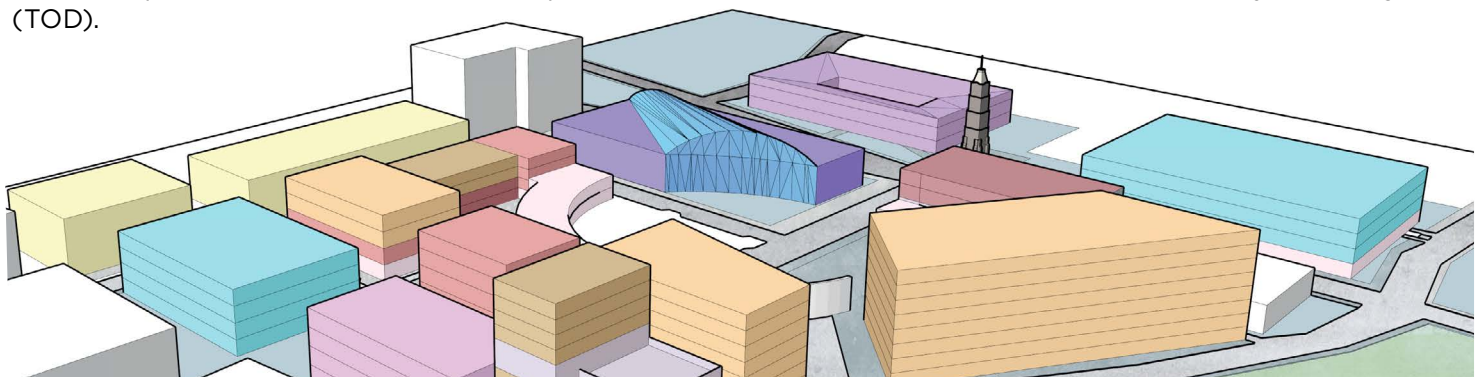
Professor Holmes tasked his students with creating TOD solutions for the capped area. While the station location has yet to be determined, Professor Holmes gave his students a set of baseline assumptions, focusing their designs on the western edge of Bushnell Park near the proposed station.

Working in teams of two, the students spent five weeks of the fall semester collaborating to develop TOD concepts. Their creative, detailed proposals address uses, circulation patterns, vistas, open space, and other urban design features.

Want to see what they came up with? Visit our newly created webpage at [i84hartford.com/studentshowcase](http://i84hartford.com/studentshowcase) and let us know your thoughts!

### What is TOD?

*TOD refers to community development that includes housing, office, retail, and other amenities within a half-mile of quality public transportation.*



Third-year architecture students designed plans for the capped portion of a lowered I-84. Their work prioritizes transit-oriented development (TOD). In this rendering, the new multi-modal station (shown in dark purple and blue) is surrounded by housing, retail, commercial, and civic spaces. The western edge of Bushnell Park abuts the tallest residential building (in light gold).

# Job Opportunities, *continued*

*(continued from page 1)*

Each trade requires unique expertise. Therefore, choosing a trade of interest can help you define a course of study. For example, a plumber must understand algebra, while a bricklayer must master geometry. Select courses that align with your chosen profession.

It's essential to earn your high school diploma or GED. Simultaneously, explore pre-apprenticeship and local programs that prepare qualified individuals for jobs. Many unions provide resources for training and apprenticeships. (Learn about one local organization's efforts on [page 4](#)). Lastly, watch for and attend a CTDOT-hosted career fair in the coming years.

## CTDOT's Role in Hiring

Many have asked, "How can I get a job on I-84?" Simply put – CTDOT does not hire individuals directly on projects. Rather, the construction project itself goes through a federally-mandated, formal selection process to determine which company will construct the job.

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*“While CTDOT encourages firms to recruit locally and supports job-readiness programs, hiring is determined by the winning firm.”*

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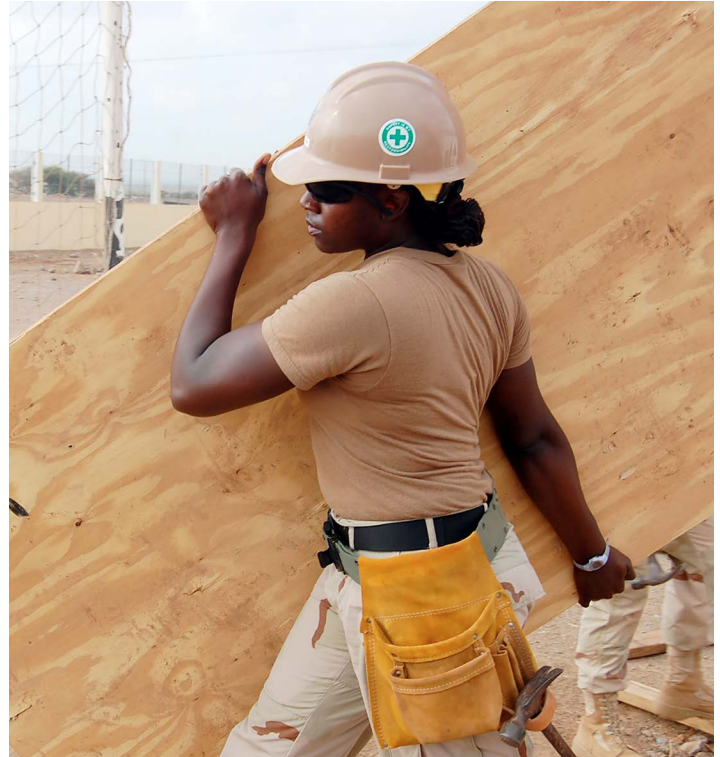
In general, six to nine months before construction is set to begin, CTDOT publicly advertises projects to both union and non-union companies. The project is awarded to the contractor who is the lowest responsible bidder.

The winning contractor determines who will work on the project, and selects a team of other companies to provide specialized services.

The company may be from Connecticut or from out-of-state. While CTDOT encourages companies to recruit locally and supports job-readiness programs, hiring is determined by the selected contractor.

## Long-Term Benefits of Large Projects

In addition to a variety of short-term construction jobs, some large-scale highway and bridge projects



*Large highway and bridge projects often generate two types of jobs: temporary skilled labor jobs that help construct the highway, and permanent employment opportunities inherent to a well-planned, redeveloped corridor.*

generate long-term economic benefits and employment. A rebuilt highway, local roadways, and facilities can equate to improved transportation efficiency. The lowered shipping and travel costs can benefit a region's economy.

For example, the I-84 Hartford Project could free up urban land, which has the capacity to support about three million square feet of development for offices, retail, services, and housing. Improvements to transit, such as the CT*rail* Hartford Line, CT*fastrak*, and bus service, promote quality transit-oriented development, which can attract employees to the workforce.

Considering the state of Connecticut's aging infrastructure and the growing demand for skilled trades, now is the time to prepare for tomorrow's jobs.

*Once you've explored the steps outlined here, please contact CTDOT's On-The-Job Training Coordinator at 860-594-2178 with further questions.*

## — Faces & Places of the Corridor —

Welcome to Faces & Places of the Corridor, profiles of people who live, work, run businesses or lead groups, as well as notable places, within the I-84 study area. Know someone or some place that should be featured? Share your ideas!

### Minority Construction Council Prepares Locals for Jobs

The Executive Director of the Minority Construction Council shares tips on getting started in the construction industry.

The I-84 Hartford Project Team has met many impressive people throughout Greater Hartford. One person we were eager to learn more about was Jennifer Little-Greer, Executive Director of the Minority Construction Council.

Formed in 2002, the Council provides and supports opportunities for Connecticut's ethnic minority construction firms.

Contractor training programs are a cornerstone of their offerings. "It's important to have a strong back-office so the contractor can focus on the trade," Jennifer tells us. The Council provides training in financial management, marketing, business development, and computer software. By securing business practices, a contractor can focus on the quality of their workmanship.

The Council is a trusted resource that helps connect prime contractors and project owners with minority-owned firms. Many state and federal construction contracts require that a certain portion of the work is completed by Disadvantaged Business Enterprises, or DBEs. Companies that are owned by women or ethnic minorities can qualify for DBE status.

*"It's important that schools offer the right training. We have to make sure that when opportunities come forward we have a workforce that is ready."*

Obtaining Disadvantaged Business Enterprise certification can be cumbersome, and unclear to those unfamiliar with the process. As a satellite service provider for CTDOT, the Council helps contractors get and maintain their DBE status. Having DBE certification is important to meeting contract requirements.

Quarterly DBE boot camps throughout the state guide contractors through the process of obtaining certification. The Council also assists contractors with DBE certification in New York, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, for work on regional projects.



*As Executive Director of the Minority Construction Council, Jennifer Little-Greer oversees programming to broaden opportunities for ethnic minority construction firms. Events include networking socials, training sessions, membership meetings, and DBE boot camps.*

Many contractors are now taking interest in heavy and highway construction. One industry challenge, however, is the aging workforce.

The Council works with A.I. Prince Technical High School in Hartford and Platt Technical High School in Milford to pair students and recent graduates with contractors looking to hire or train skilled workers. "It's important that schools offer the right training. We have to make sure that when opportunities come forward we have a workforce that is ready."

Jennifer suggests that individuals interested in starting a construction business "know your niche". Understand the trends in a chosen industry, and consider adapting as technologies and project types evolve.

The Minority Construction Council is invaluable to local workforce development, placement, and contracting. If the I-84 Hartford Project progresses, connections with industry and community stakeholders will continue to foster opportunities.

Learn more about the Minority Construction Council, upcoming training programs, DBE certification, and membership opportunities at [mccforct.org](http://mccforct.org).