



## I-84 Enters Environmental Review

### A Public Scoping Meeting Recap

The message was clear at the Hartford Public Library on January 21<sup>st</sup>. The I-84 Hartford Project has entered into environmental review, the next phase of the planning process. Now the study team will develop and screen improvement alternatives. The most viable ones will undergo extensive environmental review, under the requirements of the National and Connecticut Environmental Policy Acts.

“Scoping is the first official step of the environmental process,” said project team member Christine Tiernan during the presentation at the Public Scoping Meeting. The purpose of scoping is to provide an early opportunity for federal and state agencies and the community to comment on the project’s Purpose and Need, preliminary alternatives, and specific impact concerns.

Tiernan continued, “Every alternative is going to have positive impacts, many of which are really exciting, as well as negative impacts, which may or may not be acceptable. The key is to find out what potential impacts to the natural and built environment are most concerning to members of the community.”

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Input gathered during the scoping period (December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014 through February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015) helps guide the refinement of alternatives and sets the course for environmental review, ensuring a process that is thorough, comprehensive, and focused on key elements of concern.

The meeting began with an open house where attendees could view displays and interact with the project team. Each display station addressed a specific aspect of the I-84 Hartford corridor and the study planning process, such as why improvements are needed, key features of the corridor, considerations to be addressed moving forward, and the environmental regulations that guide the process.

*(continued on page 4)*



Scoping Meeting attendees regroup after bicycling to the January 21<sup>st</sup> event, held at the Hartford Public Library.



Project team member John Dudzinski answers questions about the corridor.

### Habla Usted español?

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

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## Faces & Places of the Corridor

\* Welcome to Faces & Places of the Corridor, which will become a semi-regular feature of this newsletter. We plan to profile people who live, work, run businesses or lead groups within the I-84 study area. Know someone who we should feature? Send us your ideas! \*

### Expand Travel Options, Not the Highway



Carlos Mouta, a Hartford native and long-time business owner, stands proudly in front of his Pope Commons shopping plaza adjacent to I-84.

Carlos Mouta, a Hartford native and business owner, believes people need to rethink how they get around.

“Travelers have to change their habits to help solve the traffic congestion problems on I-84,” said Carlos.

Mouta thinks public transportation, staggered travel times, tolls, and better, more connected sidewalks are ways to improve mobility. He is pleased that travelers will soon have the option of using CTfastrak, the Bus Rapid Transit system that is scheduled to launch service in March 2015.

Mouta was born in Mozambique in southeast Africa, then a Portuguese colony. The family moved to Parkville in 1975, when Carlos was 14. He played soccer on

Hartford Public High School’s state championship team and graduated from Central Connecticut State University.

In the 1980s, Mouta started buying and fixing up buildings in the Parkville neighborhood. Today he owns many properties in Hartford, including the Pope Commons shopping plaza and the Design Center on Park Street. Both are adjacent to the I-84 viaduct.

When not involved in his real estate business, Mouta is active in neighborhood improvement efforts. He’s led the Parkville Business Association and serves on the board of the Pope Park Designated Fund.

For people who currently commute to Hartford for work, Mouta suggests that major employers do more to stagger working hours to minimize rush hour traffic. “I have no problem traveling on I-84 until mid to late afternoon,” he noted.

Mouta favors adding tolls on I-84 and using the income to subsidize highway improvements. There should be many options for travel, he feels. “It’s just a matter of people getting used to the changes.”

Another change Mouta would like to see is improvement to the city’s sidewalks to encourage people to walk more. “I can easily walk 40 blocks in New York City,” he said. “Why not in Hartford?”

Want to be featured?

Do you know a person, business, or group that should be featured in Faces & Places of the Corridor? Visit the [i84hartford.com](http://i84hartford.com) Contact Us page and introduce yourself!

## Can You Hear Me Now?

And more importantly, have we heard from you?

Community engagement. Public involvement. Stakeholder outreach. Call it what you will, connecting with the community is instrumental to the success of the I-84 Hartford process.

We're still in the early stages of this project, so we will need to draw I-84 neighbors, employees, and travelers into the conversation both now and for years to come.

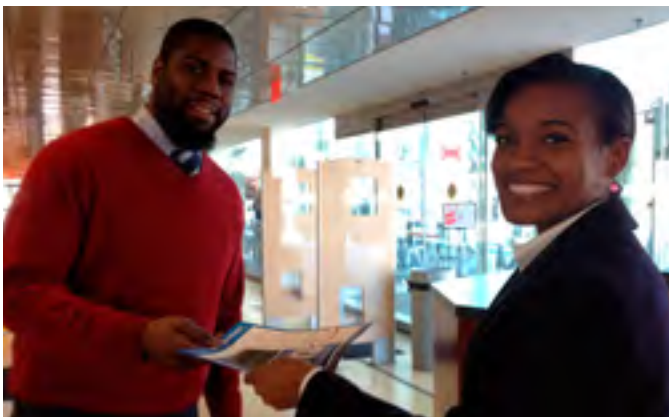
To reach the many people with a stake in this important corridor, the project team uses a mix of outreach tools. You may be familiar with our website, social media, large-scale public meetings, and of course, this newsletter. But did you know that we produce videos explaining technical project elements and maintain an interactive meeting page on our project website? All of our fact sheets, newsletters, and e-bulletins are available in English and Spanish, as 16% of Hartford's population speaks Spanish as their primary language. In addition, we conduct small group meetings with neighborhood groups, businesses, and civic organizations.

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*Share your ideas on how we can improve communication. We truly believe that your participation will help us achieve the best possible solutions!*

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Help us change I-84 for the better! Schedule a meeting with our project team. Let us come talk to your organization. Leave feedback through our [website](#), or Facebook [page](#) and Twitter [feeds](#).



We try to reach stakeholders without home internet access by delivering flyers and newsletters to all Hartford Public Library (HPL) branches and popular gathering spots. Above, team member Stacy Graham-Hunt hands a stack of newsletters to Corey Fleming, HPL's Director of Public Services.

Join the conversation!  
Visit [i84hartford.com](http://i84hartford.com)  
[facebook.com/i84hartford](https://www.facebook.com/i84hartford)  
[@i84hartford](https://twitter.com/i84hartford)

The best way to communicate is the [i84hartford.com](http://i84hartford.com) comments page. All comments are logged into a database and reported to the project team, as it's critical to understand the community's issues and concerns. Those of you who have submitted comments or questions online know that we try to respond within 48 hours.

So far, hundreds have participated. The comments reflect a wide range of interests, including desire for bicycle and pedestrian accommodation, specific concerns about access, references to the outdated design of the current roadway, preferences for certain alternatives, design suggestions, desire for a bypass solution, and many others.

Are we getting our outreach right? What more could we be doing? Share your ideas on how we can improve our communication. We truly believe that your participation will help us create the most improved corridor!



In addition to conducting public meetings, the project team is available to meet with local organizations. Contact us on [i84hartford.com](http://i84hartford.com) to schedule a visit and learn more in a small group setting.



# I-84 Enters Environmental Review, Continued

(continued from page 1)

A 45-minute presentation followed. Dave Stahnke, the consultant program manager, discussed the characteristics of four preliminary alternatives: No-Build, Elevated Highway, Lowered Highway, and Tunnel. "These alternatives are very conceptual at this time and will undergo many variations and refinements based on community input and engineering analysis," stated Stahnke.

A formal public comment period followed the presentation, during which several speakers voiced their concerns and preferences.

For those not comfortable speaking publicly, a stenographer was available to record comments privately. Comment cards were also provided, and attendees were encouraged to submit comments via the project website.

All public and agency comments submitted during the scoping period will be summarized and responded to in a Scoping Summary Report, available to the public in late Spring 2015.

### Did you miss the meeting?

You can still participate! Visit our interactive Scoping Meeting [webpage](#). This feature was created to serve those who were unable to attend. Check out the content and voice your opinions at your convenience. And stay tuned for future interactive meetings!



## The environmental phase will deliver...

...a preferred alternative that has been selected based on evaluation of the environmental impacts of the alternatives and considering all of the input received from regulatory agencies and the public. Once a preferred alternative is selected, the project will be able to move forward into final design.

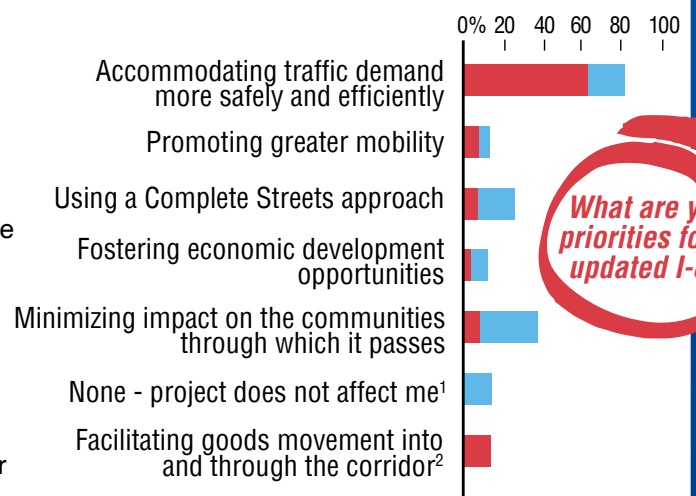
# Different Strokes for Different Folks

One challenge of rebuilding I-84 is balancing the public's diverse priorities. A 2014 survey presented to two different groups asked, "What is your priority for an updated I-84?"

The American Automobile Association (AAA) polled 6,047 club members of Hartford, Middlesex, New London, Tolland, and Windham Counties, while the I-84 team polled 115 local citizens at the June Public Meeting. Survey results are illustrated at right. Not surprisingly, drivers want I-84 to provide safe and efficient transportation while meeting attendees lean more heavily toward **complete streets** and minimization of impact.

Additionally, AAA asked, "If good mass transit options existed in the Hartford region today, would you consider using them to avoid traffic congestion on Interstate 84?" A resounding 51% said yes! Visit [TransformCT.com](http://TransformCT.com) to learn more about our state's various transit initiatives.

The project team is refining alternatives that carefully consider your priorities. Visit <http://on.fb.me/1NPxppZ> to weigh in.



■ AAA Survey  
■ I-84 Public Meeting

<sup>1</sup> Only asked in AAA Survey  
<sup>2</sup> Only asked at Meeting