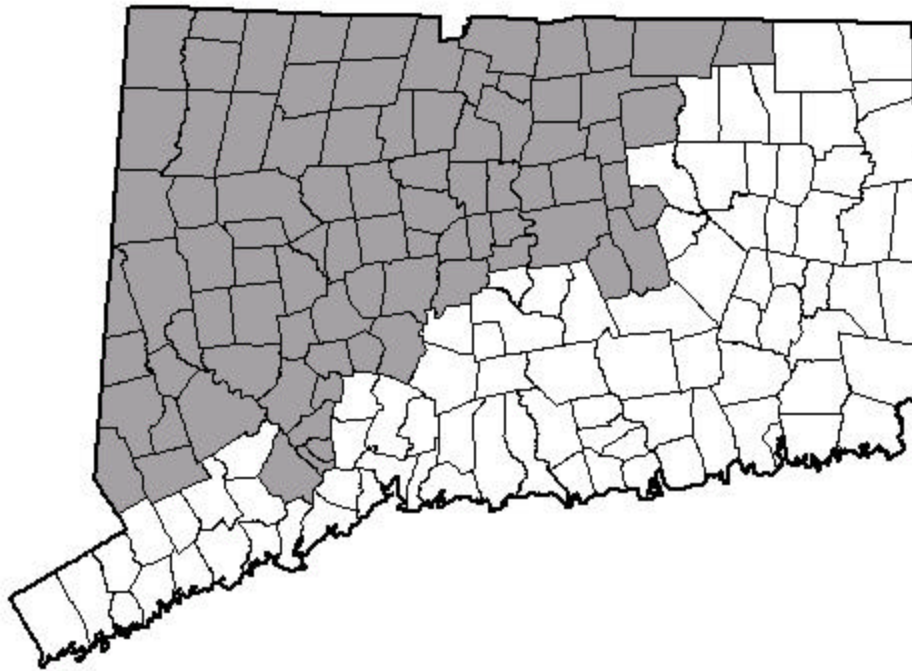


I-84 Corridor

Transportation Investment Area

Initial Corridor Plan



November 1, 2001

THE I-84 CORRIDOR TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT AREA (TIA)

INITIAL CORRIDOR PLAN

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Introduction

This Initial Corridor Plan was developed by the I-84 Transportation Investment Area (TIA) Board to meet the requirements of Public Act 01-5 creating a statewide Transportation Strategy Board (TSB). It is intended to provide the TSB with an overview of the I-84 TIA, its primary transportation challenges and opportunities, and a set of goals and strategies to guide its future. It is intended to form the basis for a more detailed plan in the months to come.

The Plan is a product of the combined knowledge, experience, and understanding of multi-modal transportation and its comprehensive environment brought to the I-84 TIA Board by its 19 members. References for the development of the Plan include Public Act 01-5 creating the Strategy Board, the Long Range Transportation Plan of each of the seven involved regional planning organizations, preliminary recommendations previously prepared by the Transportation Strategy Board, the Gallis Report citing the coming transportation crisis in Connecticut, and various other technical and policy documents.

The I-84 TIA encompasses seven of Connecticut's 15 regional planning organizations, approximately one-half of the state's geographic area, and approximately 50 percent of its population. It includes two of the state's major cities, Hartford, the state capitol, and Waterbury as well as the cities of Bristol, Danbury, East Hartford, Manchester, New Britain, and West Hartford. It includes a number of the state's smaller and historic urban centers such as Torrington, Naugatuck, and Shelton. It includes many comfortable suburban towns, and some of the most beautiful and historic of the state's rural areas. The character of its towns ranges from the most dense to the most rural and contains some of the wealthiest to the poorest populations. It borders the states of New York and Massachusetts and it includes almost the entire length of Interstate 84 in Connecticut. This great diversity of the I-84 TIA is representative of the entire state.

Goals of the TSB Legislation

1. Stimulating sustainable economic growth and enhancing the quality of life for the residents of the state, and developing and continuously upgrading analytical tools to demonstrate the link between transportation and the public benefits;
2. Facilitating the mobility of people and goods within the state and the TIAs, by: (A) reducing traffic congestion; (B) facilitating inter-corridor movement within the state; and, (C) facilitating access to employment opportunities and essential services;
3. Increasing connectivity in access to the regional, national and global economies, which consists of: (A) improving access (i) to surrounding states...and (ii) to the national and global economies; (B) expanding modal choices for passenger and freight, which consists of (i) developing an airport system that stimulates growth, (ii) linking the state to international rail grids, (iii) developing water-borne transportation alternatives, and (iv) assuring workable freight access to the ports of New York and New Jersey and the corridor related to the North American Free Trade Agreement; and
4. Improving transportation safety and security, which consists of: (A) adequately maintaining infrastructure and equipment; and, (B) enforcing safe operations and use of the transportation systems by customers and operators.

Problem and Vision Statement of the I-84 TIA

Connecticut is in a transportation crisis. Because it is a slow-motion crisis, it often goes unnoticed, but it is a crisis nonetheless. The I-84 TIA Board believes that the crisis is a transportation system that is overburdened and unbalanced to the point where it threatens both the economic health and the quality of life of the state's residents.

Over dependence on highways has created a level of traffic congestion that is a barrier to the movement of goods and people, and that precludes adequate connection to the regional and the global economies. That over dependence has contributed to a sprawling pattern of land development that empties our cities, overcrowds our suburbs, and despoils the beauty and open space of our countryside, at the same time that it pollutes our air and increases the gap between rich and poor.

Congestion relief primarily by highway widening can no longer solve these problems; we cannot build our way out of it. Instead, transportation investments, as perhaps one of the most powerful forces shaping growth, must become a deliberate and strategic component of our overall economic development and land use planning, if we are to deal successfully with this crisis. That is our challenge in crafting this plan.

Improving mobility and enhancing connectivity requires a balanced transportation system and a corresponding realignment of investment priorities and resources. We need to reassess our public policies and investment priorities to develop a balanced transportation system that gives people and businesses more choices for traveling and moving freight.

Goals and Strategies of the I-84 TIA

1. Support Land Use Planning. The congestion problems on our highways are due in large measure to our sprawling, inefficient development patterns. If we want to solve our transportation problems, it is imperative that we also change the way we develop our communities.
 - *Smart Growth.* Support efforts to promote smart growth policies at all levels of government, which foster higher transit supporting densities.
 - *Strengthen Land Use Planning.* Re-establish a State Planning Office and integrate ConnDOT's Master Transportation Plan with the State Plan of Conservation and Development. A statewide aerial survey and digitized mapping is needed to support coordinated land use and transportation planning.
 - *Reinforce Urban Centers.* Our land use plans, development policies, and government financial programs need to redirect investment, employment and housing opportunities into our historic urban centers; for example, the creation of multi-modal transportation centers can assist in reinforcing urban centers, and the designation of Route 8 as an interstate highway can help promote economic development in Waterbury.
 - *Redevelop Brownfields.* We need to clean up and redevelop brownfields, which are often located in our older urban centers and adjacent to major transportation facilities.
 - *Better Jobs-Housing Balance.* We need to achieve a better jobs-housing balance. It is needed not only for social equity reasons, but also to help reduce the increasingly long commutes our residents are forced to make.
 - *Transit Oriented Development.* Our land use policies need to recognize and encourage transit oriented development patterns.

2. Improve Connectivity for Economic Growth. The I-84 TIA supports the TSB goal of stimulating sustainable economic growth in Connecticut through more and better transportation connections to the key economic centers and transportation facilities in the northeastern U.S., the NAFTA corridor, the nation, and the globe.
 - *Coordinated Planning.* Work with neighboring states, the federal government, and the Eastern Canadian provinces to coordinate planning on transportation issues or facilities of common interest. For example, we need to strengthen relationships with the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council.
3. Support Public Transit & Ridesharing. We need to provide better public support to our existing public transit and ridesharing systems, including the rural systems. We also need to expand and improve the systems. Our existing services need a significant new source of dedicated, stable funding just to maintain their current level of service. If we want to achieve a balanced transportation system, and if we want to reduce congestion, we need to expand transit services and give people more choices other than driving alone.
 - *Financing.* Stabilize and expand funding based on a formula for determining a basic level of transit service. Develop alternative sources of funding.
 - *Transit Governance.* Explore the benefits of transferring responsibility for statewide commuter rail and bus services to a new transit authority.
 - *Bus Services.* This is the basic transit service available in the I-84 TIA, and we need to maintain and improve it. Not only does bus service require more funding, it needs to be made more attractive and convenient. New modes such as bus rapid transit need to be supported where appropriate (the New Britain - Hartford Busway is one such application), and the recommendations of the “Statewide Bus System Study” need to be implemented.
 - *Services for the Elderly & Disabled.* Need to maintain and improve these services, which are often the only transportation service available for these people.
 - *Rail Services.* Need to improve passenger rail services to Metro North and Amtrak on the New Haven Line (and potentially the Harlem line) from the Waterbury area and the Danbury-New Milford area, and provide commuter rail services from New Haven to Springfield, including Bradley International Airport.
 - *Ridesharing Services.* Need to support current ridesharing programs as well as new initiatives to reduce the number of single-occupant vehicles.
 - *Jobs Access.* Need to support Jobs Access services for low-income.
 - *Transportation Demand Management.* Need to support informational marketing and financial incentive programs that encourage people to use alternate means of transportation.
4. Improve Pedestrian/Bicycle Network. Provide more opportunities for people to walk or bike safely to their required destinations.
 - *Marketing.* Support appropriate combination of facilities, publicity, encouragement, education, and planning to enable a shift to bicycling and walking from the use of the single-occupant automobile.
 - *State Policy.* Revise state policies on sidewalks to do more to encourage bike/pedestrian movement where appropriate.
 - *Regional Policies.* Require each regional planning organization to adopt bicycle and pedestrian policies.

5. Improve Our Airport System. Airports in and near Connecticut provide an important link to the national and global economies. We need to improve our major regional airports such as Bradley and improve our system of smaller airports. We also need to improve access to the national air travel market for residents of the western side of the I-84 TIA.
 - *Statewide Aviation Strategy.* Create a strategy on the roles of how Bradley and the state’s smaller airports interact, including their role in relation to other large aviation facilities outside Connecticut.
 - *Inter-modal Linkages.* Create improved linkages to other modes of transportation.

6. Improve Freight Transport Systems. Freight transport is critical to the economic vitality of Connecticut and the I-84 corridor. We are heavily dependent on truck transport in the I-84 corridor. We need to improve our ability to move goods by truck, but we also need to expand and improve other options such as rail, water, and air transport.
 - *Freight Study.* Need an analysis of all freight movement within and through the state.
 - *Rail Transport.* Need better rail access to the major container ports in New York and New Jersey, especially an additional Hudson River crossing. Need improved rail facilities within Connecticut – tracks capable of carrying heavier loads with higher and wider clearance and more sidings to encourage businesses to use rail.
 - *Water Transport.* There are no seaports in the I84 corridor, but we recognize that the development of the ports in New Haven and Bridgeport could make it easier to get freight to our area and reduce the number of trucks on I-95 and I-84.
 - *Truck Transport.* Need to find ways to make it easier to move trucks safely within our state, while at the same time finding ways to reduce the number of trucks that need to use our roads. Address the severe shortage of rest areas for trucks along state highways, following the recommendations of the “Truck Stop and Rest Area Parking Study.”
 - *Air Transport.* Bradley International Airport is an important airfreight facility and we need to support its continued development as an airfreight center.

7. Safer, More Efficient Highway System. Our goal is to reduce dependence on the automobile. We recognize that we are dependent on highways for much of our personal travel and freight movement. We need to continue to maintain those highways we have, correct safety and operational problems where needed, and make future highway investment decisions that are consistent with the goals of this Plan.
 - *I-84 Corridor Studies.* As the most important highway link in the TIA, I-84 is critical to the economic vitality of the Region and is a gateway into New England. Recent studies have identified safety, operational, and capacity problems that could affect future economic growth if not addressed in a timely manner. The recommendations in the following studies should be assessed in view of the defined priorities of the TSB and prioritized from a corridor-wide perspective.
 - Danbury-Newtown Study
 - Southbury-Waterbury Study
 - Plainville-New Britain Study
 - Farmington-Hartford Study

- *Routes 7, 8 and 25.* Assess needs and deficiencies on Route 7, 8 and 25, particularly the I-84/Route 8 interchange.
- *Management Strategies.* Set goals for reducing the rate of increase in the number of vehicle miles traveled on state highways. Implement transportation demand management techniques such as value pricing¹ in a manner that does not disproportionately impact business costs. Support better management of our highway systems through methods such as incident management², and Intelligent Transportation Systems.³

8. Planning Tools.

- *Freight Study.* Need an analysis of all freight movement within and through the state.
- *Aerial Survey.* Need a statewide aerial survey and digitized mapping to support coordinated land use and transportation planning.
- *Travel Forecasting by Mode, Origin, and Destination.* Upgrade the forecasting system statewide to help ensure that optimal decisions are made as to transportation investments. ConnDOT's model should be refined to provide time-of-day projections, new origin and destination studies, and upgraded municipal and zone-level population and employment projections.

¹ Value pricing is also called congestion pricing. It promotes economic efficiency in the use of highways and supports congestion reduction, air quality, energy conservation, and transit productivity.

² A system-wide process to reduce the time to detect and verify that an incident has occurred, to initiate an appropriate response, to clear the incident, to communicate appropriate information to motorists, and to divert and manage traffic.

³ The application of well-established technologies in communications, control, electronics, and computer hardware and software and the improvement of surface transportation system performance.

I-84 Corridor TIA Board Members

Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG)

RPO Representative: Rick Porth, Executive Director, CRCOG
Alternate: Tom Maziarz, Transportation Director, CRCOG
Public Representative: Joseph Barber, All Aboard!

Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency (CCRPA)

RPO Representative: Theodore Scheidel, First Selectman, Town of Burlington (TIA Co-Chair)
Alternate: Carl Stephani, Executive Director, CCRPA
Public Representative: Morgan Seelye, Retired Town Engineer,
Alternate: Anthony Ferraro, Public Works Director, Berlin

Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley (COGCNV)

RPO Representative: Peter Dorpalen, Executive Director, COGCNV
Alternate: Susan Forster, Senior Planner, COGCNV
Public Representative: Bernie Lynch, President, Greater Waterbury Chamber of Commerce (TIA Co-Chair)

Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials (HVCEO)

RPO Representative: Dennis Elpern, Planning Director, Danbury
Alternate: Jon Chew, Executive Director, HVCEO
Public Representative: Stephen Bull, President Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce

Litchfield Hills Council of Elected Officials (LHCEO)

RPO Representative: Rick Lynn, Executive Director, LHCEO
Public Representative: Stephen Dunn, Retired Transit Planner

Northwestern Connecticut Council of Governments (NWCCOG)

RPO Representative: Dan McGuinness, Executive Director, NWCCOG
Public Representative: Robert Bass, General Manager, Housatonic Rail Road

Valley Regional Planning Agency (VRPA)

RPO Representative: James Della Volpe, Mayor, Town of Ansonia
Alternate: Scott Barton, First Selectman, Town of Seymour
Public Representative: Ronald Skurat, Secretary, VRPA
Alternate: Richard Eigen, Executive Director, VRPA

At-Large Members

Cathryn Addy, President, Tunxis Community College
Tim Moynihan, Retired President, Greater Hartford Chamber of Commerce
Michael O'Donnell, Manager, Waterbury-Oxford Airport
Ellen Rosenberg, CT Chapter of Regional Plan Association
Katharine Zatkowski, Employer Service Coordinator, RideWorks
Alternate: Toni Gold, All Aboard!
Alternate: Gene Eriquez, Mayor, City of Danbury

Ex-Officio Member

Congressman James Maloney represented by Sheila O'Malley