



I-84 Danbury Project



Spring 2022 Newsletter

I84Danbury.com



SPRING 2022

How Non-Highway Improvements Can Benefit the I-84 Highway

The I-84 Danbury Project team is considering many concepts to reduce congestion and improve mobility of people and goods in the I-84 corridor in greater Danbury. While most concepts target improvements on I-84 and various interchanges such as Exit 4, Exit 5, etc., non-highway concepts target other modes and programs to improve overall travel in the I-84 corridor.

Non-highway concepts recognize that people use different modes of transportation to get around, not just automobiles. Improvements and

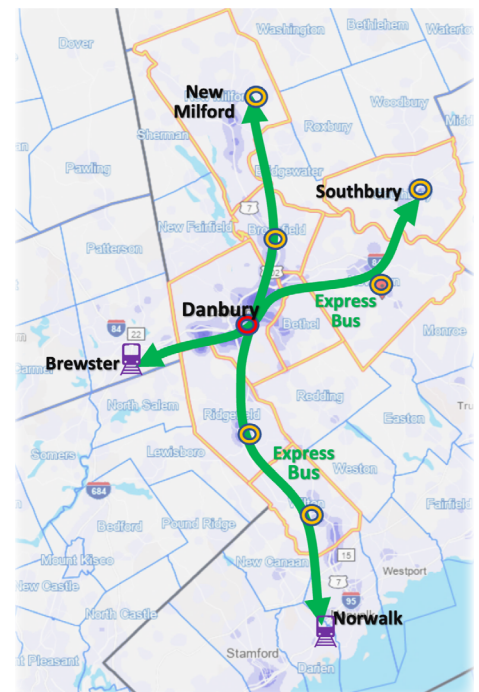
expansions of bus, rail, and train systems will help those who do not use or own a car to get around the city and neighboring areas. Danbury has the most zero/ one car households in the study area. Those households are more likely to rely on transit to get to work, school, or for other trips. Non-highway concepts are generally developed and presented because they provide mobility options for transit dependent communities and provide alternative modes of transportation for all users, including commuters and motorists. Continued improvement of diverse transit modes makes it easier and more appealing for people to take public transportation, while offering some relief to the congestion from the corridor.

There are many reasons to consider non-highway concepts. First, new bus transit service has potential to offer regional and local mobility options. Analysis of weekday peak period travel based on U.S. Census and regional travel model data found the following:

- Most trips in the Danbury region are local trips, meaning they begin and end within an 8-town region.
- Approximately 10% of the existing trips are made to / from New York State.

- I-84 and Route 7 are the primary roadways used for both local and regional travels.

Bus transit improvement options can be centralized within the 8-town region



New and improved express bus routes could provide and enhance regional connectivity, especially to commuter rail stations

Examples of Non-Highway Improvements

- Transit facility / route / service improvements
- Bicycle and pedestrian improvements
- Intermodal connections
- Commuter shuttles
- Carpools / vanpools
- Tele-commuting programs
- Flexible work schedules
- Taxi and shared vehicles

What's Inside

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

1

How Non-Highway Improvements Can Benefit the I-84 Highway

2

Local Spotlight

3

This is What You're Telling Us

4

How Non-Highway Improvements Can Benefit the I-84 Highway (cont.)

4

Local Spotlight (cont.)

4

Get Involved!



Local Spotlight

The New American Dream Foundation

How a Danbury Non-Profit is Supporting the Community with College Scholarships and Hot Meals

The COVID-19 pandemic has put an unprecedented strain on household resources, exacerbating issues like access to health care, reliable transportation, and food insecurity. Those hit especially hard are seniors, who are at an increased risk of severe illness from the virus.

In April of 2020, The New American Dream Foundation (TNADF), a 501(c)(3) organization that serves as the philanthropic arm of the Tribuna Newspaper, developed a program to support what they saw was their neighborhood's most immediate need: feeding the community and building connection. According to United Way, in parts of Danbury, food insecurity among older adults is as high as 30 percent, a number they believe has increased because of the pandemic.

Emanuela Palmares, Vice-President of TNADF, observed that not enough seniors needing prepared meals were qualified for other available programs. TNADF thus developed the Hot Meal Program and began working with volunteers to deliver meals door-to-door. Since the start of the pandemic, TNADF has delivered over 33,000 meals to seniors and residents in Danbury.



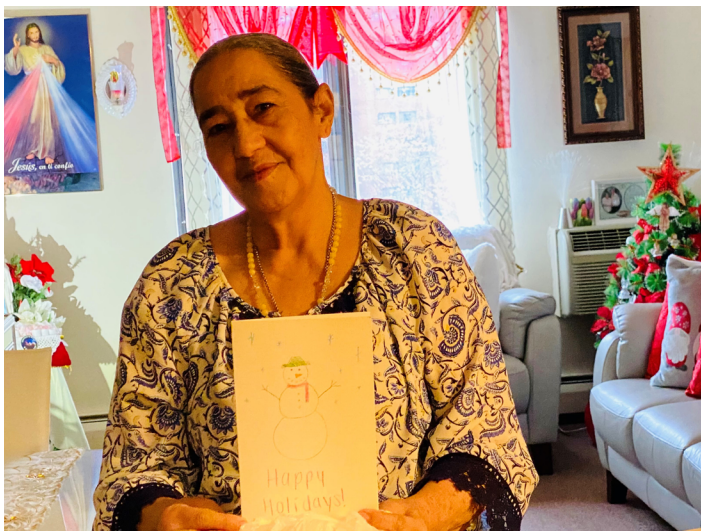
TNADF volunteers are holding hot meals as they pose for a photo outdoors, with masks. (Credit: TNADF)

“More bus lines and stop locations would make a big difference,” she added. Improving transit options in the area would allow seniors that cannot drive, independence to move around the city. She stated that improving public transportation could help reduce the congestion that limits their weekday delivery opportunities. “We cannot do the meal program during the weekday because of traffic. Investment in public transportation also has a big impact for the undocumented community who may not have the necessary paperwork to apply for a driver’s license,” Palmares said.

While TNADF’s Hot Meal Program was brought on by the pandemic, the organization has historically centered their work around helping immigrant communities reach their American Dream. Their mission is to promote our nation’s rich, immigrant history, and highlight the cultural, social, and economic contributions of immigrants of all generations. They pursue that mission through education, health care efforts, civic engagement work, and holding an annual American Dream Awards Gala. At the gala, they highlight new immigrants who are shaping the society. The American Dream Award Scholarship grants five (5) \$2,000 scholarships to an immigrant or child of immigrants who has faced many challenges to achieve their American Dream. For Palmares, sharing these immigration stories bridge generational divides and differences, “to see their Irish great-grandfather in the eyes of an Ecuadorian 15-year-old. It’s the same journey on a different backdrop.”

The organization plans to continue the hot meal program, incorporating their mission with their senior meal program. Their plan is to host a meal once a month in one of the senior-living buildings, featuring a cross-generational conversation about each immigrant story to create a space where people can ask themselves, “How can I see myself in this person’s story? How do I see my great-grandfather in this person’s story?” While savoring foods from different immigrant communities in Danbury like Irish Shepherd’s Pie, Brazilian picanha,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



A Danbury resident receives a hot meal and a holiday card from The New American Dream Foundation Hot Meal Program. (Credit: TNADF)

The effect of their work can be seen not only by seniors but also by the volunteers. Palmares shared how relationships are built through the program and the volunteers, “We have building leaders (volunteers) that will not give up delivering to a building. They know the residents and want to see these friends once a month. The delivery of physical food has become an invisible, emotional food.”

Palmares wishes that seniors had access to more diverse



This is What You're Telling Us

Your Thoughts So Far on the Concepts

We are continuously updating the website with new concepts and presenting them to you on social media. We've also been giving presentations on several of the concepts to our Project Advisory Committee and other stakeholders. Here's some of the feedback received.

Concept 1 adds additional lanes for lane continuity on I-84 in each direction and eliminates left-hand exit ramps.

Drivers may struggle to change lanes to exit I 84.

Reduces congestion, improves mobility and has low probability of creating damage to the environment.

Concept 7 straightens the I-84 alignment in the vicinity of Interchanges 2 and 4. Two subconcepts, a tunnel and an open-cut section, are considered on I-84 on the west side of the project corridor.

Concerns for safety issues at Interchange 4.

Tunnel proposal destroys two neighborhoods, a business community and cuts under Western Connecticut State University.

Concept 2 constructs one-way eastbound and westbound roads parallel to I-84 near Interchanges 5 and 6 and provides access to local roads.

Providing access to Madison Avenue and closing the Golden Hill Road connection would generate more traffic in Juniper Ridge neighborhood.

Concept 9 creates lane continuity by separating and shifting Route 7 into the median section of I-84 and eliminating left-hand exit ramps.

How about a zipper on ramp from Route 7 to I 84W?

Emergency access could be an issue if too many lanes are constructed.

Concept 3 improves access to Danbury Hospital and Downtown via Tamarack Ave improvements.

Ramps at Tamarack Avenue probably make the most sense, but the property impacts are considerable.

Ramps at Tamarack Avenue would attract more traffic and potentially congestion as well.

Concept 10 adds additional lane to a single lane on-ramp from Route 7 southbound to I-84 westbound.

Could negatively impact Great Plain Rd hospital access concept. (Concept 13)

Concept 6 improves vehicular travel by eliminating the weaving near Interchanges 3 and 4 on I-84 eastbound with a new off-ramp to Segar Street.

Could assist in eliminating the existing weave condition between Route 7 and I 84 at the highway's curve at this location.

Would add traffic onto the local city streets and would negatively impact Segar Street.

Concept 13 improves access to Danbury Hospital and Downtown via Great Plains Rd improvements.

Ambulance traffic would likely prefer the less congested, slightly flatter Great Plains Road over Tamarack Avenue.

Big hill on the highway between Great Plain Road and North Street could add traffic in this area.



How Non-Highway Improvements Can Benefit the I-84 Highway

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and can complement each other to attain the best results. For instance, a Southbury to Danbury inter-town express bus service combined with additional Park & Rides can provide better accessibility to the Metro North Railroad Harlem Line. Given that current east and west services are limited, this option could have a major effect on ridership and accessibility.

Another reason to consider non-highway options is that highway improvements could facilitate and enhance other transportation options. For example, during highway construction, enhanced bus transit service can provide an alternative option to getting around the Danbury area. Transit options like this can be implemented before any highway construction and would provide long term alternative travel options.

While non-highway concepts do provide options for people to move around the city, they alone do not significantly improve congestion levels on the highway. During the peak hour, I-84 Danbury carries approximately 7,000 auto trips in the peak travel direction. It is estimated that if all of the potential transit options could be implemented, approximately 410 auto trips (or about 6 percent of the 7,000 auto trips) on I-84 could be shifted to transit during peak hour.

The on-going concepts analysis is looking at over 20 different concepts, including concepts that do not involve improvements to I-84 itself. These non-highway concepts will likely be paired with others to ultimately provide the mobility of people, goods, and congestion relief to the corridor.

Local Spotlight The New American Dream Foundation

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

and Ecuadorian ceviche, TNADF hopes to bring communities together one meal at a time.

If you are interested in donating or volunteering for the Hot Meal Program, please visit their website at: www.thenewamericandreamfoundation.org.



Credit: HARTtransit via Google Maps.

What do you think?

Which non-highway improvements would you like to see in Danbury? Do you have highway or interchange improvements that you would like to see these paired with? Let us know by visiting our website at www.i84danbury.com/comment-subscribe

Get Involved!

- 👉 Attend a meeting
- 👉 Like us on Facebook: [I-84 Danbury Project](https://www.facebook.com/I84DanburyProject)
- 👉 Follow us on Twitter: [@I84Danbury](https://twitter.com/I84Danbury)
- 👉 Follow us on Instagram: [@I84Danbury](https://www.instagram.com/I84Danbury)
- 👉 Visit I84Danbury.com and sign up for project updates