

## REPORT OF MEETING

**Date and Time:** Tuesday, July 8, 2025, 12:00 – 1:15 PM

**Location:** Virtual via Zoom Webinar

**Subject:** Public Information Meeting

### 1. Attendees

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### 2. Overview

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) hosted a virtual Public Information Meeting to discuss the I-84 Danbury Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL) Study on Tuesday, July 8, 2025 via Zoom Webinar from 12 – 1:15 p.m. The meeting provided an opportunity for

Danbury community residents, leaders, and business owners to learn about the I-84 Danbury PEL Study and share their feedback with the CTDOT study team. In addition to the general PEL process, the team shared information on the recommended range of alternatives and potential breakout projects.

The meeting was a follow-up to the June 26<sup>th</sup> in-person open house-style meeting and presented the same materials as at the earlier meeting. The presentation was followed by a discussion period.

### **3. Presentation**

Marcy Miller, of FHI Studio, now IMEG, began the presentation by welcoming everyone to the virtual Public Information Meeting. She provided an overview of the meeting format and provided tips for participating, by raising hands or typing into the Q + A feature, in the Zoom Webinar meeting. She reminded the attendees that the meeting is being recorded and will be posted online to the project website at [www.i84danbury.com](http://www.i84danbury.com). She reviewed Title VI information related to civil rights and encouraged the attendees to complete a voluntary post meeting survey at <https://portal.ct.gov.ctdotsurvey>.

Kevin Burnham, of CTDOT, introduced the study team and reviewed the agenda for the presentation. The agenda included:

1. Study Background
2. Screening Process
3. Concept Segments
4. Potential Breakout Projects
5. Schedule
6. Discussion

Jeanine Armstrong-Gouin, of SLR Consulting, provided background information on PEL studies, noting their purpose is to streamline planning efforts for states, regions, and municipalities. A key feature of PEL studies is community engagement. She described several of the engagement efforts that have occurred for this process. J. Gouin stated that the PEL Study is often the initial stage of planning prior to the larger planning, environmental, design, and construction process. She presented the identified Needs & Deficiencies of the study limits. J. Gouin described the geometric and travel features that impact the congestion and poor mobility in the corridor.

J. Gouin presented the study location, noting that the 10-mile corridor is broken into concept segments (Mainline, West, Center, and East). She discussed the three-tier screening process and the filtering of 26 initial concepts down to 12 concept combinations. Three reasonable alternatives advanced to further environmental review and the study recommended several breakout projects.

K. Burnham presented several improvement concepts, beginning with Mainline Concept C1: Lane Continuity. In much of the corridor, this continuity would present itself as consistent three lanes of travel in each direction and replacement of left-hand ramps with right-hand ramps. He presented the concept for the West Concept C6: Interchanges 3 & 4 Segar Street eastbound ramp.

This new ramp at Segar Street would provide better access and eliminate weaving between I-84 and Route 7 traffic around Exit 4.

K. Burnham presented the three Center section concepts. Concept C3 would provide full Danbury Hospital access via Tamarack Avenue. Center concept C13 would implement a partial interchange at Great Plain Road to provide access to and from the west. Center concept C26 would complete the missing ramps at the North Street interchange. In the East section, Concept C15 would eliminate many of the weaves via a collector-distributor (CD) road. It would also address some of the poor curvature.

K. Burnham stated that the concepts presented above have a longer timeline and often high costs. He reviewed several breakout projects, noting that they typically are implemented more quickly and at a lower cost. He presented the Dynamic Lane Use (DLU), which would allow for travel in the left, median shoulder during peak congestion periods. This breakout project would all occur within the current right-of-way (ROW). He said that DLU is also referred to as Flex Lane.

Sharat Kalluri, of CDM Smith, presented bicycle and pedestrian breakout projects, including a sidepath along the Mill Plain Road corridor. He presented transit service options to add new express bus routes and a circulator route to serve most of the travelers that are currently traveling on transit in the eight municipalities including and surrounding Danbury. He discussed a potential turtleback interchange that could be constructed at Interchange 8 to provide a more fluid traffic circulation pattern.

The final breakout project presented by S. Kalluri is the intersection improvements at Main Street, North Street, and Downs Street. He stated that the team held an open house in August 2024 to learn whether the public could support improvements at this intersection. He presented survey results from the open house, noting a large percentage of support for converting Downs Street to a one-way eastbound street.

Nilesh Patel, of CTDOT, presented the project schedule, stating that the environmental review, design and construction for the long term I-84 improvement alternatives could take several years before implementation given the complexity and magnitude of the improvements. Construction of some of the breakout projects could start as early as 2028. The PEL Study report should be posted to the website within the next few weeks.

M. Miller closed by stating that those wishing to comment can do so via emailing the general inbox, entering a comment on the project website, or calling a specific number at CTDOT. All comments are due to CTDOT by July 22, 2025.

#### **4. [Discussion](#)**

**Question:** To clarify, is the DLU anticipated to be a static opened / closed based on the time of day or will it be opened / closed based on density, speed, or some sort of metric that will trigger it to open or close?

**Answer:** K. Burnham replied that the opening of this lane would be based on highway condition and/or speeds.

**Question:** How do we speed up the timeline? Can the red tape be cut? The timeline is agonizingly long.

**Answer:** N. Patel replied that this is a common question for many larger projects. CTDOT is required to go through several legal requirements and keep the road open during construction, which adds to the project timeline. He said that the breakout projects, such as DLU, would offer some congestion relief improve mobility quicker.

**Question:** How will the westbound Exit 4 be addressed, as it is tough to get over?

**Answer:** S. Kalluri stated that he understood the question to be related to the movement from I-84 westbound to Route 7 southbound. Exit 4 westbound would not change with respect to access to Lake Avenue. On the eastbound direction, he said that the Segar Street ramp concept would prevent the I-84 traffic from exiting at Exit 4 and would remove the existing weave between I-84 eastbound and Route 7 northbound traffic.

**Question:** Is there any anticipation or expectation to coordinate with New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) to also coordinate improvements up to and including to the I-684 interchange which is where most would argue the corridor begins? The bridge over Dingle Ridge Road has already been widened to be able to carry three lanes in each direction a number of years ago.

**Answer:** N. Patel answered that as the alternatives move into the environmental review phase, the coordination with NYSDOT would continue. Additional alternatives may be introduced through coordination during the environmental process. S. Kalluri added that there has been some early coordination between the two state agencies, and the study limits have been extended to include potential improvements to I-684.

**Question:** How many people do you expect to use the new bus or bike lanes? How is Return on Investment (ROI) measured?

**Answer:** S. Kalluri discussed the team's high-level bus analysis. He said that the team did not see a significant mode shift to transit, primarily a result of riders' current access to transit. He added that the team has not looked at mode shift to bicycle use yet. However, he noted that transit and bus improvements will complement the highway improvements.

**Question:** If there is electronic monitoring of congestion and speed, can the design include speed cameras (with ticketing) to help enforce the speed limit and promote public safety? Speeding is rampant today, with no sign of police enforcement.

**Answer:** K. Burnham answered that the team is looking at enforcement tools that can be implemented when DLU is in effect.

**Question:** What environmental review is needed for opening the shoulder?

**Answer:** N. Patel replied that DLU would require a Categorical Exclusion (CE), which is less complex and typically faster to complete than what would be required for the entire corridor alternatives.

**Comment:** Regarding the bike sidepath near Exit 2, Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG) has a project in progress to develop the abandoned railroad that parallels Mill Plain Road.

**Answer:** N. Patel stated that the team is aware of this and is coordinating with the City and region on this work.



*Question:* How does this stretch of highway compare to others within the state??

*Answer:* N. Patel said his team has been working on several PELs in the state. Each PEL corridor is unique. The I-84 Danbury corridor faces challenges such as lane discontinuity, poor road geometry, and left-hand exits.

*Question:* How successful are DLUs in other states? What are their use cases like?

*Answer:* N. Patel stated that several other states, including Wisconsin, Michigan and Ohio, have successfully implemented DLU. CTDOT has been speaking with those states about their operations and benefits. S. Kalluri added that Wisconsin and Michigan have seen significant reductions in delay, and Wisconsin has noted significant reductions in rear-end crashes. He added that several other states are opening the lanes, though none of these are in New England.

*Question:* Would the DLU be a high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) or general use lane when it is open?

*Answer:* K. Burnham answered that the lane would function as a general use lane. S. Kalluri added that trucks would not be permitted in the DLU.