

Excerpt from: http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/Other_Projects_NS_2008.doc

Connecticut: Hartford/New Britain-Hartford Busway

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) is proposing to construct the New Britain-Hartford Busway, an 11-station, 9.4-mile exclusive BRT system operating primarily in an existing and abandoned railroad right-of-way on a new two-way roadway between downtown New Britain and downtown Hartford's Union Station. The busway would run parallel to Interstate 84 (I-84), the primary transportation link between New Britain, West Hartford, and downtown Hartford. The project's operating plan calls for a number of bus routes to operate on the Busway, including services that enter and exit the facility to reach destinations well outside of the immediate corridor without the need for a transfer.

I-84 is currently, and is forecast to remain, the region's most congested highway. The proposed busway project is intended to provide faster transit travel times between major activity centers throughout the corridor, improve mobility and accessibility for the corridor's relatively large transit-dependent population, and promote redevelopment opportunities in older urban centers along the project alignment. The New Britain-Hartford Busway project is anticipated to result in travel-time benefits not only to residents living within the corridor, but to suburban commuters who take advantage of the flexibility of BRT service.

In 1994 the Capitol Region Council of Governments' regional transportation plan identified the I-84 corridor west of Hartford as one of the metropolitan area's high priority corridors in need of improvement. A major investment study for the corridor was completed in 1999, resulting in the selection of a BRT system between New Britain and Hartford as the locally preferred alternative. In 2000 FTA approved the project into preliminary engineering. A Final EIS for the project was completed in December 2001, and an environmental ROD was issued in March 2002. A re-evaluation to the EIS documenting minor scope changes to the project was submitted to FTA in April 2006, and FTA issued a letter of concurrence on it in June 2006. FTA approved final design for the project in October 2006. Prior to FTA consideration of the project for an FFGA, ConnDOT must resolve outstanding design and right-of-way issues, gain full commitments of non-New Starts funding, and maintain sufficient New Starts ratings. The project is scheduled to open in 2012.

SAFETEA-LU Section 3043(b)(18) authorized the New Britain-Hartford Busway for final design and construction. The capital cost for the 9.4-mile exclusive BRT system is estimated at \$458.78 million, of which ConnDOT is seeking \$275.27 million, or 60.0 percent, in New Starts funding. Through FY 2006, Congress has appropriated \$7.37 million in New Starts funding for this project.