

What was the decision-making process?

In 2006, the Aetna Viaduct Alternatives Committee was formed to raise awareness about the impacts of the highway on surrounding neighborhoods through which it passes. Meanwhile, the Capital Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) convened a study group to consider long range alternatives to reconstruction of the viaduct. The viaduct carries more than 180,000 cars per day and the area around it has felt the impacts of the highway, including noise, dust, and the visual presence of the elevated structure. The “Hub of Hartford” steering committee includes representatives from the City of Hartford, the major employers in the city (Aetna, The Hartford, etc.), neighborhood representatives, the CTDOT, and the CRCOG. The steering committee’s mission statement reads, “Using the redesign and de-emphasis of I-84 as the central theme for change, the Hub of Hartford can become a lively and walkable, mixed-use, mixed-income urban place, and a regional crossroads where business, government, community and recreational uses integrate seamlessly in a historic context supplemented by compatible new development.”

What can *The I-81 Challenge* learn from this effort?

The Aetna Viaduct carries somewhat higher traffic volumes than does the I-81 viaduct in Syracuse. However, this project does have several similarities to *The I-81 Challenge*. The sizes of the metropolitan areas and the regional significance of



these interstate highways are comparable.

The primary goal of the Hub of Hartford is to explore ways to repair the damage and impact of the I-84 viaduct. While efficient transportation will be a critical consideration, the urban environment shares equal priority among members of the steering

committee. A study of alternatives that is currently underway will include, “a comprehensive assessment of how each alternative might help improve the quality of life in surrounding neighborhoods, support existing businesses, and promote economic development⁸.”

The “Hub of Hartford” committee emphasizes employer and neighborhood representation. Their initial effort is not leading directly to an EIS, but rather is a broad-reaching urban planning and design effort that will precede the highway planning and design process, perhaps comparable to the *University Hill Transportation Study* in Syracuse.

For More Information:

<http://www.crcog.org/viaduct.html>

http://www.hartfordinfo.org/issues/documents/transportation/htfd_courant_0413_08_2.asp