

April 18, 2006

Mr. Richard H. Doyle
Regional Administrator
Region I
Federal Transit Administration
Volpe Center
55 Broadway, Suite 920
Cambridge, MA 02142-1093

Dear Mr. Doyle:

Subject: State Project No. 171-305
New Britain – Hartford Busway
New Britain, Newington, West Hartford and Hartford
Reevaluation of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)

This environmental reevaluation is submitted in accordance with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regulations (23 CFR part 771.129 (a)). The subject regulations require the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) to consult with FTA to establish whether the approved National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document remains valid and to request FTA action on any major approvals or grants.

Background

The facility will be a dedicated Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) facility along a 9.4-mile corridor between downtown New Britain and downtown Hartford, along with any associated improvements to the transit and transportation system that are necessary to make the Busway possible. The recommended corridor for the Busway follows an abandoned railroad right-of-way from New Britain to approximately 2000 feet south of Newington Junction. From this point north, the Busway corridor lies within the active Amtrak railroad right-of-way and is, for the most part, parallel to the active Amtrak rail line. A total of up to twelve transit stations would serve the users of the Busway. Buses using this corridor would have more competitive travel times when compared with automobiles, since they would bypass congestion on arterial streets and I-84. The facility would permit bus access at intermediate points, whereby circulator bus routes could readily serve surrounding neighborhoods and then traverse the Busway, thus providing a one-seat ride. In addition, the Busway will include express, shuttle, circulator, and connecting feeder bus service. A multi-use trail will be constructed adjacent to the Busway in the areas where it can be accommodated.

The BRT project was the recommendation of the Hartford West Major Investment Study (MIS) which began in 1996 and was completed in 1999. The MIS recommended a hybrid package of improvements, including the New Britain – Hartford Busway as its principal action.

The EIS process began in late 1999. The purpose of the Draft EIS was to assess the anticipated environmental impacts of the project, as required under the National Environmental Policy Act and the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA). As the Draft EIS process progressed, public input was solicited at numerous meetings with groups and the general public. Based upon public input, a variety of alignment and station options were considered. Three alignment options and twenty-one station options (at twelve locations) were ultimately included in the Draft EIS.

The Draft EIS for the New Britain – Hartford Busway was released for public circulation on March 20, 2001. A fifty-six day comment period was provided (ending May 18, 2001) for the public and agencies to review the document and provide comments that would be officially entered into the public record. Once the comment period ended, work was initiated on responding to all comments received and composing the Final EIS, which identifies ConnDOT's recommended action. The Final EIS notice of availability was published in the Federal Register on December 21, 2001. Copies of the Final EIS were distributed to all federal, state and local agencies, and private organizations, as well as members of the public who provided substantive comments on the Draft EIS or who requested a copy. The comment period ended on January 22, 2002 and the Record of Decision (ROD) was approved on March 13, 2002. Throughout the NEPA process, ConnDOT made extensive commitments related to the design and construction of the New Britain – Hartford Busway. A total of sixty-five commitments, measures to minimize harm, were incorporated into FTA's ROD.

ConnDOT has evaluated the sixty-five commitments outlined in the approved ROD and does not anticipate that any of the commitments were altered due to the following design changes:

1. Amtrak Access road

FEIS Scope

The FEIS anticipated that maintenance of Amtrak's facility would be provided from the busway by closing one lane during non-peak periods and as needed for emergencies.

Cause of Change

During the design phase of the project, Amtrak emphasized the need for ConnDOT to accommodate their future expansion plans and preserve access for Amtrak's maintenance forces. After meetings and discussions, and reviewing the Preliminary Engineering plans, Amtrak advised ConnDOT that access from the Busway would not serve their needs and an access roadway must be provided.

Proposed Scope

The proposed access road would be a continuous gravel roadway along the east side of the existing tracks, beginning approximately 3000 feet south of the Newington Junction Station and extending northerly to the Sigourney Street Station, a distance of about five miles.

The access road is basically parallel to Amtrak's existing/future eastern most track (track #2) and 10 feet in width, except at few locations and for short distances, where it is reduced to 8 feet wide to avoid impact to adjacent properties. The construction of the access road would require the construction of three new bridges (over New Britain Avenue, Trout Brook and Park Street) and some retaining walls.

Resulting Impacts

- Historic/4(f) – A bridge for the access road, on the downstream side, spanning over Trout Brook would be constructed. *ConnDOT has received a letter, copy attached, from the State Historic Preservation Office stating that “the proposed project revision will constitute no effect upon Connecticut’s cultural heritage.”* This location was listed in the FEIS as needing historic documentation, *which is currently being performed and will be completed later this month.*
- A wetland area located south of the Willard Avenue overpass would be impacted, where the fill slope (2H to 1V) would be within the Channel Encroachment Line. This wetland has not been field delineated. Based on the wetland limits shown on the base map, the impacted area is approximately 9,500 square feet or 0.25 acre and is not seen as a significant impact. Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection permits will be needed. *Separate and early permit approvals will be obtained for breakout projects, such as the access road. The process starts during Final Design and the necessary permits must be completed and approved prior to the start of construction.*
- Ten properties are anticipated to be impacted by the roadway. All takes are partial and only one includes a building, Cashway Lumber Company opposite the Newington Junction Station. (See Exhibit 1).
- The access road will impact a substantial number of the utility poles located along the east side of Amtrak's right-of-way, which will require relocation.
- Increase in project cost – Based on the Preliminary Engineering Study performed in October 2004, the probable construction cost for the access road is \$7,650,000 (2005 dollars).
- Potential Contamination – Further investigation, in the area of the Amtrak access road along the rail corridor, will be undertaken during the design phase to determine levels of contamination that may be encountered and their associated cost. ConnDOT will assume liability for clean-up within the construction limits for the access road. *ConnDOT has selected a consultant to perform the environmental site assessments. This work will begin as soon as the Engineering Agreement between ConnDOT and Amtrak is executed, which should be within the next couple of months but not prior to submitting a request to enter Final Design.*
- Ownership of access road – The proposed access road will be designed and constructed as part of the Busway project, but owned and maintained by Amtrak.

Resulting Benefits

- The access road will allow Amtrak trackside access to their railroad infrastructure without interfering with the operation of the Busway.
- The work associated with the construction of the Amtrak access road can be accelerated and constructed as an advance contract, so there is no negative impact on current schedule and project completion date.

Summary

The proposed Amtrak access road alignment is virtually completely within Amtrak's right-of-way, parallel to the existing/future eastern most track, and has minimal impacts to adjacent properties and wetlands. No adverse environmental effect is likely to result from the inclusion of the access road. There are no environmental factors or features in this area of the project that have changed, nor have there been changes in laws and regulations that would affect the information presented in the FEIS. Because the access road is within Amtrak's right-of-way, the information presented in the FEIS has not substantially changed and remains valid.

2. Union Station/Northern Terminus Layout

FEIS Scope

Union Station would serve as a terminus for the dedicated busway service before buses circulate through downtown Hartford. The Busway would pass over Asylum Street on the existing bridge structure and provide a Busway platform on both sides of Asylum Street with a pedestrian walkway over Asylum Street. The platform on the south side of Asylum Street would include a pedestrian stairway connection down to Asylum Street. The north platform would use the existing rail platform at Union Station and also provide direct pedestrian access to Asylum Street. Additionally, existing pedestrian connections down to the Union Station building may be used as well. The Busway would continue northward through the Station, and a loop ramp would be constructed that would enable buses to drop down to street level near the intersection of Myrtle, Church and Spruce Streets so they may circulate throughout downtown Hartford. It is assumed that no new parking would be provided for busway passengers, as Union Station is already served by existing parking.

Cause of Change

During the Preliminary Design phase it was determined that the Busway alignment, as proposed in the FEIS, would require; the reconstruction of three bridges that are over 100 years old, significant inconvenience during construction to pedestrians and vehicular traffic at Union Station; acquisition of a large parcel currently used as a surface parking lot, but which is a prime location for future development; and a touchdown to a secondary street which did not provide the best route for buses to circulate throughout downtown. Because of the cost of bridge

reconstruction, and desires to preserve the lot on Church Street and get the buses into the circulation pattern more quickly, a study of the feasibility of a new terminus in the vicinity of Union Station was initiated.

Proposed Scope

The ConnDOT Study to determine possible options to terminate the Busway in downtown Hartford included performing a preliminary traffic analysis of the intersection of the Busway/Asylum Street/Spruce Street/I-84 Ramps and estimates to quantify the probable cost of each option. It was concluded that it is more desirable to terminate the Busway at-grade at Asylum Street rather than the option recommended in the FEIS. The Busway would terminate at the intersection of Asylum Street, Spruce Street, I-84 WB on-ramp and I-84 EB off-ramp. The Busway northbound lane would be adjacent to the east side of the existing I-84 EB off-ramp. In the southbound direction, the roadway would consist of one-lane which would then split to the Busway and to I-84 WB. A median would separate the northbound and southbound traffic.

The existing platform along the east side on Spruce Street will be utilized as the northbound platform, and a new platform will be constructed on the southbound side. These platforms in conjunction with bus stops on Asylum Street will provide busway passengers with direct access to the multi-modal hub at Union Station. In addition to providing service to Union Station, this terminus location provides better access to the street network for buses to circulate throughout downtown Hartford.

To facilitate bus access to downtown Hartford, consideration will be given to a counter-flow lane on Asylum Street between High Street and Main Street. This section of Asylum Street is currently one-way westbound, away from downtown. The counter-flow lane, eastbound, would allow for a dedicated bus-only lane while maintaining general vehicular traffic in the westbound direction. By ending the Busway at-grade at Asylum Street, none of the existing parking that serves Union Station would be impacted. No new parking would be provided for busway passengers.

The Busway terminus, as currently proposed, *is anticipated to have* minimal impact to pedestrian and vehicular traffic at Union Station. *However, ConnDOT will complete a traffic study analyzing impacts of the proposed changes to pedestrians and vehicular traffic prior to submitting a request to enter Final Design. ConnDOT has determined new routings to reflect the revised plan for the terminus (see enclosed letter dated March 20, 2006), which will be utilized in performing the traffic study. The full bus service plan will be revised prior to ConnDOT's fiscal 2008 New Starts submittal.*

No relocation of bus parking nor changes in bus and pedestrian circulation would be required due to construction staging. Also, no property impacts are anticipated in the vicinity of Union Station, and a substantial saving in project cost would be realized.

Resulting Impacts

The reconstruction of the Busway terminus, as currently proposed, would have the following impacts:

- Land Acquisition – No additional land required since the Busway would terminate at Asylum Street. As noted below right-of-way would be reduced.
- Historic/4(f) – The proposed design change would have no effect on historic resources or 4(f) regulated properties.
- Construction of a bridge for the Busway southbound roadway, over the existing I-84 WB on-ramp and under the I-84 EB off-ramp.
- Busway would be constructed adjacent to the existing I-84 EB off-ramp and I-84 WB on-ramp.
- Reconstruction of existing ramps. Approximately 400 feet of the off-ramp, and 800 feet of the on-ramp.
- Construction of several retaining walls.
- Busway and non-busway traffic would share common roadway. The Busway southbound roadway and the I-84 WB on-ramp from Asylum Street.
- Reconfiguration of the intersection at Asylum Street and new traffic signal.
- Loss of part of one on-street, drop-off lane along Spruce Street, due to the proposed bus platforms.

Resulting Benefits

The reconstruction of the Busway terminus, as currently proposed, would have the following benefits:

- This terminus location provides better access to the street network for buses to circulate throughout downtown Hartford.
- Bus travel time will be reduced since buses no longer need to negotiate the loop ramp before accessing the city street network.
- Minimal impact, if any, to pedestrians, vehicular traffic, and the operation of the multi-modal hub at Union Station.
- Less impact to Amtrak's right-of-way and no impact to property north of Union Station.
- No impact to the Williams Communications fiber optic conduit attached to the Union Station viaduct.
- No impact to the existing parking that serves Union Station and nearby businesses.
- The large parcel north of Church Street that would have been impacted in its entirety under the FEIS scenario will remain as an ideal location for future development.
- No rehabilitation of the following structures is required, which were originally constructed more than 100 years ago: Amtrak railroad over Asylum Street, Union Station, and Church Street.
- Substantial reduction in project cost. Based on the Preliminary Engineering Study, as proposed in the FEIS, and a concept layout for terminating the Busway at Asylum Street. The probable saving in project cost is approximately \$10,000,000 (2005 dollars).

Summary

The proposed terminus will not impact the Union Station property or the property north of Union Station needed to ramp the Busway down to street level at Church Street, as recommended in the FEIS. Constructing the Busway terminus at its new proposed location will not involve a transfer of property, as the property is currently owned by the State of Connecticut. Therefore, the environmental impacts in the Union Station area of the project have been minimized, and there have not been changes in laws and regulations that would affect the information presented in the FEIS. As described above, the terminus layout is substantially different than what was presented in the FEIS, but remains valid.

3. I-84 EB Off-ramp to Capitol Avenue

FEIS Scope

The existing structure carries the off-ramp over Amtrak near the original Legislative Office Building (LOB) Station location and connects to Capitol Avenue. The Off-ramp Bridge was not listed in the FEIS as one of the structures that would require alterations/reconstruction to meet the requirements of the Busway.

Cause of Change

The span of the existing bridge is insufficient to accommodate the proposed Busway, and Amtrak's offset requirements; therefore, the following items are required: a new bridge spanning the Busway section, the relocation of existing active track, future track, and provision for Amtrak's minimum horizontal offset of 10 feet between the centerline of track and permanent structures, and 14 feet between the centerline of tracks.

Proposed Scope

A new bridge is required to accommodate the busway section, the relocation of existing active track, future track, Amtrak's requirements as stated above, and maintain the existing vertical clearance over existing track and future track. It is anticipated that the proposed replacement structure will have a total length of approximately 260 feet. The cross section of the new bridge would be the same as the existing and constructed at the same location.

Resulting Impacts

The reconstruction of the I-84 EB off-ramp to Capitol Avenue Bridge, as currently proposed, would have the following impacts:

- Land Acquisition – No additional land required since the bridge will be constructed in the same footprint.

- Historic/4(f) - The proposed design change would have no effect on historic resources or 4(f) regulated properties.
- Reconstruct approximately 260 feet (all structure) of the ramp.
- Traveling public will be affected by bridge reconstruction. Construction can be accomplished in stages by maintaining traffic on half of the roadway, one lane of traffic, while constructing the other half. Detours can be established to redirect traffic around the construction area.
- Increase in project cost. Based on a concept layout of the proposed bridge spanning over Amtrak and the Busway, the probable construction cost (computed on the basis of deck area) for the I-84 off-ramp Bridge is \$3,600,000 (2005 dollars).

Resulting Benefits

The reconstruction of the I-84 E/B off-ramp to Capitol Avenue Bridge, as currently proposed, would have the following benefits:

- Accommodates the busway cross section.
- Provides sufficient space to meet Amtrak's requirements, horizontally and vertically.
- The work associated with the reconstruction of the I-84 off-ramp bridge can be accelerated and constructed as an advance contract, so there is no negative impact on current schedule and project completion date.

Summary

There are no environmental factors or features in the I-84 E/B off-ramp to Capitol Avenue Bridge area of the project that have changed. The Busway alignment is similar to the recommended alignment in the FEIS. The information presented in the FEIS has not substantially changed and remains valid.

4. Legislative Office Building (LOB) Station

FEIS Scope

This Station would serve government offices in the Armory and LOB, as well as locations on Broad Street. Additional nearby properties include the Hartford Courant and other state offices. The Station would be provided near the LOB parking ramp with an offset platform arrangement. No parking or kiss-and-ride facilities would be provided since this Station would primarily serve as a destination location. An up-and-over stairway, ramp and covered walkway would carry people using the Station over the active Amtrak tracks to the parking structure, where additional climate-controlled connections are provided to the LOB and Capitol complex. Additionally, an access will be provided from the Broad Street overpass with covered stairs down to the Station site, as well as a pedestrian ramp. Prominent signage and the other features on Broad Street will alert the public to the location of the Station.

Cause of Change

Since the start of the design phase for the Busway project several meetings have taken place with Amtrak to discuss their requirements when the Busway is within Amtrak's right-of-way, and convey the design alternatives developed to accommodate these requirements to the extent possible. Amtrak's design requirements are as follows: That the design plans protect Amtrak's option for future electrification of a double track system on its Springfield Line; and provide a 16-foot offset between the centerline of the nearest track and the edge of the Busway, except at those locations where a design exception would be requested and granted.

At locations where the requirements as stated above could not be met, ConnDOT prepared Design Exceptions in accordance with "Amtrak Design Exception Procedure" and submitted them for review and approval by Amtrak. The Design Exception for the area where the LOB Station was to be located is known as DE #4. A letter from Amtrak to ConnDOT dated May 4, 2004, stated the following: "Amtrak has no objections to the concept of the proposed minimum horizontal clearance for Design Exception #4 of 10'-0" from centerline of relocated existing track to pre-cast jersey barrier along the Busway N/B lane; and 10'-0" from the centerline of future 2nd track to face of existing/proposed permanent structures along the east side of Amtrak's right-of-way."

Site constraints and Amtrak's requirements, even with the stated design exception, made the design of this Station very difficult, which would have significant impacts to nearby I-84 ramps specifically the I-84 E/B off-ramp to Asylum Street. If the Station were to be constructed as proposed in the FEIS, the I-84 E/B off-ramp would have to be realigned to the west requiring approximately 740 feet of reconstruction at an estimated cost of \$7,000,000. During the initial information meetings and discussions with the public, the general response to the LOB Station was negative due to its inaccessibility, visibility and ability to provide a secure environment for passengers. The functionality and operation of the Station would be compromised because of the narrow right-of-way that requires the platforms to be approximately 500 feet apart.

Proposed Scope

The elimination of the LOB Station changes where riders access the Busway and the transit system, but it has only a small impact on the overall user benefits and ridership. When the LOB Station is removed, user benefits are reduced by 169 hours (4.1 percent) as shown in the table below. A similar reduction occurs in total transit trips and new transit trips. Total transit trips decrease by 179 or (0.3 percent) of total system ridership. New transit trips decrease by the same amount – 179, but this is a higher percentage change of 4.2 percent of the total new transit trips generated by the project.

Transit Impacts of Removal of LOB Station¹

MY2030	With LOB	No LOB	Change	% Chg
User benefits (hours)	4,054	3,885	-169	-4.1%
Transit trips (daily)	59,440	59,261	-179	0.3%
New transit trips (daily)	4,502	4,323	-179	-4.2%

Resulting Impacts

The elimination of the LOB Station, as currently proposed, would have the following impacts:

- Land Acquisition – No additional land required since the Busway would be constructed within Amtrak’s and ConnDOT owned property, as proposed in the FEIS.
- Historic/4(f) – The proposed design change would have no effect on historic resources or 4(f) regulated properties.
- The LOB Station functions as both an origin and destination station, so its elimination affects both residents of nearby neighborhoods and workers at nearby state office buildings. About 40 percent of the riders using the LOB Station are residents of nearby neighborhoods. The other 60 percent are workers and others destined to the LOB, State Capitol, and other state office buildings nearby.
- Direct access from the Busway’s fixed guideway to the LOB, Capitol complex, other state offices, and nearby businesses such as the Hartford Courant would not be provided, but would be offset by the direct routing of bus connections to these origins and destinations. Since most users of the LOB Station will shift to other stations or other transit routes, overall transit user benefits will only be reduced by 169 hours (4.1 percent), and transit ridership will be reduced by 179 daily person trips (0.3 percent).
- The LOB Station was expected to serve about 1,500 of the 18,700 trips that were projected to use the busway. With the removal of the LOB Station, about 46 percent of these trips will shift to other busway stations. Forty-two (42) percent will shift to non-busway routes. Only about 12 percent, or 179 trips, will change to a non-transit mode.

Resulting Benefits

The elimination of the LOB Station, as currently proposed, would have the following benefits:

- Amtrak’s requirements, per Design Exception #4, will be met without having to:

¹ The analysis is based on travel model results. Off-model trips associated with Central Connecticut State University commuter students are not included in the table. Bnt, these special generator trips (less than 200) would not substantively alter the results shown in the table.

- Reconstruct the I-84 E/B off-ramp to Asylum Street structure. Approximately 740 feet of structure would require reconstruction, if the Station were to remain.
- Reconstruct the I-84 E/B off-ramp to Capitol Avenue over the Busway and Amtrak structure. The structure length to be reconstructed would be shortened due to the reduced width of the Busway.
- The overall span length for the replacement of the Broad Street Bridge over the Busway and Amtrak would be shortened due to the reduced width of the Busway without the Station.
- Substantial reduction in project cost, based upon the Preliminary Engineering Study, and estimates for the Station from the FEIS. The probable savings in project cost is \$10,600,000 (2005 dollars).

Summary

The elimination of the LOB Station would substantially reduce the impact to the nearby bridges while the design would be in accordance with Amtrak's Design exception #4. There are no significant environmental factors or features in the area of the project where the LOB Station was to be constructed. Public information meetings were held in the four Busway towns in February and March. The elimination of this Station generated supportive reactions. Additional meetings will be scheduled as Preliminary Design is completed and also during Final Design. As described above, the elimination of the LOB Station is substantially different than what was presented in the FEIS resulting in less impact, thus remaining valid. The deletion of the LOB Station will again be presented to the public at the end of Preliminary Design for review and comment.

5. Broad Street Bridge

FEIS Scope

The existing Broad Street Bridge carries Broad Street over Amtrak and connects Capitol Avenue to Asylum Street in Hartford, near the original LOB Station location. The Broad Street Bridge was not listed in the FEIS as one of the structures that would require alterations/reconstruction to meet the requirements of the Busway.

Cause of Change

The span of the existing bridge is insufficient to accommodate the proposed Busway, The Hartford Courant's siding and Amtrak's requirements. Therefore, the following items are required: a new bridge spanning the Busway section, the relocation of existing active track, future track, siding, and providing Amtrak's required minimum horizontal offsets (10 feet between centerline of track and permanent structures; and 14 feet between centerline of tracks).

Proposed Scope

A new bridge is required to accommodate the Busway section, the relocation of existing active track, future track, Hartford Courant's siding, Amtrak's required horizontal offset of 10 feet (between centerline of track and permanent structures, which applies for the Busway section between Sigourney Street Station and the Northern Terminus), and maintain the existing vertical clearance over existing track, future track, and siding. The proposed bridge would be a single-span structure with a total span length of approximately 175 feet. The cross section of the new bridge would be the same as the existing and constructed at the same location.

Resulting Impacts

The reconstruction of the Broad Street Bridge, as currently proposed, would have the following impacts:

- Land Acquisition -- No additional land required since the bridge will be constructed in the same footprint.
- Historic/4(f) - The proposed design change would have no effect on historic resources or 4(f) regulated properties.
- Reconstruct approximately 275 feet (including bridge) of Broad Street, approximately 50 feet on either side of the structure.
- Traveling public and businesses will be affected by bridge construction. Construction can be accomplished in stages by maintaining traffic on half of the roadway, one lane in each direction, while constructing the other half. Detours can be established to redirect traffic around the construction area.
- Increase in project cost. Based on a concept layout of the proposed bridge spanning over Amtrak and the Busway, the probable construction cost (computed on the basis of deck area) for the Broad Street Bridge is \$5,350,000 (2005 dollars).

Resulting Benefits

The reconstruction of the Broad Street Bridge, as currently proposed, would have the following benefits:

- Accommodates the busway cross section.
- Provides sufficient space to meet Amtrak's requirements, horizontally and vertically and accommodate the Hartford Courant's siding.
- The work associated with the reconstruction of the Broad Street Bridge can be accelerated and constructed as an advance contract, so there is no negative impact on the current schedule and project completion date.

Summary

There are no environmental factors or features in the Broad Street Bridge area of the project that have changed. The Busway alignment is virtually identical to the recommended

alignment in the FEIS. The information presented in the FEIS has not substantially changed and remains valid.

6. Flower Street Closure

FEIS Scope

Flower Street runs north-south between Capitol Avenue and Farmington Avenue, with two major businesses located on the Street; Aetna and The Hartford Courant are located north and south of the at-grade intersection with the railroad, respectively. The design in this area, as proposed in the FEIS, would maintain the at-grade crossing while upgrading it to incorporate the Busway. During the FEIS it was believed that with a minimal shift to the east of Amtrak's existing track, the Busway cross section would be accommodated with minimal impact to the at-grade crossing and adjacent structures supporting I-84.

Cause of Change

The alignment, proposed in the FEIS, is based on a 10-foot offset between the centerline of the nearest track and the Busway. However, this alignment does not provide adequate separation for the installation of railroad gates and flashing-light signals in accordance with design standards outlined in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Due to the constraints associated with this location, the significant impact to the I-84 viaduct, the potential impact to the buildings adjacent to the Busway on the Aetna corporate campus, and most of all, the safety benefits that would be realized from the elimination of the at-grade crossing, it was decided to examine the option of dead-ending the street north and south of the crossing.

Proposed Scope

Based upon the design and construction issues, several Busway alignment alternatives were developed for this area to assess impact to the adjacent facilities/structures and cost, while providing a design in accordance with Amtrak's requirements. The alignment proposed in the Preliminary Engineering Study was found to be the least disruptive to the adjacent infrastructure and the most economical. This alignment is based on a 10-foot offset between the centerline of the nearest track and the Busway. Due to the constraints associated with this location and the safety benefits that would be realized from the elimination of the at-grade crossing, it was decided to pursue the option of dead-ending the street north and south of the crossing.

In May 2005, a traffic analysis (*see enclosed report*) was performed that included five signalized intersections in the vicinity of the proposed closure and Aetna's expansion plans to construct an eight-story parking garage structure located between Flower Street and Broad Street and bordered to the south by I-84 and to the north by office buildings. The purpose of the analysis was to assess traffic impacts to the local street network/businesses and to determine

possible mitigation measures. The analysis concluded that with minor mitigation measures and lane arrangement reconfiguration, a Level of Service (LOS) equal to or better than the No-Build (existing conditions) can be attained. The necessary improvements would be implemented when the Busway is constructed.

Preliminary plans for the possible closure of the Flower Street at-grade crossing and the traffic analysis were presented and discussed with officials from the City of Hartford, Aetna and The Hartford Courant. In principle, all parties agreed that the closure of Flower Street is feasible, as long as the Department is able to demonstrate that there will be no detrimental effects to the traffic on the nearby street network and business facilities and that all costs related to the closure would be incurred by the Busway project. ConnDOT is in the process of getting written concurrence from all three parties.

Resulting Impacts

The closure of the Flower Street at-grade crossing, as currently proposed, would have the following impacts:

- Land Acquisition – *The proposed design would require additional right-of-way, a partial take. (See Exhibit 2). The construction of the cul-de-sac, south of the tracks, would also impact the Hartford Courant’s parking lot resulting in the loss of approximately thirty-two parking spaces, including eight for people with disabilities.*
- Historic/4(f) – The proposed design change would have no effect on historic resources or 4(f) regulated properties.
- Elimination of through-traffic movement across the railroad and the proposed busway.
- Some inconvenience to traveling public, motorists and pedestrians. Both have to use nearby Broad Street for direct access between Capitol Avenue and Farmington Avenue.
- Three of the piers supporting I-84 at the Aetna viaduct would be impacted.
- Increase in project cost due to moving piers that support I-84. Based on the concept that Flower Street will be closed, the probable construction cost for the reconstruction of the I-84 Aetna viaduct piers is \$2,300,000 (2005 dollars). This is less than if Flower Street remained open and the design needed to accommodate the additional width required to fit the crossing gates based on Amtrak’s design criteria.

Resulting Benefits

The closure of the Flower Street at-grade crossing, as currently proposed, would have the following benefits:

- The greatest benefit would be safety due to the elimination of the crossing.
- The design would be in accordance with Amtrak’s requirements, as specified in Design Exception #4.
- Minimal impact to the Aetna’s Refrigeration and Grounds Department buildings.
- Allows for a two-lane Busway from Sigourney Street to Asylum Street, with manageable impacts and at reasonable cost.

- The Flower Street closure allows the elimination of the crossing gate systems and reduces the project cost by approximately \$1,100,000.

Summary

There are no environmental factors or features in the Flower Street area of the project that have changed. The Busway alignment is similar to the recommended alignment in the FEIS. The information presented in the FEIS has not substantially changed and remains valid.

7. Laurel Street Bridge

FEIS Scope

The existing Laurel Street Bridge carries Laurel Street over Amtrak and is located between the Sisson Avenue interchange and Sigourney Street in Hartford. Laurel Street runs north-south, between Park Street and Niles Street. The Laurel Street Bridge was not listed in the FEIS as one of the structures that would require alterations/reconstruction to meet the requirements of the Busway.

Cause of Change

The span and configuration of the existing bridge is not adequate to accommodate the proposed Busway, Amtrak's requirements, and the access road; therefore, a new bridge is required to span over the Busway section, the existing active track, future track, Amtrak's access road, and provide Amtrak's required minimum horizontal offsets (16 feet – between the centerline of track and permanent structures; and 14 feet – between the centerline of tracks).

Proposed Scope

A new bridge is required to accommodate the Busway section, the existing active track, future track, Amtrak's access road, and Amtrak's required horizontal offset of 16 feet (between the centerline of track and permanent structures), which applies for the Busway section between the Newington Junction Station and the Sigourney Street Station, maintaining the existing vertical clearance over existing/future track. The proposed bridge would be a continuous, two-span structure with approximately 60-foot spans. The cross section of the new bridge would be the same as the existing and would be constructed at the same location.

Resulting Impacts

The reconstruction of the Laurel Street Bridge, as currently proposed, would have the following impacts:

- Land Acquisition – No additional land required since the bridge and Laurel Streets will be

constructed in same footprint.

- Historic/4(f) - The proposed design change would have no effect on historic resources or 4(f) regulated properties.
- Reconstruct approximately 750 feet of Laurel Street, between Capitol Avenue and Hawthorn Street.
- Proposed grades would be steeper than existing, but well within the allowable grades for design standards for a “Local Urban Street.”
- Steeper grades for the two driveways within the construction limits, but functional.
- Traveling public and businesses will be affected by bridge and roadway construction. Construction can be accomplished by closing the street to through-traffic and detouring traffic onto nearby streets.
- Increase in project cost. Based on a concept layout of the proposed bridge spanning over Amtrak and the Busway and a very preliminary assessment of the improvements necessary for Laurel Street, the probable construction cost (bridge computed on the basis of deck area) for the reconstruction of Laurel Street is \$3,600,000 (2005 dollars).

Resulting Benefits

The reconstruction of the Laurel Street Bridge, as currently proposed, would have the following benefits:

- Accommodates the busway cross section.
- Provides sufficient space to meet Amtrak’s requirements, horizontally and vertically.
- The work associated with the reconstruction of Laurel Street Bridge can be accelerated and constructed as an advance contract, so there is no negative impact on current schedule and project completion date.

Summary

There are no environmental factors or features in the Laurel Street Bridge area of the project that have changed. The Busway alignment is virtually identical to the recommended alignment in the FEIS, except the lateral offset between the centerline of the nearest track and permanent structures, which has increased from 10 to 16 feet. The information presented in the FEIS has not substantially changed and remains valid.

8. Flatbush Avenue Grade Crossing

FEIS Scope

The busway would span over Flatbush Avenue to avoid traffic conflicts, but the existing Amtrak at-grade crossing of Flatbush Avenue would remain. South of Flatbush Avenue, the proposed Busway profile would begin to rise over Flatbush Avenue and remain elevated north of Flatbush Avenue until the platform area is fully developed and before descending to an at-grade

condition north of the Station. The platform area, therefore, would be entirely above grade just north of the elevated overpass of Flatbush Avenue. The Busway approaches south and north of the bridge over Flatbush Avenue and the platform area would consist of a retained fill section,

with retaining walls along both sides of the Busway. The walls would prevent impact to adjacent properties and Amtrak's active rail.

Cause of Change

As design and preliminary geotechnical investigation were advanced and Amtrak requirements were defined, it was clear that constructing a long structure to accommodate the Flatbush Avenue Station and span over Flatbush Avenue would be a difficult challenge which, during construction, could negatively impact the rail operation. Further, retaining the rail grade crossing also retained the ongoing safety issues at the crossing. Numerous concepts were developed that would improve safety, vehicle and pedestrian movement, minimize impact to the rail operation, and simplify construction.

Proposed Scope

The proposed design for the Flatbush Avenue Crossing is the result of a Value Engineering process, where over fifteen different options were studied and numerous meetings and discussions were held between ConnDOT personnel and officials from both municipalities (Hartford and West Hartford). The recommended option, which all parties agreed to be the most favorable, would span Flatbush Avenue over the Busway, Amtrak, and Amtrak's access road. The Busway would be constructed close to existing grade with a minimum 16-foot offset from the centerline of the nearest track. With the exception of removing the existing at-grade crossing and the railroad signal equipment, the railroad would remain as is. The proposed design would require the following reconstruction: approximately 1400 feet of Flatbush Avenue, 700 feet of Newfield Avenue, and 750 feet of New Park Avenue.

The Flatbush Station would remain as recommended in the FEIS, with the exception that it would be one level rather than two, now that the Busway will be at or close to existing grade. Pedestrian access to the Station would be provided from the sidewalks on both New Park Avenue and Flatbush Avenue. Also, access to the Station from Flatbush Avenue would be provided with stairs and elevators and/or ramps in compliance with ADA regulations.

Concept plans of the recommended option for the Flatbush Avenue at-grade crossing, as noted above, were presented and discussed with City of Hartford, and the Town of West Hartford's officials. In principle, all parties agreed that this is an acceptable solution and meets both municipalities' objectives. The municipalities suggested that ConnDOT consider aesthetically pleasing designs for the Flatbush Avenue improvements, including landscaping in the median of Flatbush Avenue and along the retaining wall adjacent to the Wal-Mart Shopping Center. ConnDOT is in the process of getting written concurrence from both municipalities.

Resulting Impacts

The elimination of the Flatbush Avenue at-grade crossing, as currently proposed, would have the following impacts:

- Land Acquisition – The proposed design would require additional right-of-way; one total take, three partial takes, and construction easements. (See Exhibit 3).
- Historic/4(f) - The proposed design change would have no effect on historic resources or 4(f) regulated properties.
- Inconvenience to traveling public. The reconstruction of Flatbush Avenue and Newfield Avenue would require closure of the streets (work area only) for the construction duration. Motorists would be detoured around the site. New Park Avenue would be reconstructed while maintaining traffic.
- The two businesses (Shell Gas Station and Car Dealership) located at the northeast and southeast corners of the intersection of Flatbush Avenue and New Park Avenue, respectively, would lose their access from Flatbush Avenue. The businesses would remain viable with access from New Park Avenue.

Resulting Benefits

The elimination of the Flatbush Avenue at-grade crossing, as currently proposed, would have the following benefits:

- The greatest benefit would be safety.
- Improved traffic operation on New Park Avenue and Flatbush Avenue due to the elimination of the rail crossing and interference with traffic.
- The elimination of the structure adjacent to the railroad would simplify construction and greatly minimize possible settlement of the tracks, which could affect Amtrak's operation.
- One-story Station building.
- Simplified pedestrian access/circulation and connectivity to the nearby residential neighborhood and businesses.
- The work associated with the construction of the Flatbush Avenue Grade Crossing can be accelerated and constructed as an advance contract, so there is no negative impact on current schedule and project completion date.
- Substantial reduction in project cost. Based upon the Preliminary Engineering Study, when comparing the proposal in the FEIS to the recommended option described above, the probable savings in project cost is \$10,000,000 (2005 dollars).

Summary

There are no environmental factors or features in the Flatbush Avenue area of the project that have changed. Although the Busway would be close to existing grade rather than elevated, the alignment is similar to that recommended in the FEIS. The information presented in the FEIS has not substantially changed and remains valid.

9. Flatbush Avenue Station

FEIS Scope

Flatbush Station Option G3 from the Draft EIS was selected and modified to improve on the Station operations, as well as fitting into the context of the neighborhood (Figures 2.4-7 and 2.4-8 in the FEIS). Flatbush Avenue is an arterial roadway that crosses the corridor at-grade near the border between Hartford and West Hartford. The nearby Charter Oak Terrace and Rice Heights housing projects were recently demolished and now sit vacant waiting for redevelopment slated to include a Job Corps Center. New Park Avenue is also nearby, and contains a mixture of retail and industrial properties. The busway would overpass Flatbush Avenue to avoid traffic conflicts, but the existing Amtrak rail crossing of Flatbush Avenue would remain at-grade.

The proposed Busway in the vicinity of the Station would begin to rise south of Flatbush Avenue, overpass Flatbush Avenue and stay elevated north of Flatbush Avenue until the platform area is fully developed before returning to grade just north of the elevated overpass of Flatbush Avenue. The Station design was modified since the Draft EIS to avoid acquisition of a gas station on the northeast corner of New Park Avenue and Flatbush Avenue, provide better on-site circulation, provide covered drop-off areas for local bus circulation, and improve the street image from both New Park Avenue and Flatbush Avenue. In addition, the auto parts store would remain in place and only the donut shop (which could be relocated on-site in conjunction with the Station) and a portion of the parking for the former Heublein site would need to be acquired.

A driveway from New Park Avenue, located directly across from Foley Street provides the access to this Station area. Local buses would enter from the driveway, circulate through the parking lot and drop riders off underneath the elevated Station. In addition, a right turn only entrance from Flatbush Avenue, for buses only, is provided. It is assumed that approximately 136 parking spaces could be provided for busway passengers as well as a drop off area for passenger cars. The parking area would also serve the needs of any development in conjunction with the Station.

Pedestrian access to the Station would be provided from the sidewalks on both New Park Avenue and Flatbush Avenue. Access up to platforms would be provided with stairs and elevators and/or ramps in compliance with ADA regulations. In addition to platform access, pedestrian walkways over Flatbush Avenue will be provided with access down to street level on both sides. This will provide good pedestrian connectivity to the Capitol Community College and Charter Oak/Rice Heights redevelopment sites located to the east of the Station. Of the three options considered in the Draft EIS, this location provides the shortest walking distance for the West Hartford residential neighborhood across New Park Avenue and north of Flatbush Avenue.

A station building will be provided underneath the overhead platforms adjacent to Flatbush Avenue. In addition, an outbuilding could be provided for co-development.

Cause of Change

Primarily, a reassessment of the Station location was necessitated by the change to a Flatbush overpass over the busway and Amtrak, and due to significant changes to the land uses in the Station area. Taking into consideration many design guidelines such as access to Station (pedestrian and vehicular), Station visibility, economic development, traffic operation, cost effectiveness, property impacts, comfort and convenience, and concerns expressed at the West Hartford Informational Meeting held on March 1, 2006, a new alternative was evaluated for the Flatbush Avenue Station. The final station location was selected by performing an alternatives analysis, input from perspective operators of the Busway, and meetings with Officials from West Hartford and Hartford and businesses owners that would possibly be impacted by either location.

Proposed Scope

The proposed Station location would be on the parcel at the southeast corner of the intersection of Flatbush Avenue and New Park Avenue, south rather than north of Flatbush. The site slopes gently downward from New Park Avenue towards the Busway, which makes the entire Station area visible from both streets. The site is designed to maximize parking, but could be revised to provide more green space and an opportunity for joint development. The entrance to the site would be opposite Darcy Street, a signalized intersection, resulting in minimal impact to the traffic operation on New Park Avenue. The Flatbush Avenue Station would be constructed on the West Hartford VW dealership site.

The Station building would be constructed either south of the platform or alongside Flatbush Avenue providing a visual connection to the platforms and a sense of security for patrons. In addition, sufficient space for future joint development would be provided between the entrance/exit to the Station and Flatbush Avenue. In the interim, this area would serve as a parking and drop-off area for motorists. A bus drop-off lane would be on New Park Avenue. The reconstruction of Flatbush Avenue over the Busway and the railroad would require the construction of stairs and elevator to allow pedestrian access from/to this level to the Station below. This vertical connection provides easy access for passengers that work or shop at the Wal-Mart Plaza.

Resulting Impacts

The construction of the Flatbush Avenue Station, as currently proposed, would have the following impacts:

- Land Acquisition – One parcel would require total acquisition, the West Hartford VW dealership site. (See Exhibit 4).
- Historic/4(f) - The proposed design change would have no effect on historic resources or 4(f) regulated properties.
- Traffic impacts are anticipated to be minimal, since the entrance to the Station from New Park Avenue would be at an existing driveway.

Resulting Benefits

The construction of the Flatbush Avenue Station, as currently proposed, would have the following benefits:

- Less property impacts, one total acquisition versus possibly three at the FEIS location.
- Simple, clear layout for pedestrians, motorists, and buses.
- On-site joint development opportunities would be provided.
- Station would be attractive, visible, and easily accessible.
- The Station would be constructed at Busway level thus eliminating the need for a two-story station building.
- Visibility to the Station/platforms is provided from both New Park and Flatbush Avenues, resulting in a safer and more secure Station.
- The acquisition of the VW property provides the opportunity to construct a detour road and maintain traffic, south of Flatbush Avenue, while constructing the bridge over the Busway and Amtrak.
- The reduction in project cost would result from less property impacts. The impacted properties have not been appraised; therefore, an estimated savings amount cannot be determined at this time. The cost for the Station is estimated to be approximately the same as the FEIS option.

Summary

There are no environmental factors or features in the Flatbush Avenue Station area of the project that have changed. The Station location and configuration is different from the recommended option in the FEIS, but it would still be built in the same proximity; therefore, the information presented in the FEIS has not substantially changed and remains valid.

10. Vertical Treatment in Fairview Cemetery

FEIS Scope

The Busway corridor bisects the cemetery; a small bridge provides access to either side of the cemetery for pedestrians and maintenance personnel. To minimize impacts to either side, the horizontal alignment, including the multi-use trail, was centered within the existing right-of-way. To further mitigate the impacts of introducing the Busway into the cemetery, the profile would be lowered about 6 feet, which would create a trench section and serve to reduce the visibility of the facility. Retaining walls would be proposed for most of the depressed section of the Busway. Where retaining walls would be needed, visual screens would be proposed to shield the Busway and buses from view of people visiting the cemetery. The underpass will be eliminated, and an at-grade intersection will be proposed to maintain access for pedestrians and maintenance vehicles between the two sides of the cemetery.

Cause of Change

During the development of the Preliminary Engineering Study phase, it was agreed that alternate designs should be considered through Fairview Cemetery to eliminate the unsafe at-grade intersection with the cemetery service road and the low point caused by the trench that would be created making it difficult to provide proper drainage. The revised proposed Busway alignment was developed in consultation with City of New Britain officials and the Fairview Cemetery Committee.

Proposed Scope

The Busway corridor bisects the cemetery. The existing small underpass that provides access to either side of the cemetery for pedestrians and maintenance personnel will be replaced with a new structure. Therefore, the Busway profile is at approximately the same grade as the existing rail bed. To minimize impacts to either side, the horizontal alignment (including the multi-use trail) was centered within the existing right-of-way, and retaining walls are proposed to retain the Busway embankment within the existing right-of-way limits. To mitigate the impacts of introducing the Busway into the cemetery, visual screens will be proposed to shield the Busway and buses from view of people visiting the cemetery. As noted above, in March 2003 the proposed design was presented to the Fairview Cemetery Committee, which concurred with the design as long as visual screens are used to shield the facility.

Resulting Impacts

The construction of the Busway over the Maintenance Road Bridge, as currently proposed, would have the following impacts:

- Land Acquisition – No additional land required since the bridge will be constructed in same footprint.
- Historic/4(f) - The proposed design change would have no effect on historic resources or 4(f) regulated properties.
- Inconvenience to maintenance personnel and visitors during construction.
- Increase in project cost - Based on a concept layout of the proposed bridge spanning over the maintenance road, the probable construction cost (computed on the basis of deck area) for the Busway Bridge is \$450,000 (2005 dollars).

Resulting Benefits

The construction of the Busway over the Maintenance Road Bridge, as currently proposed, would have the following benefits:

- The elimination of the at-grade intersection will be a safety improvement for pedestrians, cyclists, and maintenance personnel.
- Better and safer traffic operation.
- Less complicated drainage design.

Summary

There are no significant environmental impacts resulting from the placement of the Busway over the Maintenance Road Bridge. The Busway horizontal alignment is virtually identical to the recommended alignment in the FEIS and vertically is at existing grade. The information presented in the FEIS has not substantially changed and remains valid.

11. Downtown New Britain Station

FEIS Scope

Downtown New Britain is a traditional downtown area containing civic offices and some retail and institutional properties. The Downtown New Britain Station would be constructed on the former Greenfield's supermarket site, on the east side of Main Street between Route 72 and Columbus Boulevard. It is expected that the site would serve as a multi-modal center that serves downtown New Britain, bringing not only the Busway service, but also interstate coach bus service, taxis, and local buses together in one place. This would improve the traffic operation on Bank Street/West Main Street in New Britain's downtown, since the existing interstate coaches loading/unloading and the local bus stops occurring on Bank Street/West Main Street would be relocated to the new Station. The Multi-use Trail begins at this Station, connecting to the Station's platforms and the sidewalk on Columbus Boulevard.

The Station is not proposed to have an attached parking facility, because there is plentiful parking available in two lightly-used municipal parking structures within a block of the proposed Station. Station design may include providing sheltered above-grade walkway to carry passengers directly from one of these parking structures to the Station.

The Station building is proposed to front Main Street, providing a visual connection with the other properties to the south and across Route 72 to the north. In addition, a second-story deck is proposed to front the Harry Truman Overpass (Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive) permitting kiss-and-ride passenger drop-offs. Vertical circulation (stairs, escalators/elevators) would connect people from this level to the main Station below. In addition, this would serve as protection from the weather for the platforms below.

The Station would be the gateway into the New Britain – Hartford Busway for buses coming from regional areas beyond the Study area towns. Eastbound regional express buses from outlying areas such as Bristol and Waterbury would exit eastbound Route 72, utilizing a dedicated bus-only off-ramp to access the Station, and drop off or pick up passengers in Downtown New Britain before continuing towards Hartford. Westbound express buses exiting the Station would make two right turns to access Route 72 W/B.

Cause of Change

Taking into consideration many design guidelines, such as access to the Station, reducing

travel time, economic development, traffic operation, cost effectiveness, and comfort and convenience, a number of alternatives were evaluated for the Downtown New Britain Station. The final Station layout was developed by utilizing the best elements of different alternatives studied and input from prospective operators of the Busway.

Proposed Scope

The proposed Station is designed as a Central Platform Transit Center, and is expected to serve as a multi-modal center for downtown New Britain. The large central platform would provide the opportunity to create a large, dramatic, landmark structure in downtown New Britain. The central platform layout would provide more bays than are necessary for the operation of the Busway; therefore, the layover of Interstate and most local buses would be accommodated within the Station. This would improve the traffic operation on Bank Street and West Main Street in New Britain's downtown, since the existing Interstate coaches loading/unloading and the local bus stops occurring on Bank Street and West Main Street would be relocated to the new Station. As in the FEIS, the New Britain Station would be constructed on the former Greenfield's supermarket site. The Multi-use Trail begins at this Station, connecting to the Station's central platform and the sidewalk on Main Street and Columbus Boulevard.

The Station building would be constructed at the corner of Main Street and Columbus Boulevard and to front Main Street, providing a visual connection with the other properties to the south and west. In addition, sufficient space for future joint development would be provided between the entrance/exit to the Station and Columbus Boulevard. In the interim, this area would serve as a parking lot and drop-off area for commuters. The Truman Overpass would be modified to provide a drop-off area for motorists traveling in the southbound direction. Vertical circulation (stairs and elevator) would connect people from this level to the main Station below.

As noted above, the Station attached parking facility is temporary, because as identified in the FEIS there is plentiful parking available in two lightly-used municipal parking structures within a block of the proposed Station. Station design would include provision for a future sheltered above-grade walkway to carry passengers directly from one of these parking structures to the Station.

To accommodate the proposed Station layout, reconstruction of the existing off-ramp from Route 72 EB to Martin Luther King Drive (Rte. 71) and the on-ramp from Martin Luther King Drive (Rte. 71) to Route 9 SB is necessary. The Station would be the gateway into the New Britain – Hartford Busway for buses coming from regional areas beyond the Study area towns. Eastbound regional express buses from outlying areas such as Bristol and Waterbury would exit EB Route 72 at the reconstructed off-ramp, utilizing a dedicated bus-only off-ramp (between the Rte. 72 off-ramp and the Station area) to access the Station, and drop off or pick up passengers at this Station before continuing towards Hartford. Westbound express buses exiting the Station would make two right turns to access Route 72 W/B.

Resulting Impacts

The construction of the downtown New Britain Station, as currently proposed, would have the following impacts:

- Land Acquisition – No additional land required since the Station will be constructed on the former Greenfield’s supermarket site, same as proposed in the FEIS.
- Historic/4(f) - The proposed design change would have no effect on historic resources or 4(f) regulated properties.
- Bridge reconstruction, Harry S. Truman Overpass over existing railroad and proposed Busway.
- Reconstruction of existing off-ramp, from Route 72 E/B to Martin Luther King Drive.
- Reconstruction of existing on-ramp, from Martin Luther King Drive to Route 9 S/B.
- Construction of retaining wall, between Station and off-ramp.
- Minor reconstruction on Martin Luther King Drive to reconfigure intersection with off-/on-ramps.
- The traveling public will be affected during construction of off-/on-ramps and Martin Luther King Drive.
- Traffic impacts are anticipated to be minimal since the entrance to the Station from Main Street will be right turns only, in and out.

Resulting Benefits

The construction of the downtown New Britain Station, as currently proposed, would have the following benefits:

- Buses can quickly and easily access Busway from their present routes that radiate from Main and Bank Streets.
- All transfers are accomplished at one central location. Up to 17 buses can layover at the Station.
- Simple, clear layout for pedestrians and buses.
- Bus operations are very direct and minimal “out of direction” operation will result.
- On-site joint development opportunities would be provided. Station would be attractive, visible, easily accessible and compact on site, encouraging developers to work it into their plans.
- The large central platform would provide the opportunity to create a large, dramatic, landmark structure in downtown New Britain.
- The entire Station would be located at or near existing grade thus eliminating the need for a second story deck.
- Substantial reduction in project cost. Based upon the Preliminary Engineering Study, when comparing the proposal in the FEIS to the concept layout for a central platform transit center in downtown New Britain, the probable savings in project cost is \$5,800,000 (2005 dollars).

Summary

There are no environmental factors or features in the downtown New Britain Station area of the project that have changed. The Station configuration is different from the recommended option in the FEIS, but it would still be built on the former Greenfield's supermarket site; therefore, the information presented in the FEIS has not substantially changed and remains valid.

12. Multi-Use Trail

FEIS Scope

Originally, a Multi-use Trail was considered in the Draft EIS to be a separate project, with the Busway design not precluding implementation of the path. Numerous comments indicated a need for the multi-use path to be incorporated into the Busway.

In accordance with the ROD, ConnDOT is committed to constructing a Multi-use Trail between downtown New Britain and Newington Junction, and between Park Street and Sigourney Street in Hartford. The trail will begin at its south end in downtown New Britain and will parallel the Busway over Route 9 to the East Main Street Station. It would continue north, passing at grade at East Main Street and Smalley Street, through Fairview Cemetery, then exit the right-of-way onto East Street at the Route 9 underpass. The trail would then split onto the two sides of East Street, with a five-foot bike lane and a five-foot sidewalk. The section continues to just north of Saint Clair Avenue, where it returns to the Busway corridor, onwards north to Newington Junction.

The other trail segment that would be constructed by ConnDOT under the recommended action would run in Hartford between the Park Street Busway Station and Sigourney Street Station.

The usable width of the Multi-use Trail will generally be 10 feet wide. An additional 2 feet of pavement will be added between this 10-foot area and the barrier separating the Busway and the Multi-use Trail, resulting in 12 feet of pavement from the barrier to the edge of the trail.

Between Newington Junction and Park Street, and between Sigourney Street and Union Station, space constraints preclude providing a Multi-use Trail in much of the Busway corridor. However, some preliminary considerations were given as part of this project and the West Side Access Study of possible ways to complete the trail between Newington Junction and Bushnell Park in downtown Hartford, and provide additional linkages to other planned trail corridors in the region.

ConnDOT will encourage Hartford, West Hartford, Newington, and the Capitol Region Council of Governments to complete multi-use trail connections beyond the Busway corridor between Newington Junction and Park Street, and Sigourney Street and Union Station.

Cause of Change

The elimination of the Park Street to Sigourney Street segment of the Multi-use Trail was necessary to comply with Amtrak's requirements and minimize significant impacts to properties along the north side of the Busway. Amtrak requires minimum horizontal offset of 16 feet – between the centerline of the nearest track and the closest edge of the Busway/permanent structures; and 14 feet – between the centerline of tracks. With the new offsets there would now be a major property impact to “The U-Haul Real Estate Company” which is a viable business that would have had to be acquired in total.

Proposed Scope

ConnDOT remains committed to constructing the Multi-use Trail between downtown New Britain and Newington Junction, as recommended in the FEIS. The usable width of the Multi-use Trail will generally be 10 feet wide. A barrier with protective fence separates the Busway and the Multi-use Trail, resulting in 10 feet of pavement from the barrier to the edge of the trail.

The other Multi-use Trail segment that would be constructed by ConnDOT under the recommended action, between the Park Street Station and Sigourney Street Station in Hartford, has been removed from the project. Amtrak's horizontal requirements made constructing this segment of the pathway virtually impossible without significant impacts to the adjacent properties. The distance between Park Street and Sigourney Street is fairly short and without linkages to other trail corridors in the area. The benefit of retaining this segment as an alternative mode of travel for bicyclists and pedestrians would be limited at best. However, as noted in the FEIS, ConnDOT will encourage efforts by local communities to complete the trail between Newington Junction and Bushnell Park in downtown Hartford, by considering off-corridor extensions.

Resulting Impacts

The construction of the Multi-use Trail, as currently proposed, would have the following impacts:

- Land Acquisition – No additional land required since the elimination of the Multi-use Trail reduces the overall Busway cross section.
- Historic/4(f) - The proposed design change would have no effect on historic resources or 4(f) regulated properties.
- Elimination of the Multi-use Trail, Park Street Station to Sigourney Street Station segment will adversely affect the benefit as an alternative mode of travel (off-street) for bicyclists and pedestrians. *The concepts presented in the West Side Access Study are currently not programmed for advancement, and without linkages to other existing or planned trail corridors in the region there would be no continuity; therefore, constructing this short segment would provide minimal benefit and no recreational opportunity to the users.*

Resulting Benefits

The construction of the Multi-use Trail, as currently proposed, would have the following benefits:

- Reduction in project cost due to the elimination of the segment in Hartford and smaller bridges at Park Street, Capitol Avenue, and Laurel Street. Based upon Preliminary Engineering Studies and Rehabilitation Studies for the bridges, the probable construction cost (bridges computed on the basis of deck area) associated with this section of the Multi-use Trail is \$1,000,000 (2005 dollars); therefore, resulting in a savings of \$1,000,000.
- Less impact to adjacent properties.
- Provision of Amtrak's required horizontal offsets.

Summary

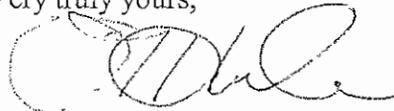
There are no environmental factors or features between the Park Street Station and Sigourney Street Station area of the project that have changed. The Busway alignment is virtually identical to the recommended alignment in the FEIS, except the lateral offset between the centerline of the nearest track and permanent structures, which has increased from 10 to 16 feet. The information presented in the FEIS has not substantially changed and remains valid.

Conclusion

As a result of the above-mentioned changes, it is ConnDOT's position that the FEIS and the ROD are still valid, and supplemental environmental documentation or studies are not required. Public Information Meetings were held in each of the four affected communities during February and March of 2006 to inform the public of the design progress, and the design changes since the last round of meetings, which are also described herein. The current project cost estimate of \$336 million (submitted July 2005) reflects the design changes identified in this document.

Your concurrence in this matter is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions concerning this reevaluation, please contact Mr. Stephen V. Delpapa, Transportation Supervising Planner, at (860) 594-2941.

Very truly yours,



Edgar T. Hurle
Transportation Planning Director
Bureau of Policy and Planning

Enclosures

**EXHIBIT 1
NEW BRITAIN - HARTFORD BUSWAY
AMTRAK ACCESS ROAD
RIGHT-OF-WAY IMPACTS**

SERIAL NO.	OWNER	LOCATION STATION TO STATION	BUILDING PART.	TYPE OF TAKE	APPROXIMATE TAKING AREA (FT²)
	Cashaway Lumber	237+65 - 239+94 RT	Y	PARTIAL	1046
	National Railroad Passenger Corp.	239+94 - 242+62 RT	N	PARTIAL	312
	Darst Associates	342+01 - 345+40 RT	N	PARTIAL	5875
	Pentecostal Tabernacle	345+40 - 347+70 RT	N	PARTIAL	684
	Harsco Corp.	352+83 - 359+30 RT	N	PARTIAL	1357
	Futuramik Industries	397+70 - 405+25 RT	N	PARTIAL	270
	Champlin	405+75 - 411+30 RT	N	PARTIAL	1012
	4452 Buckingham St. LLC	417+00 - 417+80 RT	N	PARTIAL	140
	Interamerica Wholesalers Inc.	419+51 - 423+40 RT	N	PARTIAL	60
	Aetna Life Ins. Co.	446+36 - 471+13 RT	N	PARTIAL	587

Note: The actual taking area will be determined during Final Design.

**EXHIBIT 2
 NEW BRITAIN - HARTFORD BUSWAY
 FLOWER STREET GRADE CROSSING
 RIGHT-OF-WAY IMPACTS**

SERIAL NO.	OWNER	LOCATION STATION TO STATION	BUILDING PART.	TYPE OF TAKE	APPROXIMATE TAKING AREA (FT ²)
	The Hartford Courant	470+65 - 471+35 FAR RT	N	PARTIAL	5334

Note: The actual taking area will be determined during Final Design.

**EXHIBIT 3
NEW BRITAIN - HARTFORD BUSWAY
FLATBUSH AVENUE GRADE CROSSING
RIGHT-OF-WAY IMPACTS**

SERIAL NO.	OWNER	LOCATION STATION TO STATION	BUILDING PART.	TYPE OF TAKE	APPROXIMATE TAKING AREA (FT²)
	Shell Gas Station	13+40 - 15+00 LT	N	PARTIAL	2109
	Barry, James E EST William H.	13+50 - 16+00 RT	N	PARTIAL	6674
	Harsco Corporation	17+40 - 23+45 LT	N	PARTIAL	7863
	Robinson Eric ET	17+40 - 19+00 RT	Y	TOTAL	35527

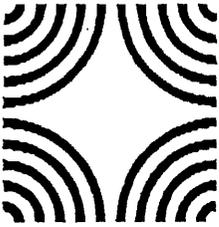
Note: The actual taking area will be determined during Final Design.

**EXHIBIT 4
 NEW BRITAIN - HARTFORD BUSWAY
 FLATBUSH AVENUE STATION
 RIGHT-OF-WAY IMPACTS**

SERIAL NO.	OWNER	LOCATION STATION TO STATION	BUILDING PART.	TYPE OF TAKE	APPROXIMATE TAKING AREA (FT ²)
	Barry, James E EST William H. (VW Dealership)	346+62 - 351+86 LT	Y	TOTAL	119,800

Note: The actual taking area will be determined during Final Design.

Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism



March 15, 2006

Historic Preservation
& Museum DivisionMr. Keith T. Hall
Environmental Planning
ConnDOT
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, CT59 South Prospect Street
Hartford, Connecticut
06106Subject: New Britain-Hartford Busway
ConnDOT #171-305(v) 860.566.3005
(f) 860.566.5078

Dear Mr. Hall:

The State Historic Preservation Office has reviewed supplemental information provided by ConnDOT concerning the above-named project. In particular, this office has reviewed the proposed right-of-way for an Amtrak maintenance-related access road which would parallel the New Britain-Hartford Busway route.

In the opinion of the State Historic Preservation Office, the proposed project revision will constitute no effect upon Connecticut's cultural heritage. This comment is conditional upon ConnDOT's professional implementation of the stipulations noted in our correspondence dated September 7, 2000, to ConnDOT's Office of Environmental Planning.

This office looks forward to additional coordination with ConnDOT regarding the expeditious furtherance of the New Britain-Hartford Busway project.

For further assistance please contact Dr. David A. Poirier, Staff Archaeologist.

Sincerely,

J. Paul Loether
Division Director and Deputy
State Historic Preservation Officer

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

subject: Project No. 171-305
New Britain - Hartford Busway
Review of Busway Volumes

m e m o r a n d u m

date: March 20, 2006



to: Mr. Dennis Guyette
Program Manager
Bureau of Engineering and
Highway Operations

from: Michael A. Sanders
Transit & Rideshare Administrator
Bureau of Public Transportation

Bureau of Public Transportation staff reviewed the Busway volumes information provided for the New Britain - Hartford Busway on April 7, 2005. At that time, it was determined that the Busway Service Plan as developed for the EIS process met policy level quality and quantity headways for Opening through Design Year. The attached Table was provided for Busway volumes and the breakdown of vehicles by type. It was noted at that time that in addition to scheduled services, a variety of other vehicles, including security patrols, supervisory vehicles, snowplows, maintenance and emergency services, would also travel the Busway. These additional vehicles are not included in the attached table. It has been determined that the information provided at that time is still the best available. However, please consider the following:

- Assume all peak inbound (to Hartford) vehicles will exit the Busway at Asylum Avenue and circulate downtown. Design should allow for a left turn onto Asylum Avenue, but it is likely that if the design can accommodate a left off the Busway at Flower Street, it would allow quicker access to the circulation pattern and would be preferred. At this time, assume the 36 peak-hour vehicles exiting the Busway at Asylum Avenue would split with 50 percent going straight (to Spruce Street) and 50 percent turning right. All outbound (to New Britain) buses would cross Asylum Avenue from Spruce Street, but the intersection should be able to accommodate buses entering the Busway from either direction on Asylum Avenue.
- Assume all buses exiting the Busway onto Asylum Avenue would only turn on green time.
- Assume all outbound buses from downtown Hartford would enter the Busway at the Asylum Avenue on ramp, but please note that there is flexibility in the service plan that could allow some buses, especially deadheads, to utilize the local street network and/or the highway system when appropriate.
- Deadhead trips would not necessarily activate the signal priority system.

The Busway service design is subject to change as the service plan is refined before and after the Busway opens. Therefore, it is important that some flexibility be retained in the overall Busway design to accommodate future changes in volume, routing, etc.



Mr. Dennis Guyette

- 2 -

March 20, 2006

If additional information is required, please contact Ms. Maureen Lawrence, Transportation Planner, at (860) 594-2911, or via e-mail at maureen.lawrence@po.state.ct.us.

Attachment

cc: Mr. Antonio Morelli, Baker Engineering
Mr. Thomas Dominiecki, Baker Engineering

Opening Through Design Year Volumes for the New Britain - Hartford Busway

Opening Year Design Year	2011	2030
	PEAK Roundtrips/ Hour	OFF-PEAK Roundtrips/ Hour
Articulated Bus		
Busway Shuttle Service	6	6
Subtotal	6	6
40' Standard Transit Buses		
P New Britain/Newington Limited	2	2
Q New Britain Avenue Limited	2	2
BU Burritt Street	2	2
FA Farmington Avenue	2	2
PL Plainville Local	2	2
BK Berlin - Kensington	2	2
OK Oak Street Local	2	2
ENB East New Britain	2	2
Subtotal	16	16
45' Over The Road Coaches		
X1 - Bristol Express	4	1
X2 - Cheshire/Southington Express	4	1 *
X3 - Waterbury Express	3	*
X4 - Meriden Express	3	1
Subtotal	14	3
Total Vehicles	36	25

* X2 and X3 Combined for off-peak service

Busway Volumes Based on FEIS Service Plan**

	Total Trips/Hour	Hours/Day	Total Trips/Day	% of Total Vehicles
PEAK				
Articulated Bus	12	4	48	17%
40' Standard Transit Buses	32	4	128	45%
45' Over The Road Coaches	28	4	112	38%
TOTAL	72		288	
OFF-PEAK				
Articulated Bus	12	14	168	24%
40' Standard Transit Buses	32	14	448	64%
45' Over The Road Coaches	6	14	84	12%
TOTAL	50		700	

** Bus trips are totals for both directions, i.e., it is estimated a total of 72 buses will cross a particular point during the peak period, regardless of direction.

Table 1
 Summary of Impacts and Benefits
 Reevaluation of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)
 New Britain-Hartford Busway

Design Change	Resulting Impacts	Resulting Benefits
1. Amtrak Access Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bridge over Trout Brook needing historic documentation. - Wetland Impact (Approximately 0.25 acre). - Fill within Channel Encroachment Line. - Impacts to adjacent properties, see Exhibit 1. - Impacts to existing utilities. - Increase in project cost (Approximately \$ 7,650,000; 2005 dollars). - Potential Contamination. - Ownership of Access Road - Amtrak. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allows Amtrak to maintain their infrastructure without interfering with the operation of the Busway. - Access Road can be constructed as an advanced contract therefore, no negative impact on schedule.
2. Union Station/Northern Terminus Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land Acquisition - Right-of-way needs would be reduced. - Historic/4f - No affect on historic resources. - Construction of new bridge for Busway southbound roadway. - Busway would be constructed adjacent to I-84 On/Off Ramps. - Busway and non-busway traffic would share common roadway. - Reconstruction of existing ramps. - Construction of retaining walls. - Reconfiguration of intersection at Asylum Avenue. - Loss of part of one on-street drop-off lane along Spruce Street. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Terminus provides better access to the street network in downtown Hartford. - Bus travel time will be reduced . - Minimal impact to the operation of the multi-modal hub at Union Station. - Less right-of-way impact. - Less impact to the Williams Communications fiber optic conduit. - No impact to existing parking that serve Union Station and nearby businesses. - No rehabilitation of the following structures: Amtrak over Asylum Street, Union Station viaduct, and Church Street. - Decrease in project cost (A savings of Approximately \$ 10,000,000; 2005 dollars).
3. I-84 E.B. Off-ramp to Capitol Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land Acquisition - Right-of-way needs would be reduced. - Historic/4f - No affect on historic resources. - Reconstruction of approximately 260 feet of structure. - Traveling public will be affected during construction. - Increase in project cost (Approximately \$ 3,600,000; 2005 dollars). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accommodates the busway cross section. - Meets Amtrak's requirements. - The Off-ramp can be reconstructed as an advanced contract therefore, no negative impact on schedule.
4. Legislative Office Building (LOB) Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land Acquisition - Right-of-way needs would be reduced. - Historic/4f - No affect on historic resources. - Direct acces to the capitol area and nearby businesses. - Elimination of the staion will affect both nearby residents and and contract therefore, no negative impact on schedule. - Minimal impact on passengers expected to be served by this staion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amtrak's requirements, per Design Exception #4, will be met. - Decrease in project cost (A savings of Approximately \$ 10,600,000; 2005 dollars).

Table 1
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Design Change	Resulting Impacts	Resulting Benefits
5. Broad Street Bridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land Acquisition - No additional right-of-way required. - Historic/4f - No affect on historic resources. - Reconstruction of the Broad Street bridge over Amtrak/Busway. - Traveling public and businesses will be affected by bridge reconstruction. - Increase in project cost (Approximately \$ 5,350,000; 2005 dollars). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New bridge accommodates Busway cross section and railroad requirements. - The bridge can be constructed as an advanced contract therefore, no negative impact on schedule.
6. Flower Street Closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land Acquisition - No additional right-of-way required. - Historic/4f - No affect on historic resources. - Traffic impacts - Elimination of thru-traffic movement, which will inconvenience motorists and pedestrians. - Partial reconstruction of the Interstate 84 viaduct. - Increase in project cost (Approximately \$ 2,300,000; 2005 dollars). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safety. - Design per Amtrak's Design Exception #4. - Minimal impact to Aetna's facilities. - Allows for a two-lane Busway from Sigourney Street to Asylum Street. - Decrease in project cost - if entire busway is on west side of north crash wall (A savings of Approximately \$ 7,000,000; 2005 dollars).
7. Laurel Street Bridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land Acquisition - No additional right-of-way required. - Historic/4f - No affect on historic resources. - Reconstruction of the Laurel Street bridge over Amtrak/Busway and 750 feet of Laurel Street. - Grades of Laurel Street and driveways would be steeper than existing. - Traveling public and businesses will be affected by bridge reconstruction. - Increase in project cost (Approximately \$ 3,600,000; 2005 dollars). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New bridge accommodates Busway cross section and meets Amtrak's requirements. - The bridge can be constructed as an advanced contract therefore, no negative impact on schedule.

Table 1
 Summary of Impacts and Benefits
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Design Change	Resulting Impacts	Resulting Benefits
8. Flatbush Avenue Grade Crossing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land Acquisition - Additional right-of-way required, see Exh bit 2. - Historic/4f - No affect on historic resources. - Traveling public will be affected for the construction duration. - Access along Flatbush Avenue would be lost for two businesses, but would remain viable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safety. - Improved traffic operation on New Park Avenue and Flatbush Ave. - Reduced structure length adjacent to the railroad. - One-story Station building. - Simplified pedestrian access and circulation. - The Grade Crossing can be constructed as an advanced contract therefore, no negative impact on schedule. - Decrease in project cost (A savings of Approximately \$ 10,000,000; 2005 dollars).
9. Flatbush Avenue Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land Acquisition - One parcel would require total acquisition, see Exh bit 4. - Historic/4f - No affect on historic resources. - Construction of a slightly larger parking lot. - Traffic impacts are anticipated to be minimal since the entrance to the Station would be at an existing driveway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Less property impacts, one total acquisition versus three. - Simple, clear layout for pedestrians, motorists and buses. - On-site joint development opportunity would be provided. - One-story Station building. - Much better vis bility to the station/platforms. - The acquisition of this property provides the opportunity to construct a detour road and maintain traffic during construction. - Decrease in project cost The reduction in project cost would result from less property impact. The actual amount cannot be determined at this time.
10. Vertical Treatment in Fairview Cemetery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land Acquisition - No additional right-of-way required. - Historic/4f - No affect on historic resources. - Inconvenience to maintenance personnel and visitors during construction. - Increase in project cost (Approximately \$ 450,000; 2005 dollars). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elimination of the at-grade crossing will be a safety improvement for all users. - Better and safer traffic operation. - Less complicated drainage design.

Table 1
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Design Change	Resulting Impacts	Resulting Benefits
11. Downtown New Britain Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land Acquisition - No additional right-of-way required. - Historic/4f - No affect on historic resources. - Partial reconstruction of the Harry S. Truman Overpass. - Reconstruction of the On and Off ramps, to and from Martin Luther King Drive. - Minor reconstruction of the intersection of Martin Luther King Drive and the On/Off ramps. - Construction of retaining wall, between Station and Off ramp. - Traveling public will be affected by ramps and Martin Luther King Drive reconstruction. - Traffic impacts - Entrance to Station on Main Street will be right turns only, in and out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Buses can quickly and easily access Busway from their present routes. - All transfers are accomplished at one central location. - Simple, clear layout for pedestrians and buses. - Bus operations are very direct. - On-site joint development opportunities will be provided. - The large central platform would provide the opportunity to create a landmark structure in downtown New Britain. - The entire Station would be at grade, eliminating the need for a second story deck. - Decrease in project cost (A savings of Approximately \$ 5,800,000; 2005 dollars).
12. Multi-Use Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land Acquisition - No additional right-of-way required. - Historic/4f - No affect on historic resources. - Elimination of Trail, Park St. to Sigourney St. Stations; which adversely affects bicyclists and pedestrians. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Less impact to adjacent properties. - Provision for Amtrak's required horizontal offsets. - Decrease in project cost (A savings of Approximately \$ 1,000,000; 2005 dollars).