

Future Preparation

CONNECTICUT IS PREPARING THE I-84 CORRIDOR FOR THE FUTURE. BY CHRIS PETERSEN

I-84 is one of the most important highway corridors in the state of Connecticut, and for years the highway has been strained to keep up with the daily demands placed on it by the traffic that streams through it. In order to alleviate the congestion and better prepare the I-84 corridor for the future, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) has begun a massive project to widen I-84 through Waterbury, Ct., and make significant improvements to the connected infrastructure. Lending their expertise to the project is the I-84 Constructors JV, which consists of leading Northeast general contractors Empire Paving Inc. and Yonkers Contracting Co., Inc.

"Currently, the section of I-84 through the project limits experiences heavy traffic congestion due to high traffic volumes, steep topography, lack of roadway capacity and design deficiencies in ramps and weave areas," CTDOT says. "The implementation of the proposed project will improve traffic flow along I-84 and local nearby streets and reduce current and future traffic congestion along the mainline and the connection streets, ramp weaves, and accident rates. These traffic enhancements will result in improvements to air quality, noise, aesthetics, and the quality of life."

With the combined strengths of Empire Paving Inc. and Yonkers Contracting on the jobsite, the I-84 Waterbury project has been blessed by the involvement of two of the most competent civil contractors in the region. As work forges ahead to meet its scheduled completion date in June 2020, the combined expertise of these two contractors is helping that work progress smoothly. I-84 Constructors JV Project Executive Phil Karsen says the project has progressed smoothly so far thanks to the close coordination of the two contractors. "I think the collaborative effort so far has been A-plus, since we approach highway construction work with the same attitude," he says.

Major Undertaking

The nearly \$300 million I-84 Waterbury project involves widening more than two-and-a-half miles of I-84 from Washington Street to Pierpont Road in Waterbury. Widening the highway will allow for a



I-84 Constructors Joint Venture

www.i-84.waterbury.com

- Project cost: \$298 million
- Location: Waterbury, Ct.
- Scope: Highway widening and safety improvements

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The relocation of the Mad River is the most challenging aspect of the entire project.

PHOTO CREDIT: Kyle Doonan

third travel lane as well as full-width shoulders in both directions. "Included in this project are the realignment of the interstate roadway in the vicinity of Harpers Ferry Road (Interchange No. 24) to eliminate the existing substandard S-curve alignment; interchange ramp reconfiguration; state and local road construction; and the relocation of the Mad River and Beaver Pond Brook," CTDOT says.

According to Karsen, the relocation of the Mad River stands out as the most challenging aspect of the entire project. "It's environmentally sensitive in addition to being a challenging item of work," he says.

Other portions of the work include the replacement or construction of eight highway bridges, one pedestrian crossing over the Mad River, seven culverts and 20 retaining walls, according to CTDOT. "Also included in the project is the rehabilitation of five existing culverts constructed with corrugated metal pipe (CMP)," CTDOT adds. "Of particular interest may be the use of innovative technology in the lining of the existing deteriorated CMP cross culverts located under high highway embankments. Among them are 30-inch and 60-inch CMP culverts located outside of the above identified project limits in the Town of Cheshire approximately 1,400 meters and 3,300 meters east of Pierpont Road, respectively."

Perfect Team

The two companies that make up the joint venture team each bring decades of experience to the job site. Empire Paving Inc., which started strictly as a paving contractor, has evolved into one of Connecticut's premier heavy highway and civil contractors. Reconstruction of I-84 is not new to Empire, as it has previously completed four other projects on this major thoroughfare. Other work includes multiple award-winning projects on the New Britain-Hartford Busway, Route 7 South in Danbury, major civil work at Tweed New Haven and Bradley International Airports.

Established in 1946, Yonkers Contracting Co. Inc. is one of the longest-surviving construction firms in the region under the same ownership, and the company has more than 2,000 successfully completed projects in its portfolio. The company's core business consists of civil infrastructure, energy, water and commercial projects. "The YCC organization comprises nearly 200 highly trained and experienced management, engineering and technical professionals known for innovative problem solving, in-depth construction expertise and solid customer focus," the company says. "As we continue to evolve and grow, we remain faithful to our founding principles: to render a distinctive service to our clients, to provide for our employees' welfare and to maintain a social conscience." ♦



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