1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Interstate 291 (I-291) was constructed from the Bissell Bridge/Route 5 intersection in South Windsor to Interstate 84 (I-84) in Manchester, Connecticut in September 1994. Prior to that time, there was no efficient east-west connection from north of Hartford to Manchester and points east. The increased congestion at the Interstate-91 (I-91)/I-84 interchange in downtown Hartford, coupled with increased growth in development and traffic east of Hartford, fostered the need for another east-west limited access connection.

Hence I-291 was constructed, resulting in a direct, limited access travel route from I-91 to I-84. A significant segment of this expressway is located in South Windsor, from Route 5 to Chapel Road with a half-cloverleaf interchange at Route 5 (Figure 1-1). This interchange provides access to and from Route 5 from the east and west.

The Town of South Windsor (also referred to herein as the "Town") has designated the I-291 Corridor from John Fitch Boulevard (Route 5) to Long Hill Road as its "I-291 Gateway Zone" (Photo 1-1), and it has been targeted by the Town for future development. This 164±-acre tract of land is bounded by a Connecticut Railroad (CONRAIL) line and Route 5 to the west; residential/commercial/light industrial businesses along Chapel Road to the north; Long Hill Road to the east; and a major electrical transmission line corridor, a light industrial business and I-291 to the south. Ellington Road (Route 30) partitions the site in half.

Photo 1-1. Gateway sign at Corner at Route 5 and I-291 Ramps.