



# Vergennes Planning and Environment Linkages

Policy Committee  
Kick off Meeting  
June 15, 2021



# Agenda

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## Welcome

- Orientation to TEAMS and meeting management
- Introductions

## Project Background

## Committees

- Roles and membership
- Meeting format
- Decision-making

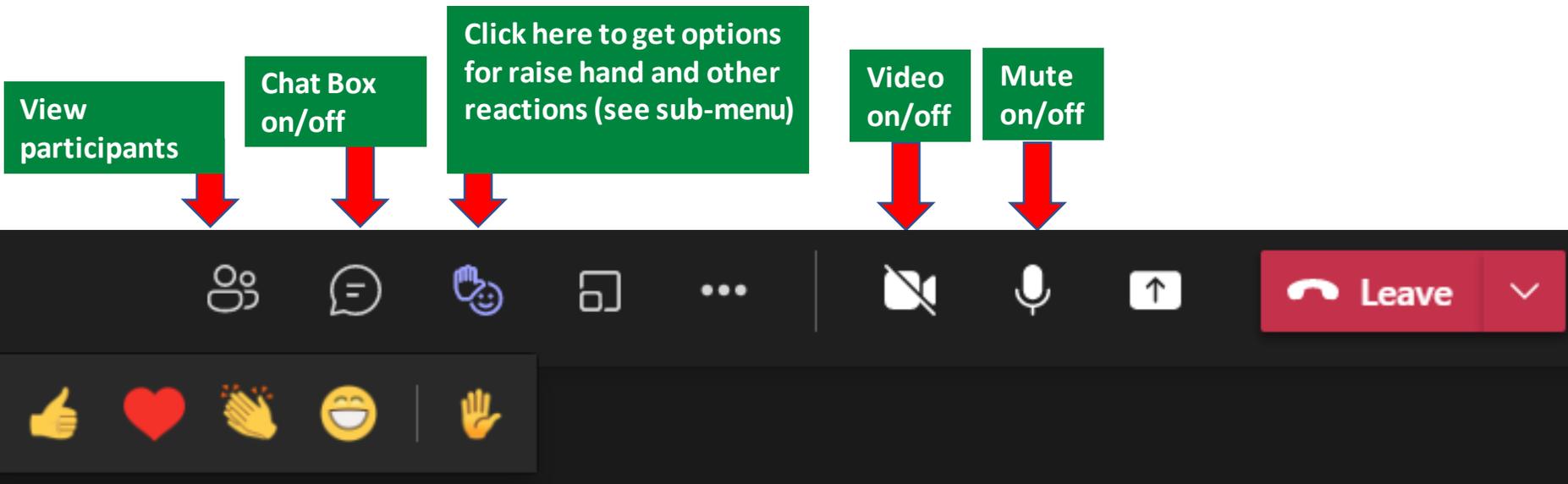
## Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL)

## Scope Overview

## Discussion and Next Steps

# Teams Orientation

- Controls are on the top right of your screen
- Everyone will be muted at the start of the meeting.
- Please use the Chat feature to ask questions if possible.
- Please turn off your webcam until the Discussion section



# Policy Committee

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**Chair - Adam Lougee, ACRPC**

Bill Smith, Vermont Truck and Bus Association

Brian Shupe, VNRC

Chris Jolly, FHWA

Clark Hinsdale, Ferrisburgh

Rep. Diane Lanpher

Dickie Austin, Vergennes

Rep. Harvey Smith

Ian Huizenga, Vergennes

Jeff Nelson, Addison

Jesse Devlin, VTrans

Joe Segale, VTrans

Mary Rudd, Panton

Rep. Matt Birong

Mike Audy, New Haven

Patrick Kirby, FHWA

Renny Perry, Vergennes Partnership

Rob Carter, Addison County Chamber of Commerce

Tim Glassberg, Waltham

Will Sipse, ACRPC

Other attendees – Mike Winslow (ACRPC) and Katharine Otto (VTrans)

# Introductions

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**Joe Segale, P.E.,**

**PTP**

Project Manager



**Katharine Otto, AICP**

Assistant Project Manager



**Mike Winslow**

Local Outreach and Coordination



# Consultant Team

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**Larry Pesesky, AICP**  
Principal-in-Charge



**Mark Tytka**  
Project Manager



**Ken Robie, PE**  
Deputy Project Manager



**Rich Tetreault, PE**  
Vermont Policy Advisor,  
QA/QC



**Stephanie Camay**  
Planning &  
Environmental Lead



**Chris Sargent, AICP, CFM**  
Land Use Planner



**Stephen Chiaramonte**  
Transportation Planning/  
Traffic Lead



**Liviu Sfintescu**  
Civil Lead



**Laura Toole**  
Public Involvement Lead



**William Melendez,**  
Traffic Engineer



An aerial photograph of a rural landscape, showing a mix of green fields, roads, and a small town or village. The text "Project Background" is overlaid in a bold, green font on the left side of the image.

# Project Background

# Truck Traffic



300 Medium Trucks/Day

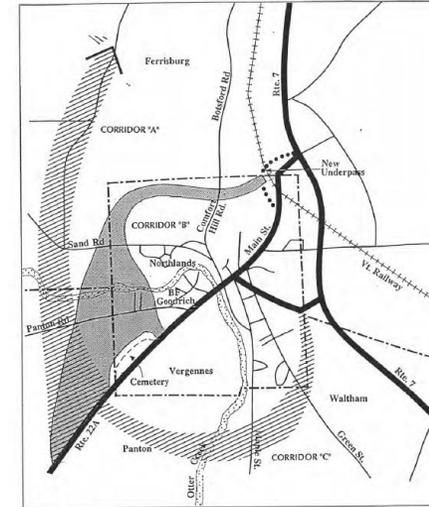


430 Large Trucks/Day

# Previous Planning Efforts

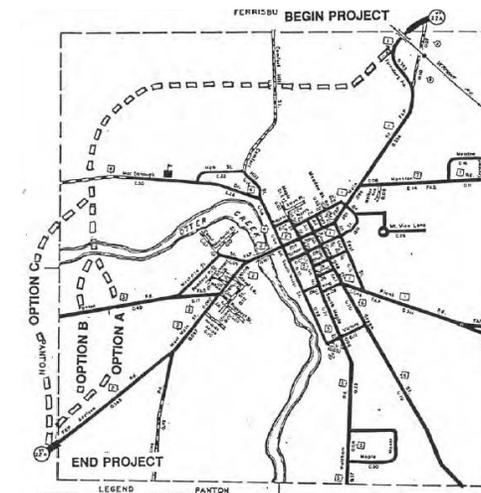
## 1995 Vergennes Route 22A Bypass Study

- Three potential bypass corridors
- Settled on Alignment B ~ 2.5 miles, includes a new bridge over the Otter Creek
- Approximate cost - \$52 million



## 2002 Vergennes Traffic Impact Study – Public Workshop/Brainstorming

- Downtown Mitigation
- Western Bypass
- Alternative Routes
- Transportation System Solutions
- Status Quo



# 2019 VT 22A Truck Route Study



# VT 22A Truck Route Study OUTCOMES

Agreement that the truck issue needs to be addressed

Near **consensus by meeting participants** in support of New Alignment

Reframed as the **Vergennes Economic Corridor**

**VTrans Secretary Flynn commits to PEL** with letters of support from legislative bodies Vergennes and six surrounding Towns

Funding for PEL in VTrans 2021 Capital Program approved by General Assembly



# Scope of work overview

Public and Stakeholder Engagement

Update the Purpose and Need  
Statement

Transportation Alternatives Screening  
& Refinement

- Many Alternatives at High Level
- Fewer Alternatives Evaluated in  
More Detail

Integrated Transportation/Land Use  
Planning

Alternatives Evaluation

Implementation Plan



An aerial photograph of a town, showing a dense grid of streets and buildings in the center, surrounded by open fields and some larger structures. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter.

# Committees

# Committee Roles and General Membership

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## Management

VTrans Project Manager – Joe Segale and Katharine Otto

ACRPC Assisting



## Technical Committee

### Role

- Guide, review and validate the consultant's methods, analyses, findings, and recommendations on which the Policy Committee will make its decisions

### Members

- Subject Matter Experts from VTrans, Region & Municipalities



## Policy Committee

### Role

- Endorsement of key assumptions and recommendations to VTrans

### Members

- Municipal representatives, VTrans, ACRPC, FHWA

Stakeholders representing business and economic development, the environment, pedestrian and bicycle users and potentially other interests.

# Technical Committee

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**Chair - Joe Segale, VTrans**

Andrea Wright, VTrans

Ashley Bishop, VTrans

Bruce Martin, VTrans

Chris Jolly, FHWA

David Raphael, Panton

Fred Kenney, Addison County  
Economic Development

Jeff Ramsey, VTrans

Jim Larrow, Vergennes

John Bull, Ferrisburgh

Jon Kaplan, VTrans

Katie Raycroft-Meyer, ACRPC

Mike Winslow, ACRPC

Nick Wark, VTrans

Patrick Kirby, FHWA

Rick Cloutier, Panton

Shannon Haggett, Vergennes

Other attendees: Adam Lougee (ACRPC), Katharine Otto (VTrans)

# Committee Format and Decision-Making Process

- Virtual meetings
- Consensus on best time of day
- Agreement with ground rules on meetings/decision-making process
- Alternate representation

Quorum is 50% of appointed members

Consensus when possible

Voting when consensus not possible

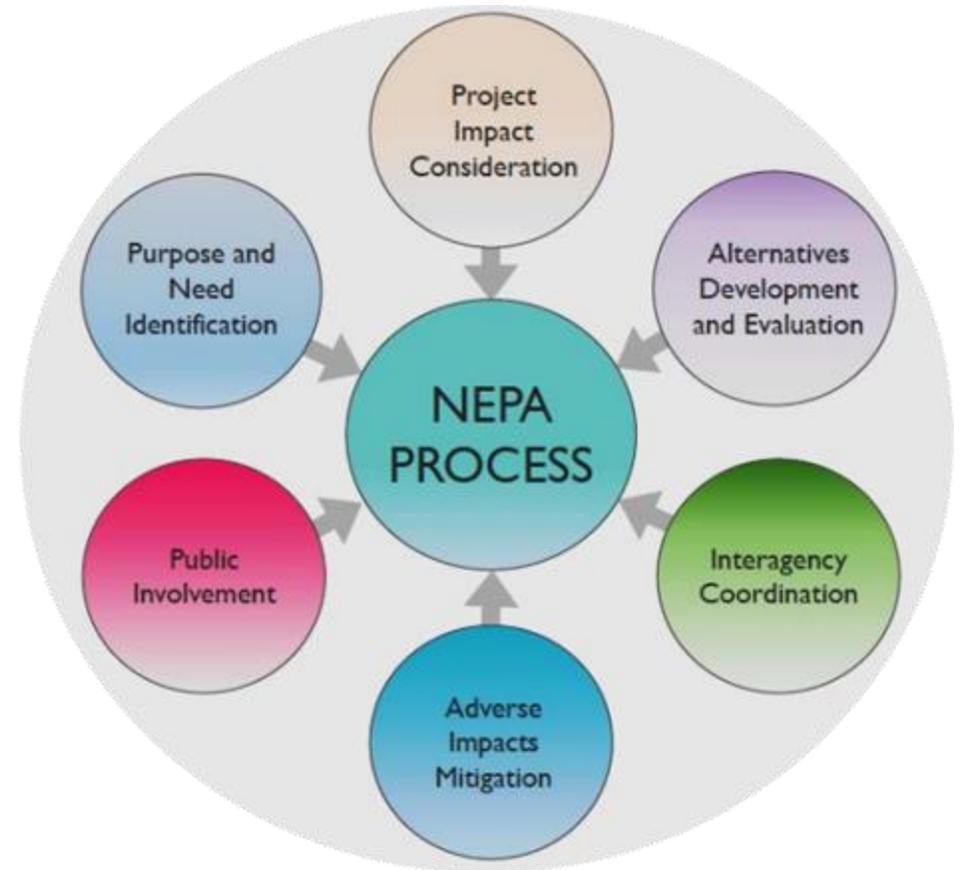
Document dissenting views

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape, showing a mix of green fields, brownish agricultural plots, and a small cluster of buildings in the center. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. The text 'Planning and Environment Linkages' is written in a bold, green, sans-serif font across the middle of the image.

# Planning and Environment Linkages

# NEPA Overview

- Became law in 1970
- Requires federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making decisions
- Requires opportunities for public review and comment on those evaluations
- Types of environmental assessments include:
  - Categorical Exclusions (CATEX)
  - Environmental Assessments (EA)
  - Environmental Impact Statements (EIS)



# NEPA Terms

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## **Lead Agency**

The federal agency carrying out the federal action is responsible for complying with the requirements of NEPA

When there may be more than one federal agency involved in the proposed action, the lead agency is designated to supervise the preparation of the environmental analysis

## **Cooperating Agency**

A federal, state, tribal or local agency having special expertise with respect to an environmental issue

A cooperating agency has the responsibility to:

- assist the lead agency by participating in the NEPA process at the earliest possible time
- participate in the scoping process
- develop information and prepare environmental analysis that the agency has special expertise in
- make staff support available

# Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL)

## What is PEL?

- PEL is a collaborative transportation decision-making approach

## What is the ultimate goal?

- Reduce duplication of effort and facilitate informed decisions to expedite project delivery

## PEL History

1969

National Environmental Policy Act establishes nation's commitment to the environment

2005

SAFETEA-LU requires increased consideration of environment in statewide and metropolitan planning

2005 –  
2008

National Highway Institute Linking Planning and NEPA Workshops

2011

FHWA promotes PEL through Every Day Counts, PEL Questionnaire, and Guidance on Using Corridor and Subarea Planning to Inform NEPA

2012

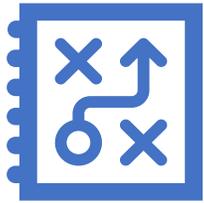
MAP-21 adds new authority for carrying out PEL in 23 U.S.C 168

2015

FAST Act amends 23 U.S.C 168 and adds new PEL authority to 23 U.S.C. 139

# What are the benefits of PEL?

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**Streamlines efforts  
from Planning  
into NEPA**



**Shortens timelines for  
NEPA review and  
project delivery**



**Stimulates the  
development of  
new tools**



**Helps identify  
stakeholders early  
in the process**



**Fosters relationships  
among agencies and  
the public**



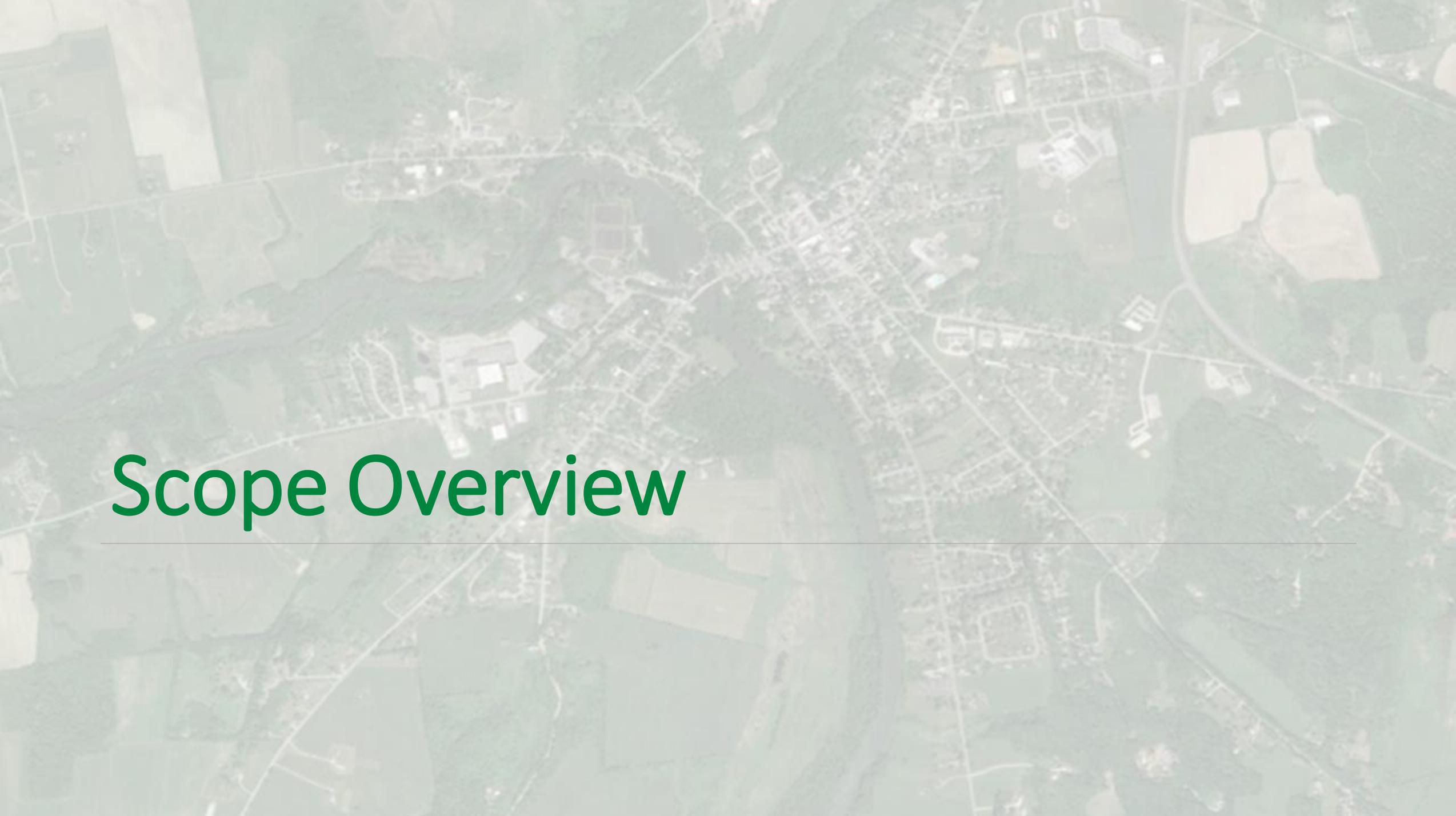
**Engages non-  
transportation agencies  
in decision-making**



**Creates better real-  
world outcomes for  
the community**



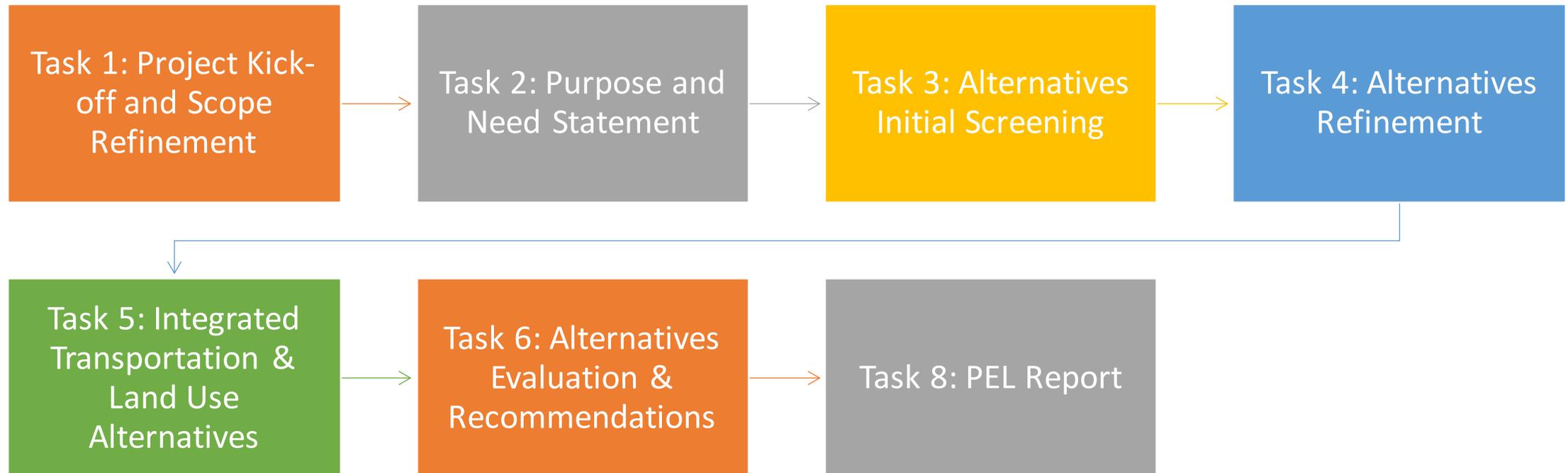
**Improves planning  
products that improve  
the NEPA process**

An aerial photograph of a town, showing a dense grid of streets and buildings in the center, surrounded by open fields and some larger structures. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. The text 'Scope Overview' is positioned in the lower-left quadrant of the image.

# Scope Overview

# Policy Committee – 7 Meetings

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# Discussion

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## Questions:

1. What is needed to advance recommended improvements?
2. What risks do you see?
3. What existing Policy (local, state, federal) may influence this study?
4. What policy issues should this study address?

## Follow up items:

- Information/data from your organization
- Individuals/organizations to involve in public process including contacts, champions, skeptics, etc.
- Major events or opportunities for public engagement/input

# Task 1: Project Kick-off and Scope Refinement

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## Goals

- Communicate project goals
- Convey project process and roles
- Set expectations
- Gain local input

## Deliverables

- Technical and Policy Committees Kick-off meetings
- Revised Scope of Work
- Schedule

# Task 2A: Public and Stakeholder Engagement

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## Goals

- Facilitate open, two-way communication
- Early involvement in the planning process
- Structure engagement over course of study
- Satisfy FHWA Environmental Justice requirements
- Respond to COVID-19 health and safety requirements
- Identify roles and responsibilities of Cooperating Agencies
- Confirm concurrence points

## Deliverables

- Public Involvement Plan (PIP)
- Agency Coordination Plan
- Project website

# Task 2B: Purpose and Need (P&N) Statement

## Goals

- Gather data to inform P&N
- Solicit public and agency input to inform P&N
- Define study area
- Develop P&N that meets PEL and NEPA requirements
- Lean forward to assess how technological advances may alter current conditions

## Deliverables

- P&N Statement memo
- Documentation of public and agency engagement
- Documentation of Cooperating Agency Concurrence



Public concerns regarding the potential for a hazardous materials spill due to a truck accident in Vergennes have been a recurring theme in prior outreach for this project.

# Task 3: Alternatives Initial Screening

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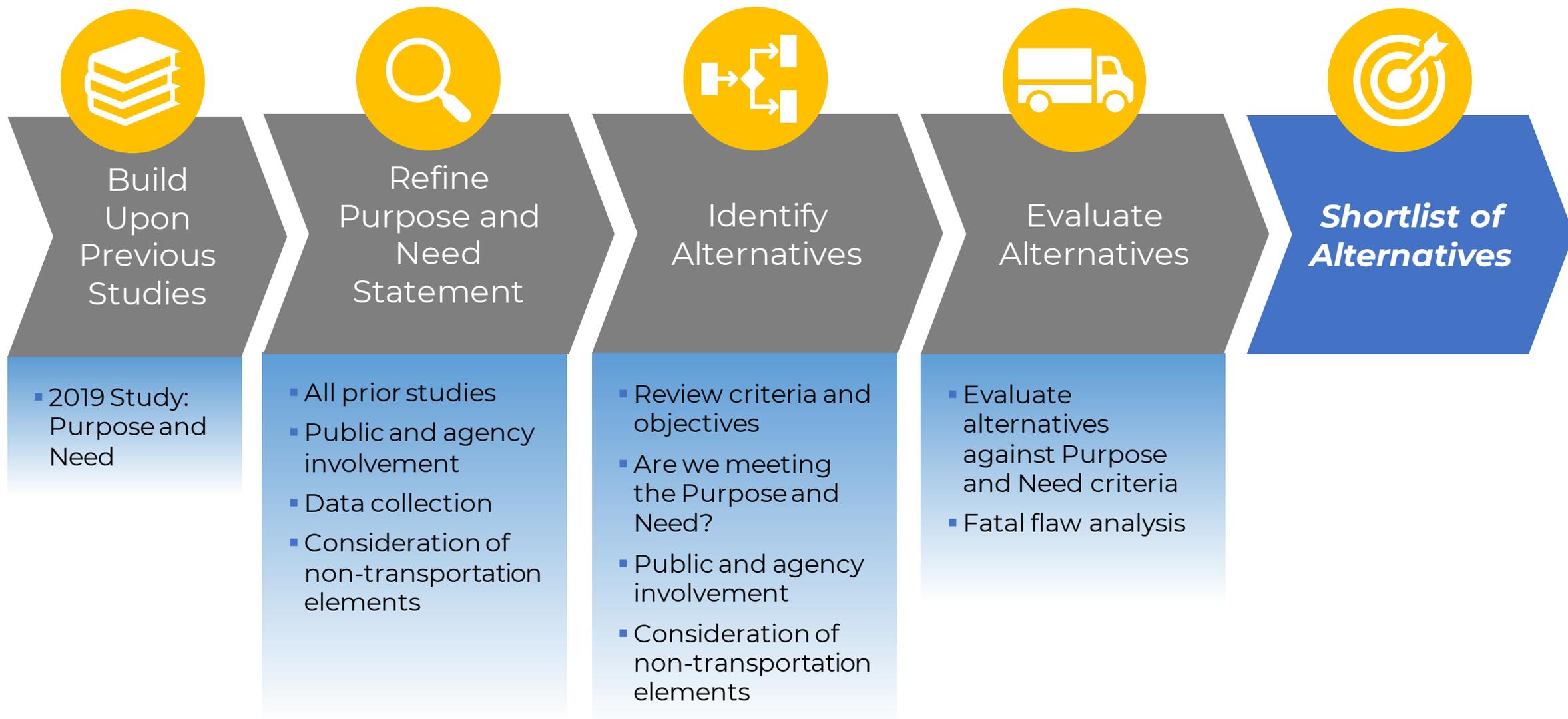
## Goals

- Identify initial long-list of alternatives
- Develop initial screening criteria & methodology
- Qualitative screening of alternatives
- Short list of reasonable alternatives

## Deliverables

- Initial Screening Technical Memo
- Documentation of public and agency input
- Documentation of Cooperating Agency Concurrence

# Initial Screening of Alternatives (Qualitative)



# Example Screening

Table 1-1: Alignment Concept Evaluation Results

GOAL	Western Alignment			Central Alignment				Eastern Alignment	
	Oyster Bay to Rye/Port Chester			Kings Park to Bridgeport or Devon				Wading River to New Haven or Branford	
	Bridge Only	Tunnel Only	Combo	Bridge Only		Combo		Bridge Only	Combo
				B-port	Devon	B-port	Devon		
1. IMPROVE REGIONAL MOBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
2. PROMOTE ECONOMIC GROWTH	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3. MINIMIZE ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
4. DEVELOP COST-EFFECTIVE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

- = best addresses goal
- = moderately addresses goal
- = does not address goal
- = recommended for further study
- = not recommended for further study



TASK	OBJECTIVES	DELIVERABLES
<b>Task 4: Alternatives Refinement</b>	Develop conceptual design of the alternatives advanced from initial screening.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design approach and criteria</li> <li>• Draft and final concept plans/cross sections/profiles</li> </ul>
<b>Task 5: Develop Integrated Transportation and Land Use Alternatives</b>	Develop a shared land use vision for the potential new roadway corridor respective of the preferences of each affected community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• StoryMap</li> <li>• Draft and final land use vision alternatives memo</li> </ul>
<b>Task 6: Alternatives Evaluation and Recommendations</b>	Evaluate and compare alternatives based on transportation, community, and environmental impact factors. Determine short-list alternatives to be advanced into the NEPA process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternatives analysis methodology/metrics</li> <li>• Alternatives evaluation memo (draft and final)</li> </ul>
<b>Task 7: Implementation Plan</b>	Provide a roadmap for implementation, including next steps for the future NEPA process, local land use planning recommendations, and identification of project financing strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft and Final Implementation Memo</li> </ul>
<b>Task 8: Draft and Final Reports</b>	Documentation of study methods, outreach, results, and next steps. Includes FHWA PEL Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft and Final Report</li> </ul>

# Discussion

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## Questions:

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## Follow up items:

- Information/data from your organization
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- Major events or opportunities for public engagement/input

# Next Steps

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- Identify preferred meeting day and time
- Prepare Public Involvement Plan and Agency Coordination Plan
- Create website
- Next meeting to discuss Purpose and Need Statement (Task 2B)

Primary contact:

**Joe Segale, P.E., PTP**

[joe.segale@vermont.gov](mailto:joe.segale@vermont.gov)



# Vergennes Planning and Environment Linkages Study

Policy Committee  
Kick off Meeting

June 15, 2021

