



Vergennes Planning and Environment Linkages Study

Conceptual Design and Community Engagement

Policy Committee

January 22, 2024



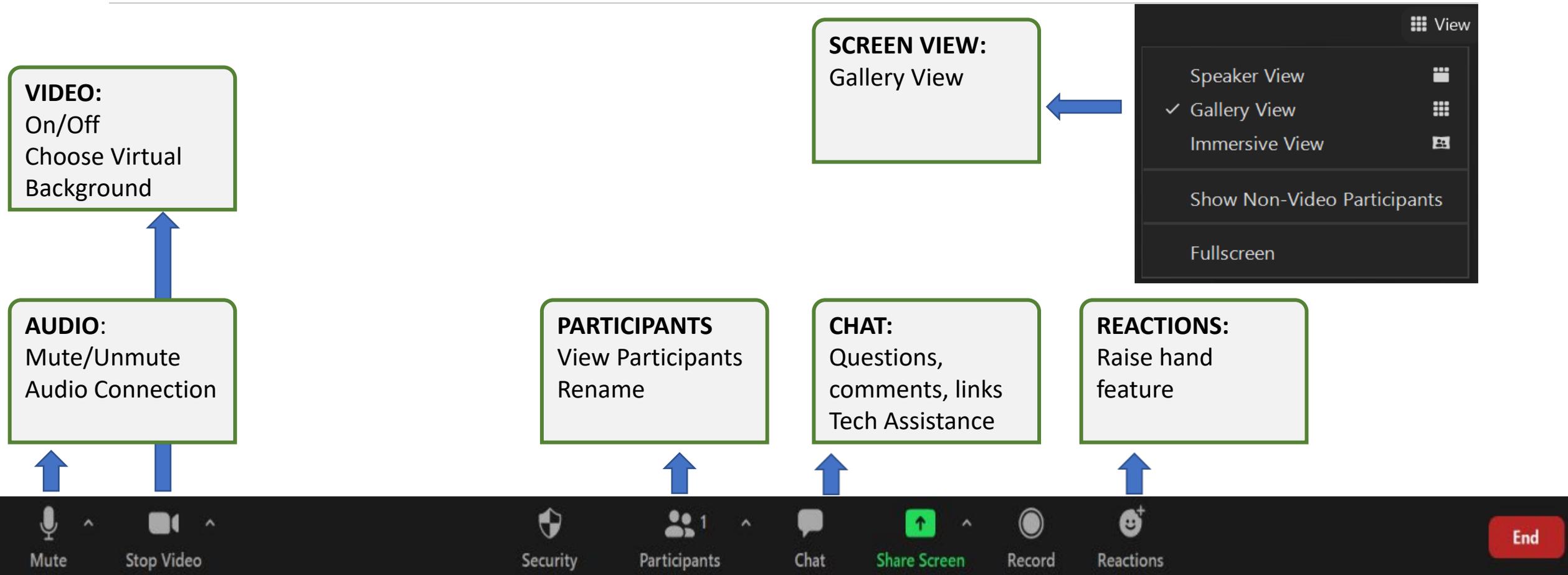
Planning & Environment Linkages (PEL) Study

Agenda

1. Call to Order and Roll Call (1:00pm)
2. Changes to the Agenda (1:09pm)
3. PEL Study Background (1:10pm)
4. Public Comment Period (1:15pm)
5. Concept Screening (1:25pm)
6. Conceptual Design and Visualizations (1:27pm)
7. Discussion and Committee Consensus Point (2:10pm)
8. Community Engagement (2:25pm)
9. Next Steps (2:40pm)
10. Other Questions from the Committee (2:45pm)
11. Public Comment (2:55pm)
12. Close Meeting (3pm)



Zoom Orientation



Roll Call

VOTING Members

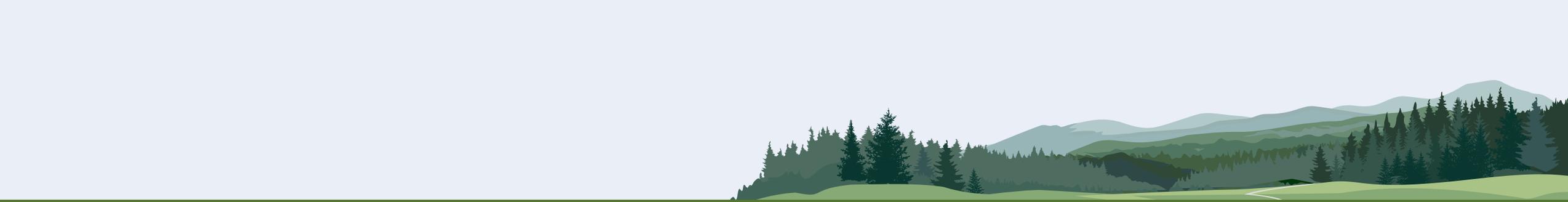
- Chair: Adam Lougee, ACRPC
- Bill Smith, Vermont Truck and Bus Association
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- Ron Redmond, City of Vergennes
- Jeff Nelson, Town of Addison
- Jesse Devlin, VTrans
- Katharine Otto, VTrans
- Mary Rudd, Town of Panton
- Matt Birong, State Rep. from Vergennes, Ferrisburgh, Waltham, Panton and Addison
- Mike Audy, Town of New Haven
- Renny Perry, Vergennes Partnership
- Phil Summers, Addison County Chamber
- Rhonda Williams, Town of Waltham

Roll Call

Non-Voting Members

- Amy Bell, VTrans
- Joel Perrigo, VTrans
- Mike Winslow, ACRPC
- Jacqueline DeMent, FHWA
- Elizabeth Shipley, FHWA

Other attendees?



PEL Study Background



Why are we doing a PEL study in Vergennes?

- Previous studies indicated regional agreement that truck volume in downtown Vergennes should be addressed.
- PEL study allow us to go:
 - Wider in our outreach and engagement
 - Deeper into details, including conceptual design and land use visioning

Goal is for region to come to *consensus* on path forward

- VTrans and ACRPC role in PEL study is to facilitate regional process



Summer 2021 – Spring 2022

Task 1: Project Kick-Off and Scope Refinement

Task 2: Purpose and Need Statement



Spring 2022 – Spring 2023

Task 3: Alternatives Development and Concept Screening



2023 - 2024

Task 4: Alternatives/Concept Refinement

Task 5: Integrated Transportation & Land Use Alternatives

Task 6: Alternatives Evaluation & Recommendations



2024 - 2025

Task 7: Implementation Plan

Task 8: PEL Report

Where are we in the overall timeline?

PEL Study (2021-2025)

Completed Tasks

- Define what we are working towards - *Purpose and Need Statement*
- Narrow down full list of concepts



Current & Upcoming Tasks

- Land use visioning
- Conceptual design
- Concept Evaluation
- Implementation Plan
- Finalize report



Future steps if the study concludes construction is needed:

Obtain Funding

- *Timeline: Unknown*



Design & Engineering

- *Timeline: 7-13 years*
- Conceptual, Draft and Final Design
- Environmental Studies & NEPA
- Permitting
- Right-of-Way Acquisitions



Construction

- *Timeline: 2-4 years*

NOTE: The study may conclude that construction is not needed.

Policy Committee Role

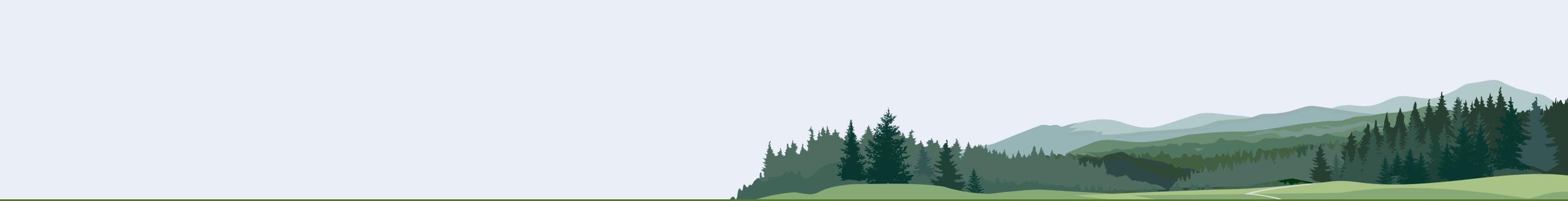
- Endorsement of key assumptions and recommendations to VTrans
- Listen to stakeholder's input and concerns
- Consider areas of representation as well as the needs of the region as a whole

Members

- Municipal representatives, VTrans, ACRPC, FHWA
- Stakeholders representing business and economic development, the environment, pedestrian and bicycle users and potentially other interests.

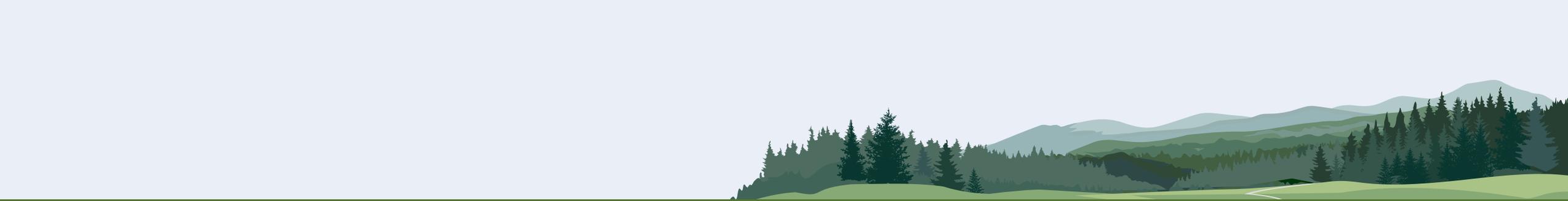
Today, we will be asking for you to recommend the conceptual designs for further evaluation during the PEL Study

- PEL is a collaborative decision-making **planning** process
- Goal to reduce the number of alternatives and identify potential impacts that will be looked at further during NEPA
- **Recommendations only – not binding** until NEPA process

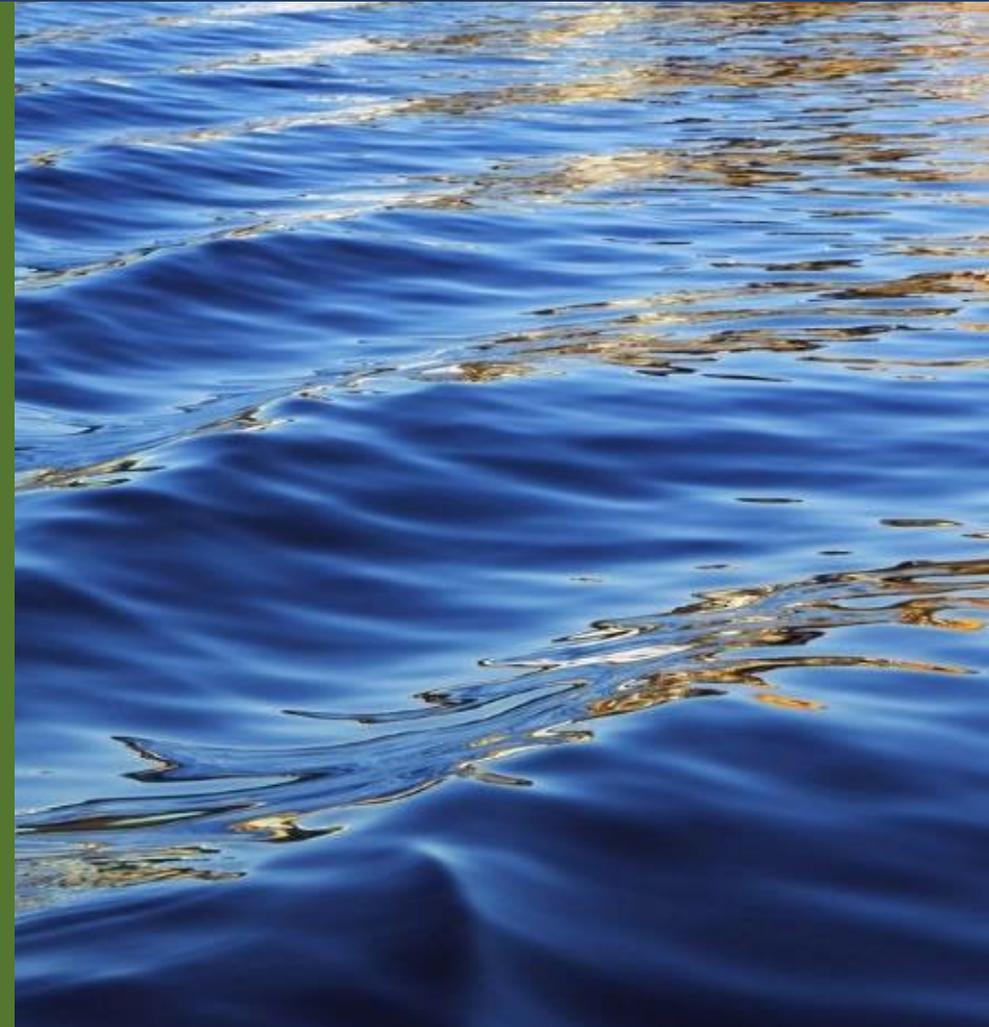


Public Comment Period





Concept Screening



Purpose and Need Statement: Vergennes PEL Study

The **purpose** is to reduce the impacts of through truck traffic, including safety, congestion, noise, vibration, and dust on Route 22A in downtown Vergennes. Transportation solutions that reduce truck related quality of life impacts should also meet the mobility, safety, and economic vitality needs of Vergennes and the neighboring communities.

A summary of the **needs** identified are detailed below.



Mobility and Access: Maintain opportunities for the movement of freight in the region and minimize and/or mitigate traffic impacts to other transportation corridors



Safety, Circulation and Resilience: Support the continued movement, resilience and safety of travel through downtown Vergennes and in the neighboring communities.



Quality of Life: Improve the quality of life and minimize negative property and environmental resource impacts in downtown Vergennes and neighboring communities.



Land Use: Support local and regional land use plans and policies and state land use goals.



Economic Vitality: Promote economic vitality of downtown Vergennes, goods movement in Vergennes and neighboring communities, and support rural economy.

Screening Criteria

Quality of Life and Environment

- Reduces truck noise and emissions
- Avoids potential impacts to water and natural resources
- Maintains/supports community character of downtown Vergennes

Equity

- Balances distribution of transportation resources
- Avoids impacts to surrounding communities, including disproportionate impacts to environmental justice communities

Mobility and Access

- Maintains freight mobility throughout the region
- Promotes greater destination access to downtown Vergennes to for all modes

Economic Vitality

- Promotes economic vitality in downtown Vergennes
- Promotes regional economic vitality

Safety, Circulation and Resilience

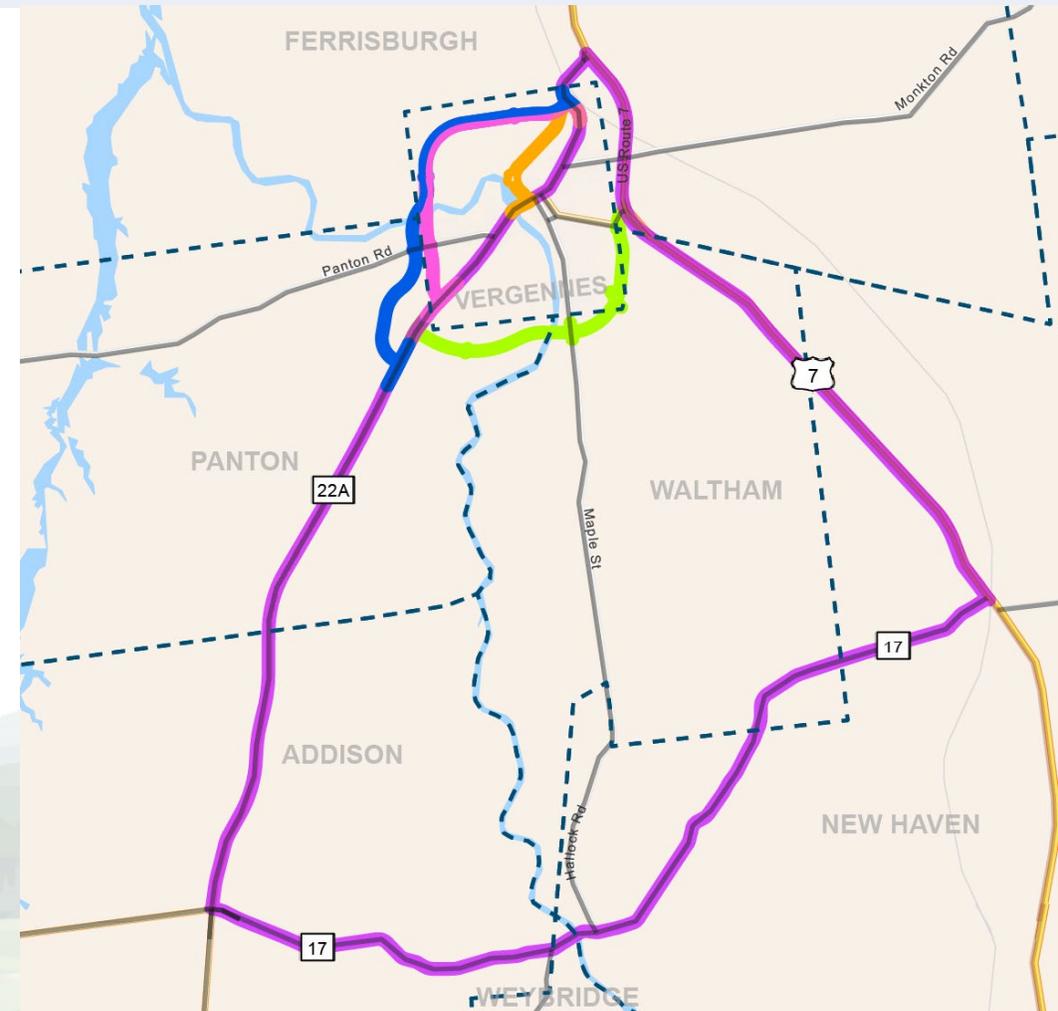
- Creates redundancies to improve resilience of road network
- Improves motorized circulation throughout the region
- Improves non-motorized circulation throughout the region
- Improves motorized and non-motorized safety on Route 22A through downtown Vergennes

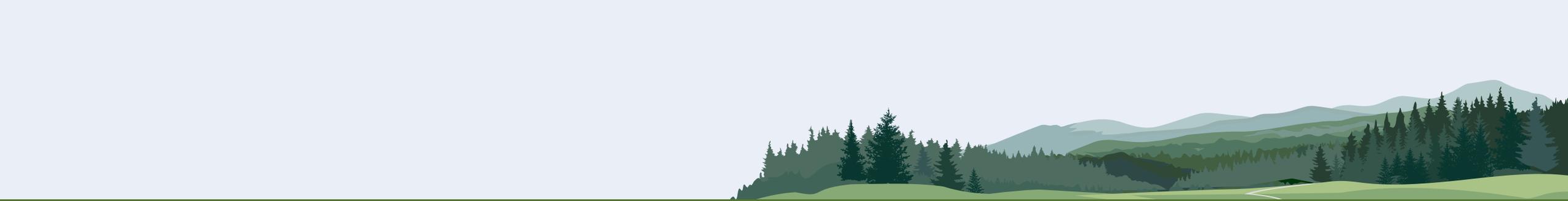
Land Use

- Consistent with existing regional land uses
- Aligns with future and projected regional land uses and statewide goals

Transportation Solutions Being Studied

- 4 new roadways
- 1 concept to improve an existing roadway, Route 17
- A "No Build" option that would maintain Route 22A in its existing configuration
- All routes have strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities





Concept Design

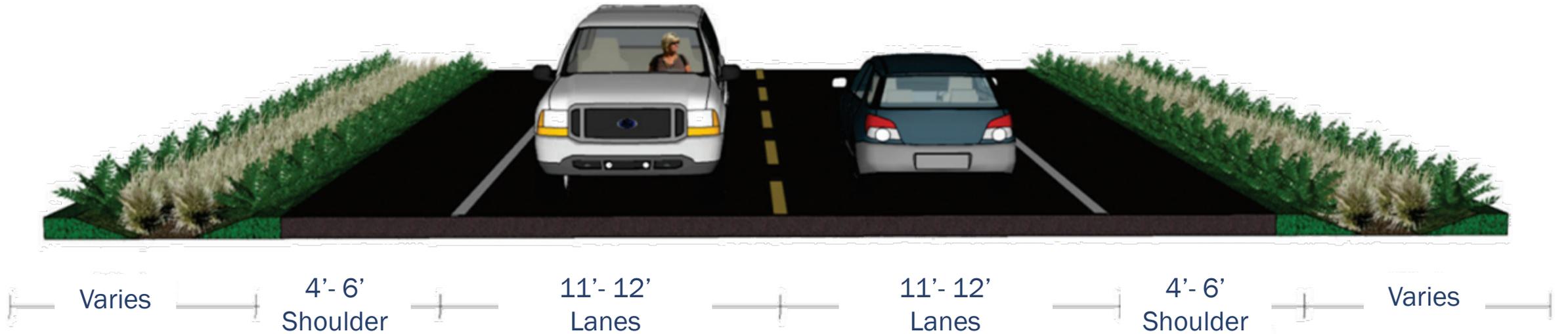


Design Methodology

- Follow Vermont State Standards related to lane and shoulder widths, speed, superelevation, vertical clearance over Otter Creek, grade and sight distances
- USCG Bridge Clearance guidance
- Avoid environmental constraints (water and natural resources) and property acquisitions, where feasible
- Objective to keep passenger vehicles in downtown Vergennes (Route 22A/Main Street), as much as possible

The conceptual designs provide a conservative footprint to further evaluate the concepts and their impacts.

Typical Section – Initial Conceptual Design



Width for initial conceptual design = 30'- 36'

Conservative approach to consider larger footprint
Additional discussion about roadway character and
design at later stage of study

What do you think?

Today's discussion will focus on:

- Conceptual designs approved by Technical Committee
- Consensus on concept designs for further evaluation and refinement
- Public Engagement efforts

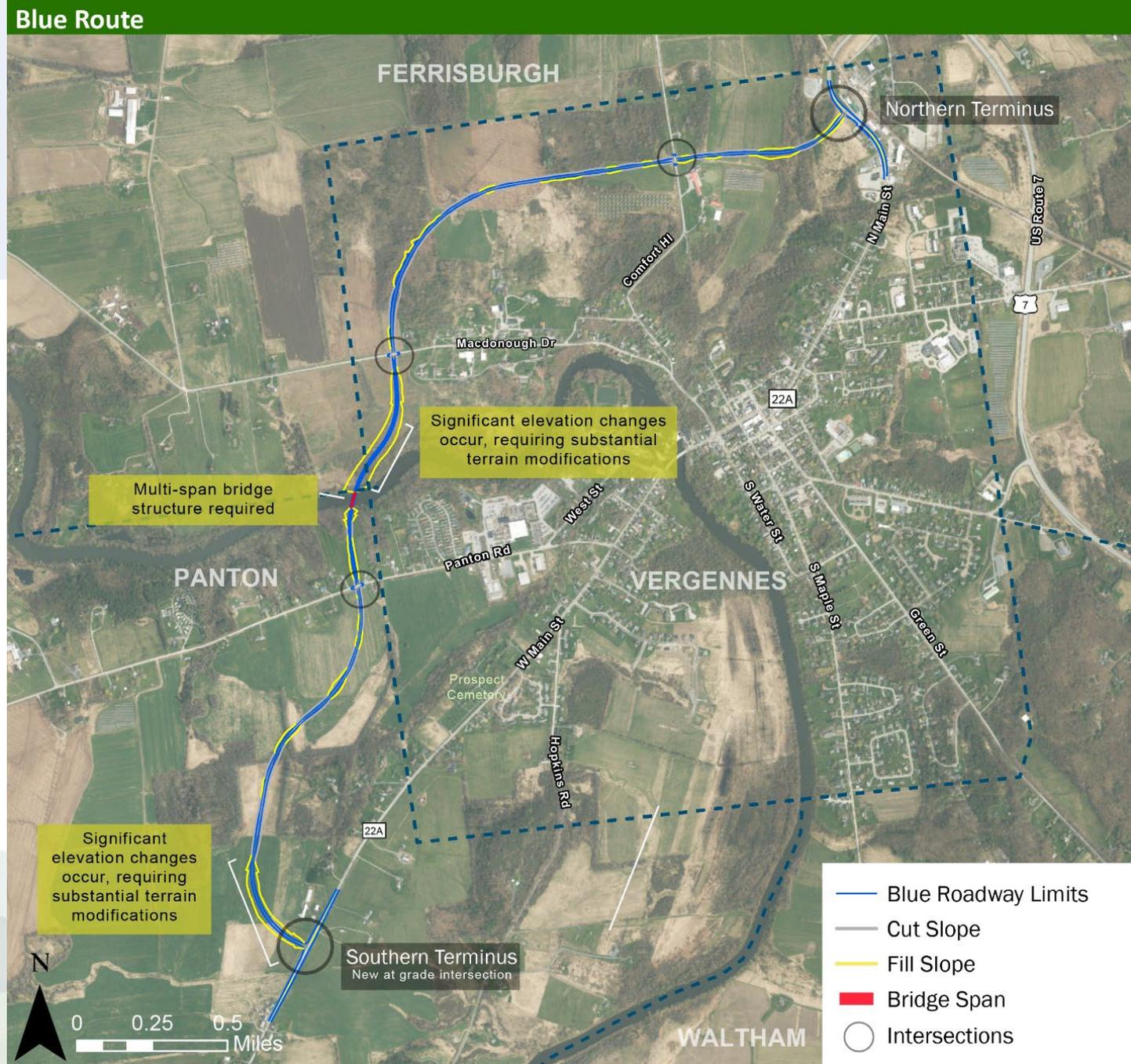
Please provide any additional comments by January 31

Further details to be developed during PEL Study:

- Future land use around the roadways
- Operational considerations
- Roadway cross-section dimensions
- Intersection designs – roundabout, signalized, jug-handle, etc.
- Bridge design
- Environmental resources
- Property impacts

Blue Route

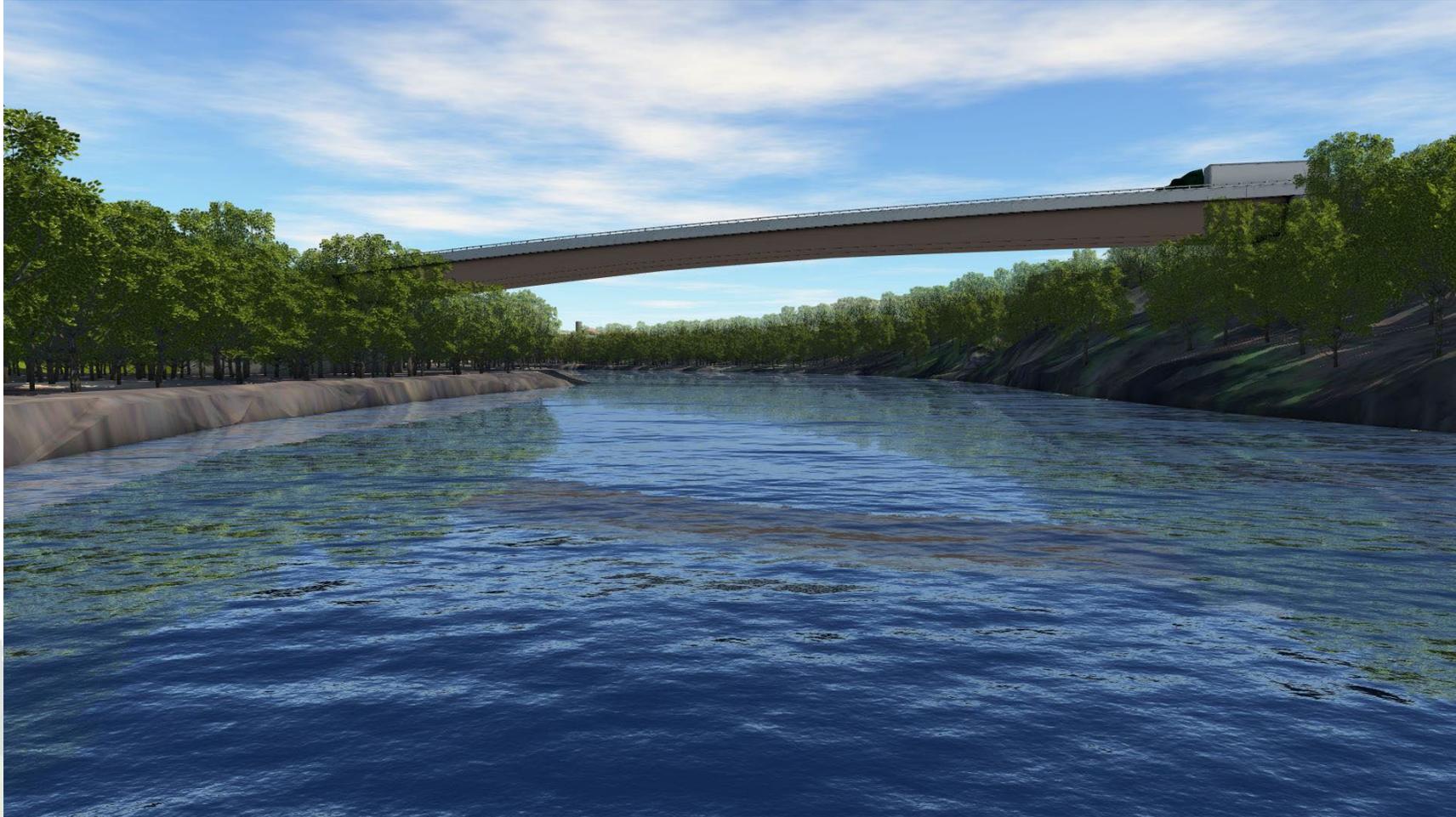
- Connects with VT 22A approximately 1.25 miles south of Vergennes
- Crosses Panton Rd, Otter Creek, MacDonough Dr, Botsford Rd/Comfort Hill
- Reconnects with VT 22A approximately 0.5 mile west of the Route 22A/Route 7 intersection
- Overall length of the proposed roadway is 2.5 miles
- Portions of the roadway south of Otter Creek are to the west of the Vergennes city limit



Visualizations: Blue Route at Panton Road, Looking North



Visualizations: Blue Route Bridge from Otter Creek, Looking East



Visualizations: Blue Route Bridge from Otter Creek, Looking West



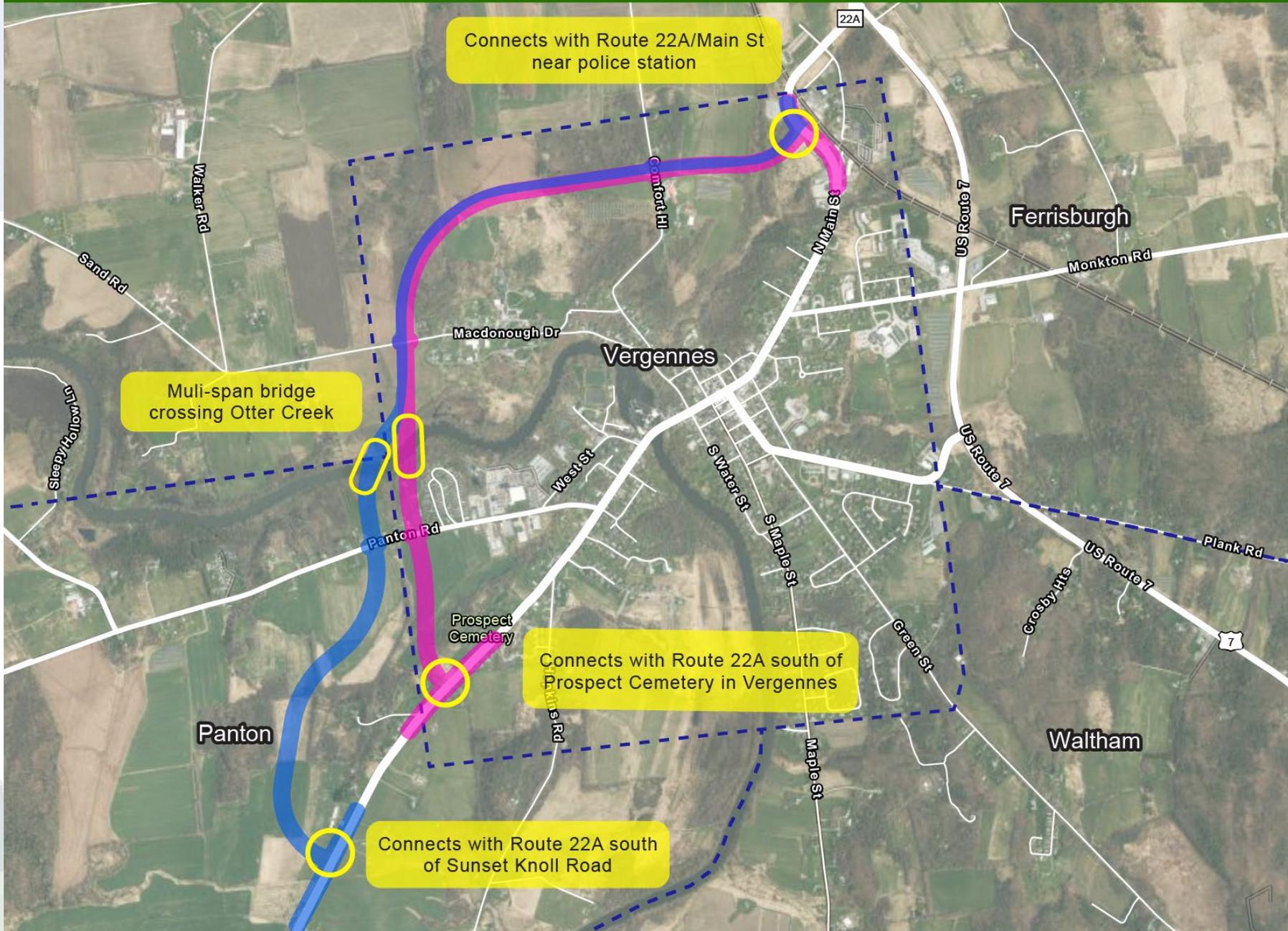
Visualizations: Blue Route Connection with Route 22A, Looking Northeast



Blue Route Discussion/Questions?

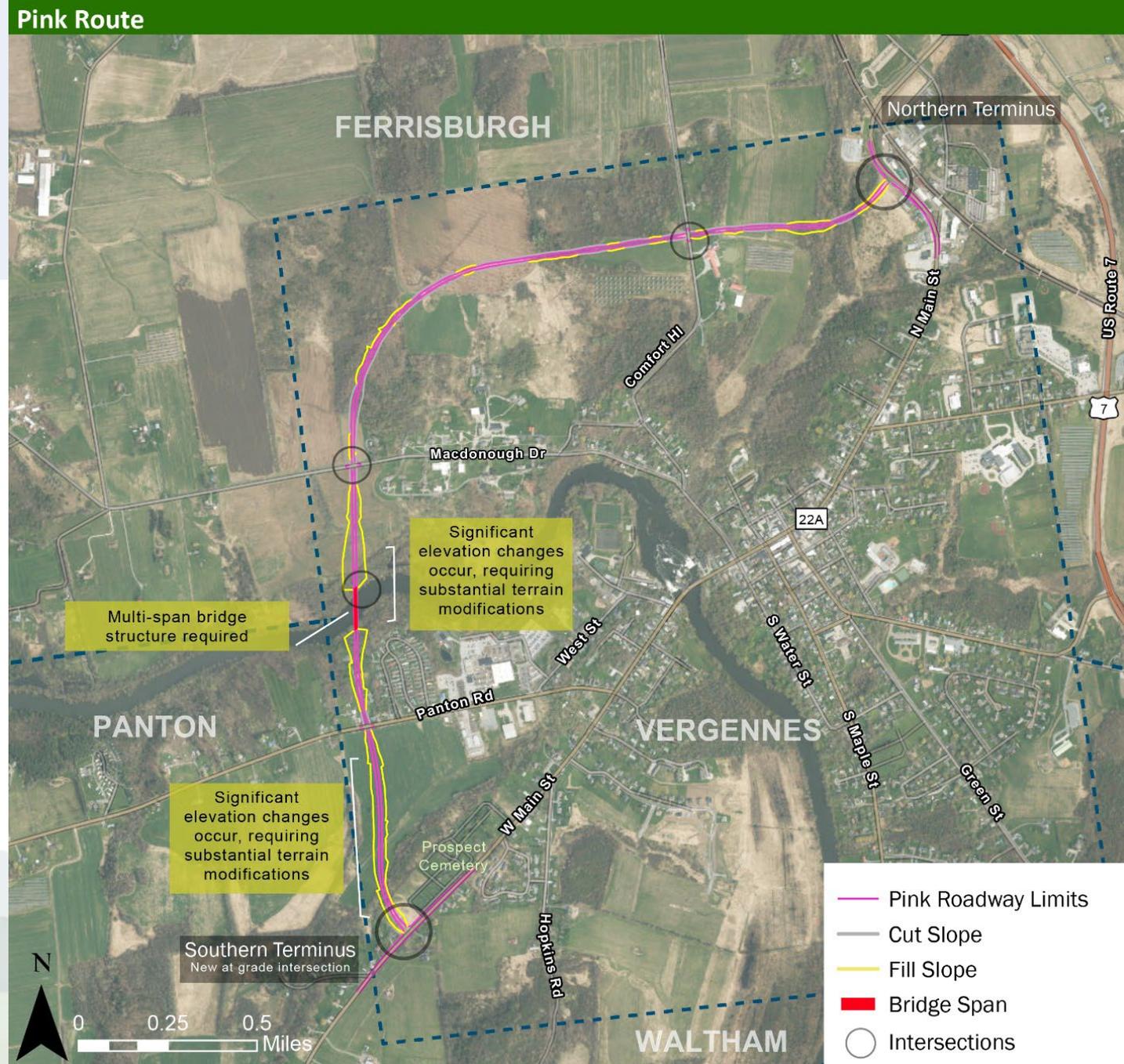


Blue & Pink Routes

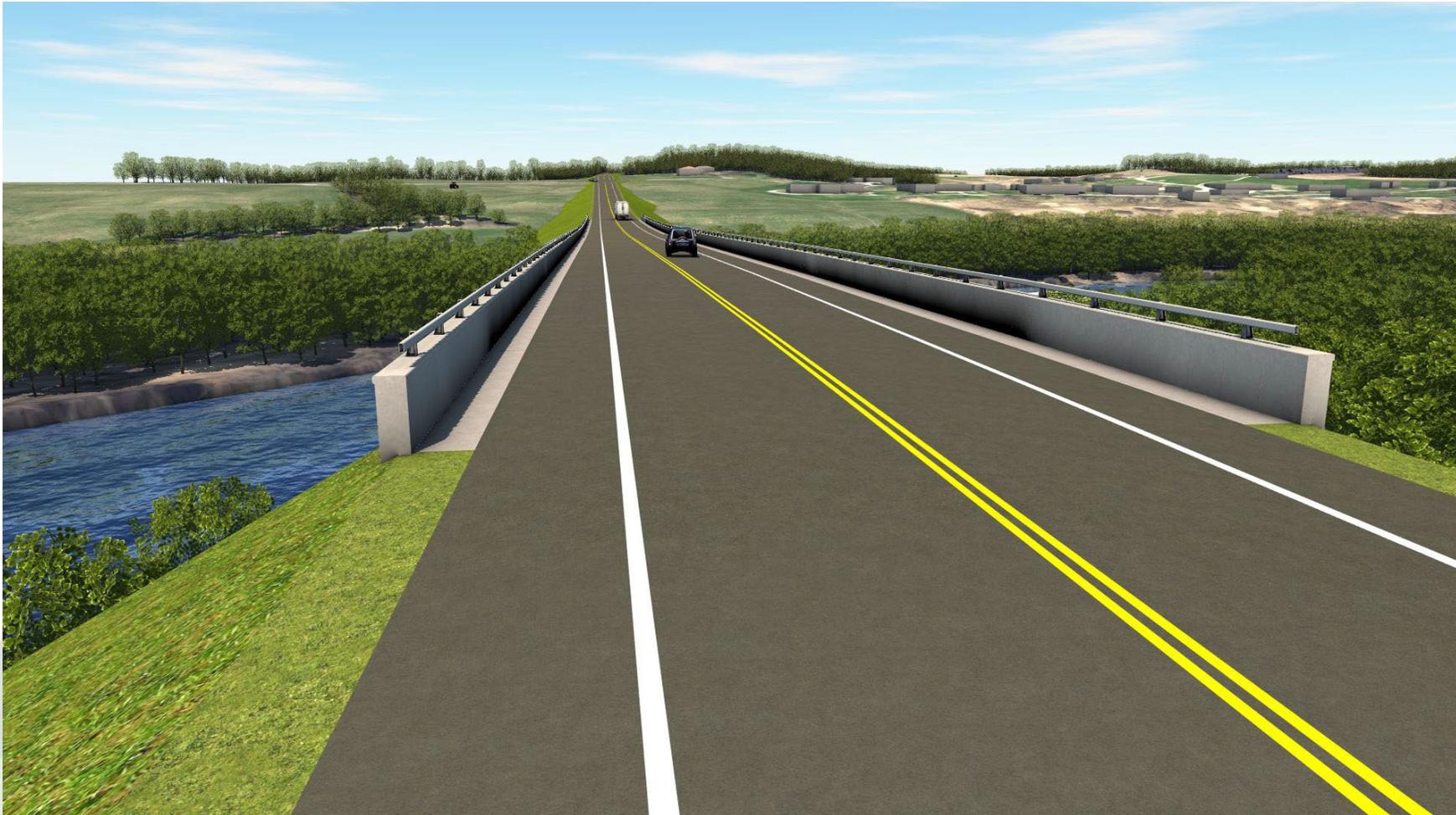


Pink Route

- Connects with VT 22A approximately 0.75 miles south of the Panton Road and VT 22A intersection
- Modified version of the Blue Route that shifts the alignment east between Panton Rd and VT 22A
- Reconnects with VT 22A approximately 0.5 mile west of the Route 22A/Route 7 intersection
- Overall length of the proposed roadway is 2.3 miles.



Visualizations: Pink Route Bridge Across Otter Creek, Looking North



Visualizations: Pink Route Bridge from Otter Creek, Looking East



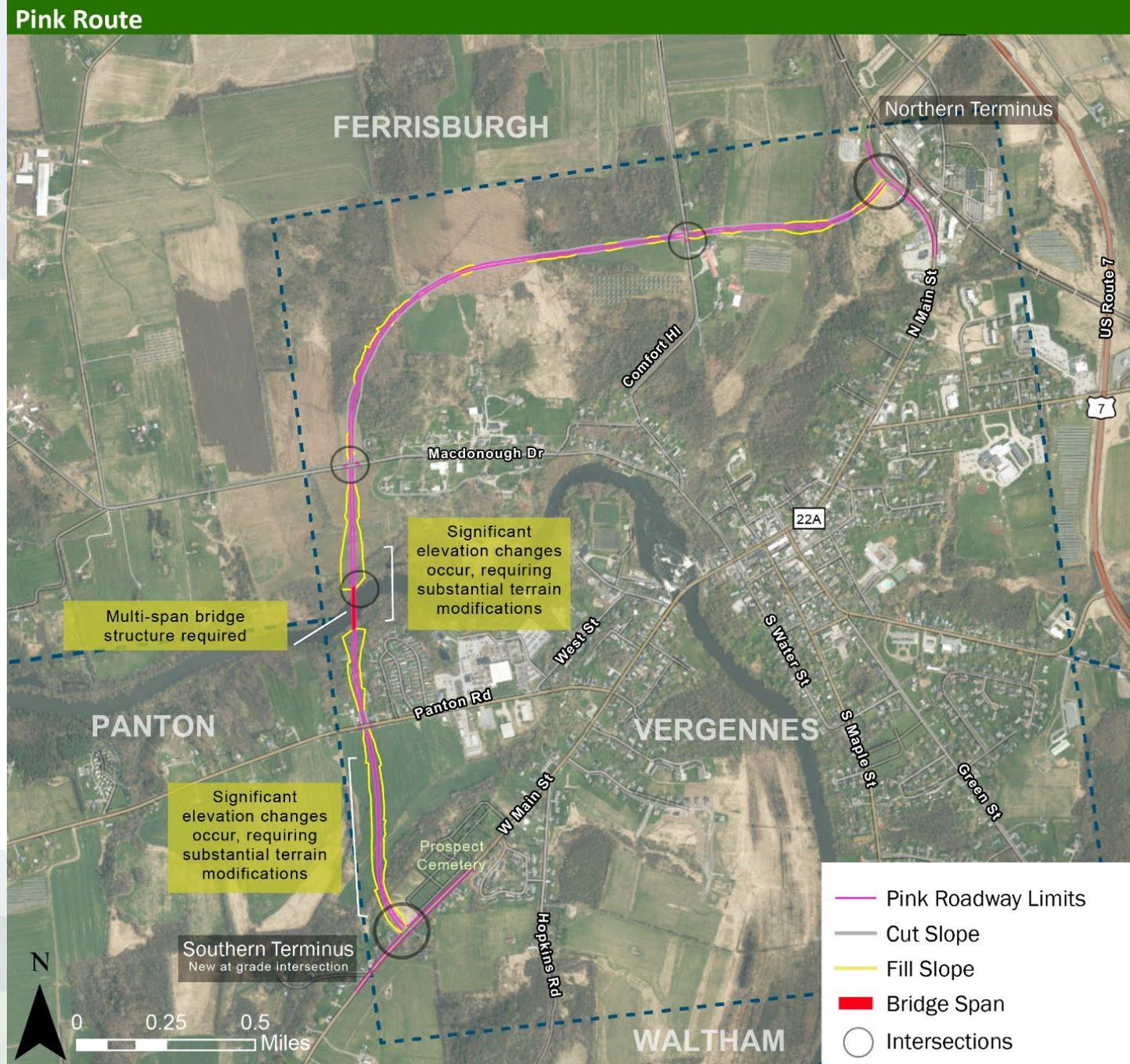
Visualizations: Pink Route Bridge from Otter Creek, Looking West



Visualizations: Pink Route Connection with Route 22A, Looking Northeast



Pink Route Discussion/Questions



Orange Route

- Southern terminus is the existing intersection of MacDonough Dr with Main St
- Realignment of MacDonough Drive between VT 22A and Comfort Hill, and new intersection of MacDonough Drive and Comfort Hill
- Reconnects with VT 22A approximately 0.5 mile west of the Route 22A/Route 7 intersection
- Overall length of the proposed roadway is 1 mile
- Reduced design speed for southern portion of orange route from 45mph to 35mph



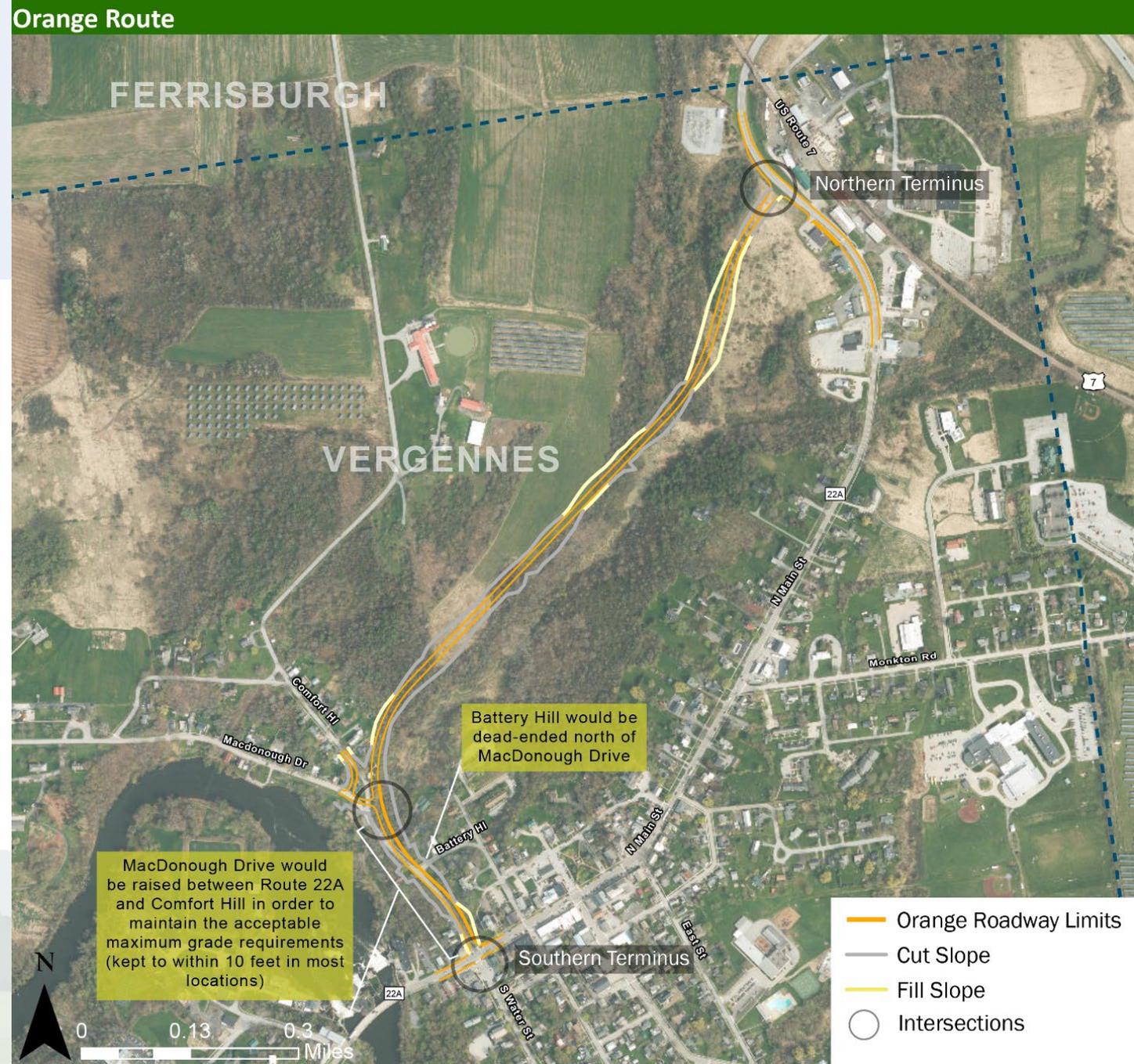
Visualizations: Orange Route Connection with MacDonough Dr



Visualizations: MacDonough Dr and Comfort Hill

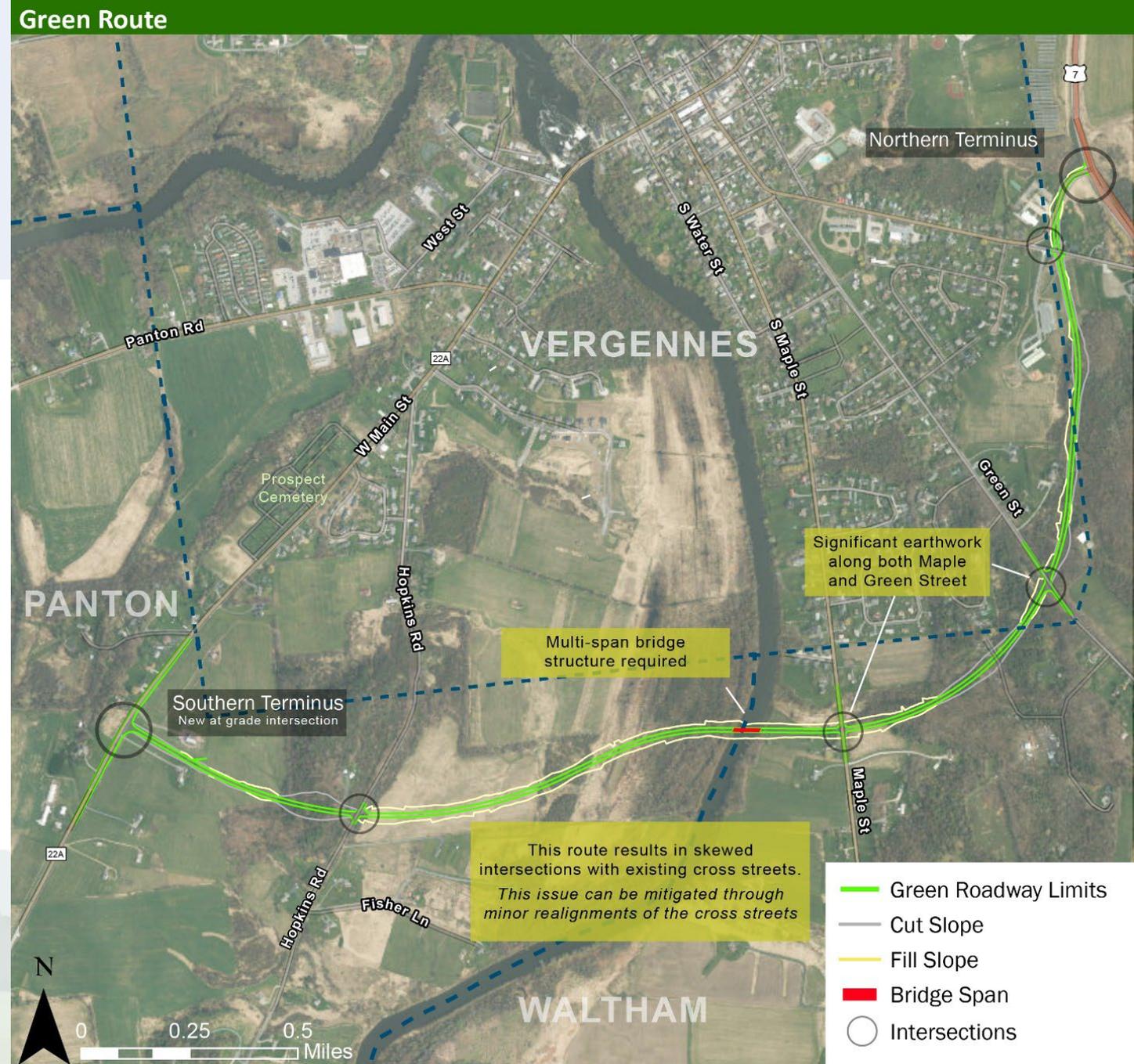


Orange Route Discussion/Questions?



Green Route

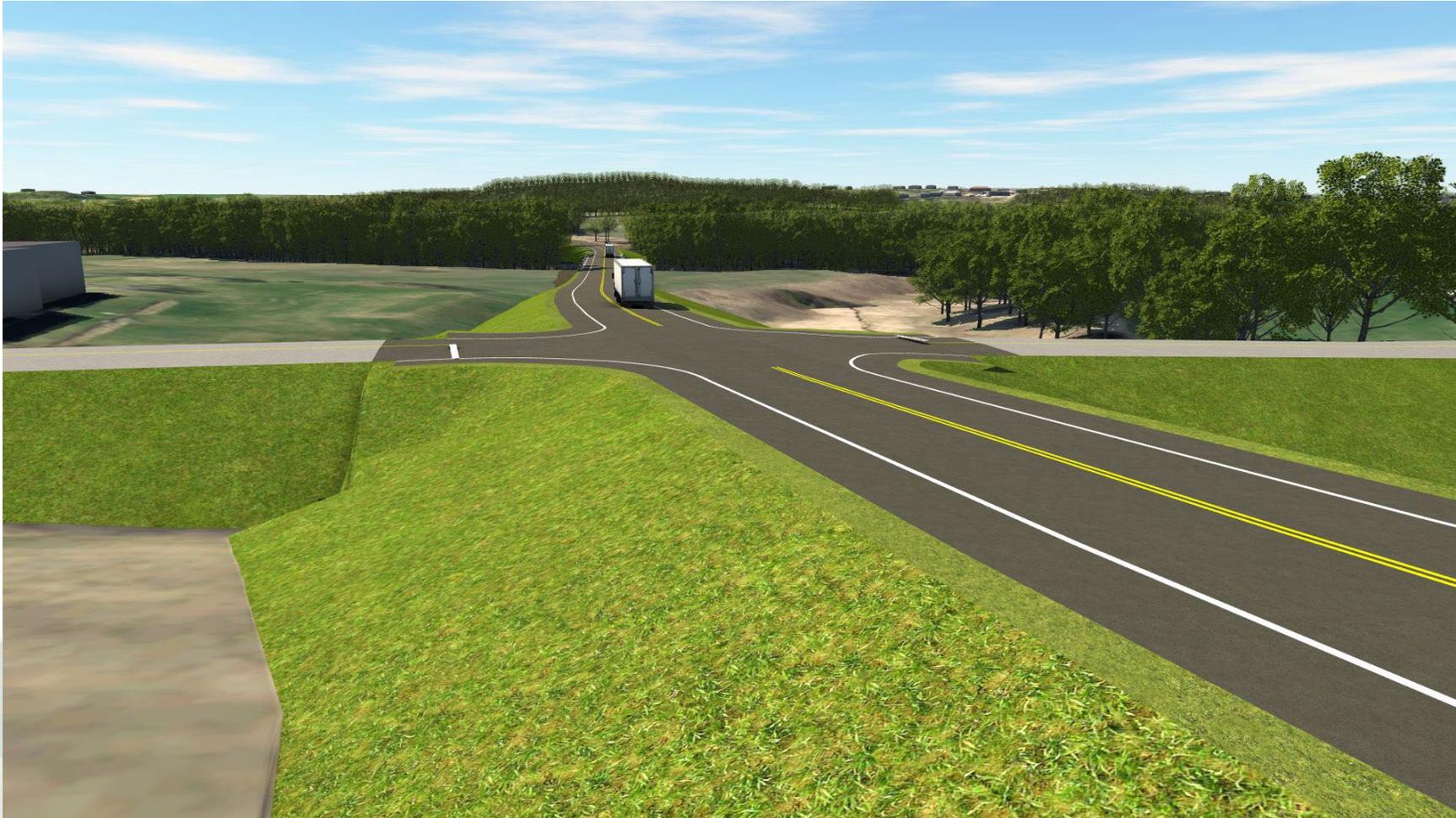
- Connects with VT 22A approximately one mile south of the Vergennes-Panton boundary
- Crosses Hopkins Rd, Otter Creek, Maple St, Green St, and Church St
- Connects with US 7 via existing New Haven Rd/US 7 intersection
- Overall length of the proposed roadway is 2.3 miles



Visualizations: Green Route at Hopkins Road, Looking West



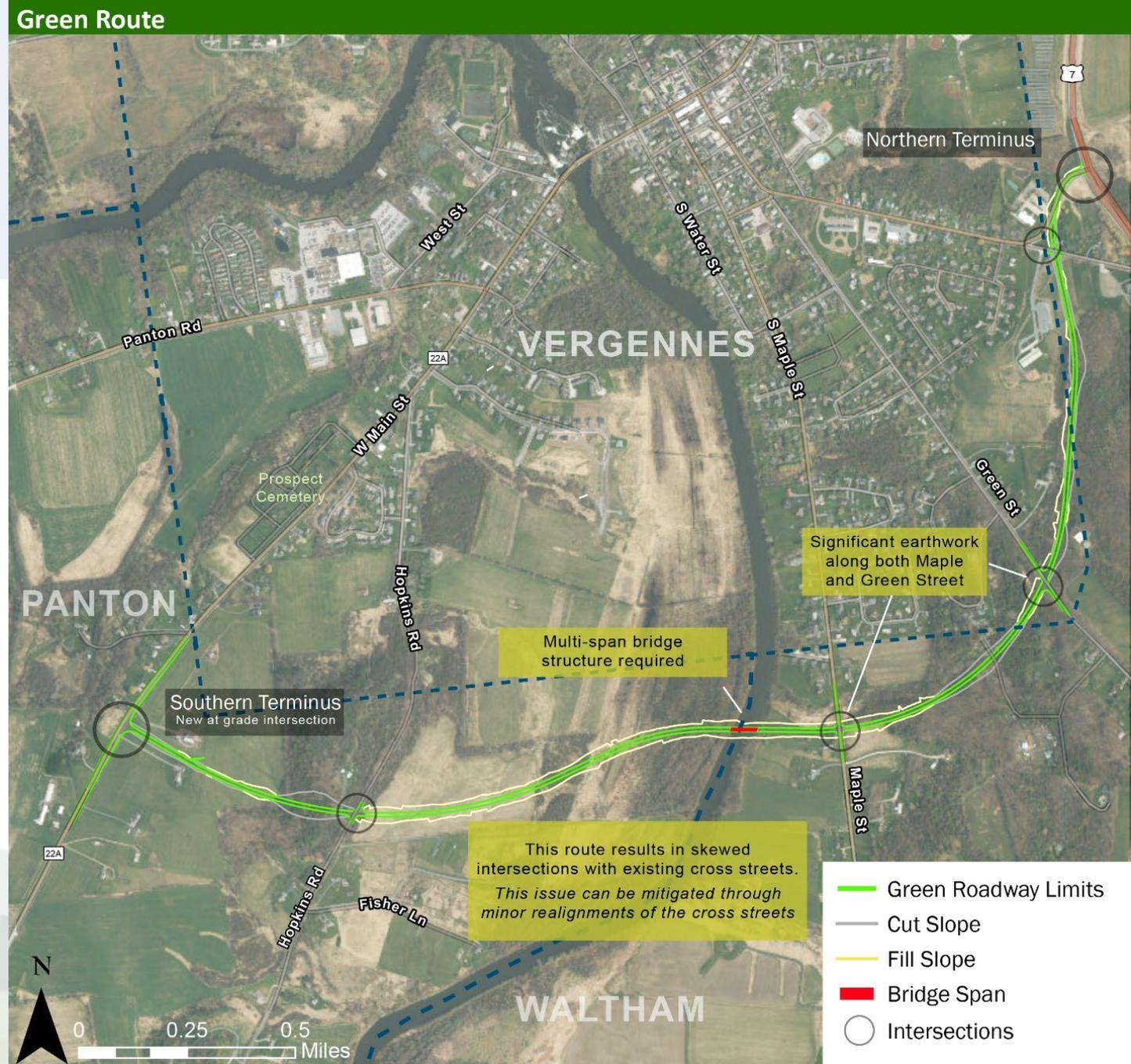
Visualizations: Green Route at Maple Street, Looking West



Visualizations: New Haven Road/U.S. Route 7, Looking South

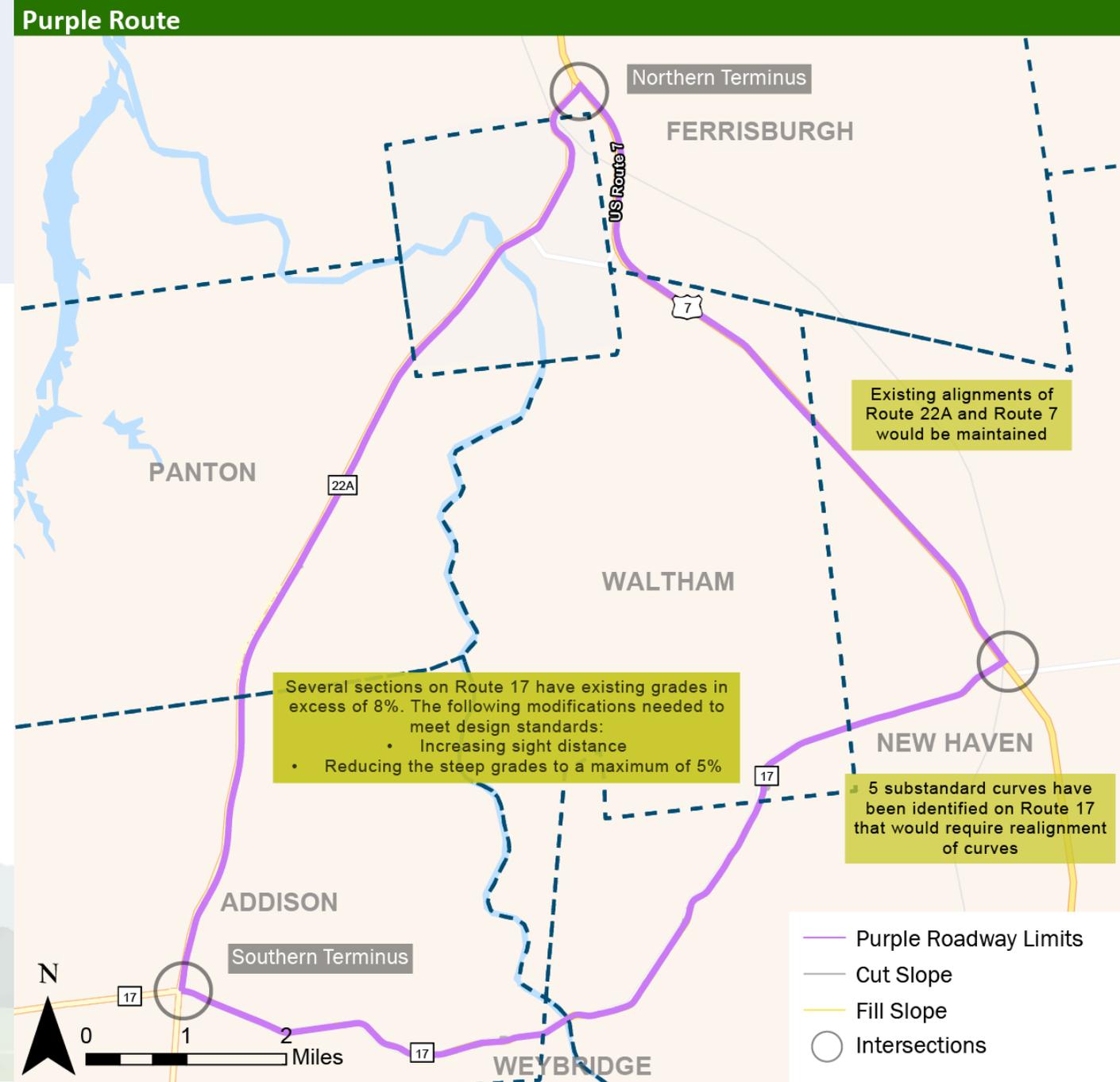


Green Route Discussion/Questions?

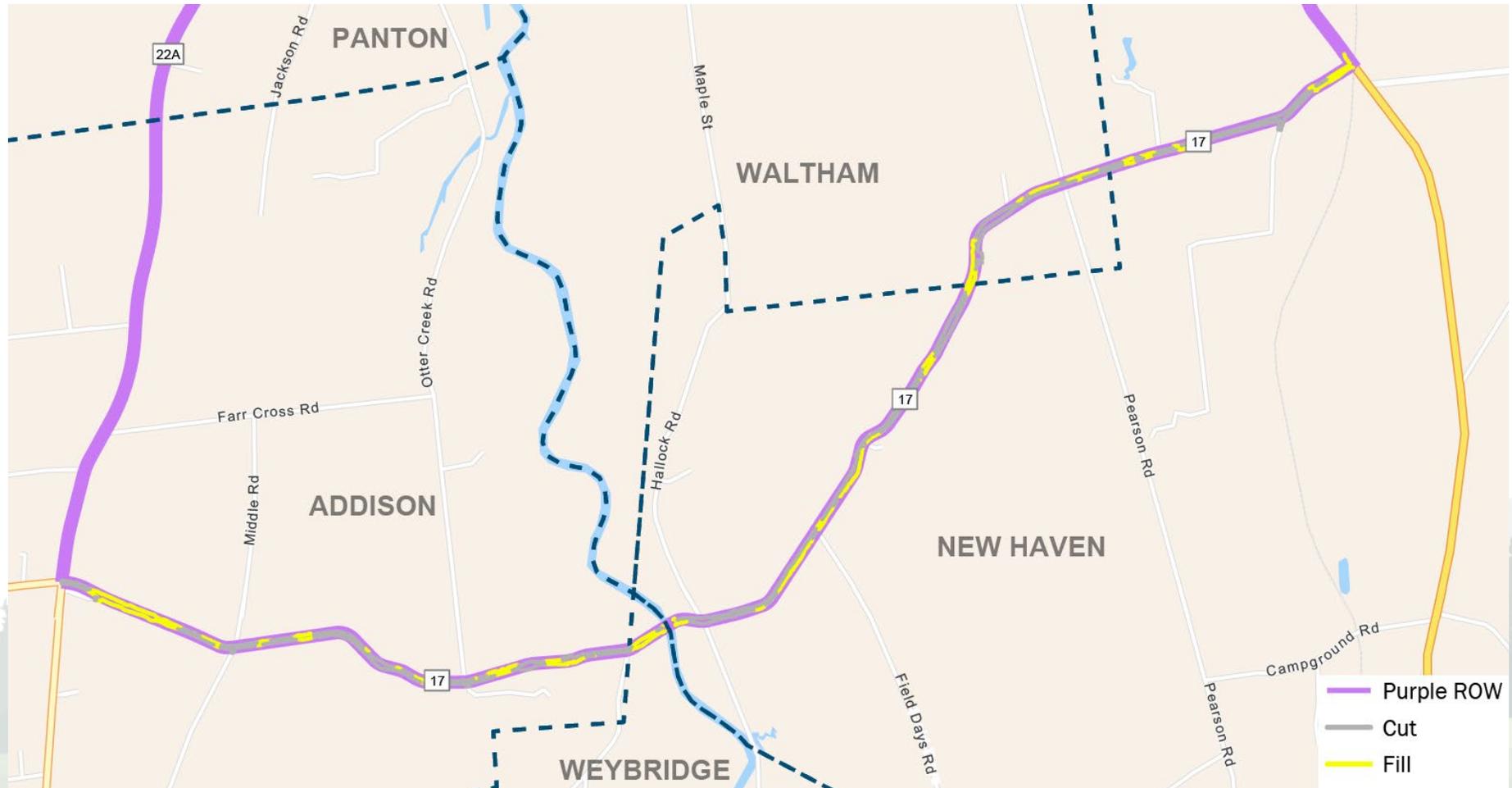


Purple Route

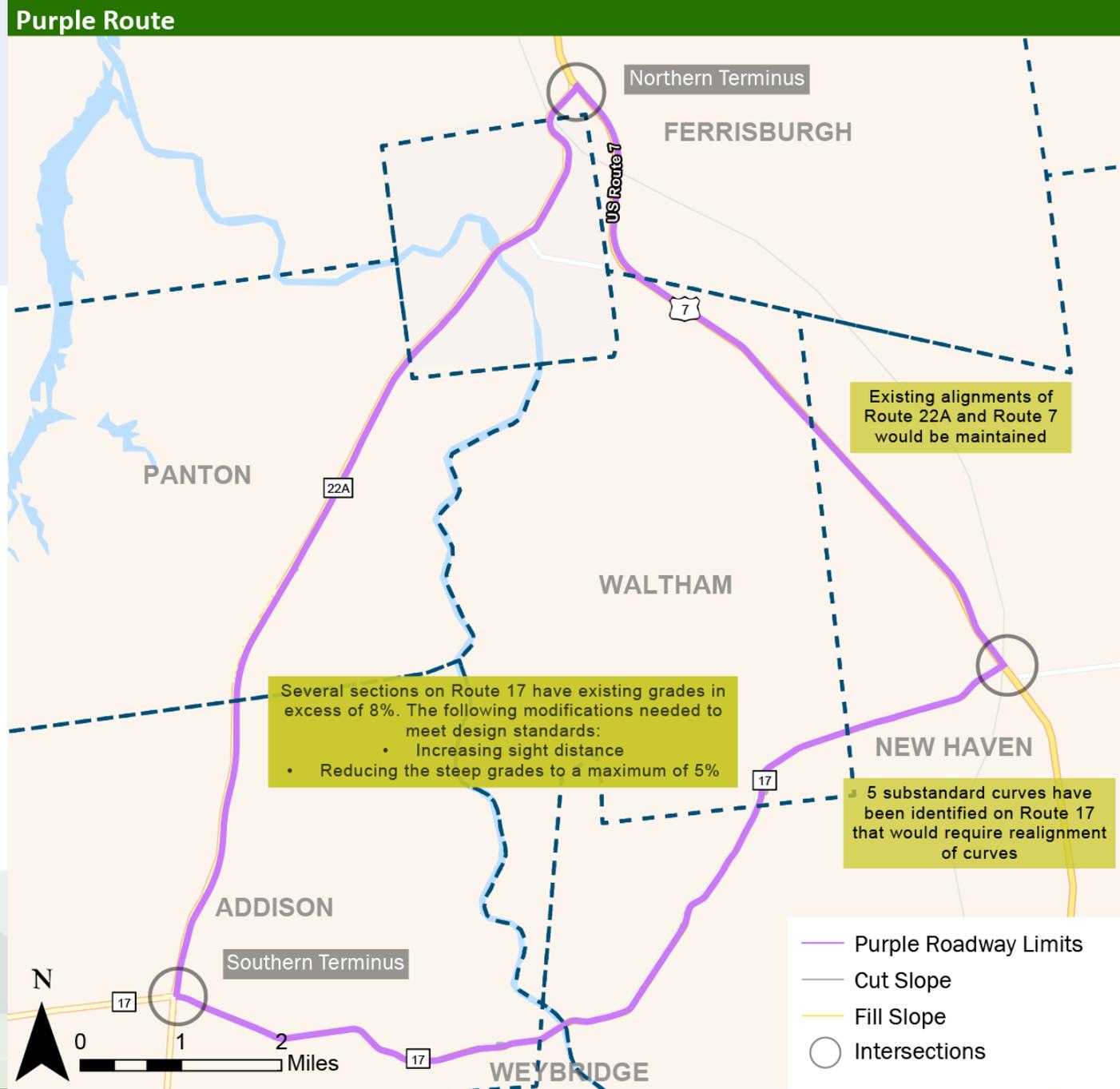
- Shift northbound truck traffic to VT 17 and US 7 and maintain southbound truck trips on VT 22A
- Roadway widenings and intersection improvements along the existing right-of-way on VT 22A and US 7
- Reconstruction of VT 17 to address deficiencies



Visualizations: Purple Route, Route 17



Purple Route Discussion/ Questions?



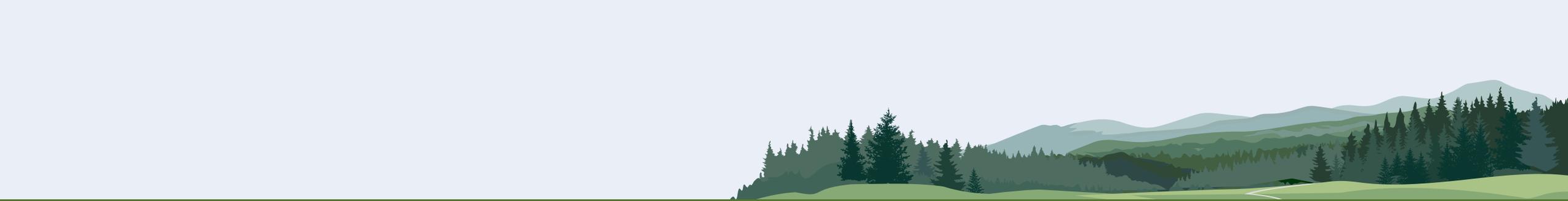
Additional Discussion and Consensus Point

- Summarize changes agreed upon during this meeting
- ***Consensus point:*** Based on your review of the Conceptual Design Technical Memorandum and today's discussion, do you recommend moving the conceptual designs into evaluation during the PEL Study?
- Additional comments unrelated to consensus point due by **January 31**

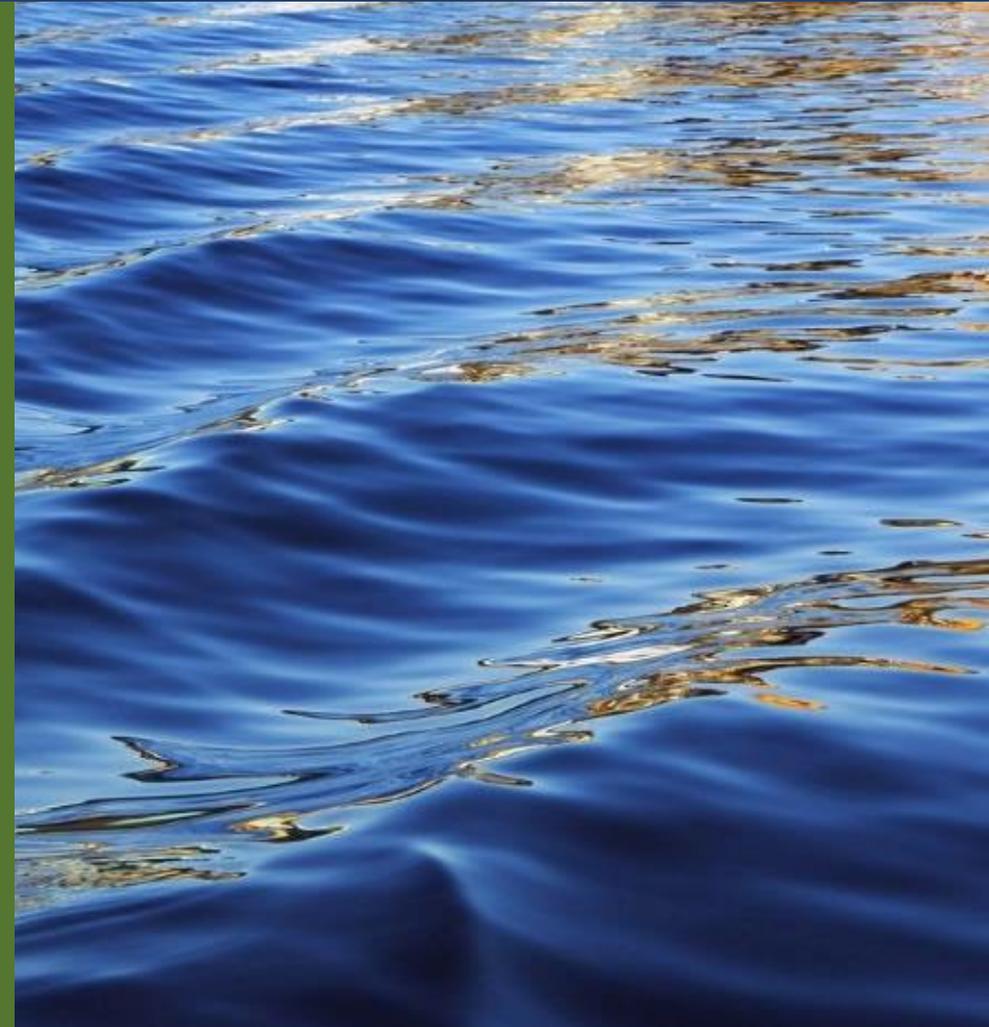
Roll Call

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- Mike Audy, Town of New Haven
- Renny Perry, Vergennes Partnership
- Phil Summers, Addison County Chamber
- Rhonda Williams, Town of Waltham



Public Engagement



Overview

- Survey launched August 17 through September 25
- Goal - Help the Study Team better understand the issues that are important to the public
- Over 900 respondents representing all municipalities potentially affected by these transportation solutions

The screenshot shows the first page of a digital presentation titled "Vergennes PEL Study". The page is numbered "1" and includes a sub-header "Learn about the study before you begin." with an information icon and a right-pointing arrow. A vertical navigation bar on the left is labeled "WELCOME". A vertical navigation bar on the right contains five items: "ROUTE OPTIONS", "TRADE OFFS", "INTERACTIVE MAP", and "WRAP UP", with the first item "ROUTE OPTIONS" being highlighted. The main content area features a large background image of a street scene in Vergennes, Vermont. A text box at the top of the main area asks "What is the Vergennes Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL) Study?" and provides a brief description of the study's purpose. A green "Next" button is located to the right of this text box. Below the main image, there is a smaller text box with a progress indicator (five circles, the first of which is filled) and a paragraph of text. In the bottom right corner, there is a logo for the Vermont Agency of Transportation and the Addison County Area of Regional Cooperation.

1 Vergennes PEL Study
Learn about the study before you begin.

WELCOME

2 ROUTE OPTIONS
3 TRADE OFFS
4 INTERACTIVE MAP
5 WRAP UP

What is the Vergennes Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL) Study?
The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTTrans), in cooperation with the Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC), is evaluating transportation alternatives that reduce the impacts of truck traffic on VT Route 22A and in Downtown Vergennes, while seeking ways to enhance the quality of life and economic vitality for residents in the city and surrounding towns.

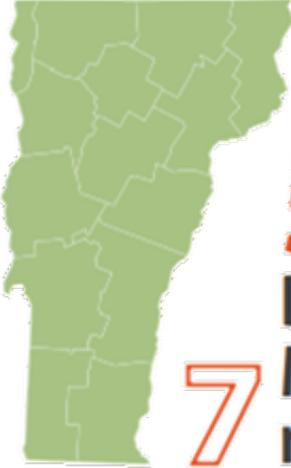
→ Next

Thirteen concepts were identified in previous studies and with stakeholders and the general public in 2022. The concepts were screened using the Purpose and Need in late 2022 and early 2023. Five potential routes plus a No Build (or do nothing) option are being studied further.

VERMONT
AGENCY OF TRANSPORTATION
Addison County Area of Regional Cooperation

Outreach

Survey Report available online:
<https://vergennespel.com/public-outreach/>



5345
Direct
7 Mailers sent to
municipalities
4,339 residents | 195 businesses | 811 PO boxes



3 email blasts sent to stakeholder
contact list of
375+



2 press releases
to area media outlets



**2 regional Front
Porch Forum posts**
*reaching the 7 study
area municipalities*

Community Liaison Engagement: By the Numbers

- **475+** Hours of community engagement, May-December 2023
- **35** Stakeholder meetings
- **50** PEL Team planning and strategy meetings
- **30** Hours working the Addison County Field Days and Vergennes Day exhibits
- **900+** Completed public surveys
- **250+** Attendees at December and January Land Use Workshops
- **300+** Miles traveled on the roads of Addison County

2023 Stakeholder Meetings

- Northlands Job Corps executive team
- Panton Planning Commission
- Six Selectboard Chairs, One Mayor
- Collins Aerospace facility manager
- Addison Housing Works executive director
- Church Street residents
- Addison County legislators
- Vergennes Rotary
- Main Street Vergennes business owners
- Waltham Planning Commission
- Vermont Truck & Bus Association
Government Affairs Director
- ACRPC Transportation Advisory Committee
- Bailey Farm/La Garagista vineyard owners

2024 Stakeholder Meetings

Which stakeholders have we not yet met with?

- Municipal leaders?
- Civic and religious organizations?
- Individual property owners?
- Neighborhood groups?
- Businesses?
- Trucking companies?
- Bike and ped groups?
- Dairy farmers?

Key Accomplishments

- **Awareness** of the PEL Study increased significantly in 2023
 - ✓ Release of the Public Survey
 - ✓ Publication of the Route Maps
 - ✓ Individual Stakeholder meetings
 - ✓ Coverage in *The Addison Independent*
- **Anxiety** over potential property impacts is transitioning to engagement with the PEL process
 - ✓ Example: Church Street neighborhood bordering Ferrisburgh, Waltham, and Vergennes
 - ✓ Example: Bailey Farm vineyard on 22A in Panton
- People are **deeply vested** in the PEL Study's outcome
 - ✓ Turnout at the Green Route land use workshop far exceeded expectations

Key Questions

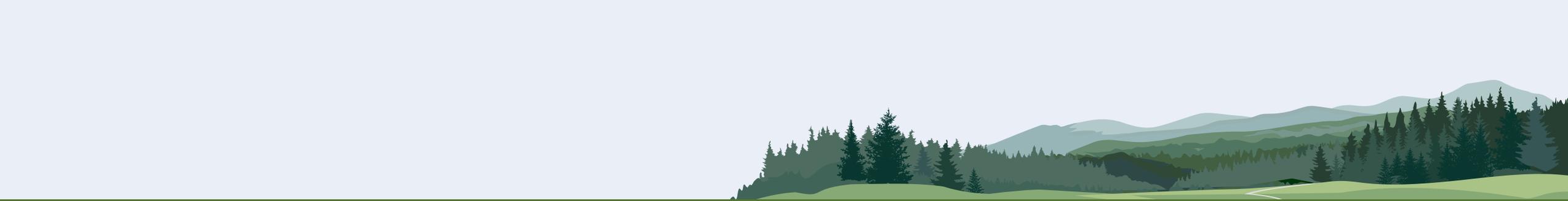
- Impact of a truck route on **Vergennes Businesses** is a concern for some
 - There remains divided opinion on whether a truck route would harm downtown businesses
- Lack of understanding about the PEL Study's **Final Recommendation**
 - Who makes the decision?
 - How many options will be on the table after this study?
 - How and when it will be made?
 - What happens after that?

Key Questions

- **Road Safety** is a concern for ALL who live on or travel VT 22A and VT 17
 - ✓ How might a truck route improve road safety on state highways extending north and east from Addison Four Corners to Route 7?
- **Consensus** among all seven communities seems unlikely. "This is a Vergennes problem" is a commonly heard refrain.
 - ✓ There is the sentiment that the PEL Study has pitted one community against another
 - ✓ Given widespread concern with road safety on VT 22A and VT 17, how do we promote a shared approach to a shared problem? What are the tangible benefits of collaboration?
 - ✓ How might Policy Committee members facilitate productive, collaborative discussion among the seven communities during the final, critical stages of the PEL Study?

2024 Engagement Priorities

- Meet 1:1 with **Policy Committee** members to discuss concerns, questions, and recommendations for 2024
- **Engage with** Vergennes-area business owners—as well as downtown cultural, religious, and civic organizations—to quantify support for/against a truck route
- Continue **productive discussions** with impacted property owners/concerned citizens
- **Engage and encourage** municipal leaders to collaborate in the final phases of the PEL Study



Next Steps



What Comes Next?

Technical Work

Transportation and Land Use Integration

- Local land use controls/zoning, economic conditions and growth trends, environmental constraints

Evaluation of Concepts

- Traffic impacts, multi-modal considerations
- Environmental impacts – wetlands, floodplains, habitats, noise

Implementation Plan

- Land use regulations
- Funding and financing

Outreach Activities

Land Use
Visioning

Public
Engagement

Expectations of Policy Committee over Next Year

- Meet with Community Liaison, Jim Gish
- Listen to stakeholder's input and concerns
- Consider areas of representation as well as the needs of the region as a whole
- Talk to each other to help gain consensus
- Review and provide consensus for transportation and land use scenarios
- Review and provide consensus for route evaluations

Levels of Consensus

1. I like it, am on board and can easily accept this decision.

2. I accept this decision but may have some questions/points to clarify at a later time.

3. I can live with this decision even though it may not be my preferred option.

4. I don't agree but I will not block this decision.

5. I loathe it and cannot accept this decision.

Source: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/levels-consensus-group-decision-making-success-leah-mether/>



Other comments and wrapping up



Remaining items on the agenda

- Other comments from Policy Committee
- Public Comment Period
- Close Meeting

We welcome your input and appreciate your feedback. Please visit <https://vergennespel.com/> to join our email list for Study updates

Please visit email us at vergennespel@gmail.com for further information or to contact the study team
Reminder – Please send additional comments by email by January 31