

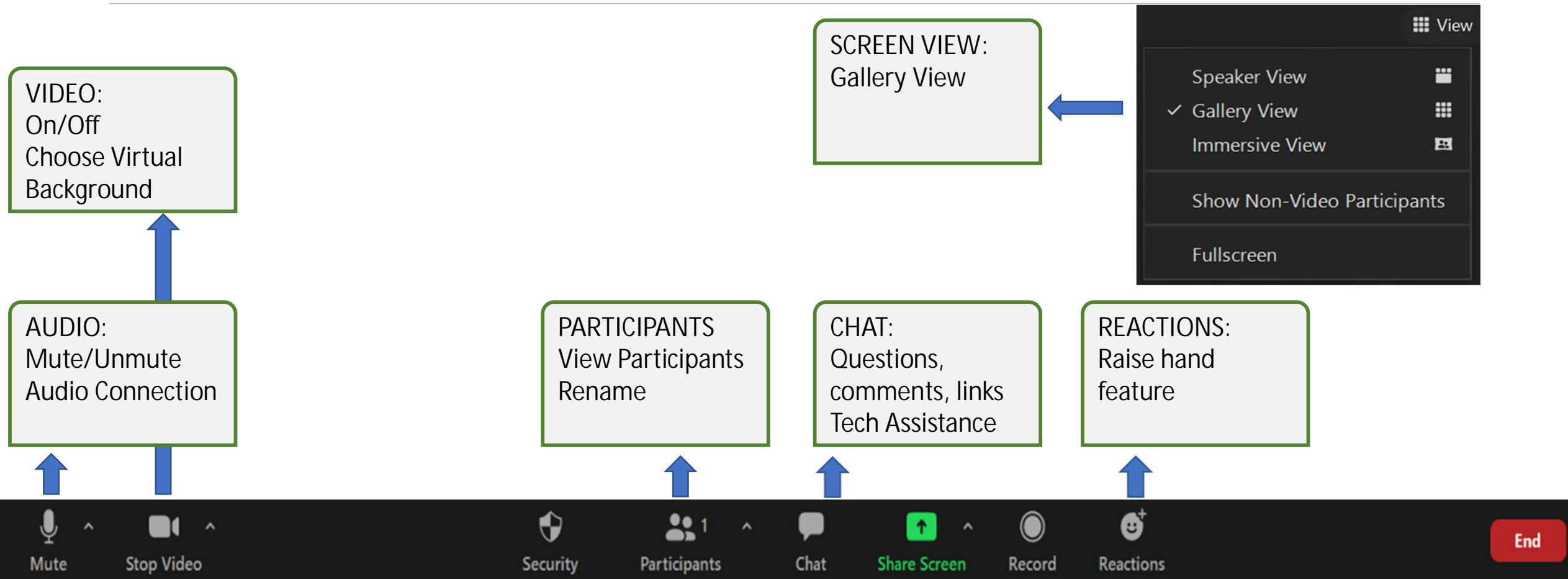
Vergennes Planning and Environment Linkages Study: Concepts Development and Screening

Policy Committee

December 21, 2022



Zoom Orientation



Roll Call – Policy Committee

VOTING members

- Chair: Adam Lougee, ACRPC
- Bill Smith, Vermont Truck and Bus Association
- Brian Shupe, VNRC
- Brent Rakowski, ACRPC TAC
- Clark Hinsdale, Town of Ferrisburgh
- Diane Lanpher, State Rep. from Vergennes, Ferrisburg, Waltham, Panton and Addison
- Dickie Austin, City of Vergennes
- Harvey Smith, State Rep. from New Haven, Weybridge and Bridport
- Ian Huizenga, 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, Ferrisburg, Waltham, Panton and Addison
- Mike Audy, Town of New Haven
- Renny Perry, Vergennes Partnership
- Phil Summers, Addison County Chamber
- Tim Glassberg, Town of Waltham

Roll Call – Policy Committee

NON-VOTING members

- Chris Jolly, FHWA
- Elizabeth Shipley, FHWA
- Mike Winslow, ACRPC
- Jacqueline DeMent, VTrans
- Joel Perrigo, VTrans

Will become voting member in January

- Jubilee McGill, State Rep. Elect from New Haven, Weybridge and Bridport

Quorum is 50% of appointed members

Consensus when possible

Voting when consensus not possible

Document dissenting views

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Changes to the Agenda
4. Roles and Responsibilities
5. PEL Study Goals
6. Concepts Proposed for Further Study
7. Feedback on Concepts
8. Next Steps
9. Policy Committee Comments
10. Public Comment Period
11. Adjourn

V E R G E N N E S

Planning & Environment Linkages (PEL) Study



VTrans and Study Team Role



Vermont Agency of Transportation

Role

Fund and manage study, consider study conclusions and recommendation of the Policy Committee on how to proceed with implementation, approve next steps as relevant

Members

VTrans Leadership



Study Team

Role

Guide study, write memos and engage stakeholders to provide information for the Technical Committee to consider

Members

VTrans Project Manager – Katharine Otto

Team includes VTrans, ACRPC, WSP, and D&K staff

Other Roles



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, and municipalities



Agency Coordination

Role

Guide coordination activities through the duration of the study with interested, involved agencies that may be likely cooperating and participating agencies under NEPA

Members

Likely Cooperating and Likely Participating Agencies



General Public

Role

Provide local input, knowledge, and preferences to support the technical work and decision-making process

Members

Residents of Vergennes and the surrounding communities, businesses in the region, the trucking industry

Your role



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.

What are we trying to achieve at this Policy Committee meeting?

We are NOT looking for a decision today!

Today we would like to

- Share updates on the study since the committee last met in February
- Give high level overview of feedback we've heard this fall
- Seek your feedback
- Give information about where to find more details
- Help you prepare to make a decision at the next meeting (in February)?

1



PEL Study Goals



What is a Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL) study?

- PEL is a collaborative approach to transportation decision-making that considers environmental, community, and economic goals
- The goal of PEL is collaboration with stakeholders to better inform and accelerate a project moving forward and being built



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

Goal is for region to come to consensus on path forward

- VTrans and ACRPC role in PEL study is to facilitate regional process, NOT to decide path forward
- In absence of consensus from the region, change is unlikely



Summer 2021 - Winter 2022

Task : Project Kick-Off and Scope Refinement

Task 2: Purpose and Need Statement



Winter 2022 – Winter 2023

Task 3: Alternatives Initial Screening



Winter 2023 – Summer/ Fall 2023

Task 4: Alternatives/ Concept
Refinement

Task 5: Integrated Transportation &
Land Use Alternatives

Task 6: Alternatives Evaluation &
Recommendations



Fall 2023 – Summer 2024

Task 7: Implementation Plan

Task 8: PEL Report

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.



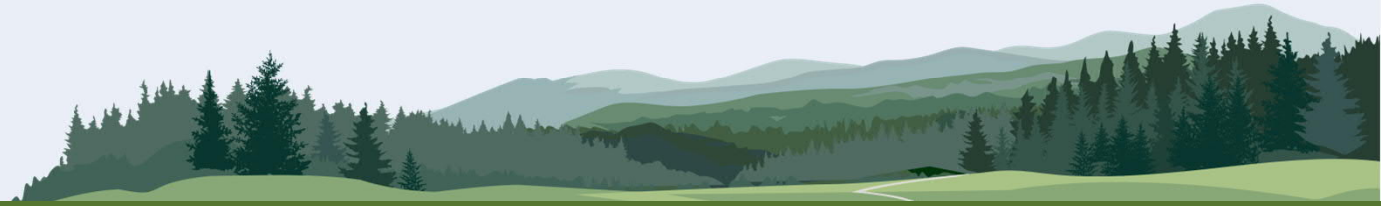
Quality of Life: Improve the quality of life and minimize negative property and environmental resource impacts in downtown Vergennes and neighboring communities.



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.



Initial Screening of Concepts for Further Study



Long List of Concepts

- Consider an exhaustive list of concepts that may address the Purpose and Need of the Study
- Obtain input from the public on all concepts being considered prior to screening



"Long" List of Concepts Types



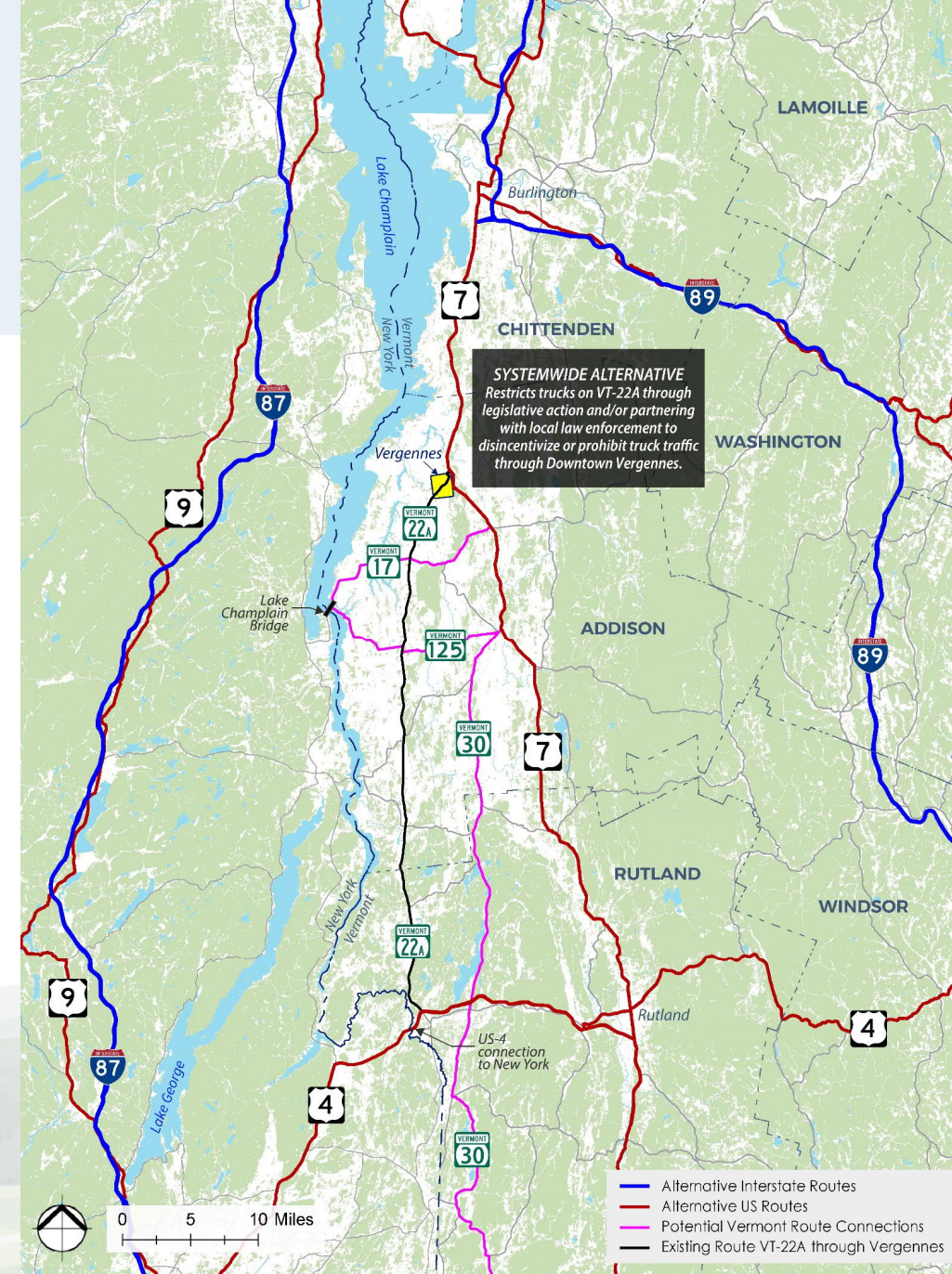
Long List of Concepts Types:

- ✓ Existing Road Concepts
- ✓ VT 22A Corridor Concepts
- ✓ New Road Concepts
- ✓ Other Freight Modes

Existing Road Concepts



- Utilize network of existing roads to shift trucks to other highways:
 - VT Routes 17, 30, and 125
 - US Routes 4, 7 and 9
 - Interstates I-87 and I-89
- May include:
 - Physical improvements to existing roadways to accommodate truck traffic
 - Restricting and/or prohibiting trucks on Rte. 22A
 - Truck wayfinding/routing



VT 22A Corridor Concepts



- Continue to permit trucks on VT Route 22A
- Would require additional VT Route 22A improvements:
 - Reconstruction/widening of Route 22A outside Vergennes to accommodate truck traffic
 - Traffic calming and multi-modal improvements on Route 22A through downtown Vergennes
- “No-Build” scenario
 - Advances only already planned Route 22A projects
- Blended Concept
 - Leverages existing roadways and VT 22A



Above: Pedestrian flashing beacons in downtown Vergennes



Curb bulb-out and new pedestrian signal in downtown Vergennes
Src: ACRPC

Other Freight Modes



- Transitioning truck freight cargo to rail or water modes
- Considerations for “Smart Freight” concepts such as electric vehicles (EVs) and Connected and Autonomous vehicles (CAVs)



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

Draft Screening Criteria: Applying to Long List of Concepts

Alternatives were screened using a “rating” system under each criteria:

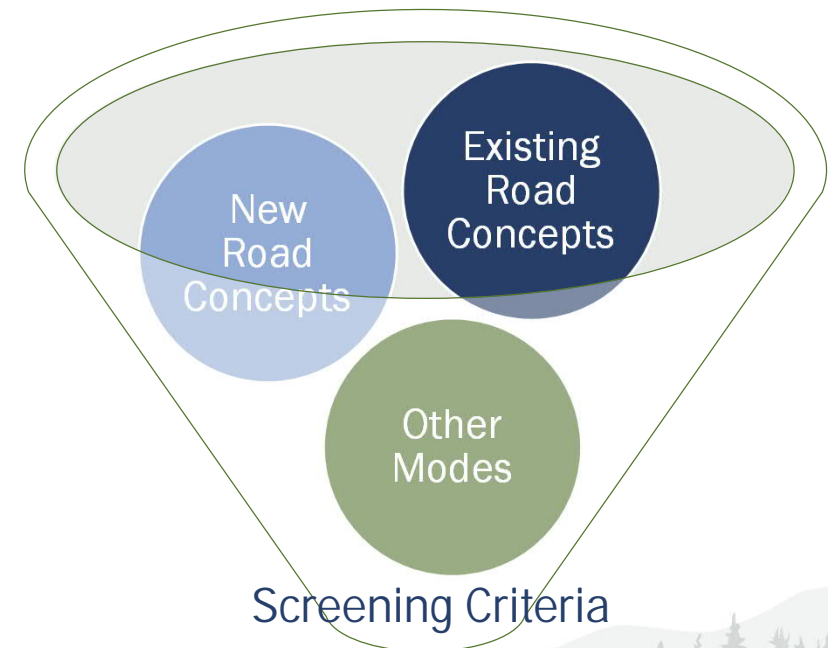
Substantial Positive Effect **++**

Some Positive Effect **+**

Neutral **○**

Some Negative Effect **--**

Substantial Negative Effect **---**



Short List of Concepts

Concepts Proposed for Further Study

Concept Screening Results	Systemwide	VT-17 / Route 7	VT-22A Corridor Improvements	VT-17 Northbound/VT-22A Southbound (Purple)	Panton-Ferrisburgh New Roadway (West Routing Option 1) (Red)	Vergennes New Roadway (West Routing Option 2) (Light Blue)	Vergennes New Roadway (West Routing Option 3) (Pink)	Vergennes-Panton New Roadway (West Routing Option 4) (Dark Blue)	Panton-Vergennes-Waltham New Roadway (Southeast Routing) (Green)	Vergennes Main Street New Parallel Route (Orange)	Rail Mode Options	Water Mode Options	Smart Freight Solutions
Total Score	5	1	-3	6	1	5	5	7	0	6	0	-7	5
Meets Purpose and Need and No Fatal Flaws	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No



Feedback on Initial Screening and Concepts



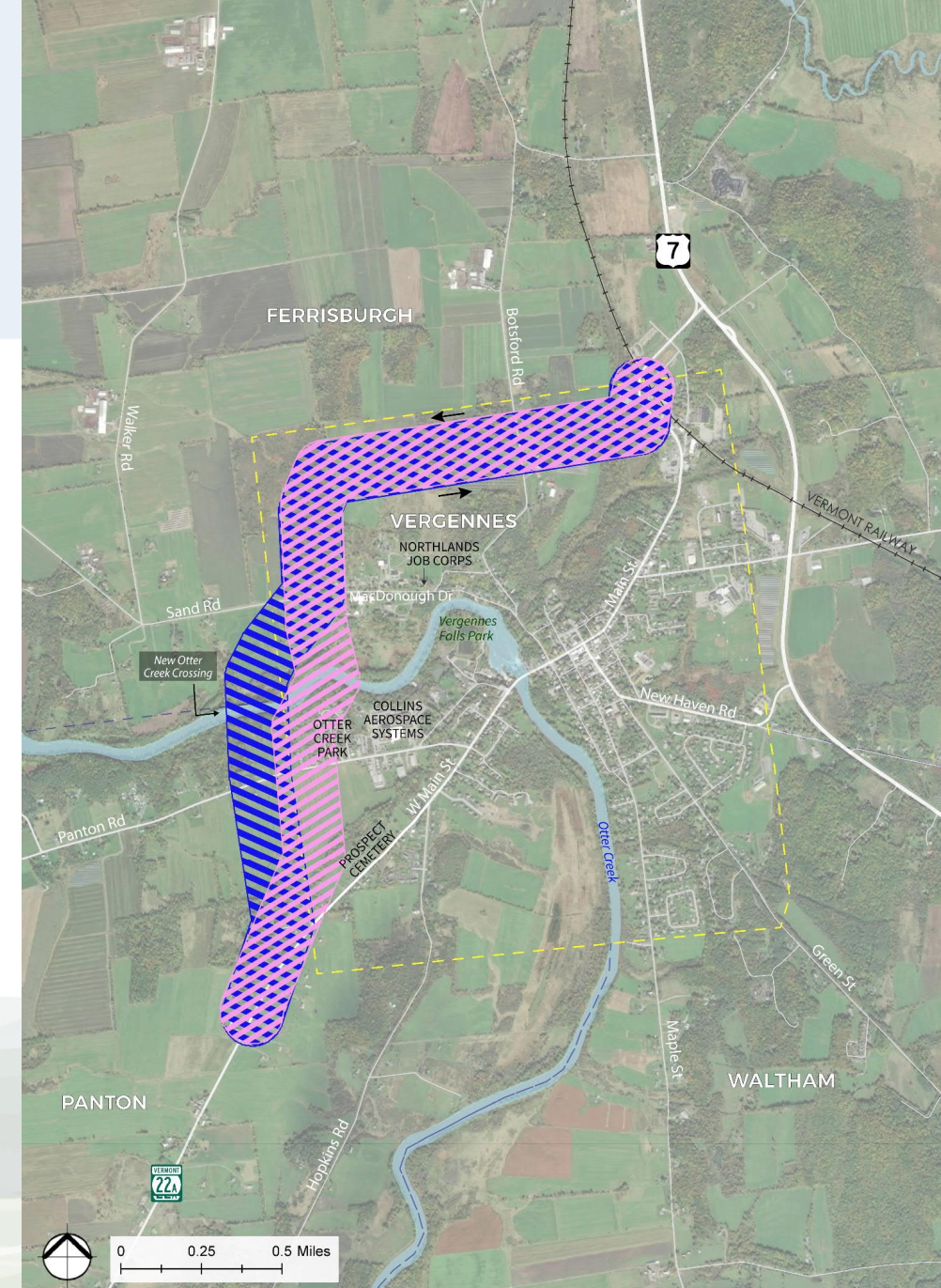
Recent and Upcoming Meetings

- 10/4 onwards – Selectboard and City Council meetings
- 10/11 – Technical Committee meeting
- 10/17 – Agency Coordination meeting
- 11/3 – Public meeting
- 11/10 – Technical Committee and Agency Coordination meeting
- 12/21 – Policy Committee meeting
- TBD [January] – Technical Committee and Agency Coordination meeting
- TBD [February] – Policy Committee meeting



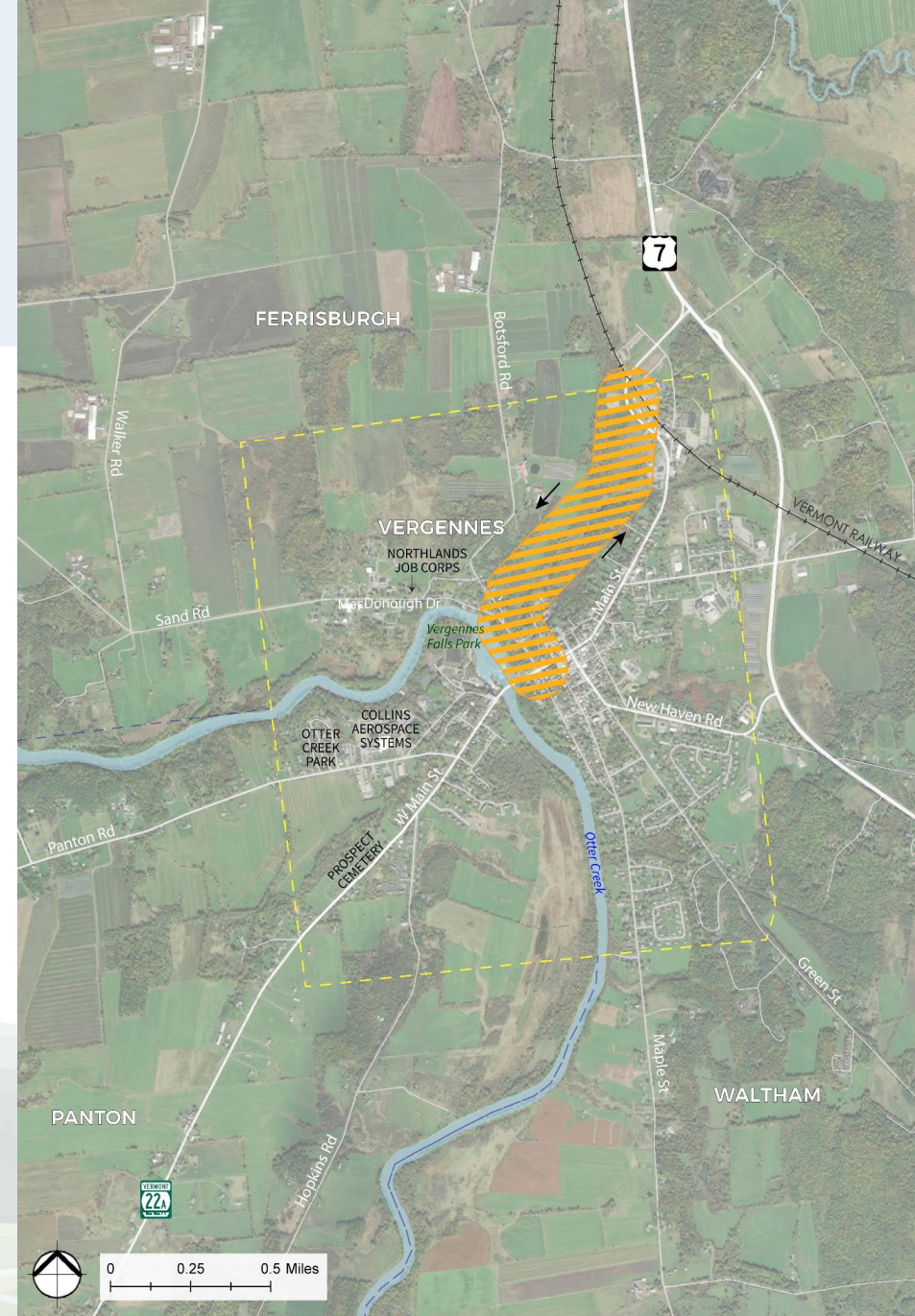
Vergennes-Panton New Roadway [Blue and Pink routes] Feedback

- Concept proposed for further study due to total score
- Potential to stay closer to Vergennes
- Supported during the public meeting
 - Avoids moving truck traffic to another community
 - Redundancy of Otter Creek crossing
 - Potential for additional housing
- Concerns raised at Panton Selectboard
 - New road concept goes into the Town of Panton, which is not compatible with the existing agricultural land uses.
 - Noise and engineering challenges of high bridge over Otter Creek
- Policy Committee, do you have any additional feedback?



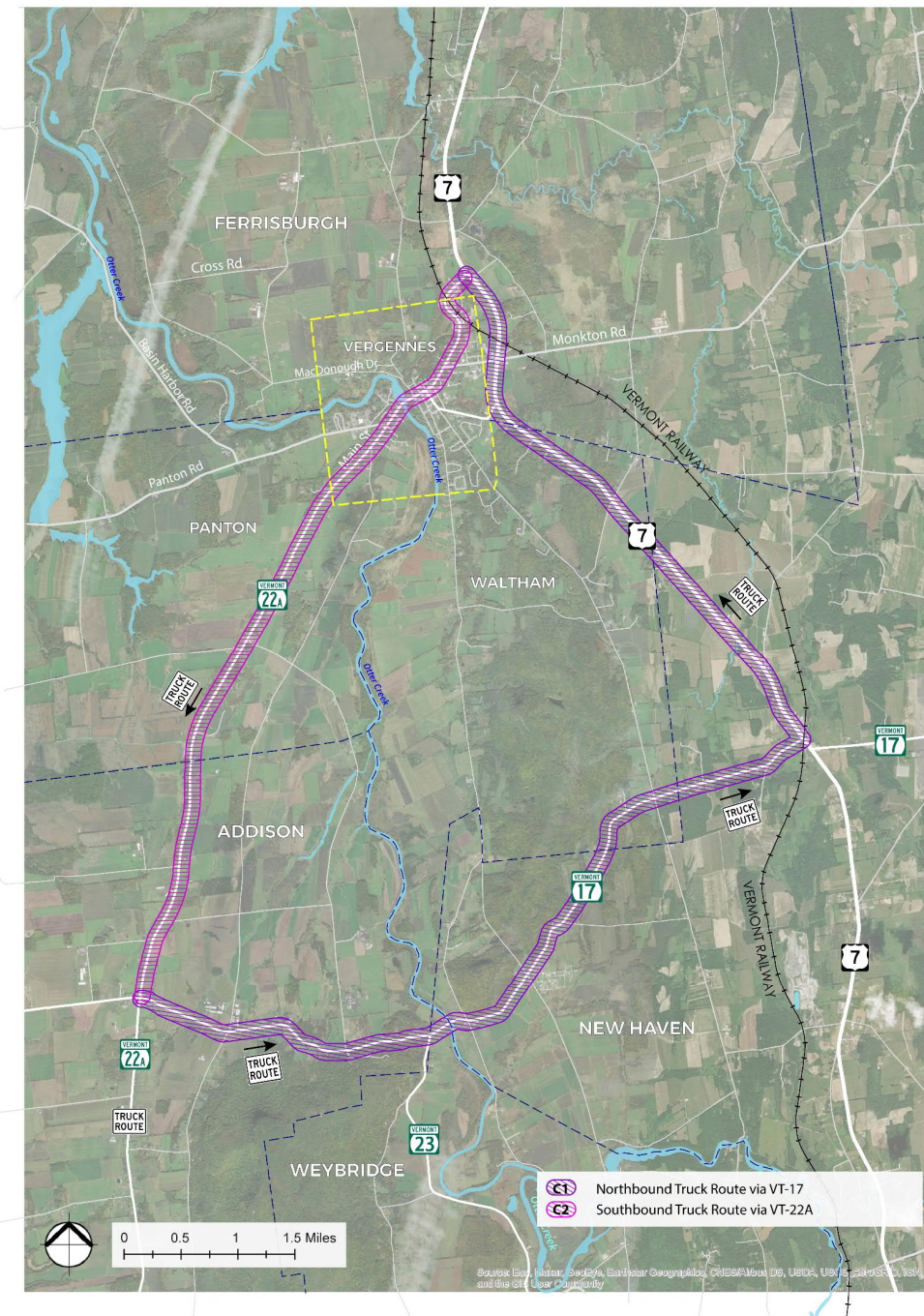
Vergennes Main Street New Parallel Route [Orange route] Feedback

- Concept proposed for further study due to total score
- Emerged during May public workshop as a concept that keeps benefits and impacts entirely within Vergennes
- No support heard during fall outreach
- Concerns raised at the Technical Committee and public meeting
 - Topographic challenges along MacDonough Drive
 - Intersection improvements at MacDonough Drive/Main Street
 - Does not provide a new Otter Creek crossing
 - Would not reduce noise impacts
- Policy Committee, do you have any additional feedback?



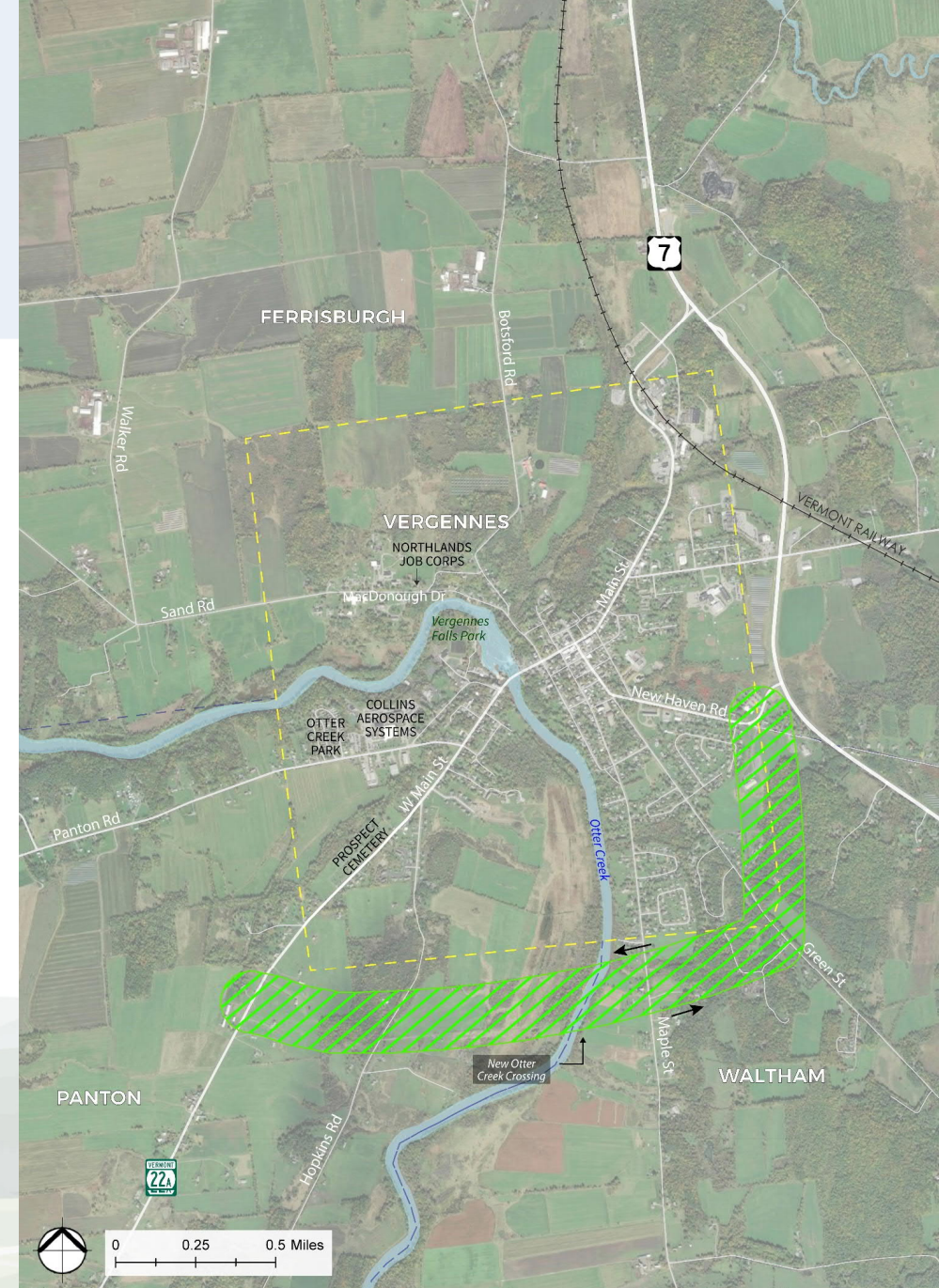
VT-17 Northbound/VT 22A Southbound [Purple route] Feedback

- Concept proposed for further study due to total score
- Support from agencies and public because of use of existing roadways and does not require new infrastructure
- Concerns raised by selectboards and during the public meeting
 - Challenges to making the routes safe for truck travel
 - Many slow-moving agricultural vehicles
 - Route 7/17 intersection challenges include railroad crossing and hill
 - Does not truly mitigate truck traffic; moves the problem to other communities
 - Would result in environmental impacts along Route 17 corridor
 - Enforcement could be a challenge
- Policy Committee, do you have any additional feedback?



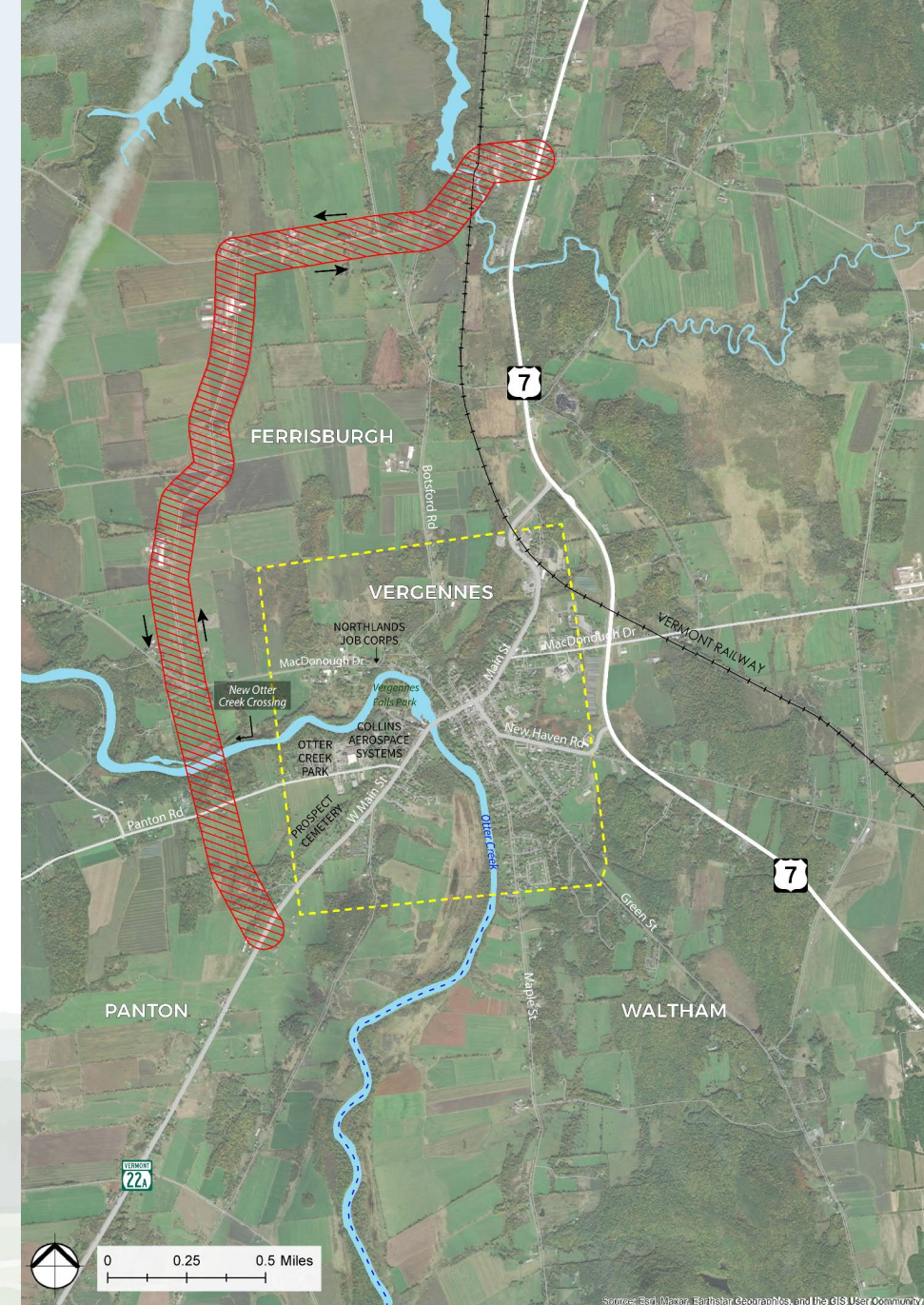
Panton-Vergennes-Waltham New Roadway (Southeast Routing) [Green route] Feedback

- Concept proposed for dismissal due to total score
- Issues raised during public and selectboard meetings
 - Wetland and topographic issues
 - Proximity to school and housing
 - New road concept goes into the Towns of Panton and Waltham, which is not compatible with the existing land uses
- Public meeting had some support for further study
 - Provides redundancy with new bridge
 - New bridge would not need to be tall enough to accommodate sail boats
 - Is a better option than the orange route?
- Policy Committee, do you have any additional feedback?



Panton-Ferrisburgh New Roadway Route (West Routing 1) [Red route] Feedback

- Concept proposed for dismissal due to total score
- Concerns raised during selectboard meeting
 - New road concept goes into the Towns of Panton and Ferrisburgh, which is not compatible with the existing agricultural land use
 - Proximity to school
- Public meeting had marginal support for further study
 - Reasons unknown
- Policy Committee, do you have any additional feedback?





Next Steps

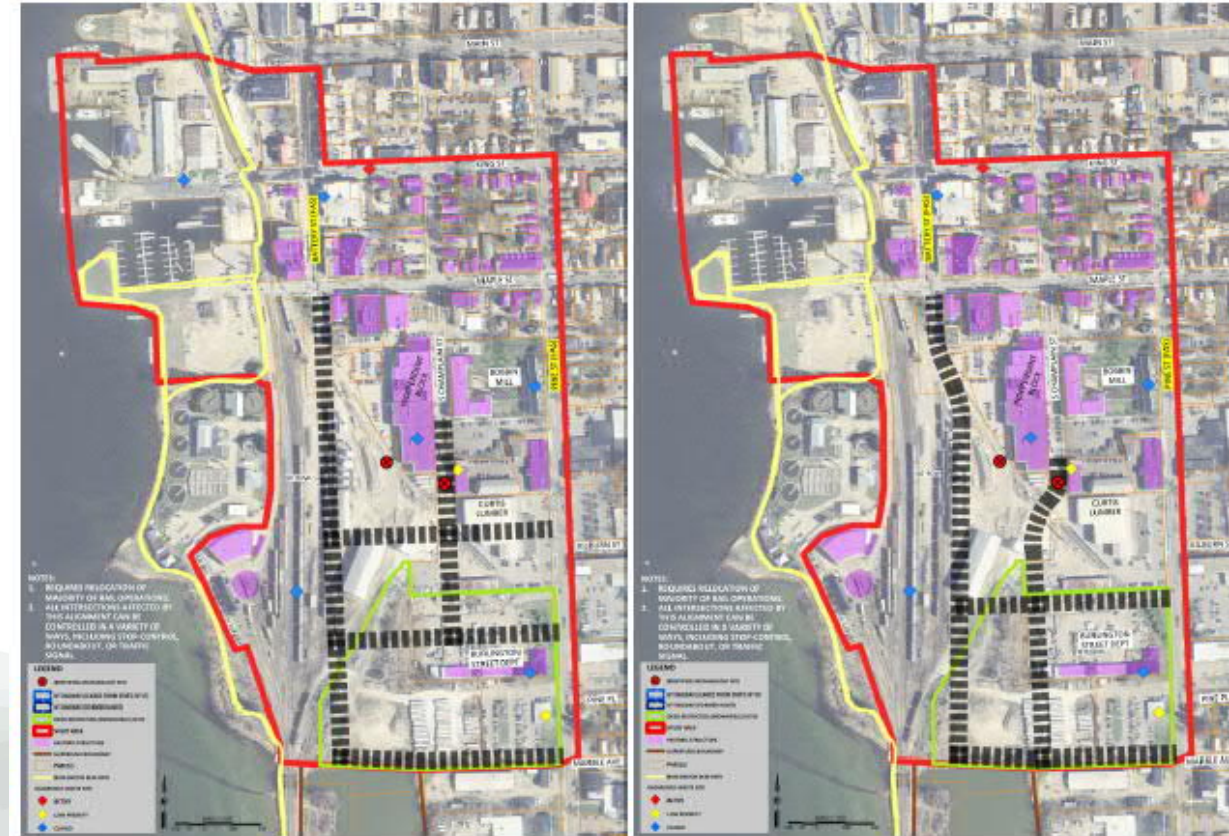


Secondary Screening (working on now)

- New roadway concept alignments with a 1,000-foot buffer as 'swath'

Key items for analysis:

- Topographic challenges
- Historic/Cultural resources
- Wetlands
- Agricultural soils
- Wildlife habitat
- Endangered species
- Floodplains
- River corridors
- Protected lands/6(f) properties
- Potential displacements
- Underserved populations
- Hazardous/contaminated soils



Comments/Concerns Raised that will be Considered in Next Steps

Conceptual Engineering

- Consider historic site impacts and cemetery boundaries
- Historic site impacts including vibrations
- Noise of potential new tall bridge
- How close is too close for Otter Creek Mobile Home Park?
- How many homes and properties could be impacted?
- Passing lanes on Route 17
- Keep the solution as close to the problem as possible so that additional issues are not added

Land Use Visioning

- Vergennes is looking at neighborhood designation
- Vergennes pursuing ANR funding for water and sewer upgrades
- Sewer and water capacity
- How do we preserve the character of Panton's gateway?
- Downtown vitality is important – is a limited access highway the only option to limit negative economic impacts?

Comments/Concerns Raised that will be Considered in Next Steps

Public Outreach and Engagement

- How do we bring people up to speed with the project?
- How do we provide context and frame expectations?
- How do we ensure we continue to reach a wide audience going forward?
- How do we encourage voices who feel unheard?

Other topics we have on our radar

- Town boundary discussion
- Route 22A bridge at the dam
- Routing trucks different ways in different directions



Current and Next Steps

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER

Study team incorporates comments into technical memo and starts secondary screening



DECEMBER (Today!)



Policy Committee meeting to review study progress



JANUARY

Joint Technical Committee and Agency Partner Meeting to review final concepts recommended for further study



FEBRUARY



Policy Committee review and come to consensus on concepts recommended for further study

Where can I find out more?

- Frequently Asked Questions – anticipated to be published on the website by the end of the year
- [Public Meeting Recording \(11/3/2022\)](#)
- [Vergennes PEL Study Concepts Overview \(10/11/2022 update\)](#)
- [Technical Committee and Agency Coordination Meeting Presentation \(11/10/2022\)](#)
- Other documents published in <https://vergennespel.com/study-documents/>

Reach out if you have specific questions or concerns – we'd be happy to email or meet!

What should I expect at the next Policy Committee meeting?

Come prepared to come to consensus on which concepts move forward for further study (conceptual design and land use visioning).

Before the meeting

- Reach out if you have questions and concerns
- Review the documents we share approximately one week before the next Policy Committee meeting
- Dig into some of the additional resources shared in the “Where can I find out more?” slide
- As relevant, reach out to people in your constituency

What does consensus mean?

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.

This is our goal for everyone

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/>

What Comes Next?

Technical Work

Outreach Activities

Concept Engineering

- Design constraints including existing ROW and land use, environmental resources, location of adjacent roadways, municipal boundaries

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

Public
Workshops
Spring 2023

Land Use
Visioning
Summer/Fall
2023

Public Workshop
Fall 2023

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, to submit comments or to contact the Study team.