



# Vergennes Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL) Study: Land Use Visioning Workshop

Orange Route

December 4, 2023



# Quick ice-breakers!

We'd love to get a feel for who is in the room!

Please raise your hand when something applies to you!

- Practice - What do you prefer?

- Pumpkin pie? Or pecan pie?

- Where do you live?

- Vergennes? One of the other 6 study communities? Somewhere else?

- Where do you work?

- Vergennes? One of the other 6 study communities? Somewhere else?

# Introductions



Katharine Otto  
VTrans



Dan Mallach  
Land Use Task Lead



Ken Robie  
Dubois & King



Jim Gish  
Community Liaison



Mike Winslow  
ACRPC

## What will we be doing today? What is “Land Use Visioning”?

Understand  
your priorities

Identify  
opportunities

Visualize a  
constructed  
**Orange Route**

### **What if** the Orange Route is built?

- How would you like the land around it to be used?
- Homes? Businesses? Open space? Farmland?
- How would you like the area to feel?

# Today's Agenda

- Presentation

- PEL Study context
- Land Use context

- Workshop

- Assuming the **Orange Route** is built, how would you like the land around it to be used and to feel?

- Report back

- Next steps

- Hear comments related to the routes in general



# Study Overview



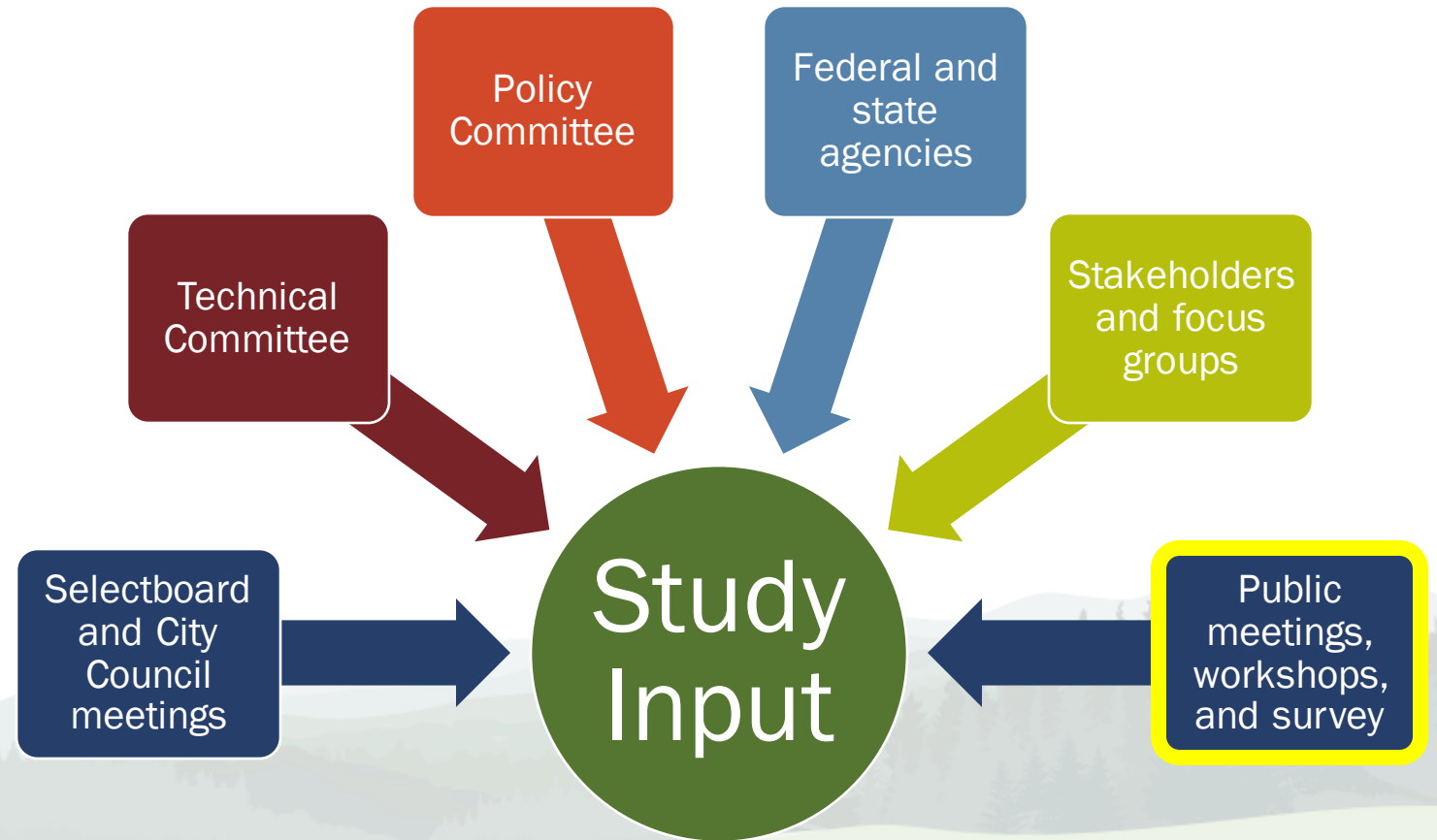
# Why are we doing a PEL Study in and around Vergennes?

- Previous studies indicated regional agreement that truck volume in downtown Vergennes should be addressed.
- This PEL Study allows us to go:
  - Wider in our outreach and engagement
  - Deeper into details, including conceptual design and land use visioning
- This PEL Study is the "last word" on a potential alternative truck route.
- If a road solution moves forward, the work of the PEL Study can help to streamline a future review process.



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

- PEL is a federal process that takes a collaborative approach to better inform and accelerate a project if it moves forward toward being built





# 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.*



# Potential Concepts



# 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.



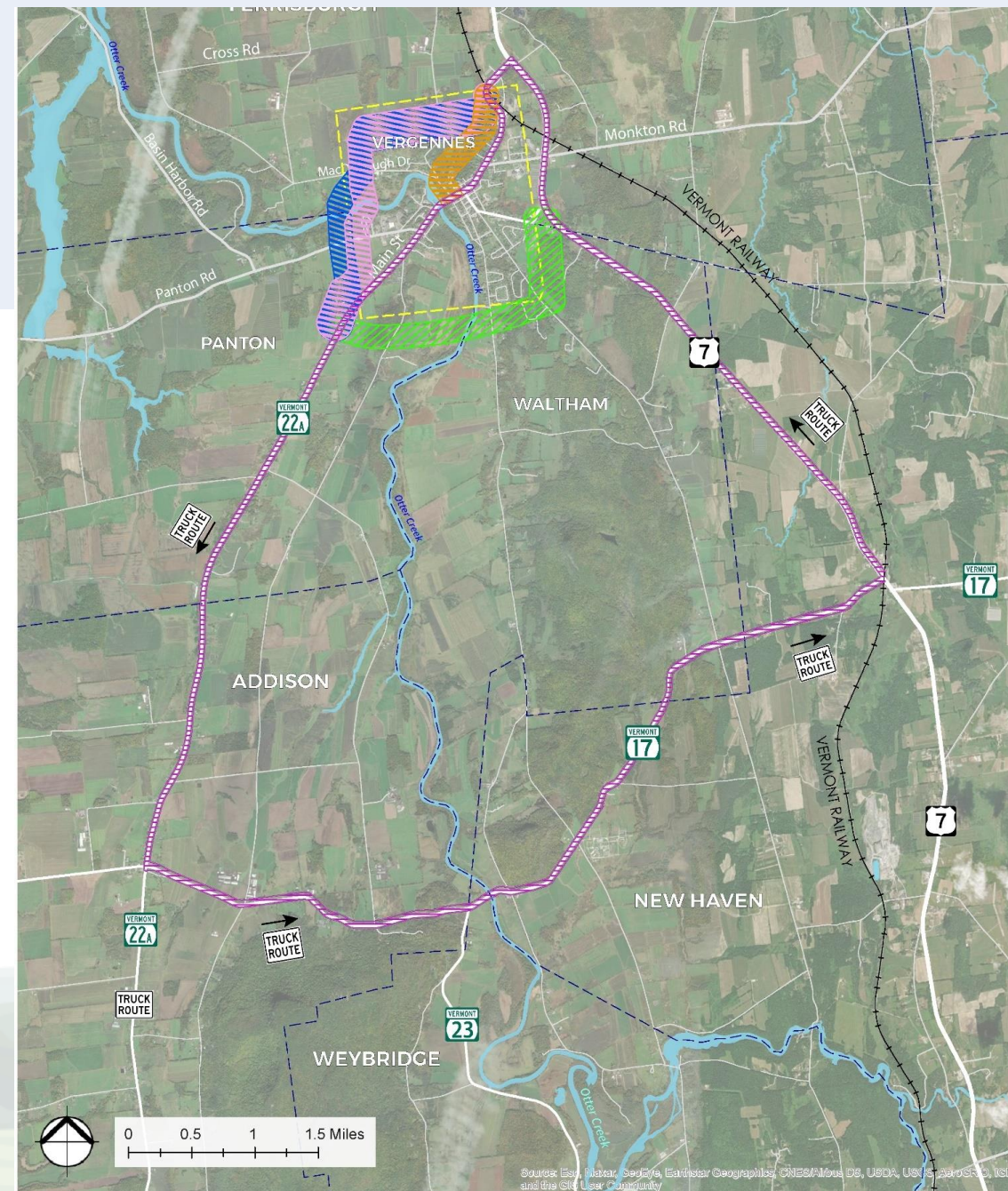
**Land Use:** Support local and regional land use plans and policies and state land use goals.



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

# Transportation Solutions Being Studied

- 4 new roadways
- 1 concept to improve an existing roadway, Route 17
- A "No Build" option
- All routes have trade offs
  - Today's focus is on land use, specifically around the **Orange Route**
  - Future tasks will evaluate all transportation solutions



# Orange Route

Strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities

- Steep gradients → rebuild road section
- Property impacts
- No new bridge
- Close to existing impact area; entirely within Vergennes
- ... and more!



## Orange Route – What we're hearing

- Survey respondents were asked to rate each route option and the No Build on a scale of 1 to 5 stars
  - Orange route received the most 1-star and 2-star ratings
- Comments related to:
  - The new routes proximity to downtown and near dense residential area in Vergennes
  - Whether the route reduces truck impacts
  - Existing challenges at MacDonough Drive and Main Street intersection
  - No new bridge
  - Could have the least sprawl/impact to open land due to small project area and proximity to downtown
  - Route would concentrate traffic near recreational spaces and access to Otter Creek

# Visualizations





**Land + Use:  
Planning From the Ground Up**





# Land Use Visualization Timeline



# When we talk about Land Use... what is “Land”?



## Rocks and Soils

- Where, how and what to build
- Suitability for types of agriculture
- Local materials
- Soil erosion control

## Waterways and Wetlands

- Flood risk management
- Biodiversity
- Carbon sequestration

## Slopes and Contours

- Sun/ wind orientation
- Construction types
- Drainage patterns
- Forms viewsheds

## Forests and Fields

- Natural resources
- Stewardship
- Habitat blocks
- Scenic views

## When we talk about Land Use... what is “Land”?

- Land means different things to different people!
- Land includes the history, day-to-day connections, and plans for tomorrow
- Features of the land guide where, how, and what to build, and how we experience "place"
- Important land elements are considered by state and federal agencies during planning and environmental review

*Topic for tonight:*  
**What does land  
mean to you?**

# Land Use Trade Off Survey Questions

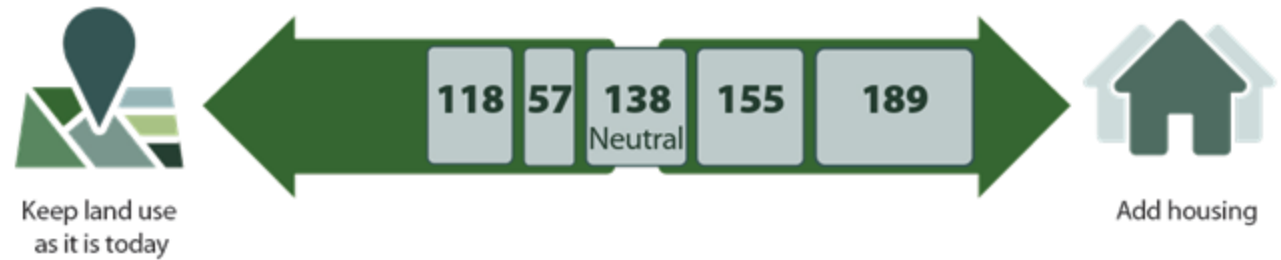
- Trade off questions focused on the area near the police station
- If a new route is built, survey respondents were asked their preference to:
  - keep land uses as they are today
  - add housing
  - add commercial or industrial uses



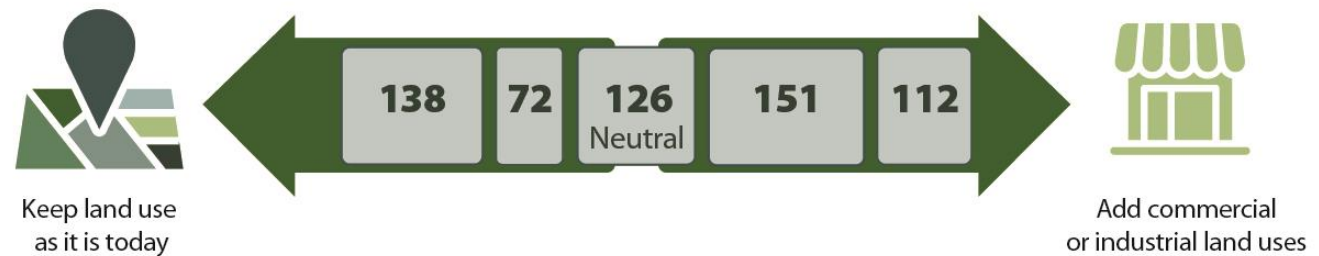
# Trade Offs Key Takeaways

- Generally in support of adding housing in the areas surrounding new routes
- Marginally in support of adding commercial or industrial land use in those areas

**If there is a new route that intersects with Route 22A near the police station, would you prefer to...**



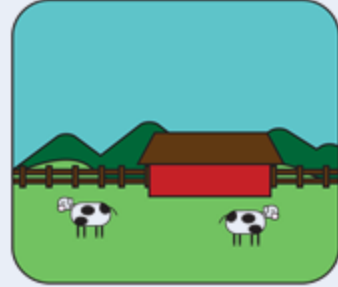
**If there is a new route that intersects with Route 22A near the police station, would you prefer to...**



# When we talk about Land Use... what is “Use”?

- There are many ways that land in Addison County is used today
- Tonight, we will focus on the following five uses:
  - Agricultural/Farmland and Working Lands
  - Housing construction, at various intensities and scales
  - Walk-in Retail and Services Businesses
  - Industrial/Light Industrial
  - Civic and Religious
  - Public Recreation and Conserved Land

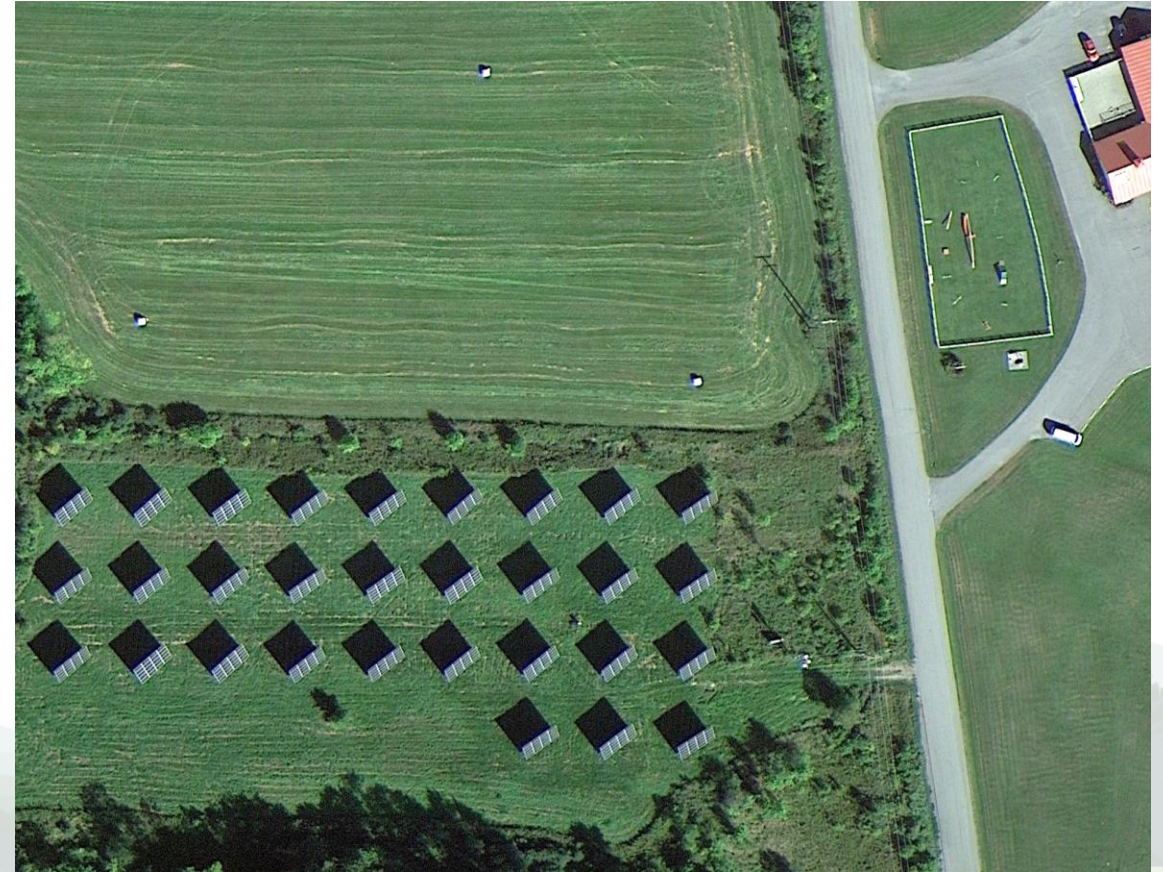
*Topic for tonight:*  
**What defines a  
"good balance" of  
land uses?**



# Agricultural / Farmlands / Working Lands



Scuttleship Farm  
Panton Road, Panton

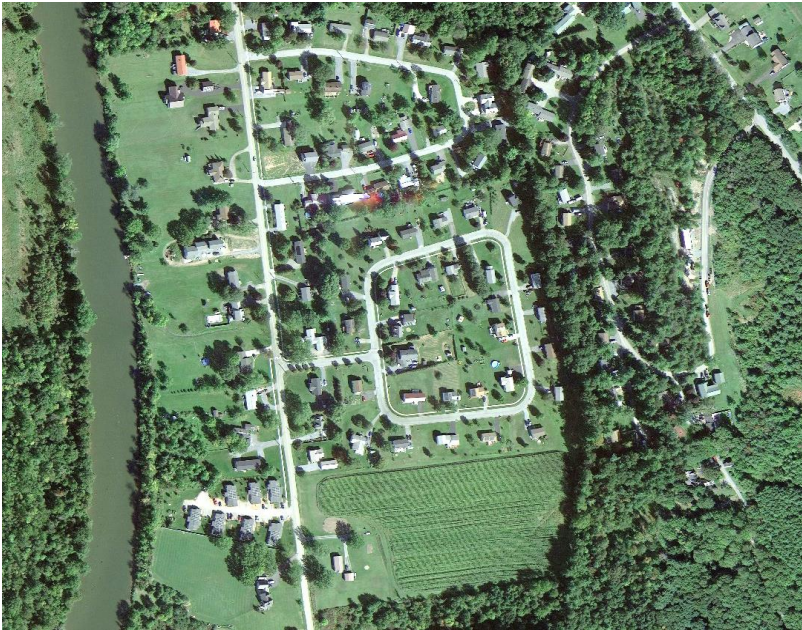


Solar Arrays, Outdoor Dog Agility Course/Play Yard  
Comfort Hill Street, Vergennes



# Residential / Housing

**Smaller Lot, Neighborhood Cluster**



Vergennes and Waltham  
around Maple Street and Green Street

**Mid-sized Lot, Linear Settlement**



Addison, along 22A

**Larger Lot, Homestead**



New Haven, Hallock Road





# Walk-In Commercial / Retail and Services



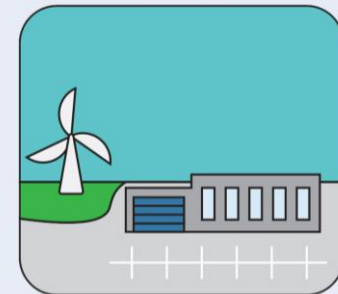
Kayhart's Home Grown Meat – Farm Store  
Route 17, New Haven



The Basin Block  
Main Street and Maple Street, Vergennes



Shaws Plaza  
Ferrisburgh and Vergennes



# Industrial / Light Industrial



WowToyz  
Panton Road, Vergennes



Shacksbury Cider  
Meigs Road, Vergennes



Maple Landmark Woodcraft  
Exchange Street, Middlebury



# Civic and Religious



Community Baptist Church and Town Hall  
Addison



Champlain Valley Christian Reformed Church  
Waltham



Ferrisburgh Central School  
Ferrisburgh



# Open Space / Recreation and Conserved Land



Button Bay State Park  
Ferrisburgh



Dead Creek  
Addison, Panton, Ferrisburgh



City Green  
Vergennes

# Land + Use = Making Choices.

## For example: Spaced or Clustered?



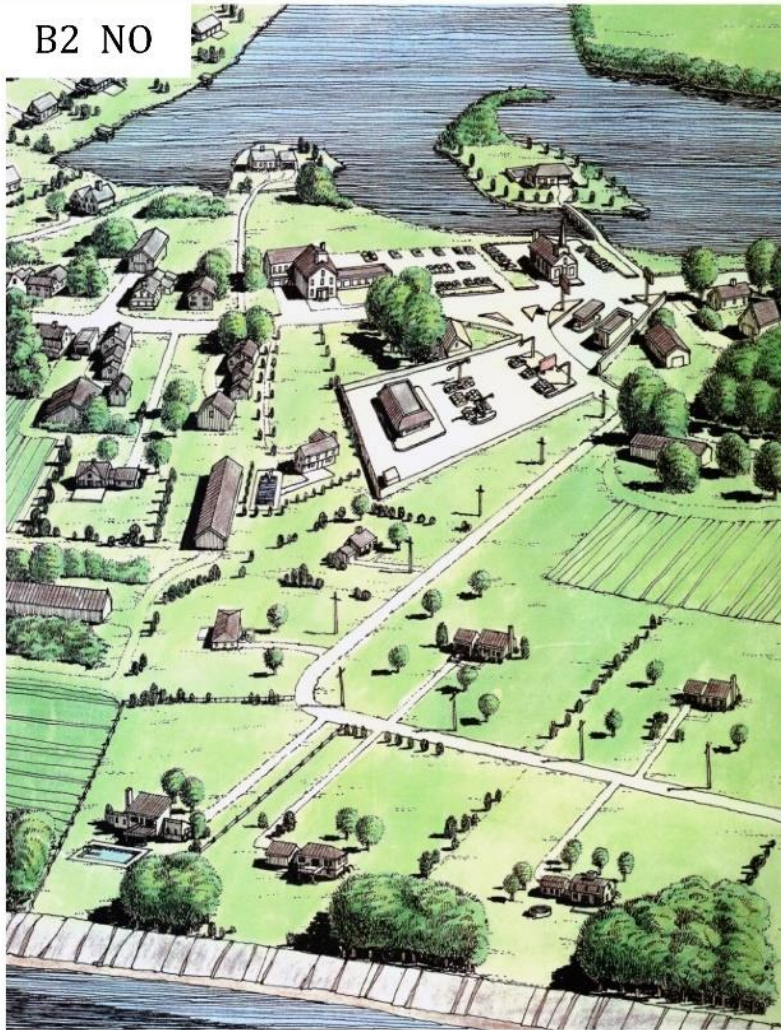
Spaced

Clustered

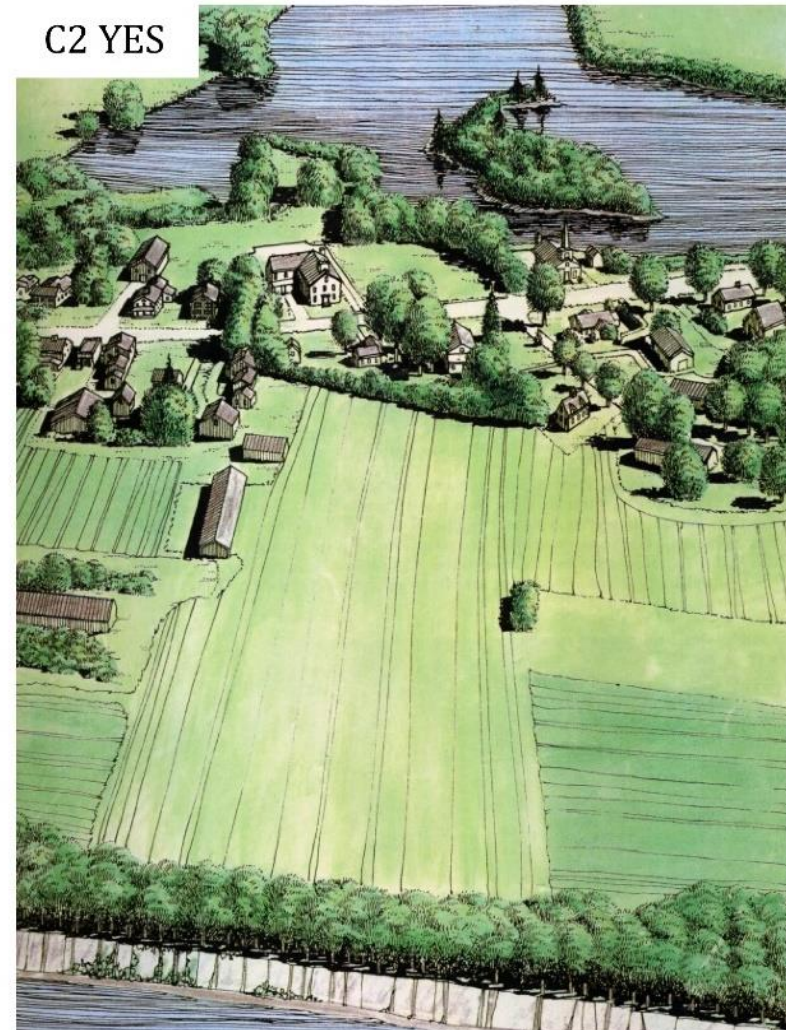
*Topics for tonight:*  
Do you have a preference on use arrangements?

Should the pattern be different for different places along a potential new road?

# Use Arrangement Strategy included in Ferrisburgh's Town Plan



**Illustrations B1 and B2:** *Conventional rural Subdivision and suburban sprawl*



**Illustration C1:** *Sensitively Designed Planned Unit Development (PUD) C2: Small New England Village Pattern of Development*

# Transportation and Land Use

## Ways to Travel

- Motor vehicles
  - Cars and motorcycles
  - Trucks
  - Local & long distance
- Active transportation (biking, walking, rolling)

## Planning considerations

- Access
- Intersection Types
- Walking, Bicycling and other Human-Powered Travel

*Topics for tonight:*  
**How are the land, travel routes, and development patterns linked?**

**How do they influence each other?**

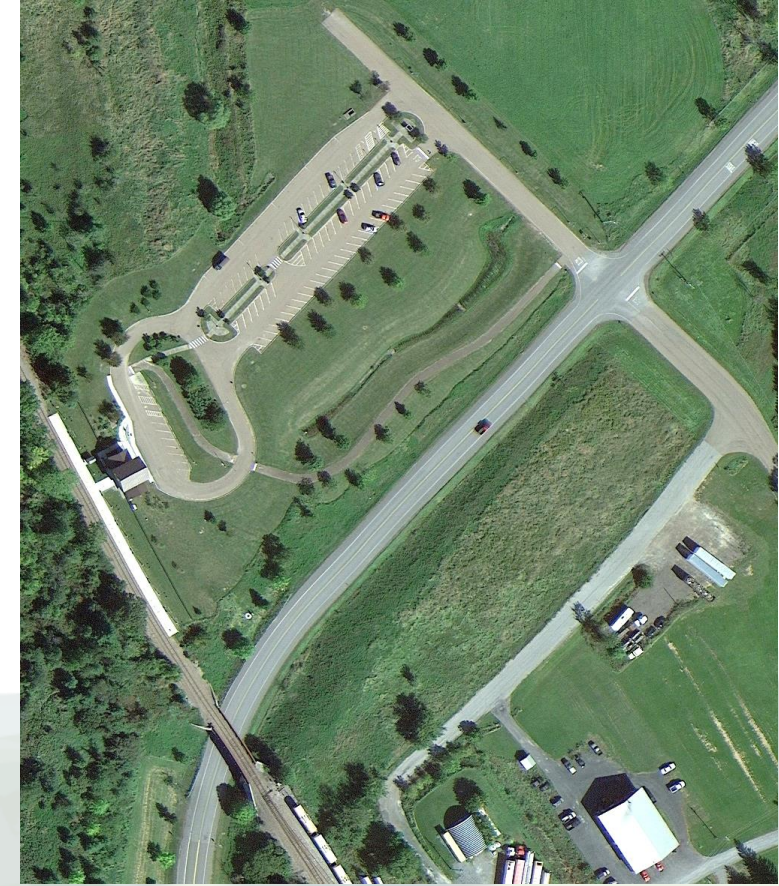
# Access: Cross Streets, Driveways, Linkages



Most homes on connecting streets



Homes directly access main road



Road to Train Station linkage



# Intersections: Four-ways, Roundabouts, Jughandles



Four-way: Addison Four Corners



Roundabout: Hyde Park, VT



Jughandle: Webster Rd, Shelburne

# Walk / Bike Facility



Sidewalk and Crosswalk, Vergennes



Multi-Use Path, Colchester



Bike Lane, Shelburne



## **Break-out Groups**



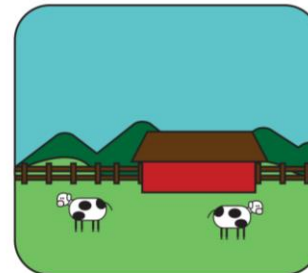
# Guidelines

*If the Orange Route were built, what is your vision for the land uses along it?*

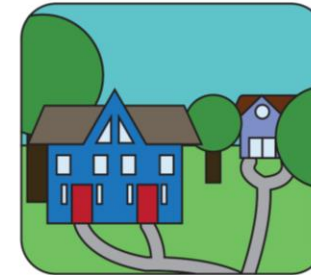
Each table has Land Use cutouts to work with

Breakout tables will report back at 7:30pm

Agricultural/ Farmland



Residential/ Housing



Municipal/ Community Center



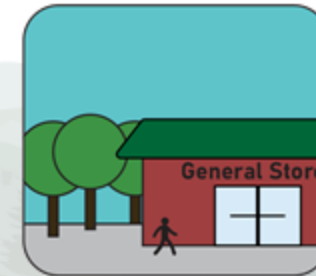
Open Space/ Recreation



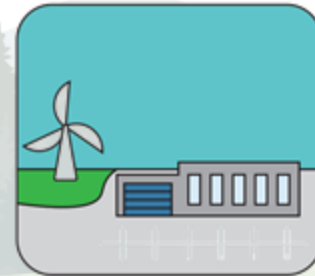
Walk/ Bike Facility



Commercial/ Retail



Industrial



# Guidelines

Your input will be used to develop land use recommendations that go into the Study's final report

## Rules of engagement:

- This is a public discussion, not a debate
- Everyone is encouraged to participate
- Listen to and respect other points of view



# Facilitator Questions

1. Explore the land uses around the proposed route
2. Identify preferred residential and commercial streets
3. Consider walking and biking along the proposed route
4. Consider the region's recreational for residents, families, and visitors
5. Identify a road within the region that is reflective of the surrounding land uses that you envision the **orange route** could be

***If the Orange Route were built, what is your vision for the land uses along it?***



# Report out





## **Next Steps and Other Comments**





## First half of 2024

- ***Task 5: Integrated Transportation & Land Use Alternatives***
  - Develop integrated transportation/land use plans
  - Planning Commission meetings
- ***Task 6: Evaluation and Refinement***
  - Environmental impact analysis
  - Traffic Analysis
  - Evaluate routes
  - Focus groups and public meetings

## Second half of 2024

- Task 7: Implementation Plan

## 2025

- Complete PEL Report

## Other Questions and Comments



Open discussion related to the routes being studied through the PEL Study

Study website for more information and to sign up for email updates:

<https://vergennespel.com/>

Study email:

[vergennespel@gmail.com](mailto:vergennespel@gmail.com)

Community Liaison, Jim Gish:

[jgish@vhb.com](mailto:jgish@vhb.com)