



Vergennes Planning and Environment Linkages Study

Technical Committee and
Agency Partners

December 5, 2023



Agenda

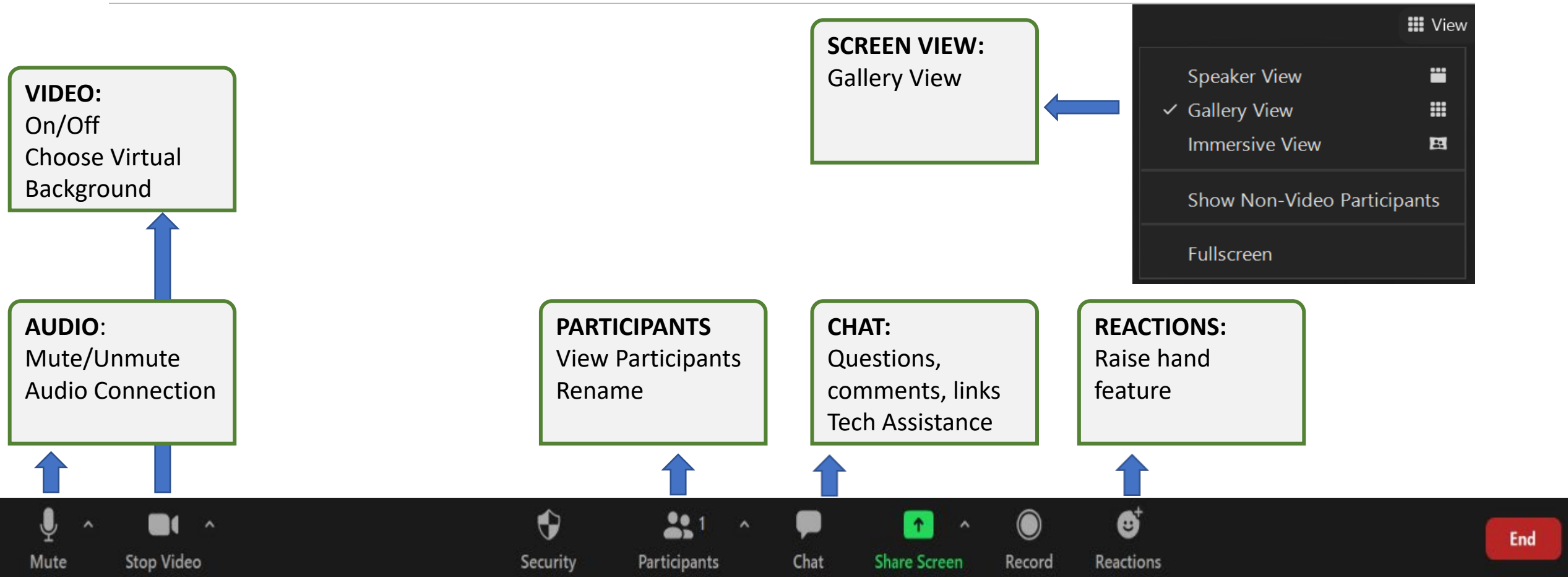
1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. PEL Study Background
3. Concept Screening
4. Conceptual Design and Visualizations
5. Discussion and Committee Consensus Point
6. Online Survey
7. Land Use Visioning
8. Next Steps

V E R G E N N E S

Planning & Environment Linkages (PEL) Study



Zoom Orientation



Roll Call – Agency Partners

Federal Agencies

- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Christopher Jolly and Elizabeth Shipley
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Michael Adams
- U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), Gary Croot
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Beth Alafat and Tim Timmermann
- U.S.D.A. - Natural Resource Conservation Service, Obediah Racicot
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), David Robbins and Eric Kuns
- [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Susi von Oettingen]

State Agencies

- Agency of Natural Resources (ANR), Billy Coster
- Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, Laura Trieschmann
- Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), Department of Housing and Community Development, Chris Cochran and Amy Tomasso
- Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets, Ari Rockland-Miller and Ryan Patch
- Buildings and General Services (BGS), Vermont Agency of Administration, Eric Pembroke

Roll Call – Technical Committee

VOTING members

- **Chair:** Katharine Otto, Transportation Planning (VTrans)
- John Bull, Municipal Public Works (Town of Ferrisburgh)
- Alysha Kane, District Maintenance (VTrans)
- Shannon Haggett, Land Use (City of Vergennes)
- Fred Kenney, Economic (Addison County Economic Development)
- Jim Larrow, Municipal Public Works (City of Vergennes)
- Bruce Martin, Roadway Design (VTrans)
- Joel Perrigo, Municipal Assistance (VTrans)
- Katie Raycroft-Meyer, Land Use Planning (ACRPC)
- Jeff Ramsey, Environmental (VTrans)
- Mike Winslow, Transportation Planning (ACRPC)

NON-VOTING members

- Jacqueline DeMent, Planning (FHWA)
- Chris Jolly, Planning (FHWA)
- James LaCroix, Structures (VTrans)
- Adam Lougee, Planning (ACRPC)
- Elizabeth Shipley, Environmental (FHWA)
- Amanda Holland, Bike-Ped (VTrans)

Note - Technical committee members were invited for specialism listed.
In contrast, Policy committee members invited according to jurisdiction (e.g., town) or specialism





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.

Technical Committee and Agency 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

Technical Committee and Agency Roles

- 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

Today's ask:

- Provide comments and ask questions related to conceptual design technical memorandum
- Provide consensus on conceptual designs for further evaluation



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

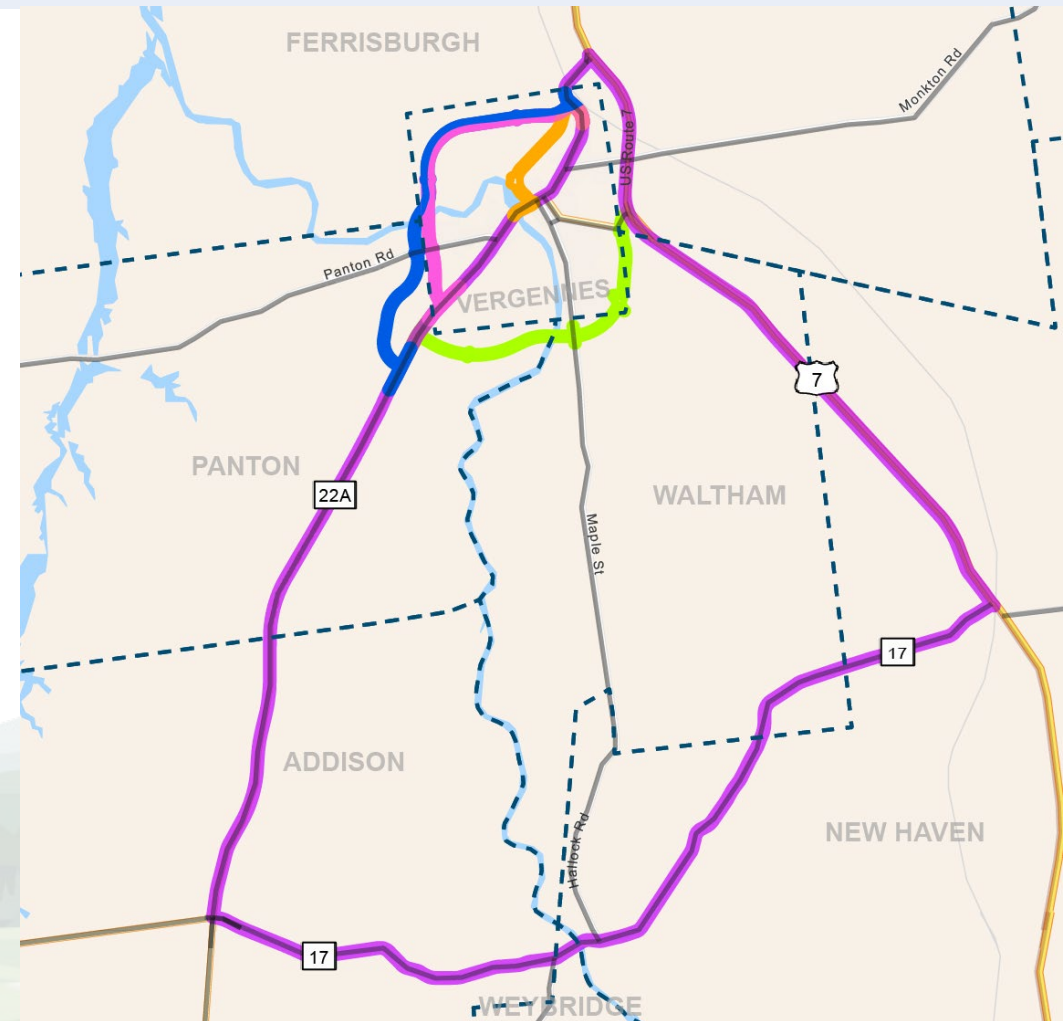
Land Use



- 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

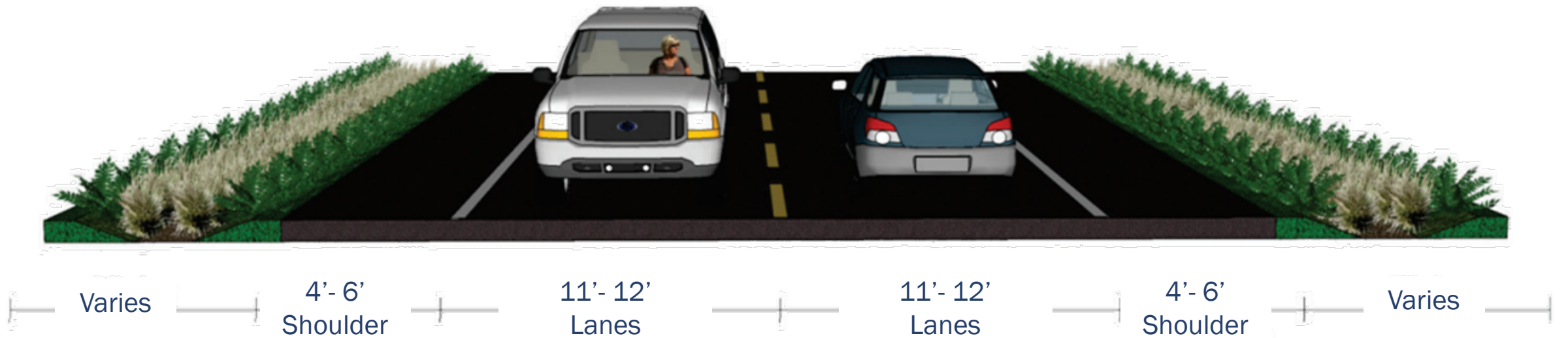


Design Methodology

- 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
- Intersection types to be considered

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 should focus on:

- Design approach and criteria (e.g., speed, geometry – see Table 2.1)
- Terminus locations
- Visualizations
- Consensus on concept designs for further evaluation and refinement

**Please provide any additional comments by
December 18**

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

What has changed since June?

- Addressed previous comments from committee and agencies
- Prepared technical memorandum to describe methodology and conceptual designs
- Prepared visualizations
- Lengthened bridges – blue, pink, and green would be multi-span bridges
- Progressed the conceptual design of the Purple Route to address deficiencies on VT 17
- Adjusted slope of orange route to reduce 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





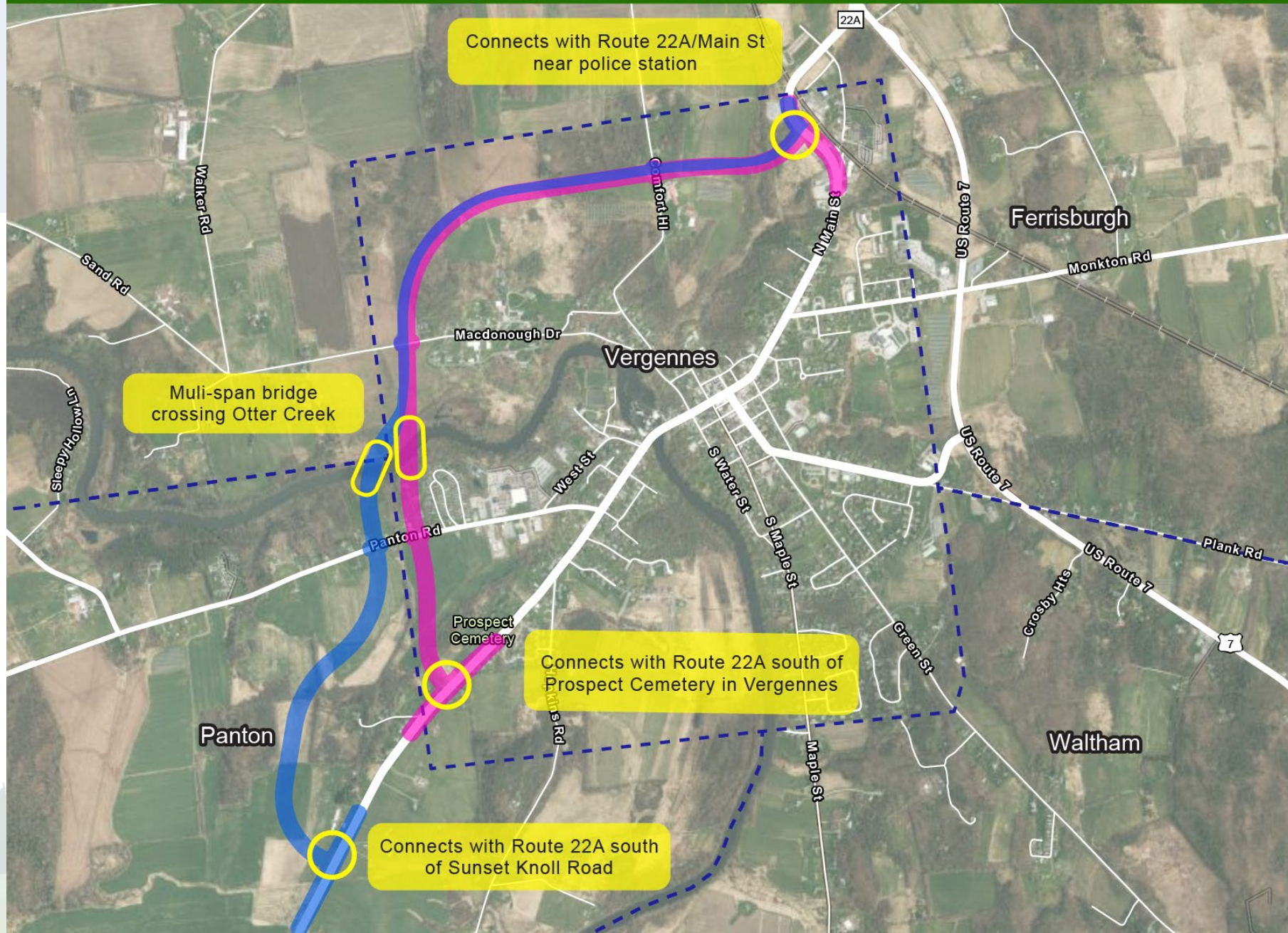
Blue Route

Discussion/Questions?

- 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

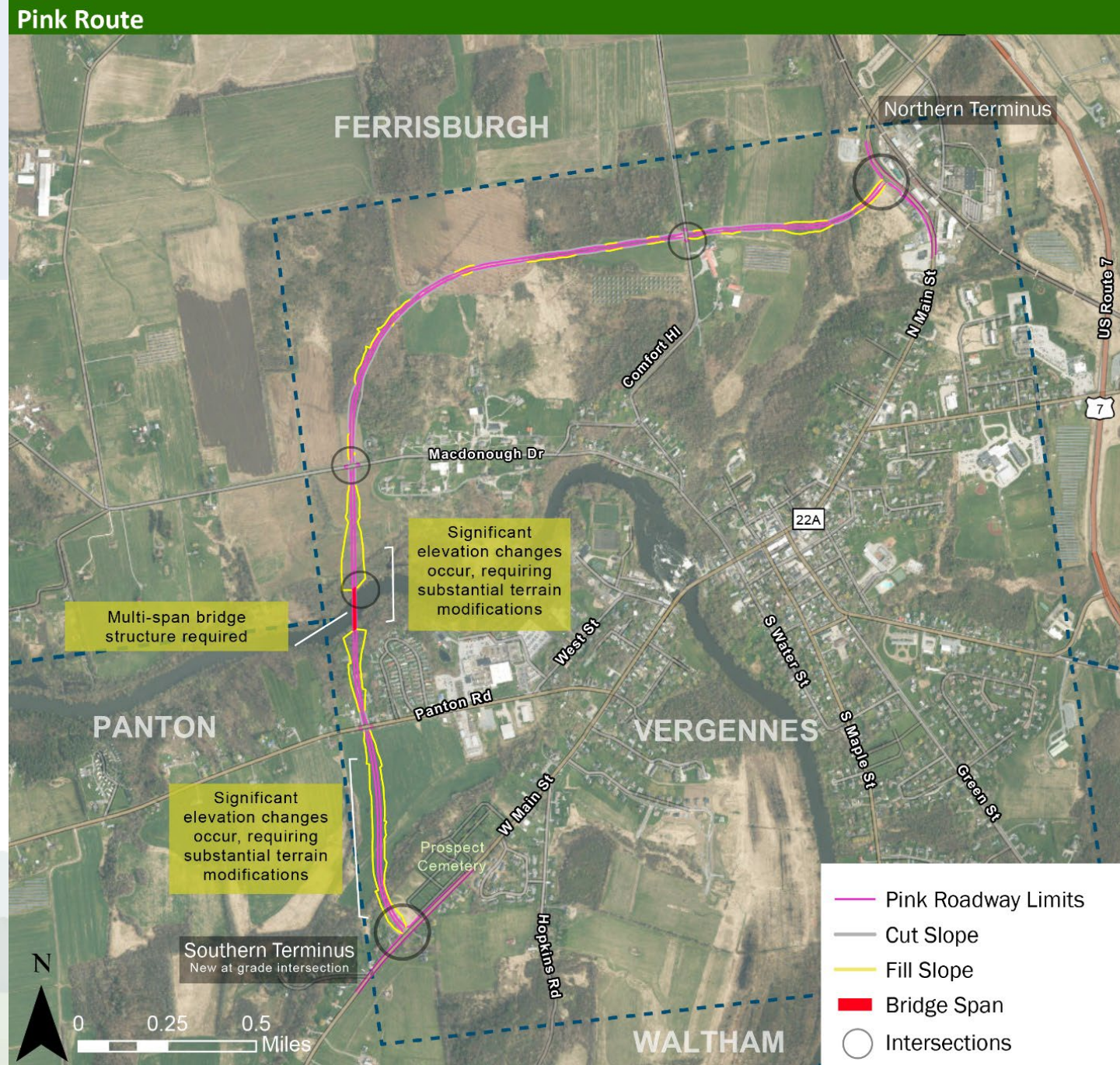


Blue & Pink Routes



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.

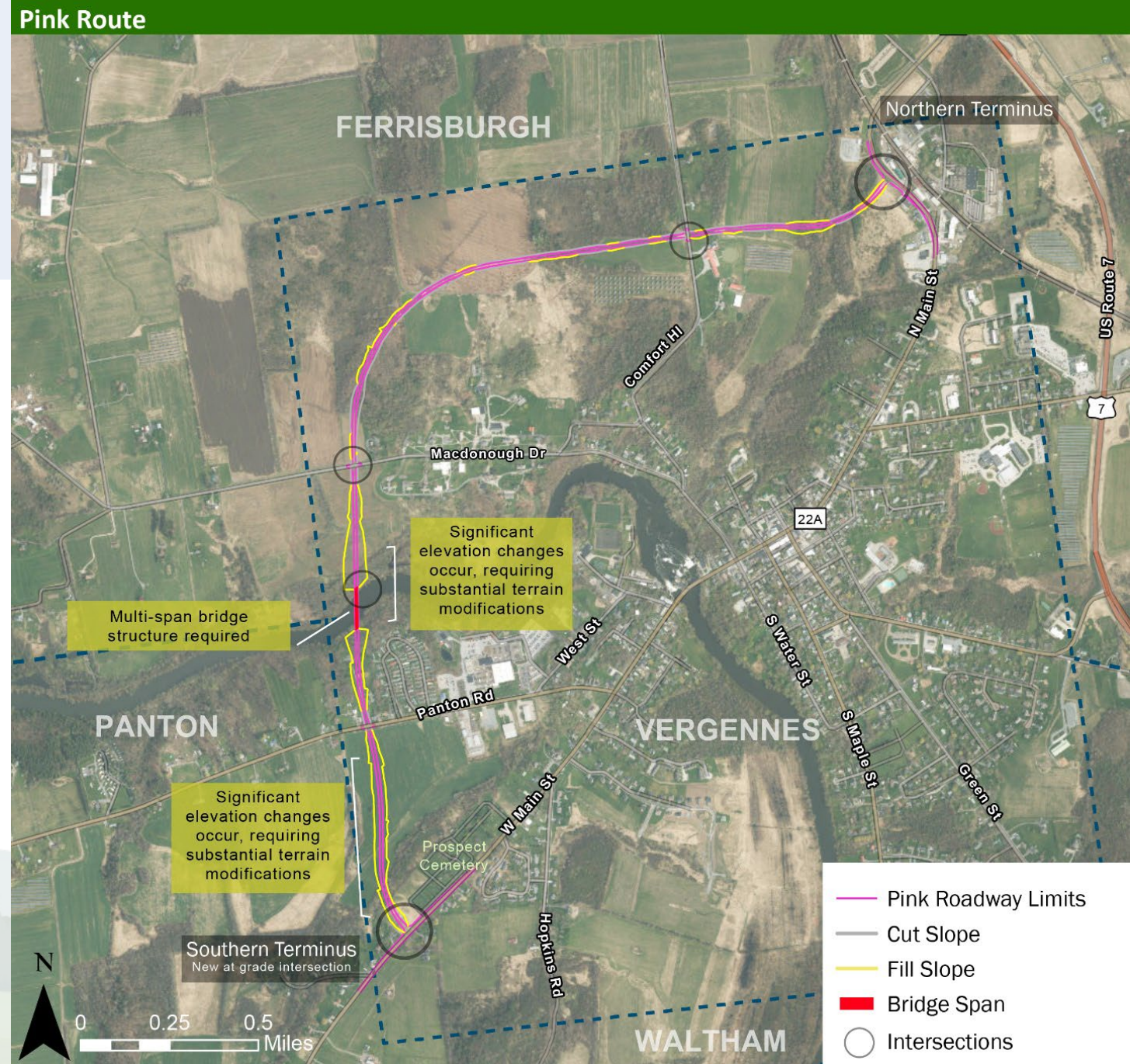




Pink Route

Discussion/Questions

- 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.



Orange Route

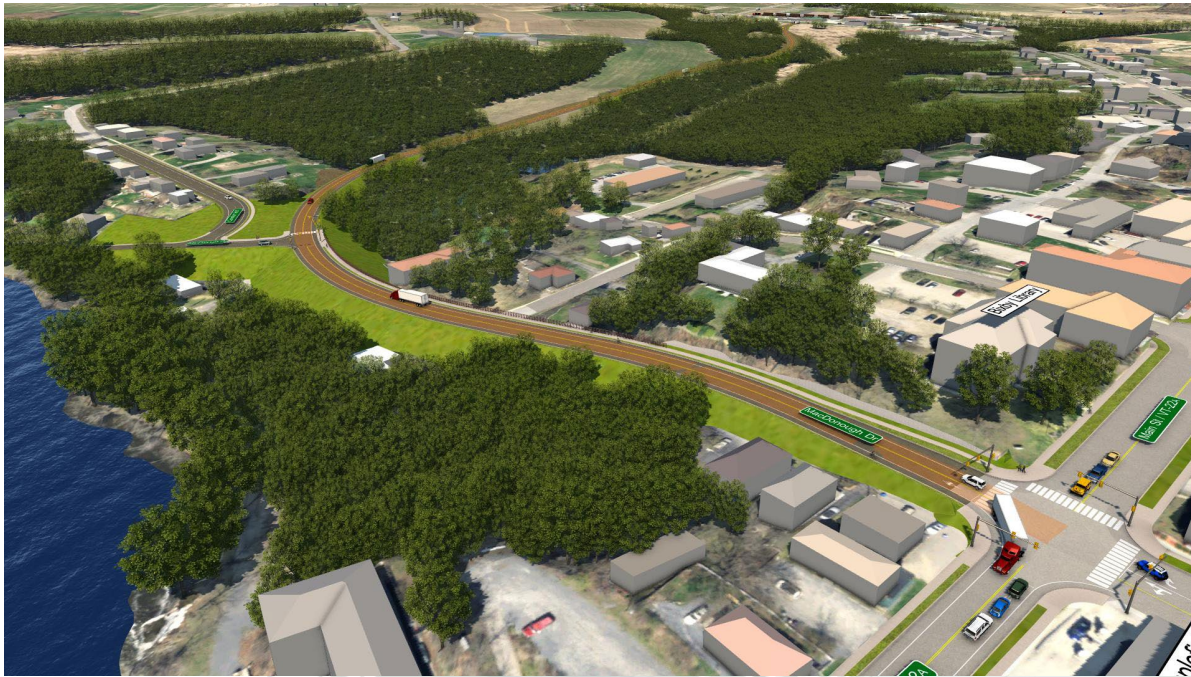
- Southern terminus is the existing intersection of MacDonough Dr with Main St
- Realignment of MacDonough Drive between VT 22A and Comfort Hill, and new intersection of MacDonough Drive and Comfort Hill
- Reconnects with VT 22A approximately 0.5 mile west of the Route 22A/Route 7 intersection
- Overall length of the proposed roadway is 1 mile



Orange Route

- Design speed is used to determine the various geometric features of the roadway
- Considers topography, anticipated operating speed, the adjacent land use, and the functional classification of the highway
- Based on review of the tech memo, reduced design speed for southern portion of orange route from 45mph to 35mph

Design Speed – 45mph versus 35mph



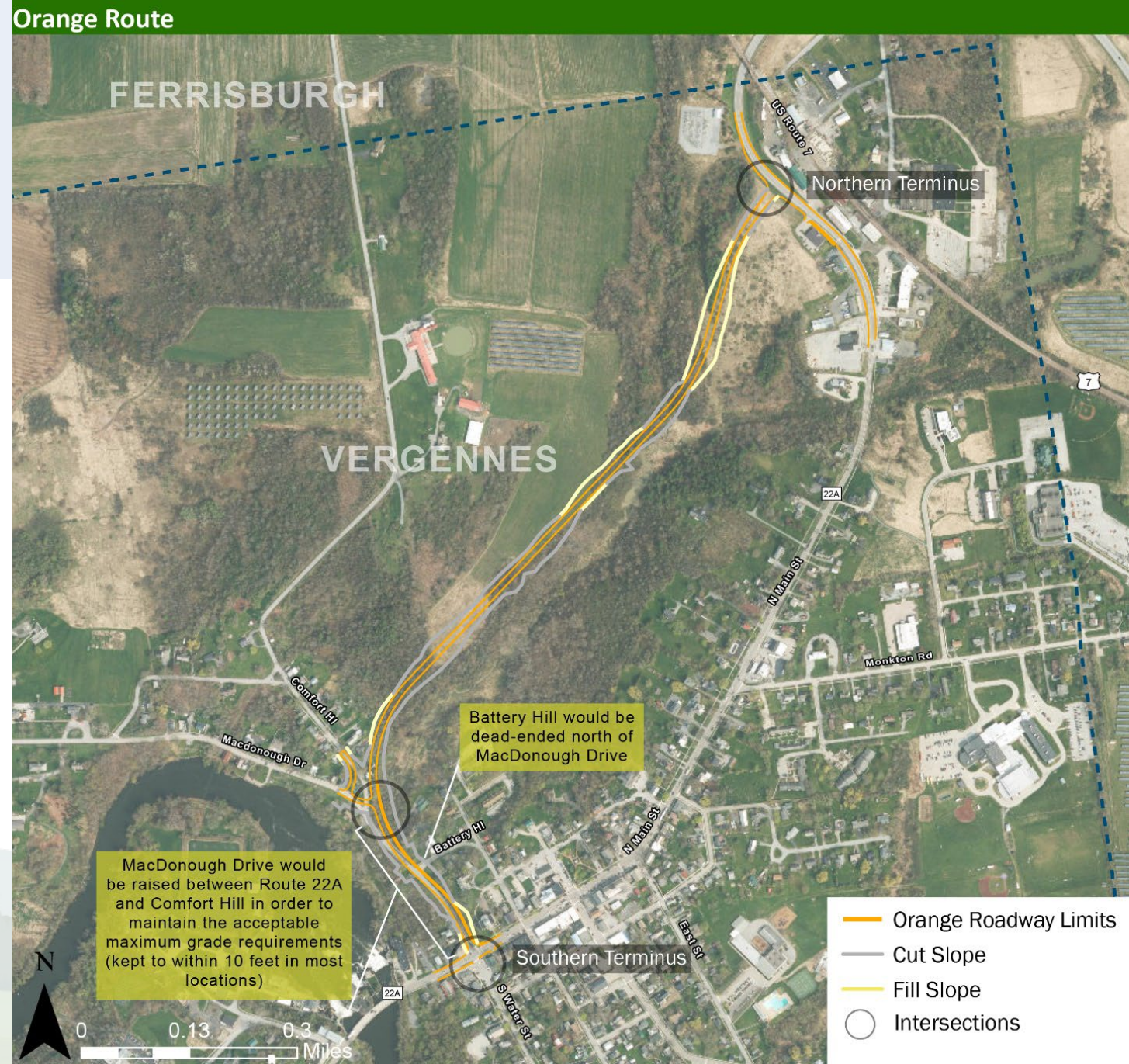
Design Speed – 45mph versus 35mph





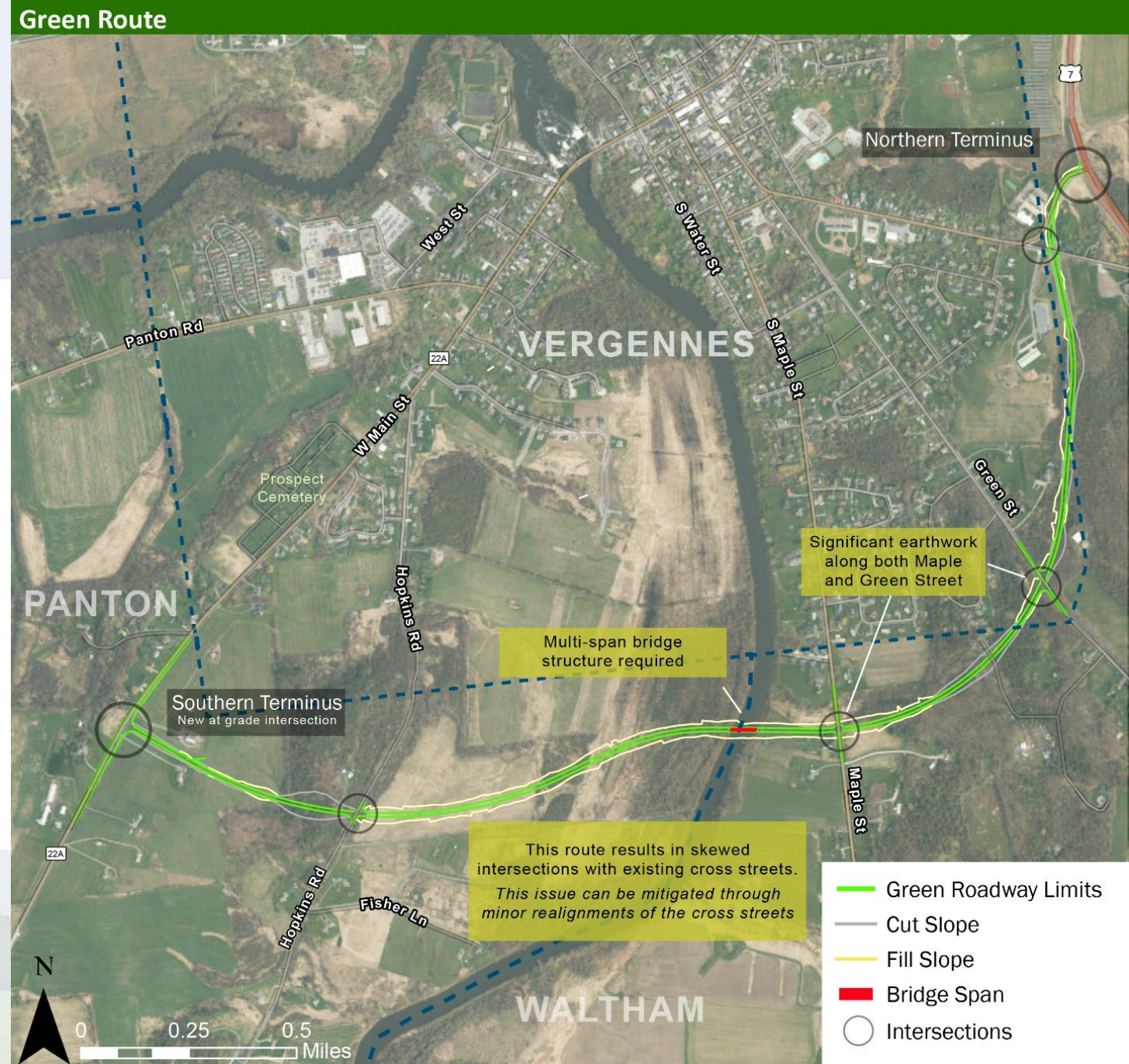
Orange Route Discussion/Questions?

- 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



Green Route

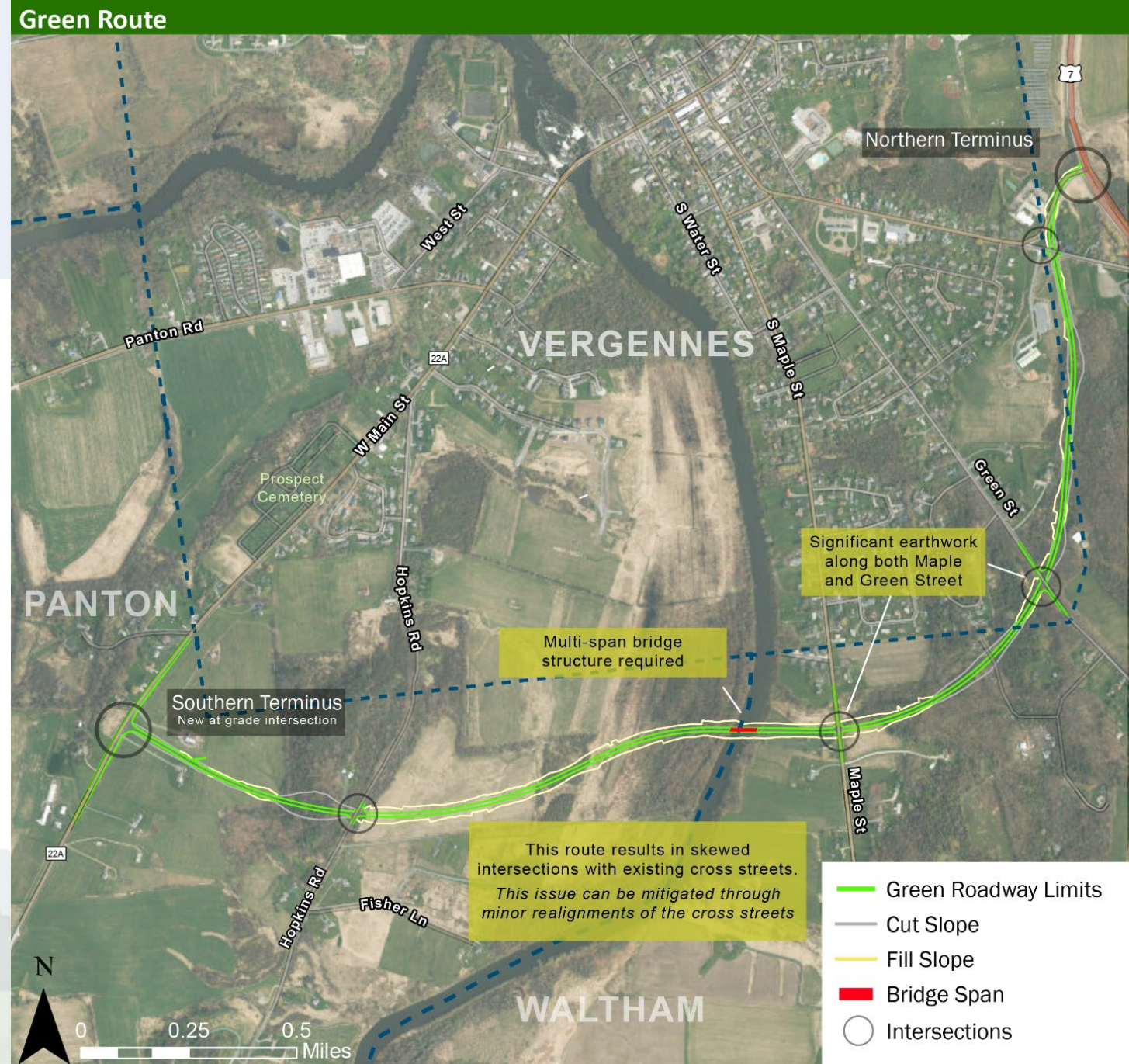
- Connects with VT 22A approximately one mile south of the Vergennes-Panton boundary
- Crosses Hopkins Rd, Otter Creek, Maple St, Green St, and Church St
- Connects with US 7 via existing New Haven Rd/US 7 intersection
- Overall length of the proposed roadway is 2.3 miles





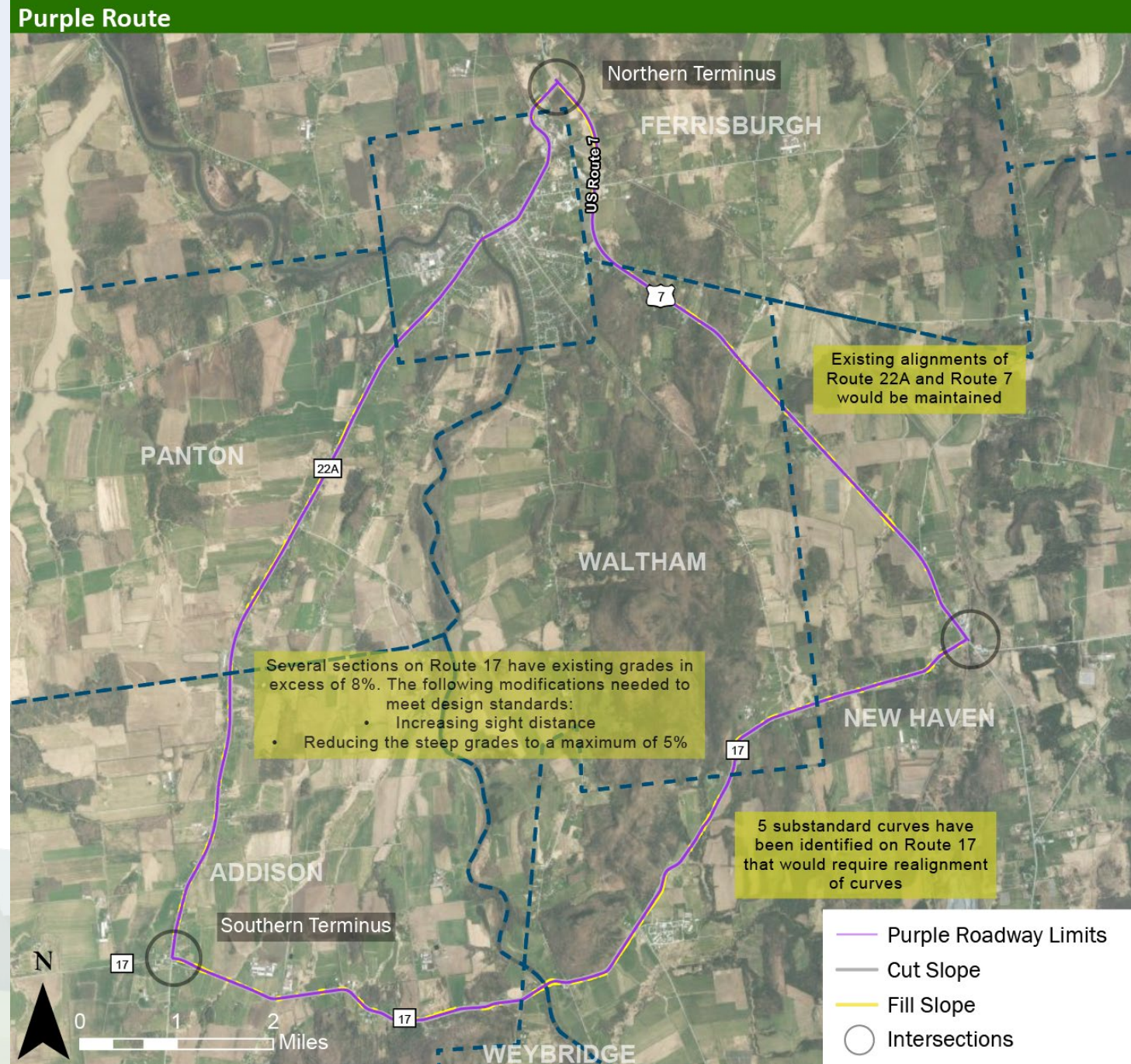
Green Route Discussion/Questions?

- 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



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



Additional Discussion and Consensus Point (for Technical Committee)

- 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 **December 18**
- **Note:** The consultant team will touch base with the Technical Committee if there are any notable changes because of the Policy Committee meeting. They will ask committee members to confirm they are still okay with their recommendation.

Technical Committee Members (for reference)

- **Chair:** Katharine Otto, VTrans
- John Bull, Town of Ferrisburgh
- Alysha Kane, VTrans
- Shannon Haggett, City of Vergennes
- Fred Kenney, Addison County Economic Development
- Jim Larrow, City of Vergennes
- Bruce Martin, VTrans
- Joel Perrigo, VTrans
- Katie Raycroft-Meyer, ACRPC
- Jeff Ramsey, VTrans
- Mike Winslow, ACRPC



Survey

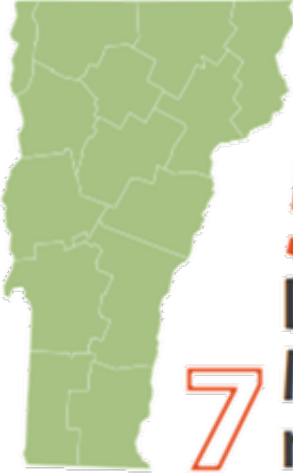


Overview


- 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 survey titled "Vergennes PEL Study". The page has a green header with the title and a sub-header "Learn about the study before you begin." Below the header is a "WELCOME" section with a large image of a street scene in Vergennes. A text box on the page explains the study's purpose: "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." A "Next" button is visible. At the bottom, a text box states: "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." Logos for the Vermont Agency of Transportation and Addison County are also present. On the right side, there is a vertical navigation menu with five items: "ROUTE OPTIONS", "TRADE OFFS", "INTERACTIVE MAP", and "WRAP UP".

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

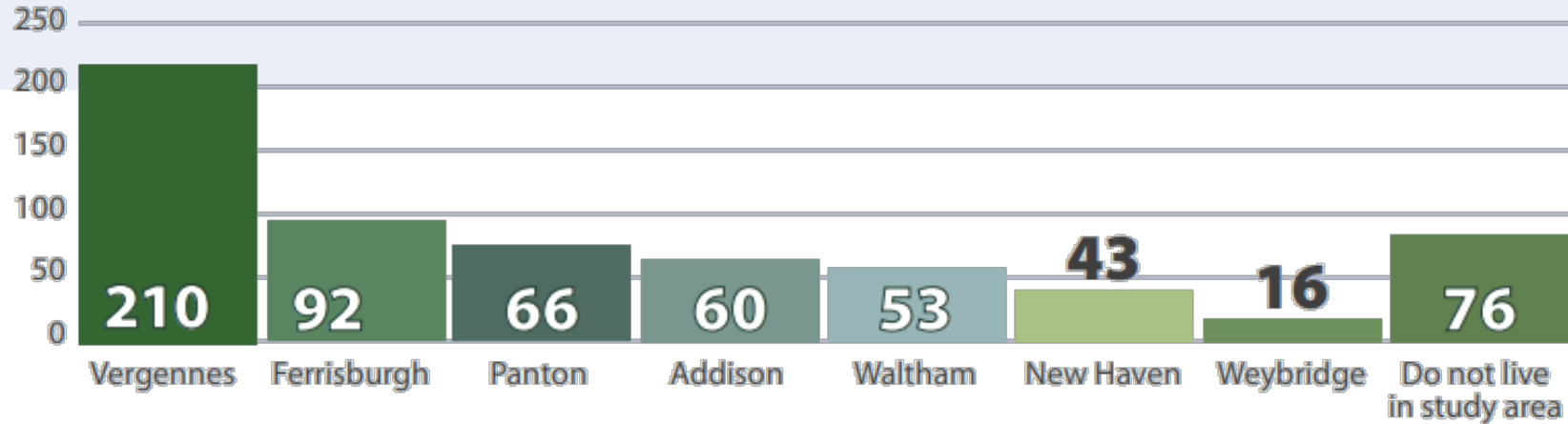


**2 regional Front
Porch Forum posts**
reaching the 7 study
area municipalities

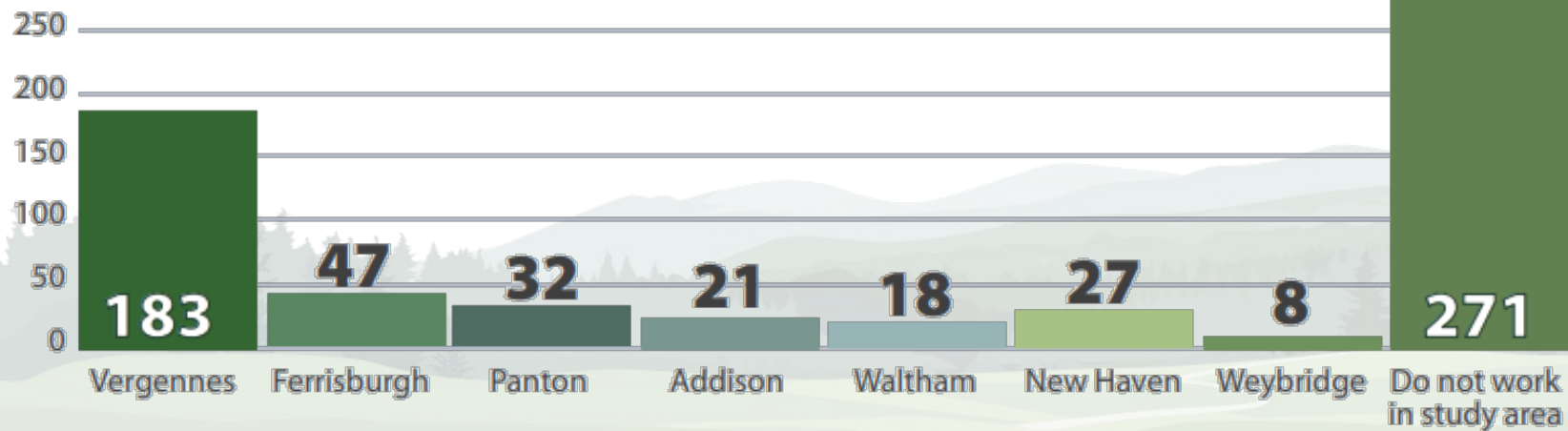
TOTAL SURVEY RESPONSES: 903



Where respondents live:



Where respondents work:



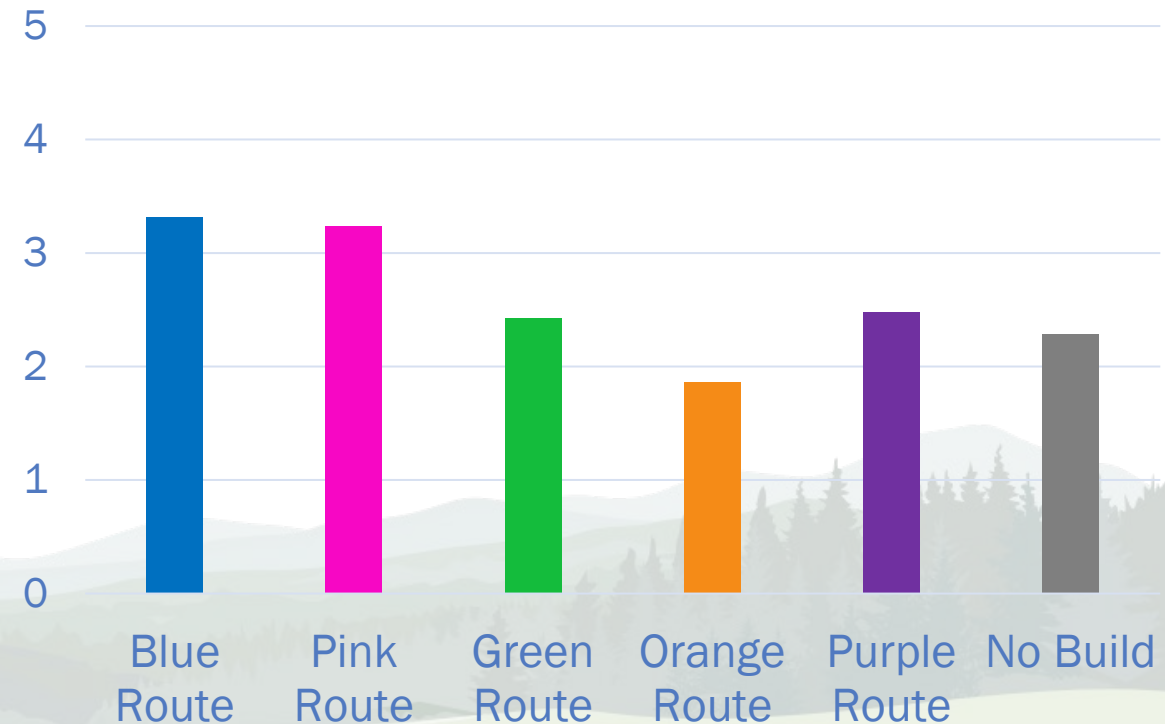
Route Preference

- Survey respondents were asked to rate each route option and the No Build option on a scale of 1 to five stars
- Respondents could provide comments on each route option as well as general comments for the screen

The screenshot shows a web application interface for 'Route Options'. The main title is 'Route Options' with a subtitle 'Learn about the routes that are being studied further.' Below the title is a navigation bar with six options: 'Blue Route' (selected), 'Pink Route', 'Green Route', 'Orange Route', 'Purple Route', and 'No Build'. The 'Blue Route' section contains the following text: 'The Blue Route includes the construction of a new roadway in Vergennes and Panton.' Below this is a 'Learn more' link: 'Click the image below to zoom in and learn more about this route option.' To the right of the text is a rating section with the prompt 'Rate this route and tell us more. Comment by clicking the icon on the right.' and a five-star rating system. Below the text and rating is a satellite map showing the area around Vergennes and Panton, with a yellow callout box highlighting a 'Single span bridge crossing Otter Creek'. The interface has a dark green sidebar on the left with navigation links: 'WELCOME', 'ROUTE OPTIONS', 'TRADE OFFS', 'INTERACTIVE MAP', and 'WRAP UP'. The 'ROUTE OPTIONS' link is currently active.

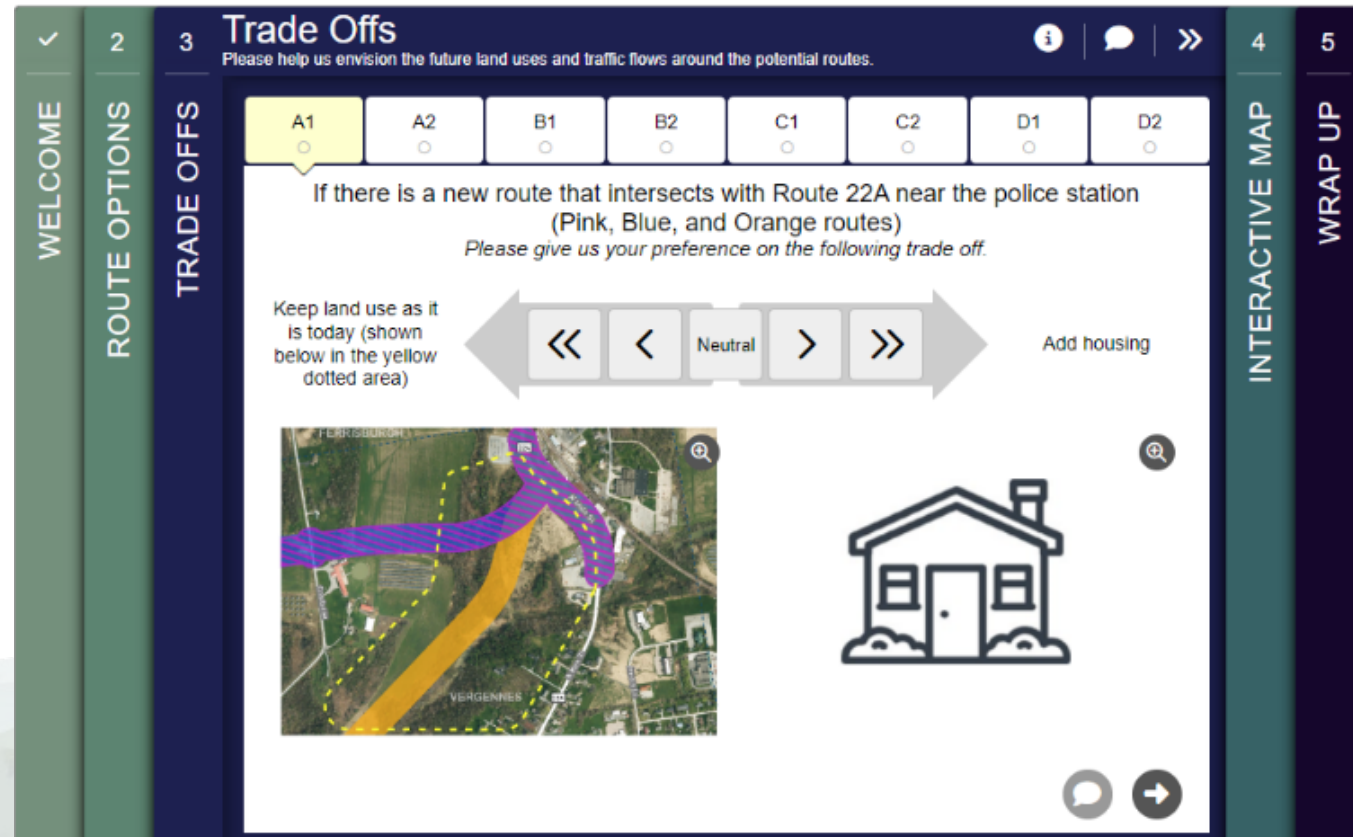
Route Preference Key Takeaways

- Public support was highest for the Blue route option, followed closely by the Pink route
- Public support was lowest for the Orange route option
 - Comments noted that this route would not reduce truck traffic in downtown Vergennes and does not alleviate the need for all truck traffic to traverse the one existing bridge over Otter Creek.
- The average ratings for the No Build, Green route, and Purple route options were within a 0.10-point range



Trade Offs

- Survey participants were asked to make a choice between eight pairs of trade-offs
- Six of the trade-offs were about land use, and two of the trade-offs were about traffic
- In each trade-off, survey respondents were given two options and were asked which option they preferred



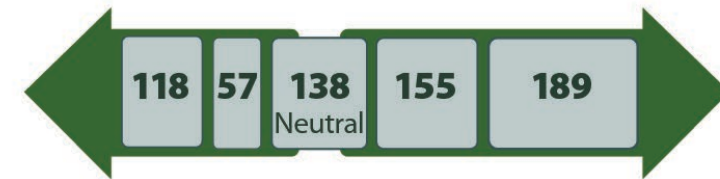
Trade Offs Key Takeaways

- 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...



Keep land use as it is today

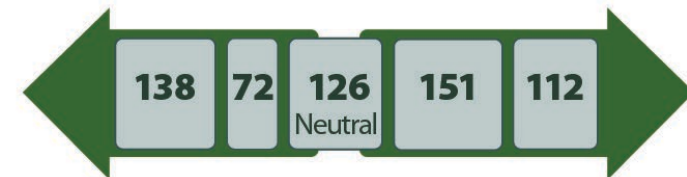


Add housing

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



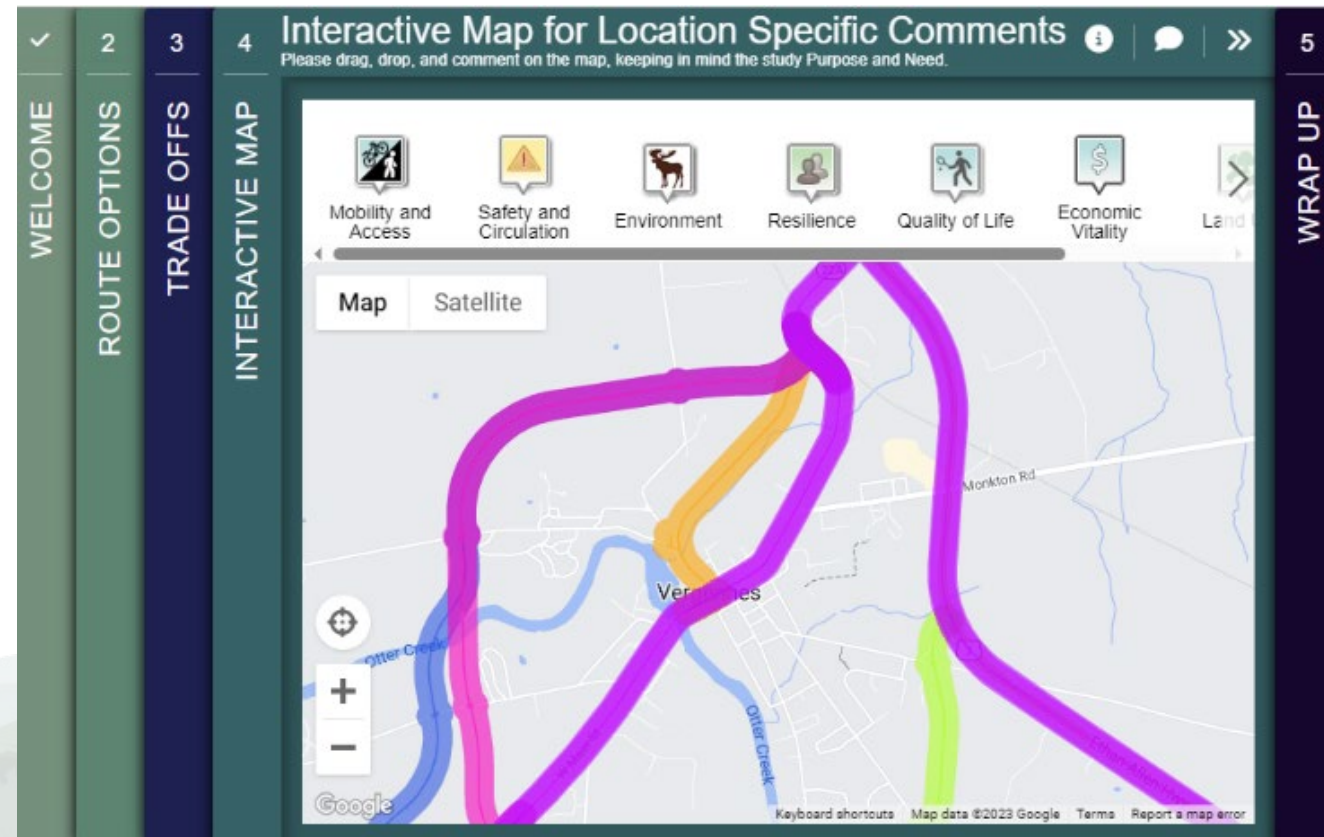
Keep land use as it is today



Add commercial or industrial land uses

Interactive Map

- Asked participants to add markers on a regional map that showed the possible routes under consideration
- Marker types related to the Purpose and Need, including mobility and access, safety and circulation, environment, resilience, quality of life, economic vitality, land use and other



Interactive Map Key Takeaways

- The largest proportion of map markers addressed safety and circulation concerns, including specific intersections and road segments with limited visibility, speeding, steep grades, traffic congestion, pedestrian needs, and difficulty turning
- The second largest group of map markers address quality of life concerns such as concern about traffic noise, pollution, proximity to residential neighborhoods, property values, and access needs.
- The third largest group of map markers addressed concerns about the environment and focused on concerns about impacts on wildlife, wetlands, wooded areas, and farmland



Land Use Visioning



Transportation / Land Use Integration



Land Use Visioning Workshops

Monday, Dec 4
Orange Route

- 6:00-8:00 pm
- Vergennes Opera House, 120 Main Street, Vergennes, VT

Monday, Dec 11
Pink & Blue Routes

- 6:00-8:00 pm
- Vergennes Opera House, 120 Main Street, Vergennes, VT

Tuesday, Dec 12
Purple Route

- 6:00-8:00 pm
- Tourterelle Restaurant, 3629 Ethan Allen Hwy (Route 7), New Haven, VT

Wednesday, Dec 13
Green Route

- 6:00-8:00 pm
- Panton Town Hall, 3176 Jersey Street, Panton, VT

Tuesday, Jan 9
All routes will be discussed

- 4:00-6:00 pm
- Virtual Workshop via Zoom



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

Updates and Announcements



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 December 18