

VERGENNES PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT LINKAGES (PEL) STUDY

2023 Public Survey Results Report

January 2024





Contents

Executive Summary	3
KEY FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY	5
Route Ratings.....	5
Land Use Preferences.....	5
Truck Traffic Preferences	5
Themes from Open-Ended Comments	5
Introduction	8
Screen 1: Welcome Screen	10
Screen 2: Route Options.....	12
Screen 3: Trade Offs.....	15
A. PREFERENCE ON LAND USE AROUND NEW ROUTE INTERSECTION WITH 22A (PINK, BLUE, AND ORANGE ROUTES) ..	16
A1 Preferences on Housing	16
.....	17
A2 Preferences on Commercial or Industrial Land Use.....	17
B. PREFERENCE ON LAND USE AROUND NEW ROUTE INTERSECTION WITH PANTON ROAD (PINK AND BLUE ROUTES) ..	18
B1 Preferences on Housing	19
B2 Preferences on Commercial or Industrial Land Use.....	19
C. PREFERENCE ON LAND USES AROUND NEW ROUTE THROUGH NORTHERN VERGENNES (PINK AND BLUE ROUTES) .	20
C1 Preferences on Housing	21
C2 Preferences on Commercial or Industrial Land Use.....	21
D. PREFERENCE ON TRUCK TRAFFIC IN THE REGION (BLUE, PINK, GREEN, ORANGE, AND PURPLE ROUTES)	24
D1 Keep Traffic on Route 22A/Main Street or Shift Traffic (trucks and passenger vehicles) to a New Roadway (Blue, Pink, Green, and Orange Routes)	24
D2 Keep Traffic on Route 22A/Main Street or Shift Northbound Traffic to an Improved Route 17 (Purple Route)	25
KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR TRADE-OFFS.....	27
Screen 4: Interactive Map for Location Specific Comments	28
RESILIENCE	33
SAFETY AND CIRCULATION.....	35
ENVIRONMENT	37
LAND USE.....	40
MOBILITY AND ACCESS	43
QUALITY OF LIFE.....	46
ECONOMIC VITALITY.....	49
OTHER 52	
KEY TAKEAWAYS ON LOCATION SPECIFIC COMMENTS	54
Screen 5: Wrap Up	56



Executive Summary

The Vergennes Planning and Environment Linkage (PEL) Study conducted a public survey from August 14 to September 26, 2023, to solicit public input on potential route options, existing conditions, and land use preferences. Potential route options included in the PEL study and public survey are shown in Figure 1, including new routes (Blue, Pink, Green, and Orange,) and existing routes (Purple and No Build). The No Build route option is not featured on the map because this option assumes no changes are made to roadways or traffic flow.

The public survey was available on the Vergennes PEL Study website and in paper format. Survey distribution is presented in Figure 2. The survey was promoted through in-person events, emails to a stakeholder distribution list, social media posts by the Vermont Agency of Transportation, and direct outreach to municipalities and local organizations who shared it with their contacts.

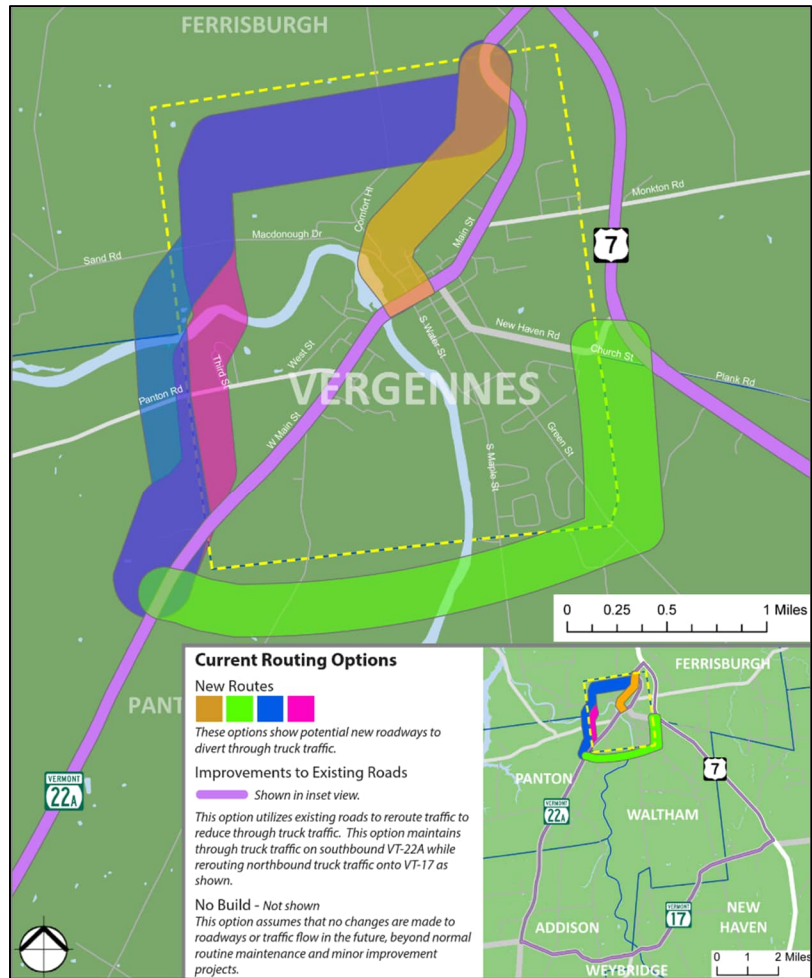
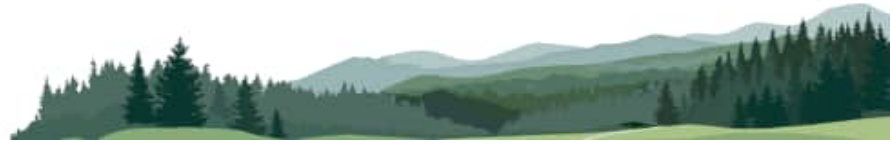


Figure 1: Map of Vergennes PEL Study Route Options



Figure 2: Survey Distribution



There were 903 responses to the public survey, including 901 responses submitted through the online platform and two responses submitted as paper surveys. Survey respondents were older than the general population of the study area, with the largest group of respondents over the age of 65 (32%). The survey received the smallest number of responses from those aged 17-24 (1%). About one-third of respondents either lived (34%) or worked (30%) in Vergennes and 12% of respondents lived outside the study area. Based on population data from the 2020 Census, survey respondents overrepresent the resident populations of Vergennes, Panton, and Waltham, and they underrepresent the resident populations of Ferrisburgh, Addison, New Haven, and Weybridge. The demographics of survey respondents are summarized in Figure 3.

Respondents' age range:

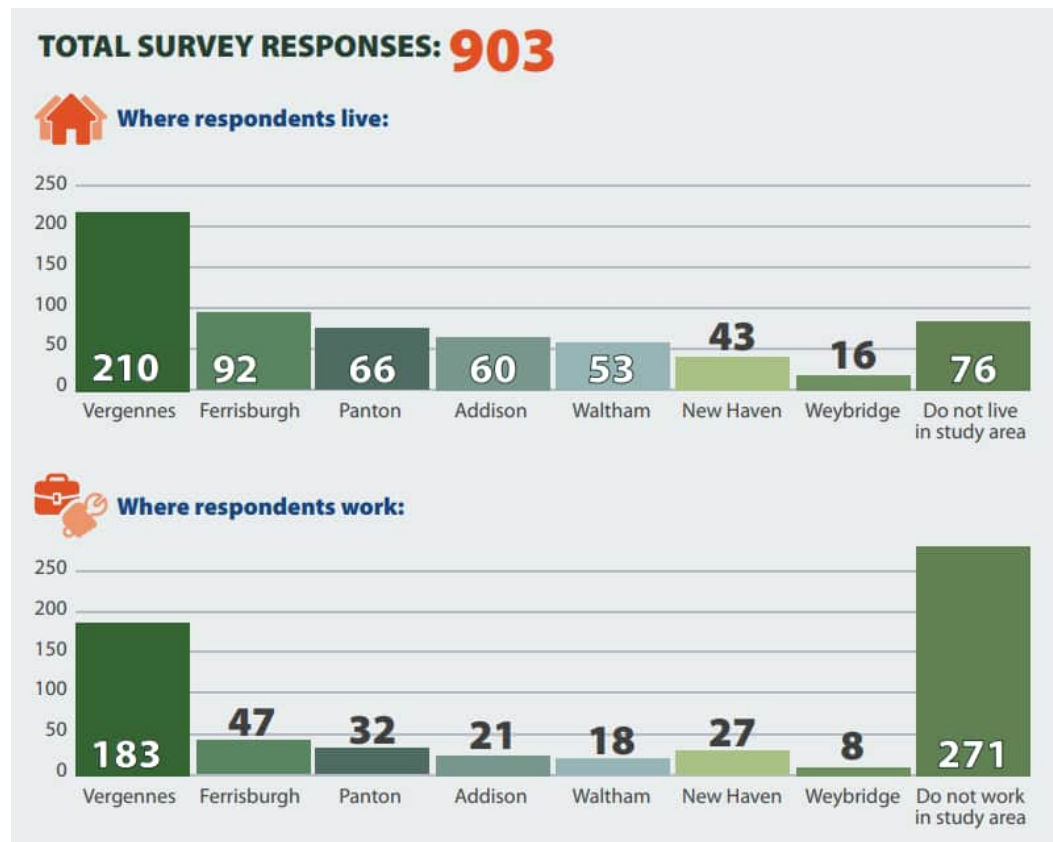


Figure 3: Demographics of Survey Respondents



Key Findings from the Survey

Route Ratings

The route option with the highest or most favorable average rating among survey respondents was the Blue Route (rated 3.32 out of 5) followed by the Pink Route (3.24). The Orange Route had the lowest average rating (1.87), while the Purple Route, Green Route, and No Build options were rated in the middle (2.29, 2.43, and 2.48 respectively.)

Land Use Preferences

Survey respondents were asked about their land use preferences in three areas that would be affected by a new route. Respondents provided their preference for keeping land use as it is today, adding more housing, and adding more commercial or industrial land use. Results are summarized in Table 1 below. Overall, respondents preferred to add housing in all locations, and to add commercial or industrial land use around a new route intersection with Route 22A.

Table 1: Summary of Land Use Preferences

Affected Land Use Area	Routes			Preferences on Housing	Preferences on Commercial or Industrial Land Use
	Pink	Blue	Orange		
New route intersection with Route 22A	●	●	●	Add housing*	Add commercial or industrial land use^
New route intersection with Panton Road	●	●		Add housing*	Keep land use as it is today^
New route through Northern Vergennes	●	●		Add housing*	Keep land use as it is today^

* Strong preference; ^Slight preference.

Truck Traffic Preferences

Survey respondents were asked about their preferences related to truck traffic through two trade-off questions. The first question asked, if moving trucks also means moving passenger vehicles, would respondents prefer to keep all traffic on Route 22A/Main Street (representing the No Build option) or to shift all traffic to a new roadway (Blue, Pink, Green, or Orange routes). Overall, survey respondents were willing to accept shifting both truck and passenger vehicle traffic away from Route 22A/Main Street to a new roadway or an improved Route 17. The second question focused on truck traffic only and asked if respondents preferred to keep existing truck traffic on Route 22A/Main Street (representing the No Build option) or to shift northbound truck traffic to an improved Route 17 (Purple Route). Respondents had a strong preference for shifting northbound truck traffic to an improved Route 17 (Purple Route) compared to keeping existing truck traffic on Route 22A/Main Street in Vergennes.

Themes from Open-Ended Comments

Respondents had the opportunity to leave open-ended comments on each screen of the survey. There were 2,119 received in total. These comments were coded by sentiment (positive, negative, or neutral), theme (e.g., noise, traffic congestion), route option, and impact area (e.g., a specific street or municipality). The majority of these comments (63%) were negative in sentiment. The routes receiving the highest proportion of positive comments were the Blue Route (41%), Pink Route (40%), while the Orange Route (8%), Green Route (14%), No Build option (21%), and Purple Route (27%) received the



lowest proportion of positive comments. These results align with the ratings of route options collected on screen 2 of the survey.

Figure 4 on the next page summarizes themes from the open-ended comments by each route option. Over 100 comments referred to the impacts of the green route on residents and residential areas. The Purple and Orange routes received a relatively high number of comments related to safety and circulation of trucks, road geometry (alignment, grade, width, lanes), and traffic congestion. Comments about businesses / economic vitality and noise were relatively evenly distributed across the route options.

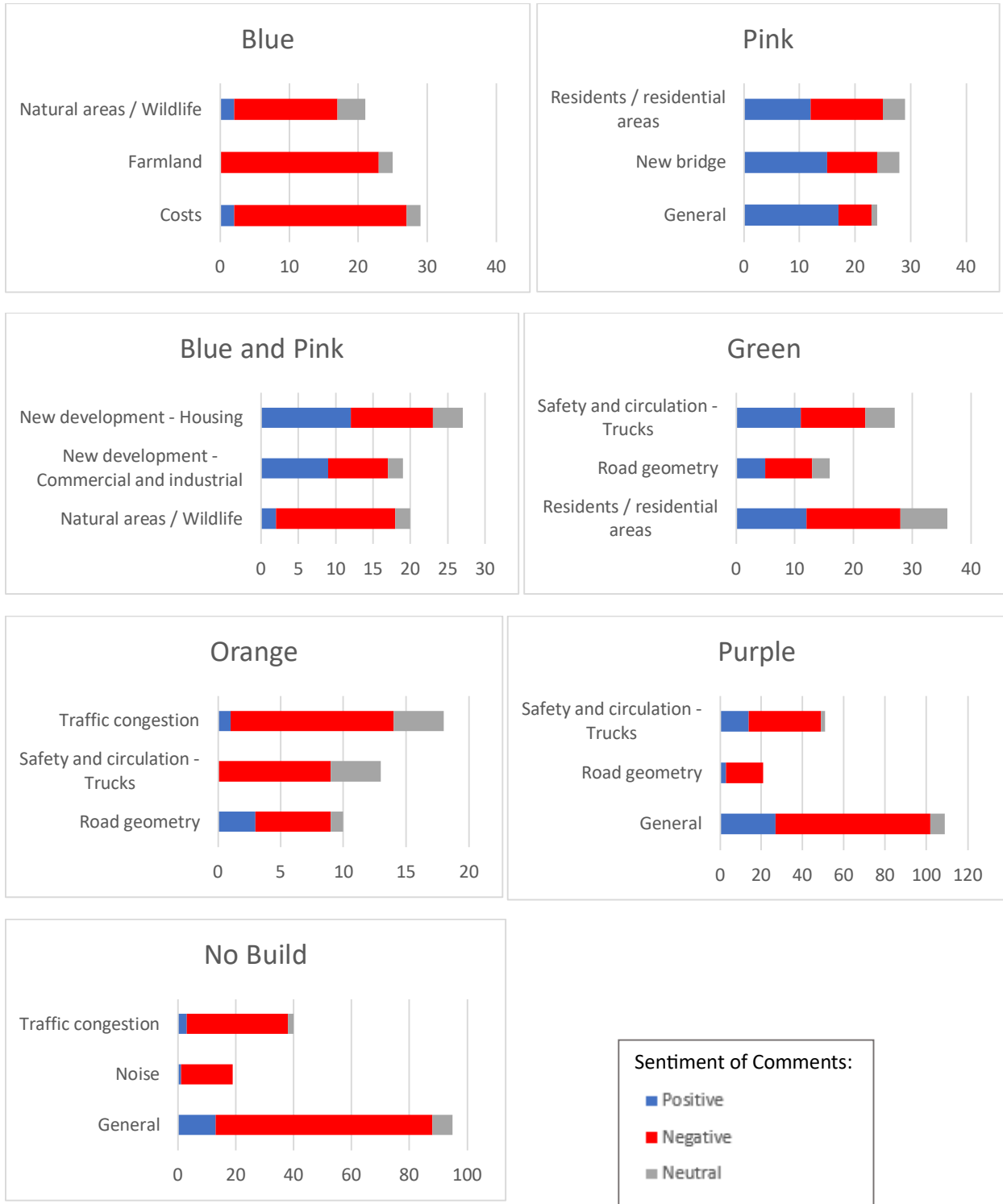


Figure 4: Top Three Issues from Survey Comments by Route Option



Introduction

This technical memorandum summarizes the results of the Vergennes Planning and Environment Linkage (PEL) study public survey conducted in 2023. The survey was conducted to solicit public input on potential route options, existing conditions, and land use preferences. The survey was available on MetroQuest, an online engagement platform. A paper version of the survey was developed to provide nondigital means to complete the survey. The survey was launched on August 14, 2023, and was open until September 26, 2023.

The public survey was hosted on the Vergennes PEL Study website: <https://www.vergennespel.com/>.

To reach all seven study communities and inform them about the public survey, the PEL Study team used a wide range of outreach tools. Outreach included:

- Attendance at Vergennes Day and the Addison County Fair and Field Days by the Vermont Agency of Transportation and Study Community Liaison.
- Email notifications to the stakeholder distribution list.
- Social media posts through the Vermont Agency of Transportation accounts.
- Direct outreach to municipalities and local organizations to share the survey on their listservs and websites.

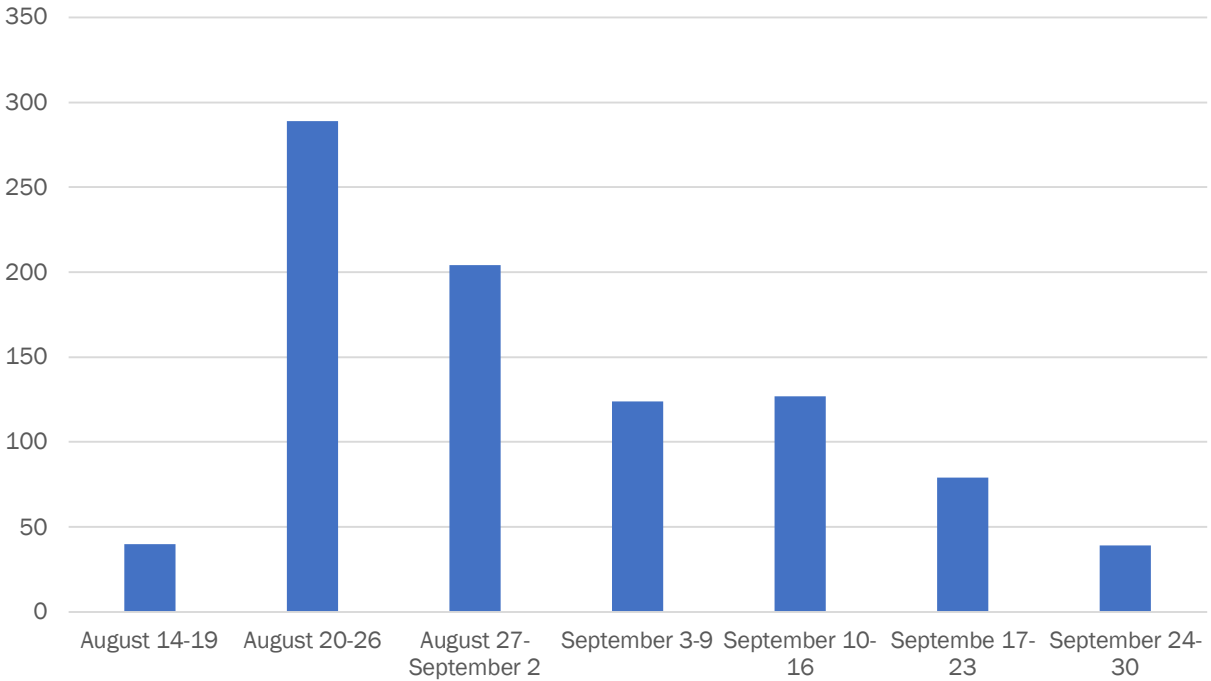


Vergennes PEL Study booth at Vergennes Day



Jim Gish, Community Liaison at the Vergennes PEL booth

There were 903 responses to the public survey collected between August 16, 2023, and September 25, 2023. Among the responses, 901 were submitted through the online platform and two responses were submitted as paper surveys. Figure 5 shows the participation by each week.



Note: August 14 to 19 and September 24 to 30 reflect partial weeks.

Figure 5. Survey Participants by Week

The following sections describe the content provided on each page of the survey and summarize the findings collected from participants:

- Screen 1: Welcome Screen
- Screen 2: Route Options
- Screen 3: Trade Offs
- Screen 4: Interactive Map for Location Specific Comments

A demonstration of the survey and layout of each screen can be found here:

<https://demo.metroquestsurvey.com/en62>.



Screen 1: Welcome Screen

The Welcome Screen (Figure 6) explained the Vergennes PEL Study objectives and basic instructions for completing the survey. The scrolling text at the bottom of this page explained what a purpose and need statement is and defined the PEL Study’s purpose and need. This screen specifically asked survey respondents to consider the Vergennes PEL Study purpose and need when completing the survey.

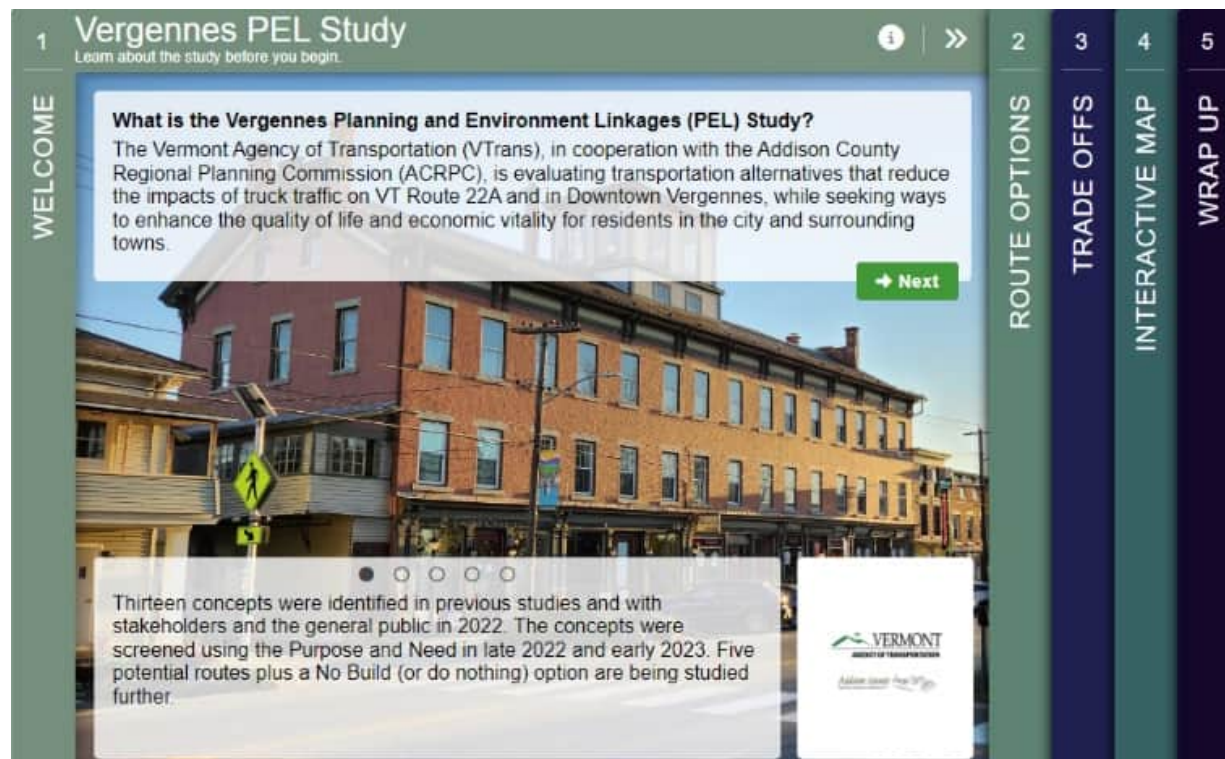


Figure 6: Welcome Screen

Purpose and Need Statement

With public and agency input, the study team developed the Vergennes PEL Study purpose and need Technical Memorandum,¹ which identified the purpose and need for the project along with the goals of the study. A purpose and need statement is an important component of PEL studies and environmental reviews prepared by VTrans, as it sets the stage for the specific problems to be addressed. The **purpose** defines the transportation problem to be solved. The **need** provides evidence that supports the assertion made in the **purpose**. The purpose and need statement developed for this PEL Study builds upon the purpose and need from the 2019 VT 22A Alternative Truck Route Study and reflects extensive public outreach and data collection efforts.

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 neighboring communities.

¹ https://vergennesspel.com/media/iiodtusc/vergennesspel-study_purpose-and-need-final-march-2022.pdf



The identified **needs** are summarized 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 neighboring communities.



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



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



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



Screen 2: Route Options

The Route Options screen (Figure 7) provided an overview of each of the five new route options under consideration, as well as the No Build option. Respondents were asked to consider:

- Blue Route (new route) – This route includes the construction of a new roadway in Vergennes and Panton.
- Pink Route (new route) – This route includes the construction of a new roadway mostly in Vergennes.
- Green Route (new route) – This route includes the construction of a new roadway primarily south and east of Vergennes within Panton and Waltham.
- Orange Route (new route) – This route includes the construction of a new roadway west of Route 22A entirely within Vergennes, in proximity to downtown.
- Purple Route (existing routes) – This route would shift northbound truck traffic currently using Route 22A to Route 17 and Route 7, maintaining southbound truck trips on Route 22A through Vergennes.
- No Build (existing routes) – This option assumes that no changes are made to the roadways or traffic flow in the future, beyond normal routine maintenance and minor improvement projects.

A map of the route with key areas highlighted was provided for each route option under consideration. Survey respondents were asked to rate each route option and the No Build option on a scale of 1 to 5 stars (1 star being the lowest and 5 stars being the highest). Survey respondents were able to provide comments on each route option as well as general comments for the screen.

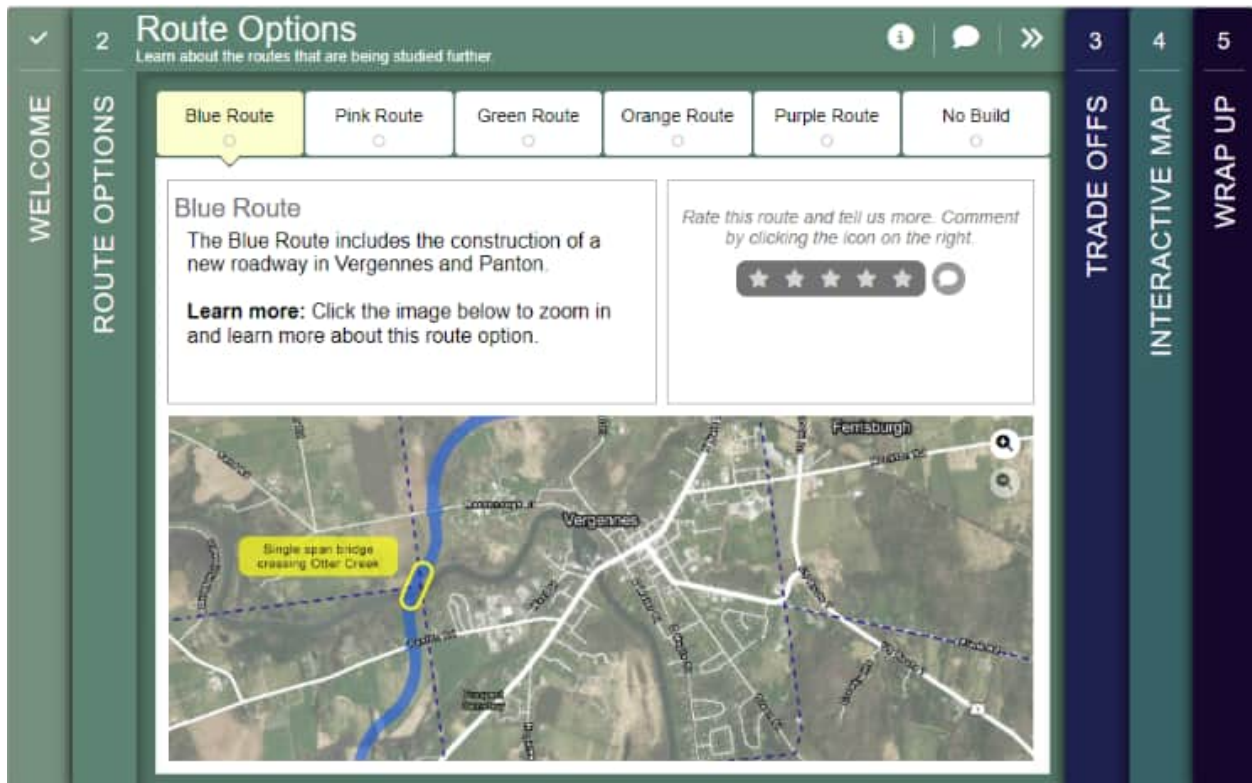
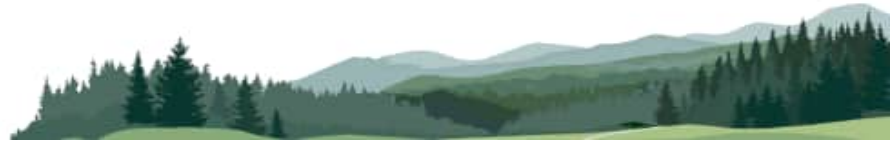


Figure 7: Route Options Screen



The Blue Route (3.32 average) and Pink Route (3.24 average) had the highest average rating among survey respondents. The Orange Route (1.86 average) and No Build option (2.29 average) had the lowest average rating from survey respondents. See Figure 8 for the average rating of each route option.

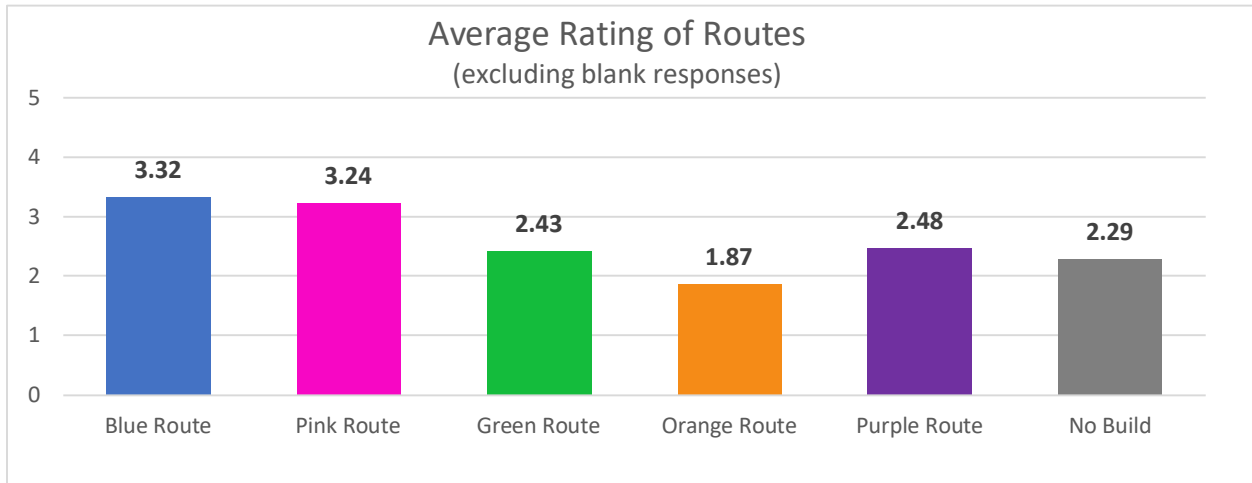


Figure 8: Average Rating of Route Options

Figure 9 shows the number of ratings from 1 to 5 for each route option. Survey responses show a strong dislike for the Green Route, Orange Route, Purple Route, and No Build option. The Orange Route received the most 1-star and 2-star ratings (423), followed by the Purple Route (348), Green Route (325), and the No Build option (320). The Blue Route and Pink Route received the most support. Only the Blue and Pink Route had more 5-star ratings than 1-star ratings; all other route options and the No Build had more 1-star ratings than 5-star ratings.

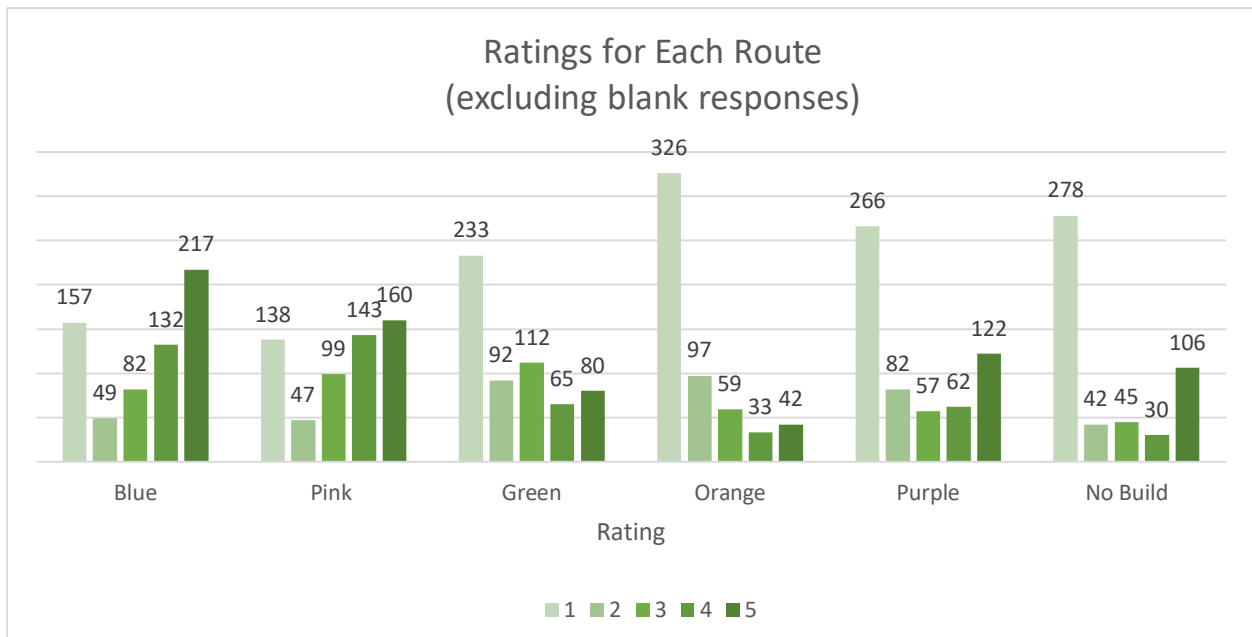


Figure 9: Number of Ratings for Each Route Option



Survey respondents were able to provide comments specific to each route on this screen. In total, the survey received 1,403 comments specific to the route options presented. All route rating comments can be found in the survey report appendices. Figure 10 below summarizes the sentiment (positive, negative, or neutral) of comments for each route across all survey screens. The proportion of positive comments generally aligned with the rating for each route. The routes receiving the highest proportion of positive comments were the Blue Route (41%), Pink Route (40%), while the Orange Route (8%), Green Route (14%), No Build option (21%), and Purple Route (27%) received the lowest proportion of positive comments.

Example Comments:

“To my mind the need is for vastly reduced truck traffic. Local deliveries only. There are too many inconsiderate truckers (engine brakes and horns) operating in this residential (and historic) neighborhood. Traffic for passenger vehicles should remain as is so as not to negatively impact economic activity in the city.”

“Getting trucks out of the downtown area would be great but leaving the rural parts of Vergennes intact is important for me.”

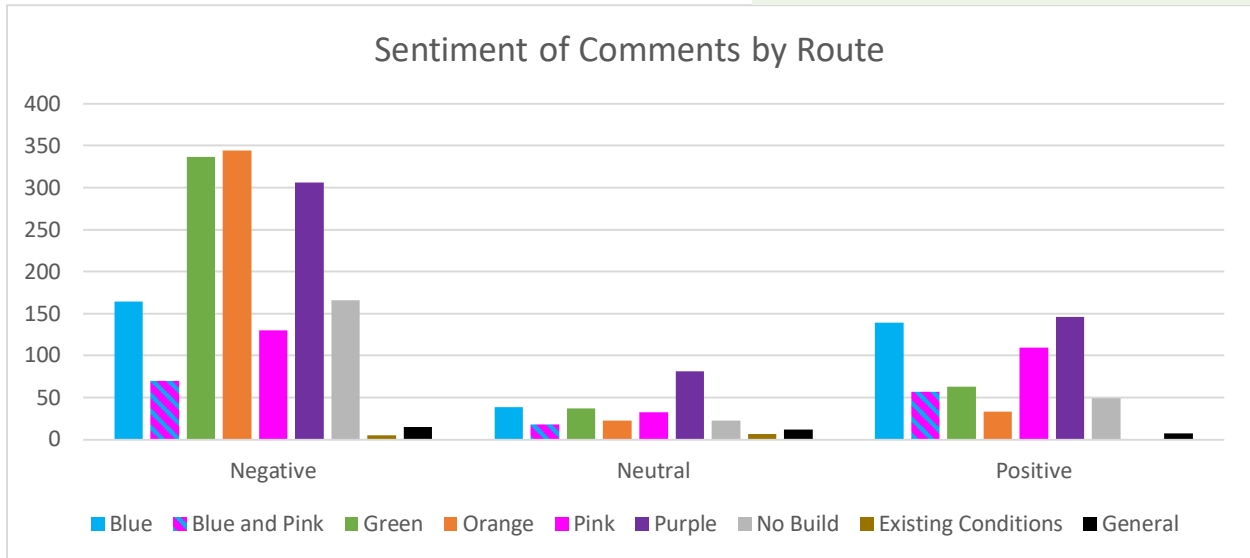


Figure 10: Sentiment of Comments by Route (All Survey Screens)

General comments noted concerns that the route options would displace truck traffic to residential neighborhoods and other areas that would be more negatively affected than downtown Vergennes. There were also concerns about new routes passing through natural areas, farmland, and historic properties. Comments in support of new routes noted it would be beneficial to open economic development opportunities on the perimeter of downtown Vergennes, to create new access points to Route 22A for emergencies, and to get truck traffic off Route 22A.



Screen 3: Trade Offs

The Trade Offs screen (Figure 11) asked survey participants to make a choice between eight pairs of trade-offs. Six of the trade-offs were about land use and two were about traffic. In each trade-off, survey respondents were given two options and were asked which they preferred.

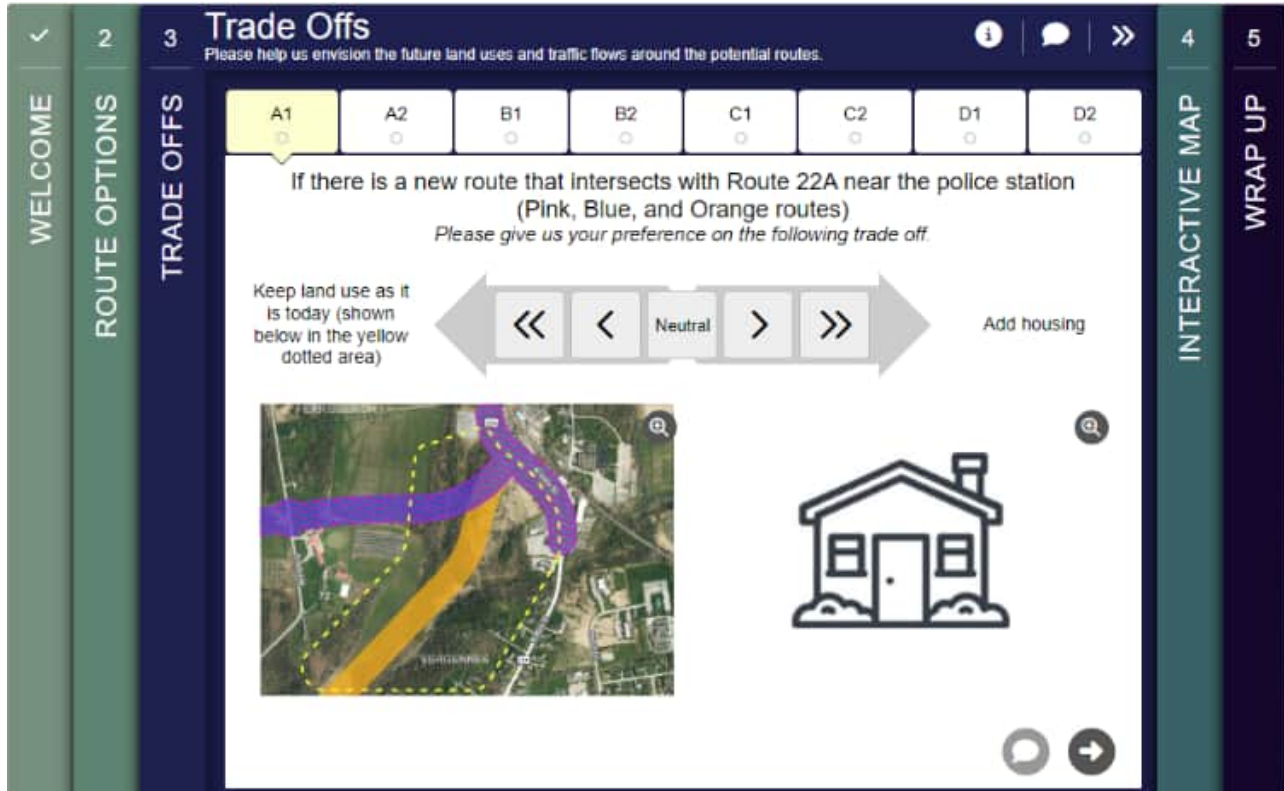


Figure 11: Trade Offs Screen



A. Preference on Land Use Around New Route Intersection with 22A (Pink, Blue, and Orange Routes)

The first two trade-off questions (A1 and A2) asked respondents about their land use preferences if a new route (Pink, Blue, and Orange routes) that intersects with Route 22A near the police station is constructed. The affected land use area is shown in the yellow dotted outline in Figure 12.

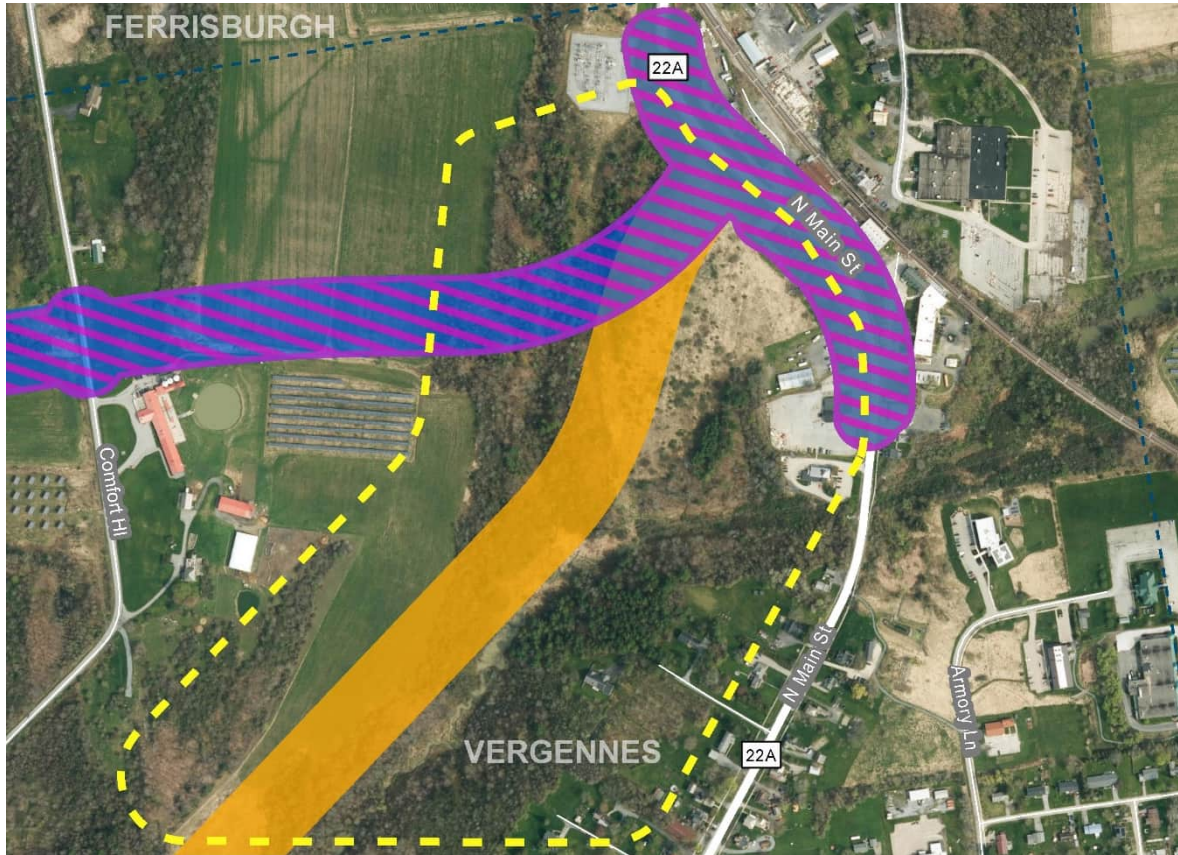


Figure 12: Land Area Around New Route Intersecting with Route 22A (Pink, Blue, and Orange Routes)

A1 Preferences on Housing

In trade-off scenario A1, respondents were asked if there is a new route (Pink, Blue and Orange routes) that intersects with Route 22A near the police station would they prefer to keep the land as it is today or add housing. The rating options were:

- Strongly prefer keeping land use as it is today
- Prefer keeping land use as it is today
- Neutral
- Prefer adding housing
- Strongly prefer adding housing

As shown in Figure 13, most respondents said they prefer (156 responses) or strongly prefer (190 responses) adding housing, while a smaller portion said they prefer to keep land use as it is today (57) or strongly prefer keeping land use as it is today (118). There were a moderate number of respondents who were neutral on this trade-off (139 responses). There were 245 survey respondents who abstained from



answering this trade-off question. Among 19 open-ended comments related to tradeoff A1 (new housing development around the Pink, Blue, and Orange routes at the intersection with Route 22A), 10 comments were negative in sentiment, five were positive, and four were neutral.

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

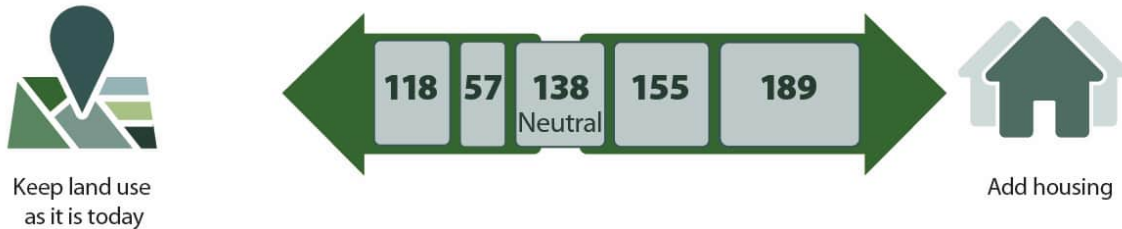


Figure 13 Results from Trade-off A1 Question to Keep Land Use vs. Add Housing

A2 Preferences on Commercial or Industrial Land Use

In trade-off scenario A2, respondents were asked if there is a new route that intersects with Route 22A near the police station (Pink, Blue and Orange routes) would they prefer to keep the land as it is today or add commercial or industrial uses. The rating options were strongly prefer keeping land use as it is today, prefer keeping land use as it is today, neutral, prefer adding commercial or industrial uses, or strongly prefer adding commercial or industrial uses.

As shown in Figure 14, responses were relatively split between the options, with a slight preference toward adding commercial or industrial uses. A slight majority of respondents reported they prefer (151 responses) or strongly prefer (112 responses) adding commercial or industrial uses, while a smaller portion said they prefer to keep land use as it is today (72 responses) or strongly prefer keeping land use as it is today (139 responses). There were a moderate number of respondents who were neutral on this trade-off (127 responses). There were 303 survey respondents who abstained from answering this trade-off question. Among eight open-ended comments related to tradeoff A2 (new commercial or industrial development around the Pink, Blue, and Orange routes at the intersection with Route 22A), five comments were negative in sentiment, two were positive, and two were neutral.

Example Comments:

“We need housing badly, for families, single people - everyone, really! And Vergennes would be a great place for growth with its proximity to jobs and recreation.”

“I am completely against turning anymore farm land into housing.”



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

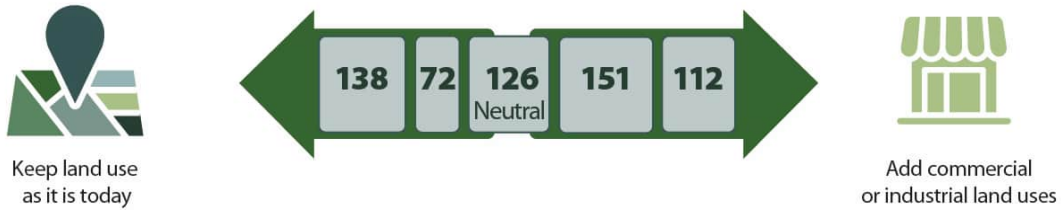


Figure 14. Results from Trade-off A2 Question to Keep Land Use vs. Add Commercial or Industrial

B. Preference on Land Use Around New Route Intersection with Panton Road (Pink and Blue Routes)

The next set of trade-off questions (B1 and B2) asked respondents about their land use preferences if there is a new route that intersects with Route 22A near Pantan Road (pink and blue routes.) The affected land use area is shown in the yellow dotted outline in Figure 15.

Example Comments:

“Commercial and light industrial seems like a great land use along a truck route.”

“We already have commercial spaces in Vergennes that need more consistent/viable tenants.”

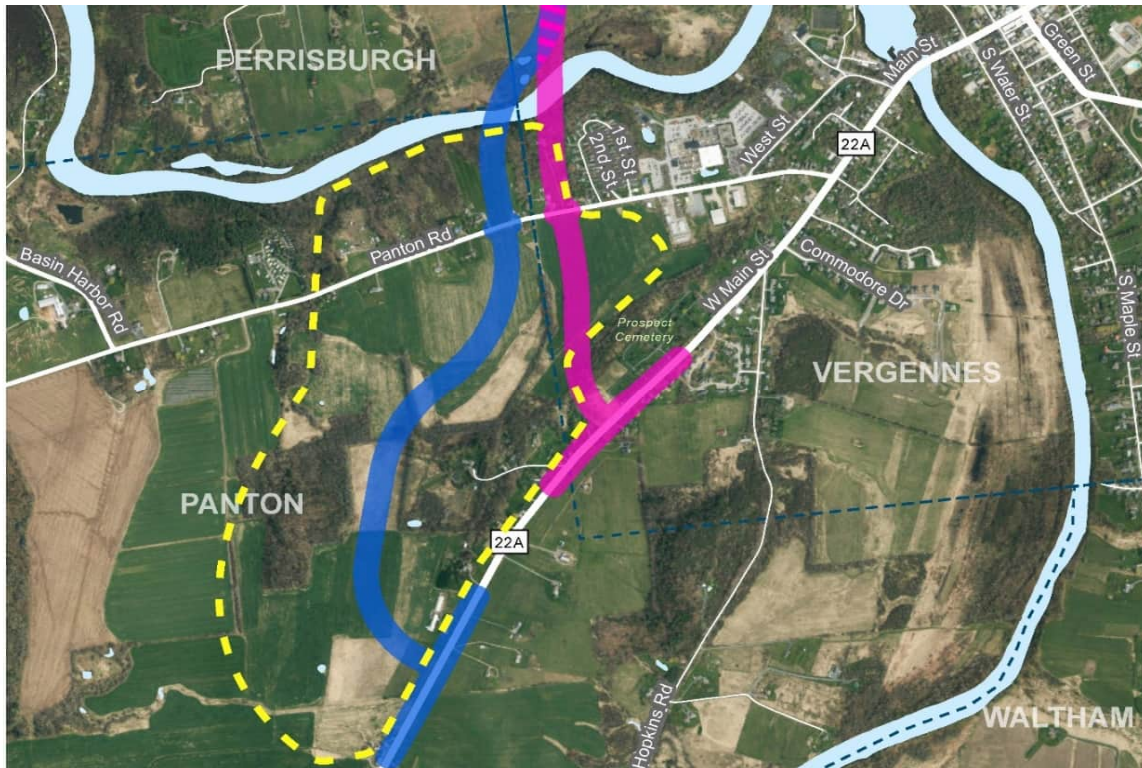
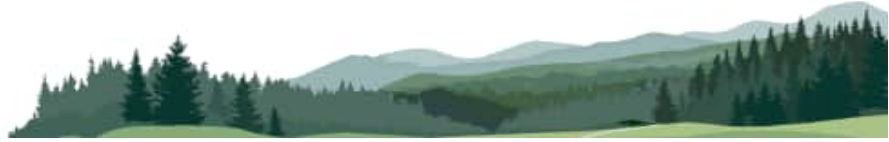


Figure 15: Land Area Around New Route Intersecting with Pantan Road (Pink and Blue Routes)



B1 Preferences on Housing

In trade-off scenario B1, respondents were asked if there is a new route that intersects with Panton Road (Pink and Blue Routes) would they prefer to keep the land as it is today or add housing. The rating options were strongly prefer keeping land use as it is today, prefer keeping land use as it is today, neutral, prefer adding housing, or strongly prefer adding housing.

As shown in Figure 16, responses showed a preference for adding housing. Responses indicate that respondents prefer (142 responses) or strongly prefer (162 responses) adding housing, while a smaller portion said they prefer to keep land use as it is today (52 responses) or strongly prefer keeping land use as it is today (137 responses). There were a moderate number of respondents who were neutral on this trade-off (104 responses). There were 307 survey respondents who abstained from answering this trade-off question. Among 14 open-ended comments related to tradeoff B1 (new housing development around the pink and blue routes through Northern Vergennes), 10 comments were negative in sentiment, two were positive, and three were neutral.

If there is a new route that intersects with Panton Road, would you prefer to...

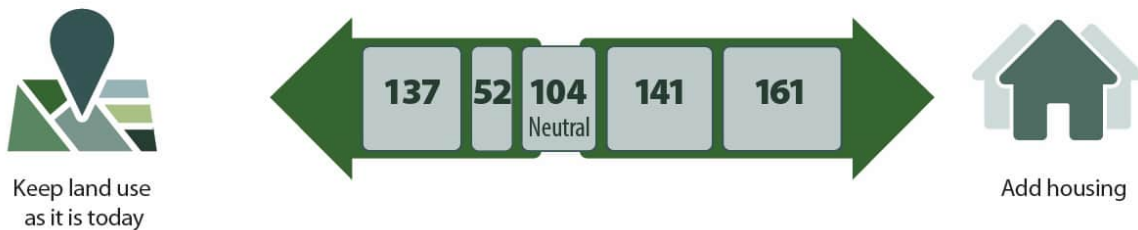


Figure 16: Results from Trade-off B1 Question to Keep Land Use vs. Add Housing

B2 Preferences on Commercial or Industrial Land Use

In trade-off scenario B2, respondents were asked if there is a new route that intersects with Panton Road (Pink and Blue Routes) would they prefer to keep the land as it is today or add commercial or industrial land use. The rating options were strongly prefer keeping land use as it is today, prefer keeping land use as it is today, neutral, prefer adding commercial or industrial land uses, or strongly prefer adding commercial or industrial land uses.

Example Comments:

“No one is going to want to listen to traffic, new housing would counteract the issue.”

“There's already plenty of new housing here. Add more! With sidewalk access to downtown, plz. :)”

As shown in Figure 17, responses showed a preference for keeping the existing land use as it is today. Responses indicate that respondents prefer (98 responses) or strongly prefer (172 responses) keeping land use as it is today, while a smaller portion said they prefer adding commercial or industrial land uses (114 responses) or strongly prefer adding commercial or industrial land uses (73 responses). There were a moderate number of respondents who were neutral on this trade-off (127 responses). There were 320 survey respondents who abstained from answering this trade-off question. Among six open-ended comments related to tradeoff B2 (new commercial or industrial development around the pink, and blue routes through Northern Vergennes), four comments were negative in sentiment, one was positive, and one was neutral.



If there is a new route that intersects with Panton Road, would you prefer to...

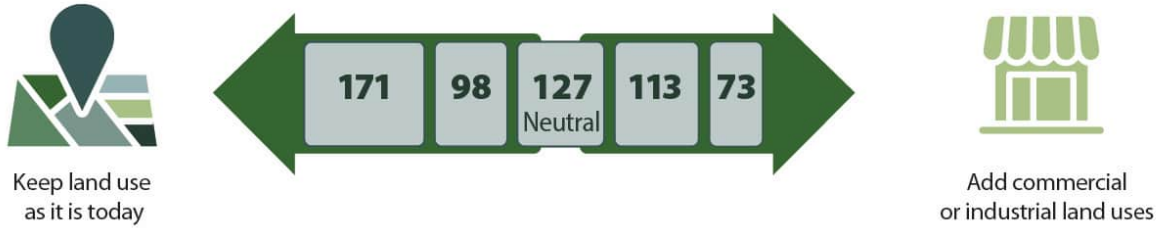


Figure 17: Results from Trade-off B2 Question to Keep Land Use vs. Add Commercial or Industrial

C. Preference on Land Uses Around New Route through Northern Vergennes (Pink and Blue Routes)

The next set of trade-off questions (C1 and C2) asked respondents about their land use preferences if there is a new route through northern Vergennes (pink and blue routes.) The affected land use area is shown in the yellow dotted outline in Figure 18.

Example Comments:

“I would rather say commercial/industrial use in the city of Vergennes rather than in Panton, but one or two businesses along that route would probably be fine.”

“This is a poor idea, any solution should only be to the west of 22A, and any solution along Panton Road is to be avoided. This area is used for tourism and needs to remain quiet and pristine. All traffic solutions should be east of 22 A.”

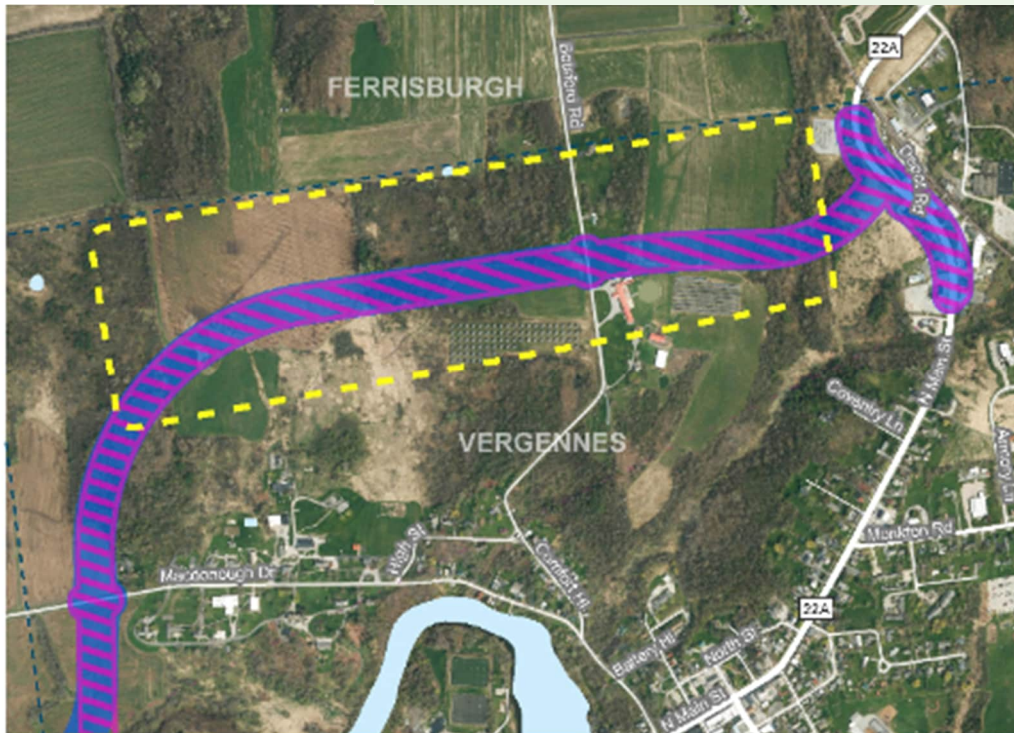


Figure 18: Land Area Around New Route through Northern Vergennes (Pink and Blue Routes)



C1 Preferences on Housing

In trade-off scenario C1, respondents were asked if there is a new route through northern Vergennes (Pink and Blue Routes) would they prefer to keep the land as it is today or add housing. The rating options were strongly prefer keeping land use as it is today, prefer keeping land use as it is today, neutral, prefer adding housing, or strongly prefer adding housing.

As shown in Figure 19, responses showed a preference for adding housing. Responses indicate that respondents prefer (130 responses) or strongly prefer (169 responses) adding housing, while a smaller portion said they prefer to keep land use as it is today (51 responses) or strongly prefer keeping land use as it is today (125 responses). There were a moderate number of respondents who were neutral on this trade-off (111 responses). There were 316 survey respondents who abstained from answering this trade-off question.

Example Comments:

“Allowing housing would seem to make sense, but space along a truck route would seem to be better suited to commercial and light industrial.”

“The whole point of the detour is for noise reduction. No one is going to want housing by a truck route.”

If there is a new route through northern Vergennes, would you prefer to...

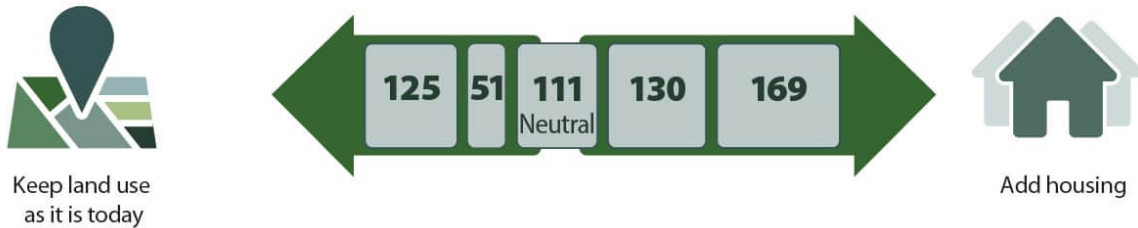


Figure 19: Results from Trade-off C1 Question to Keep Land Use vs. Add Housing

C2 Preferences on Commercial or Industrial Land Use

In trade-off scenario C2, respondents were asked if there is a new route through northern Vergennes (Pink and Blue Routes) would they prefer to keep the land as it is today or add commercial or industrial uses. The rating options were strongly prefer keeping land use as it is today, neutral, prefer adding commercial or industrial uses, or strongly prefer adding commercial or industrial uses.

As shown in Figure 20, responses showed a preference for keeping the land use as it is today. Responses indicate that respondents prefer (54 responses) or strongly prefer (153 responses) keeping the land use as it is today, while a smaller portion said they prefer adding commercial or industrial uses (115 responses) or strongly prefer adding commercial or industrial uses (96 responses). There were a moderate number of respondents who were neutral on this

Example Comments:

“What type of future financial burden will this place on the taxpayers?”

“Does this route go through anyone's property? I do not want to displace any citizen, historical property, or disrupt nature.”



trade-off (124 responses). There were 326 survey respondents who abstained from answering this trade-off question.

If there is a new route through northern Vergennes, would you prefer to...

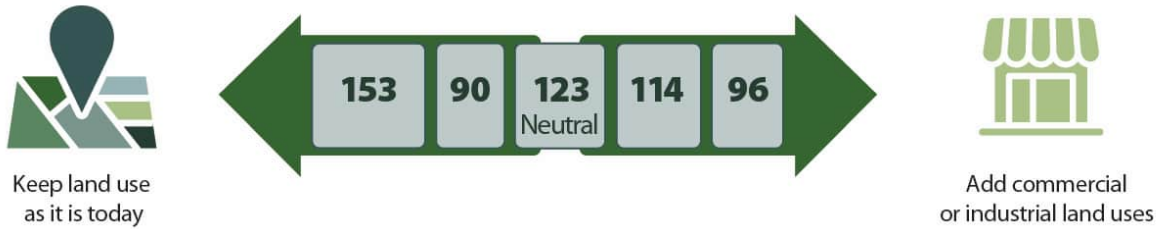
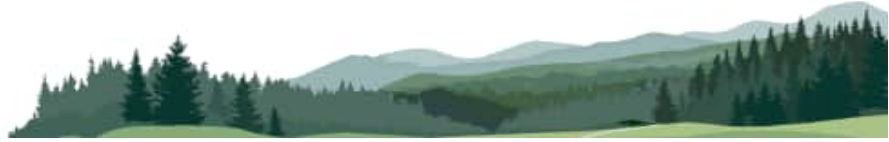
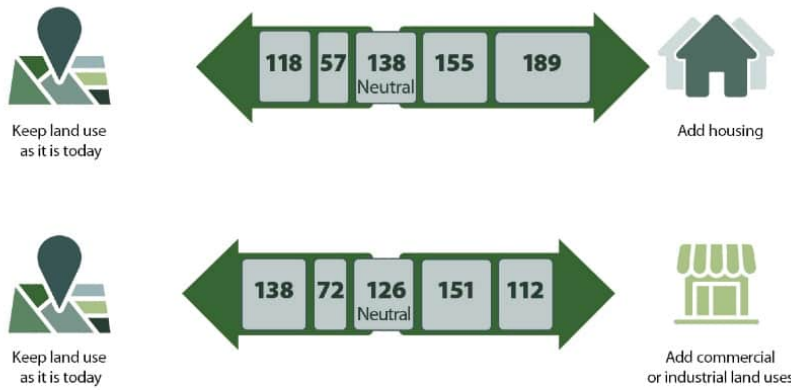


Figure 20: Results from Trade-off C2 Question to Keep Land Use vs. Add Commercial or Industrial

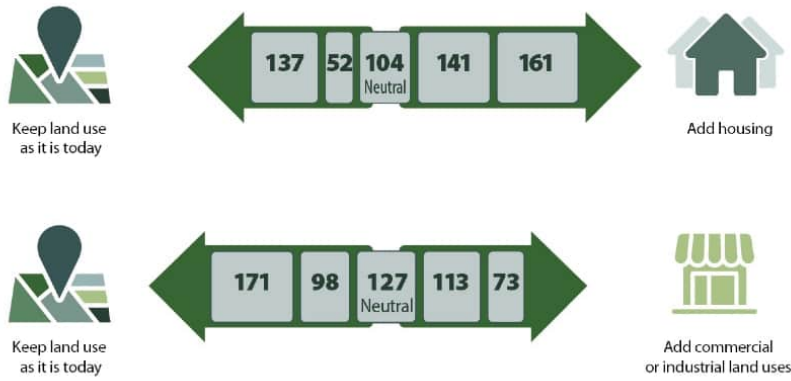
Figure 21 presents the results off all six of the land use trade off questions (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2). For all three locations, there is a preference for housing. When comparing keeping land as it is today versus adding commercial or industrial, survey respondents were more neutral.



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 Panton Road, would you prefer to...



If there is a new route through northern Vergennes, would you prefer to...

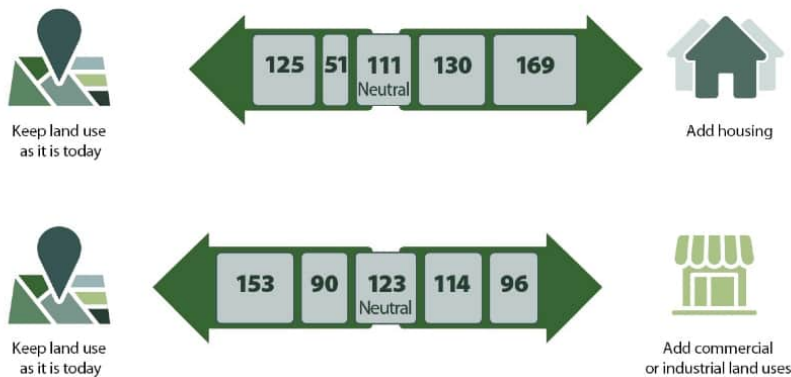


Figure 21: Land Use Trade-Off Comparisons



D. Preference on Truck Traffic in the Region (Blue, Pink, Green, Orange, and Purple Routes)

The final set of trade-off questions (D1 and D2) asked respondents about their traffic preferences to either shift traffic to a new roadway (blue, pink, green, or orange routes), shift northbound traffic to an improved Route 17 (purple route), or to keep existing traffic on Route 22A/Main Street in Vergennes assuming that no changes are made to roadways or traffic flow in the future (No Build option.)

D1 Keep Traffic on Route 22A/Main Street or Shift Traffic (trucks and passenger vehicles) to a New Roadway (Blue, Pink, Green, and Orange Routes)

In trade-off scenario D1, respondents were asked if moving trucks also means moving passenger vehicles; would respondents prefer keeping existing traffic on Route 22A/Main Street in Vergennes (No Build option), or would respondents prefer shifting traffic to a new roadway (Blue, Pink, Green or Orange routes). The location of the Blue, Pink, Green, and Orange routes are shown in Figure 22.²

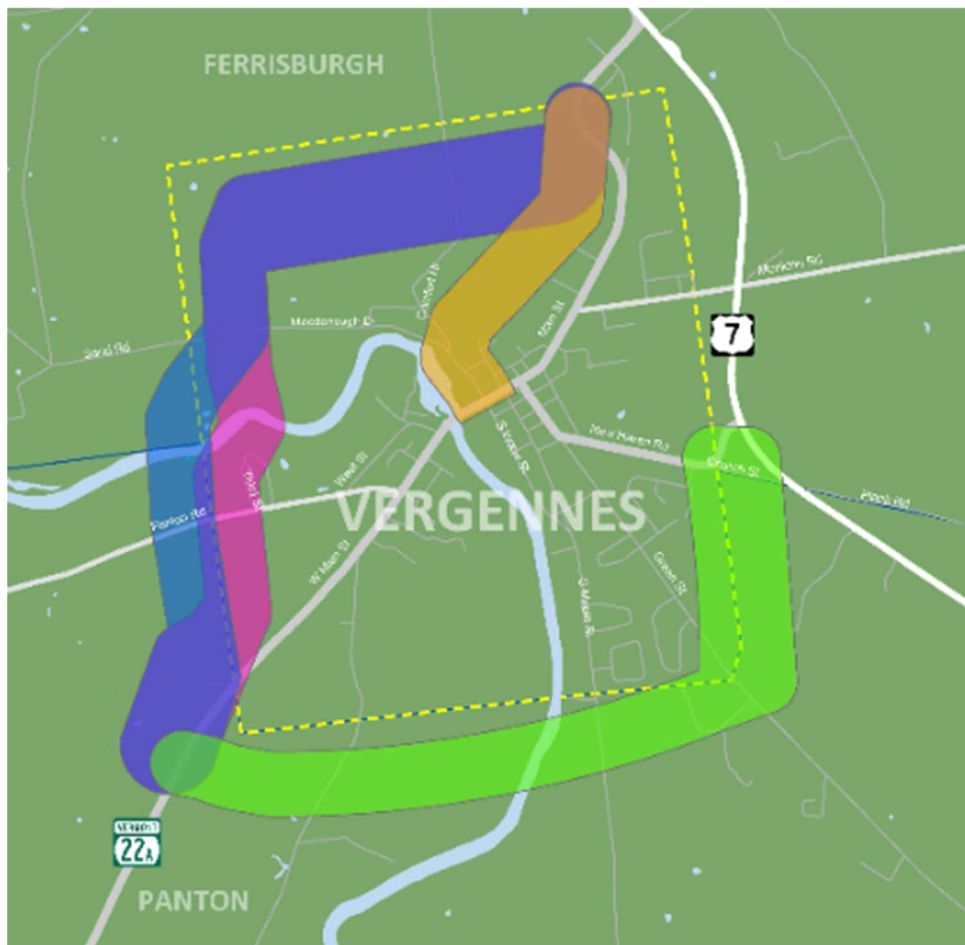


Figure 22: Location of New Routes relative to Existing Route 22A/Main Street (Blue, Pink, Green, and Orange Routes)

² The overlapping area between the Pink and Blue routes is shown as purple in Figure 22. This area is different than the Purple Route discussed in survey question D2.



The rating options were:

- Strongly prefer keeping existing traffic flow
- Prefer keeping existing traffic flow
- Neutral
- Prefer shifting traffic to a new roadway
- Strongly prefer shifting traffic to a new roadway

As shown in Figure 23, responses showed a strong preference for shifting traffic to a new roadway (Blue, Pink, Green or Orange routes). Responses indicate that respondents prefer (122 responses) or strongly prefer (203 responses) shifting traffic to one of the proposed routes (Blue, Pink, Green or Orange routes), while a smaller portion said they prefer (53 responses) or strongly prefer (128 responses) keeping existing traffic on Route 22A/Main Street in Vergennes (No Build option). A small number of respondents (79) were neutral on this trade-off. There were 318 survey respondents who abstained from answering this trade-off question. Among 30 open-ended comments related to tradeoff D1, 14 comments were negative in sentiment, ten were positive, and six were neutral. Among negative comments, three referred to all new route options, three referred to the No Build option, and four referred to removing passenger vehicles from Main Street. Among the positive comments, five referred to all new route options and two referred to the No Build option.

If moving trucks also means moving passenger vehicles, would you prefer to...

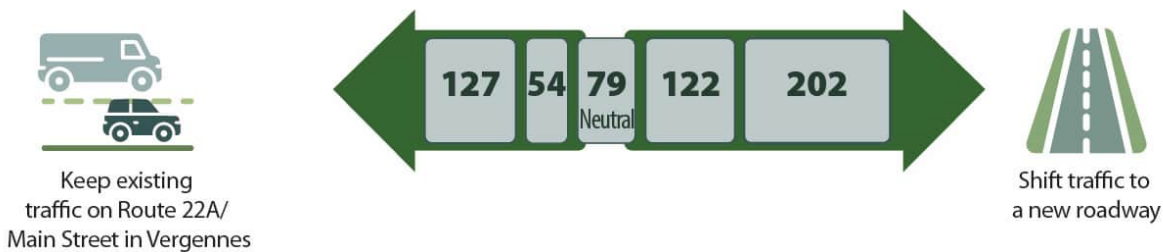


Figure 23: Results from Trade-off D1 Question to Keep Existing Truck Traffic Flow vs. Shift Truck Traffic to a New Roadway

D2 Keep Traffic on Route 22A/Main Street or Shift Northbound Traffic to an Improved Route 17 (Purple Route)

In trade-off scenario D2, respondents were asked to think about truck traffic in the region and decide if they prefer keeping existing traffic on Route 22A/Main Street in Vergennes (“no build” option), or would respondents prefer shifting northbound traffic to an improved route 17 (Purple Route). Figure 24 shows the location of the improved Route 17.

Example Comments:

“Moving more cars out of downtown could help with traffic but may hurt businesses due to lack of traffic and exposure”

“Offer the new route to passenger vehicles as an alternate bypass, and not mandatory for through passenger vehicle traffic - but mandatory for trucks.”

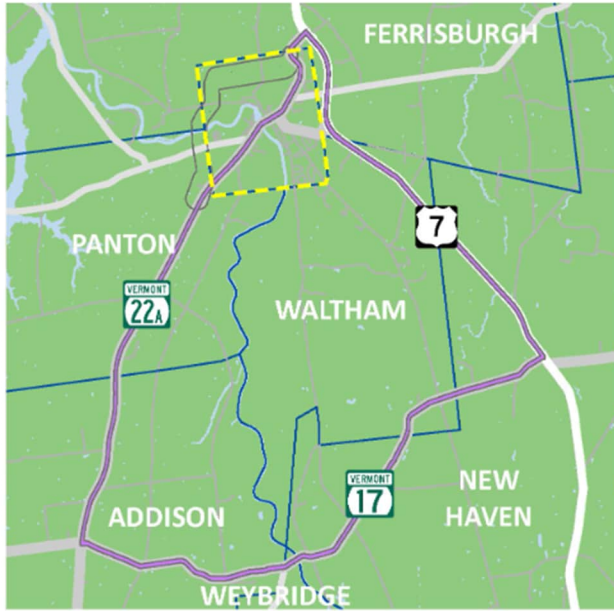


Figure 24: Location of Improved Route 17 (Purple Route)

The rating options for this question were:

- Strongly prefer keeping existing traffic flow
- Prefer keeping existing traffic flow
- Neutral
- Prefer shifting northbound traffic to an improved Route 17
- Strongly prefer shifting northbound traffic to an improved Route 17

As shown in Figure 25, responses showed a strong preference for shifting northbound traffic to an improved Route 17 (Purple Route).

Responses indicate that respondents prefer (101 responses) or strongly prefer (232 responses) shifting northbound traffic to an improved Route 17 (Purple Route), while a smaller portion said they prefer (45 responses) or strongly prefer (120 responses) keeping existing traffic on Route 22A/Main Street in Vergennes (No Build option). A small number of respondents (88) were neutral on this trade-off. There were 317 survey respondents who abstained from answering this trade-off question. Among 28 open-ended comments related to tradeoff D2, 17 comments were negative in sentiment, eight were positive, and three were neutral. Among negative comments, 16 referred to the Purple Route and one referred to the No Build option. Among the positive comments, seven referred to the Purple Route and one referred to the No Build option.

Thinking about truck traffic in the region, would you prefer to...

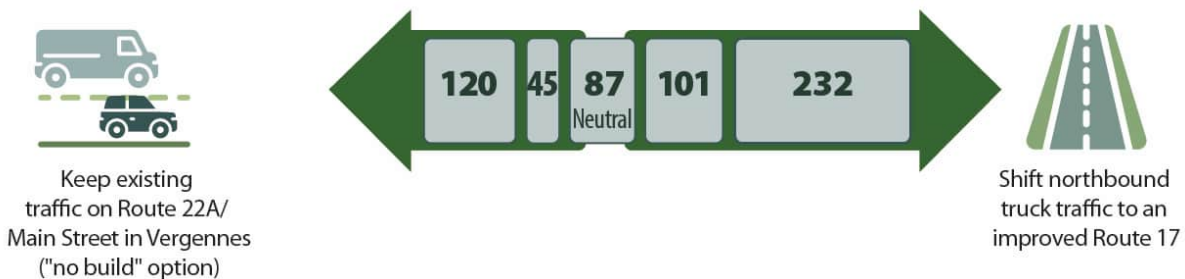


Figure 25: Results from Trade-off D2 Question to Keep Existing Truck Traffic Flow Vs. Shift Northbound Truck Traffic to an Improved Route 17



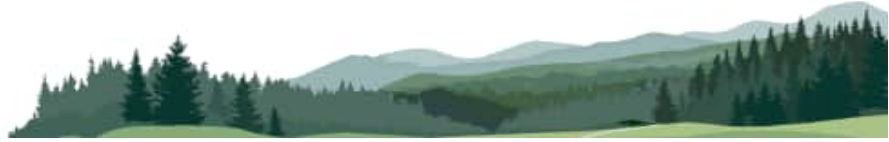
Key Takeaways for Trade-Offs

- Survey respondents were generally in support of adding housing in the areas surrounding new routes but less supportive of adding commercial or industrial land use in those areas relative to keeping land use as it is today. These preferences applied to a new route intersecting with Route 22A (Pink, Blue, and Orange routes) and a new route through northern Vergennes (Pink and Blue routes)
- Survey respondents were generally in support of changing truck traffic flow away from Route 22A/Main Street in downtown Vergennes and instead shifting traffic to a new roadway (Blue, Pink, Green, and Orange routes) or an improved Route 17 (Purple Route) Support was slightly stronger for shifting traffic to an improved Route 17 (Purple Route) compared to a new roadway (Blue, Pink, Green, or Orange routes).
- Compared to the preference ratings, there were fewer open-ended comments, and they were more negative in sentiment about changing existing conditions across all tradeoff questions. This suggests that respondents who felt negatively about a tradeoff were more likely to leave open-ended comments.

Example Comments:

“No one is going to choose more miles taking 17 over going through Vergennes without penalties”

“This is a good option- 17 is already used for all types of vehicles so it would not negatively impact the adjoining areas.”



Screen 4: Interactive Map for Location Specific Comments

The Interactive Map for Location Specific Comments screen (Interactive Map screen) asked participants to add markers on a regional map (Figure 26) that showed the possible routes under consideration in the Vergennes PEL Study (Blue, Green, Pink, Orange, and Purple). Survey participants were asked to select marker types (mobility and access, safety and circulation, environment, resilience, quality of life, economic vitality, land use, and other) based on the **Purpose and Need**. After selecting the map marker type, participants were asked to place the marker along the corridor and leave a comment specific to their concerns, suggestions, or feelings (positive or negative).

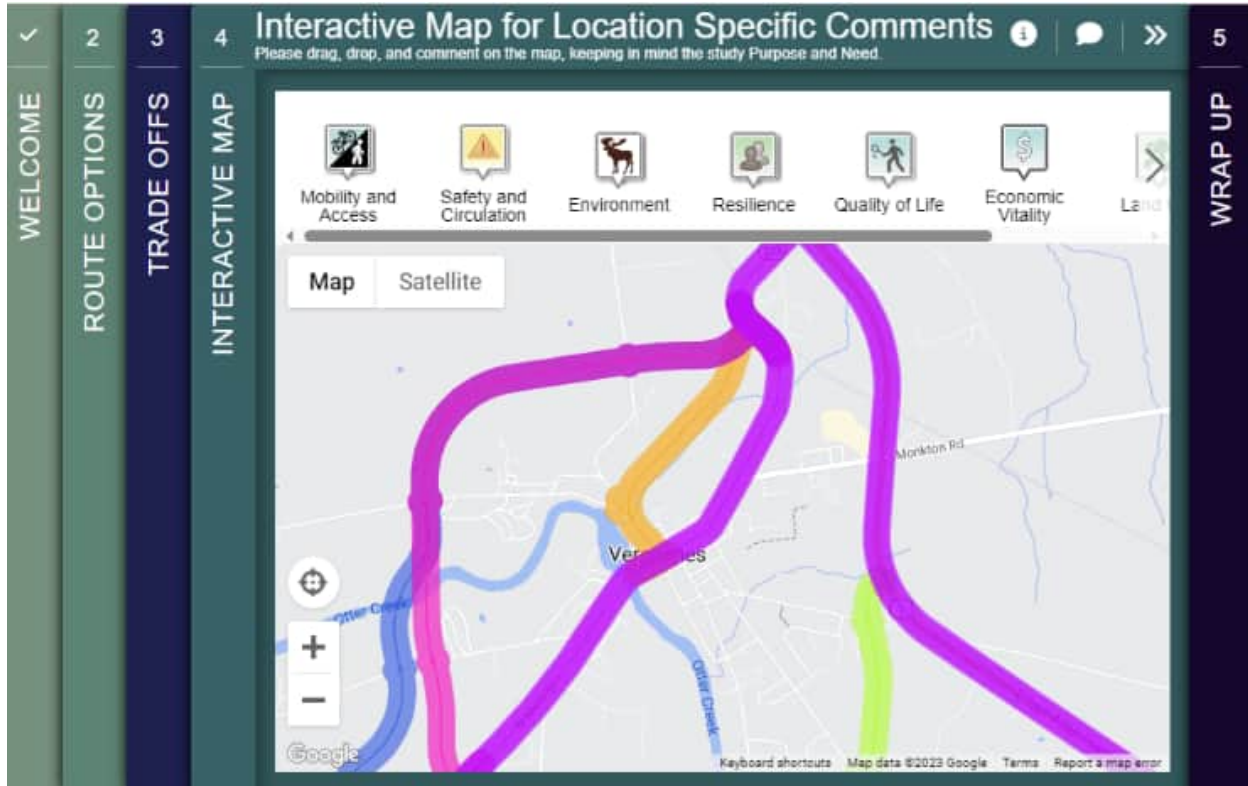


Figure 26: Interactive Map for Location Specific Comments screen

Survey participants placed a total of 879 markers on the Interactive Map screen. An interactive online map showing all the comments is available on the study website at www.vergennespel.com with all other survey results. Figure 27 shows the density of location specific comments, which were most concentrated in downtown Vergennes, with clusters along the new roadways and Route 17 in New Haven. Figure 28 shows the markers at a larger scale to provide more detail along the Blue, Pink, Orange, and Green routes.

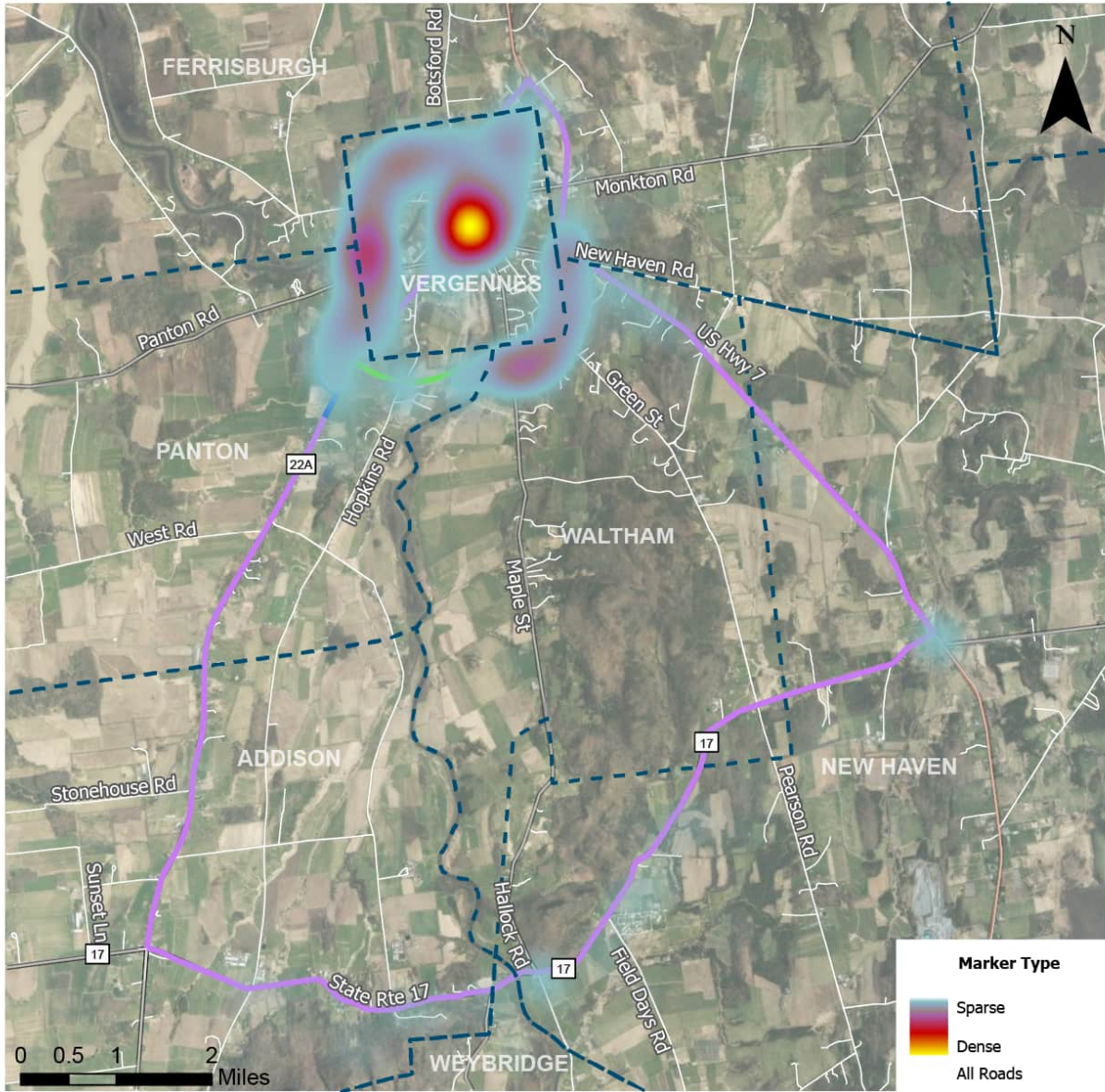


Figure 27: Density Map of Location Specific Comments, Regional Extent

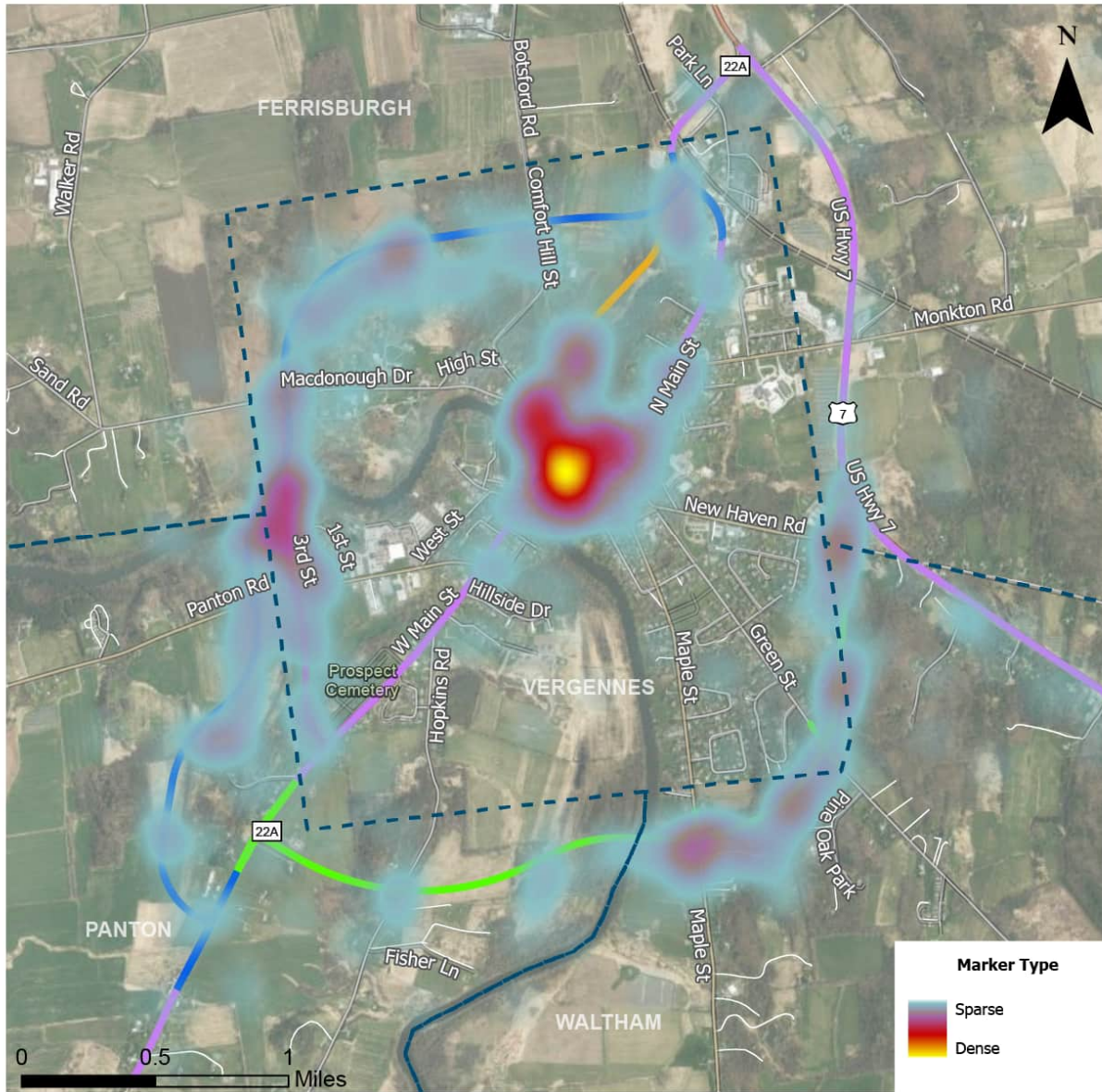


Figure 28: Density Map of Location Specific Comments, Vergennes Extent

Figure 29 shows the comment locations for all marker types and Figure 30 shows the markers at a larger scale to provide more detail along the Blue, Pink, Orange, and Green routes. The majority of markers (23%) were Safety and Circulation, followed by Quality of Life (21%). The fewest number of markers were in the categories of Resilience (5%) and Other (4%). Each of the marker types are described separately in the following sections. Among open-ended comments, the most common themes were impacts to residents and residential areas (252 comments), safety and circulation for trucks (224 comments), and traffic congestion (197 comments). In addition, survey respondents provided 18 general comments that included concern over preserving open and agricultural land, economic impacts of any alternative, and explanations of why certain routes are more favorable than others.

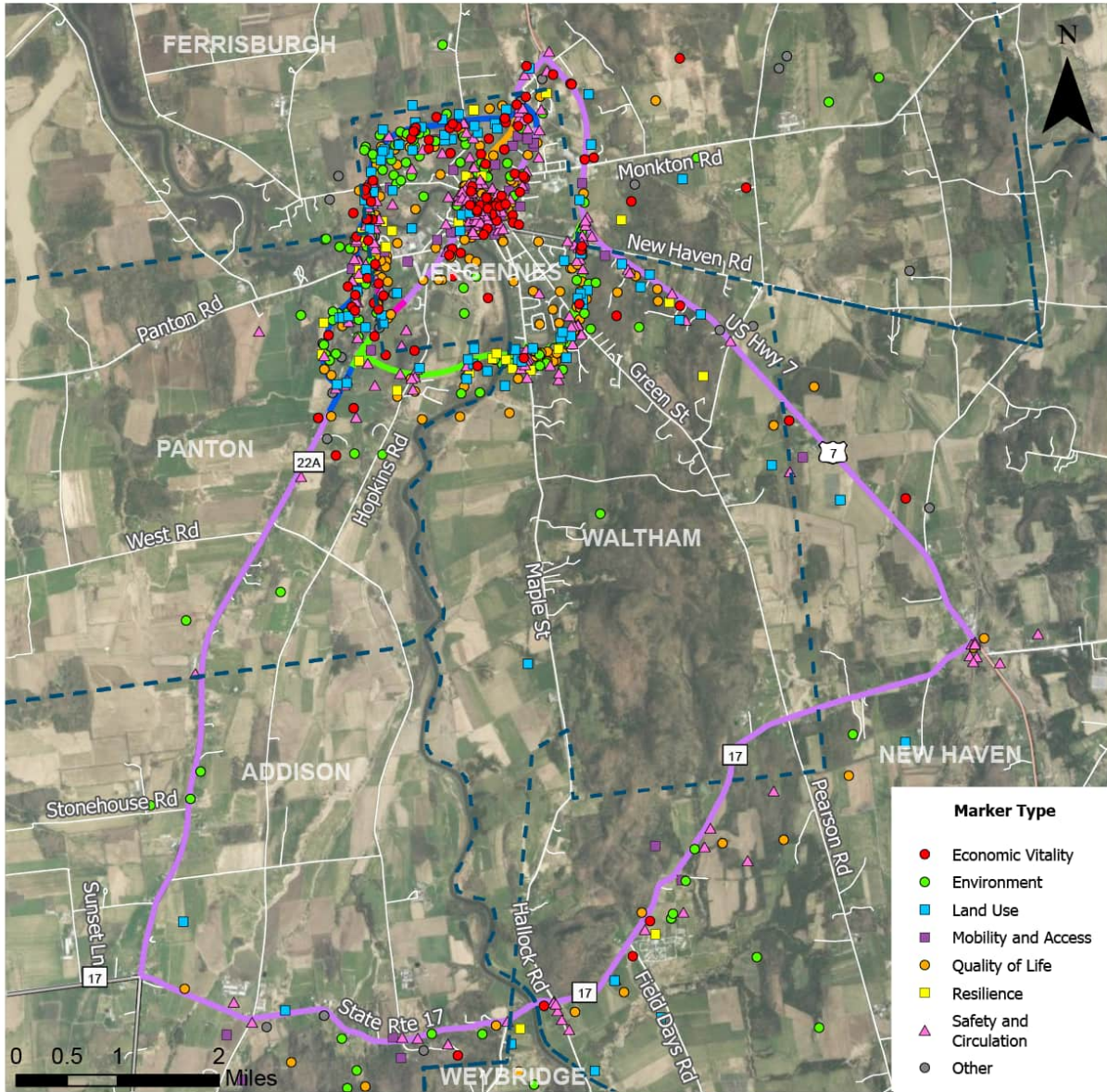


Figure 29: Comment Locations for All Marker Types, Regional Extent

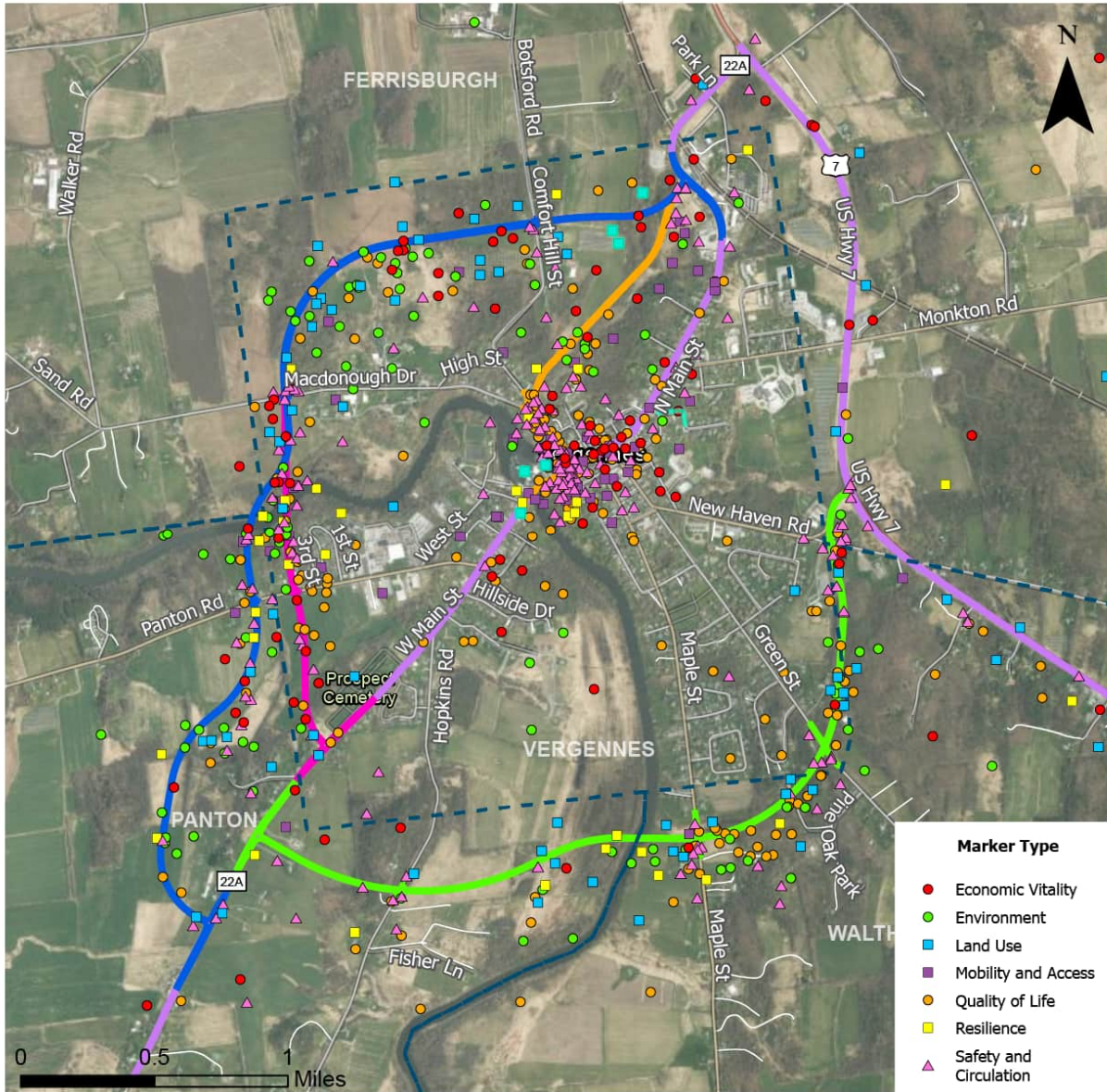


Figure 30: Comment Locations for All Marker Types, Vergennes Extent



Resilience

There were 42 resilience markers posted on the map as shown in Figure 31 (regional extent) and Figure 32 (Vergennes extent focused on new route options). There were 25 open-ended comments related to resilience; 12 were negative in sentiment, 11 were positive, and two were neutral. The most common themes in the comments were related to a new bridge (five comments) and construction or maintenance costs (four comments). Themes from the resilience-related comments are summarized by route in Table 2.

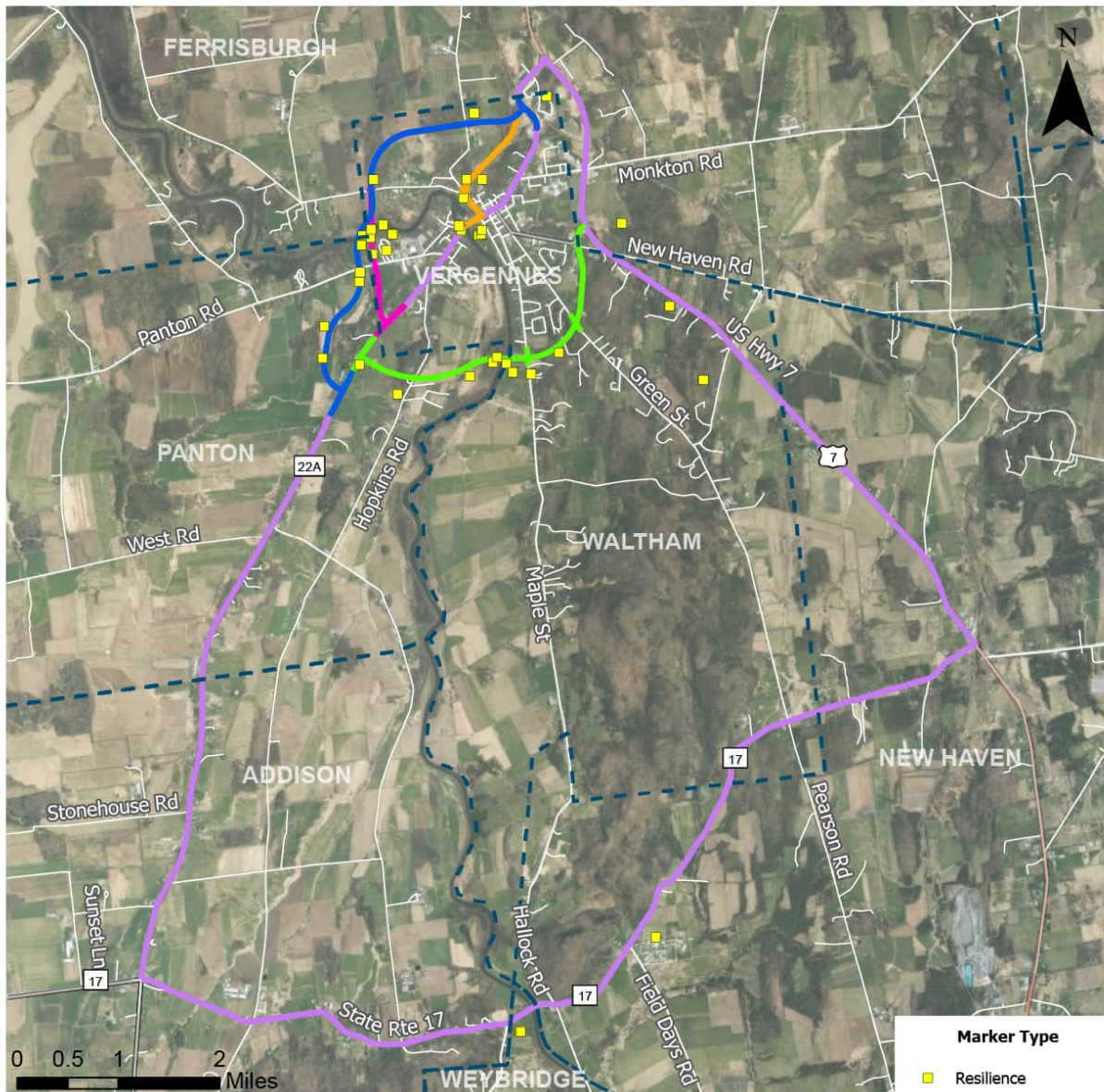


Figure 31: Map of Resilience Markers, Regional Extent

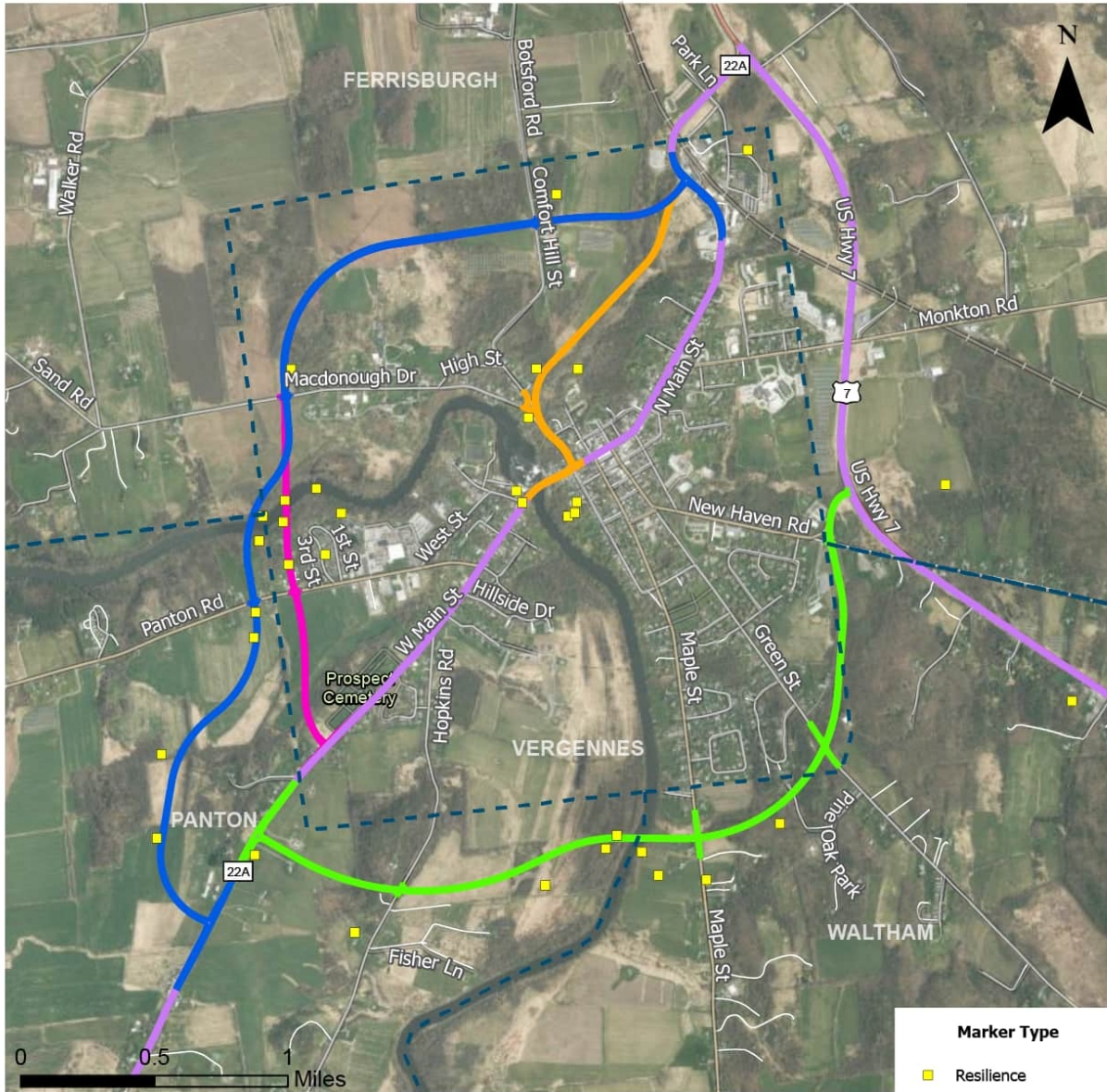


Figure 32: Map of Resilience Markers, Vergennes Extent

Table 2: Themes from Resilience-Related Comments

Route(s)	Themes from Resilience-Related Comments
Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify floodplains around the proposed bridge crossing Otter Creek. - More infrastructure would result in more maintenance.
Pink and Blue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional bridge would enhance resilience. - Additional bridge would add more maintenance.
Orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need for second bridge at another location.
Purple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This route would be good in the distant future.



Safety and Circulation

There were 202 safety and circulation markers placed in the Interactive Map screen as shown in Figure 33 (regional extent) and Figure 34 (Vergennes extent focused on new route options). Among these markers, there were 195 open-ended comments; 140 were negative in sentiment, 30 were positive, and 25 were neutral. The most common themes in the comments related to safety and circulation concerns in general (39 comments) and for trucks specifically (25 comments) as well as traffic congestion (24 comments). Other themes included safety concerns over a new road in a residential areas and support of a second bridge. Themes from comments specific to routes are summarized in Table 3.

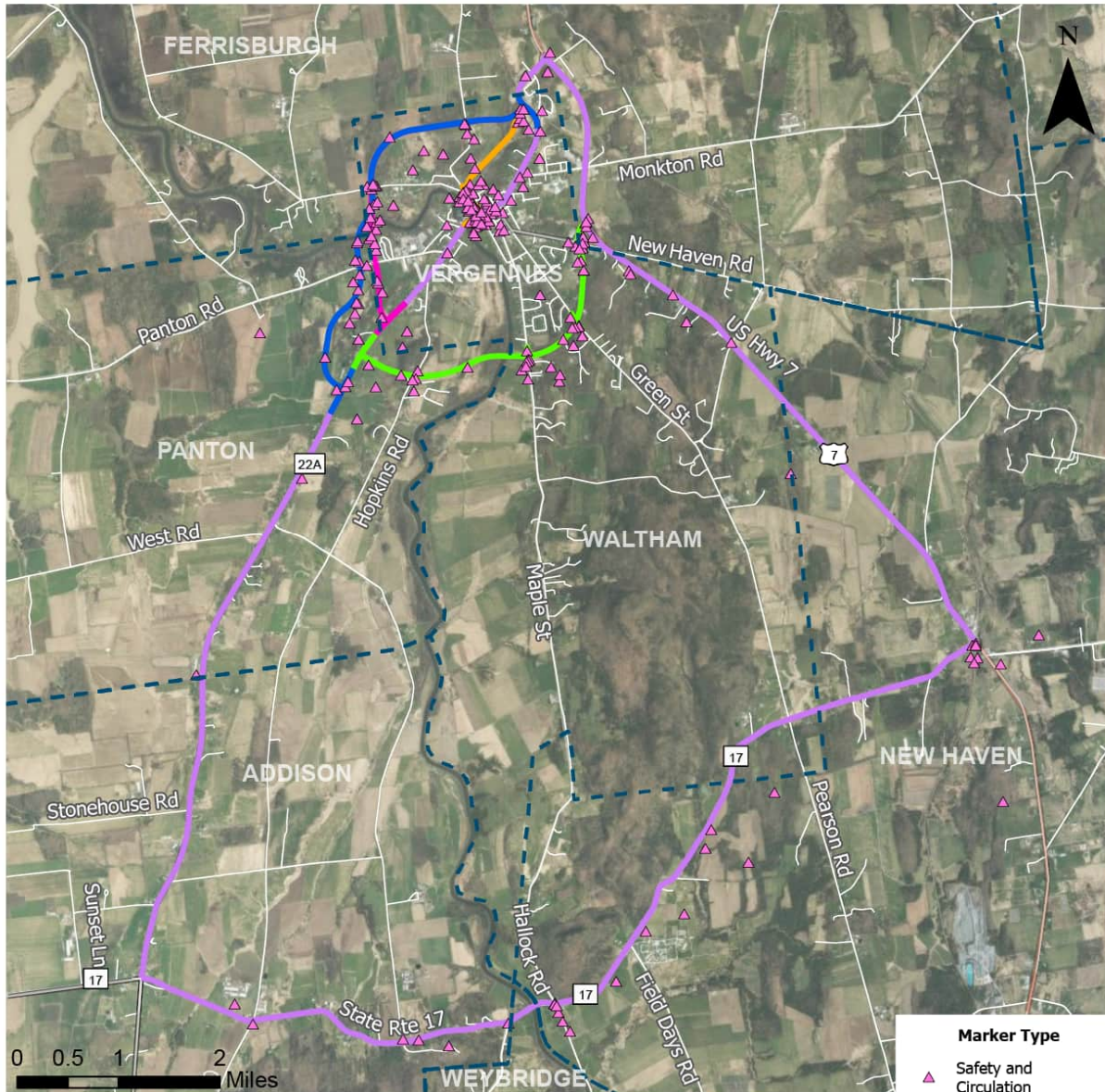


Figure 33: Map of Safety and Circulation Markers, Regional Extent

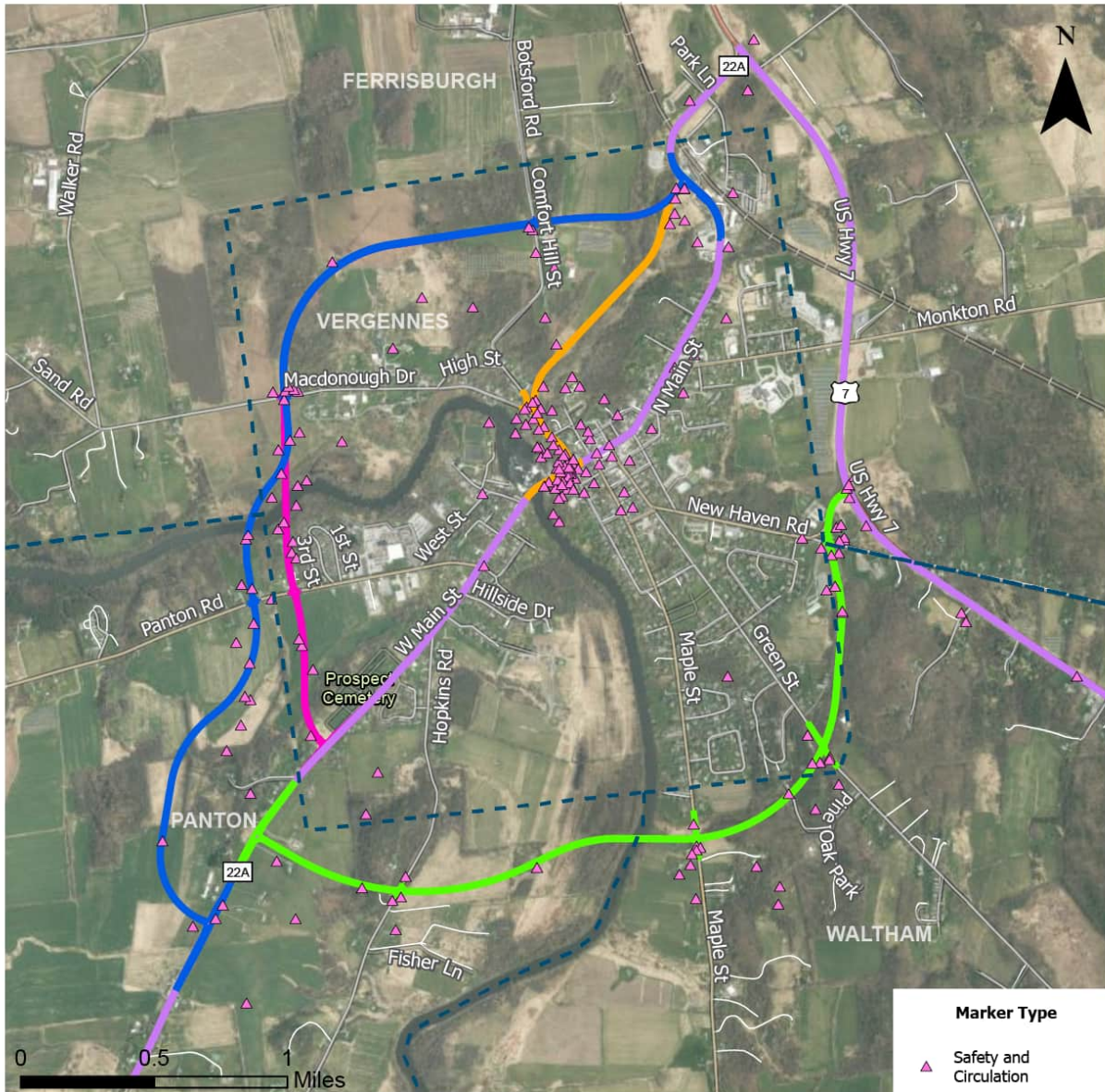
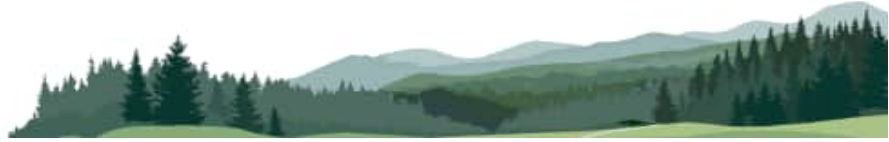


Figure 34: Map of Safety and Circulation Markers, Vergennes Extent

Table 3: Themes from Safety and Circulation-Related Comments

Route(s)	Themes from Safety and Circulation-Related Comments
Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential safety issues as a result of newly created intersections. - New Haven Road/US 7 intersection is already busy. - There are homes, a school, and a church located nearby New Haven Road. The area is residential. - Support the direct connection to US 7. - Potential conflicts between pedestrians and trucks.



Route(s)	Themes from Safety and Circulation-Related Comments
Pink and Blue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concern over shifting traffic to a new area. - Options would be safer for pedestrians. - Routes would increase traffic on Botsford Road.
Orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Steep grade/hill at MacDonough Drive. - Concern that trucks turning on to MacDonough Drive would create congestion or potentially back up Main Street. - Safety of the Main Street/MacDonough Drive intersection. - Safety of pedestrians crossing the road.
Purple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - US 7/US 17 intersection is difficult due to the railroad and grade, and it is already has multiple uses. - Poor visibility at existing intersectons: Hallock Rd/ Route 17, Otter Creek Road/Route 17, Mountain Road/Route 17, Route 23/Route 17. - Route 17 is primarily agricultural and has many hills and curves.

Environment

There were 137 environment markers placed on the map placed in the Interactive Map screen, as shown in Figure 35 (regional extent) and Figure 36 (Vergennes extent focused on new route options). Among these markers, there were 85 open-ended comments; 75 were negative in sentiment, six were positive, and four were neutral. The most dominant theme in the comments was impacts to natural areas and wildlife (64 comments). The comments noted the need to be mindful of the rural land, concern over increased emissions, wetlands, water resources nearby, and wildlife and their access to water resources. There were general questions asking what the environmental impacts would be at several locations and requests for studies of potential impacts. Comments specific to routes are summarized in Table 4.

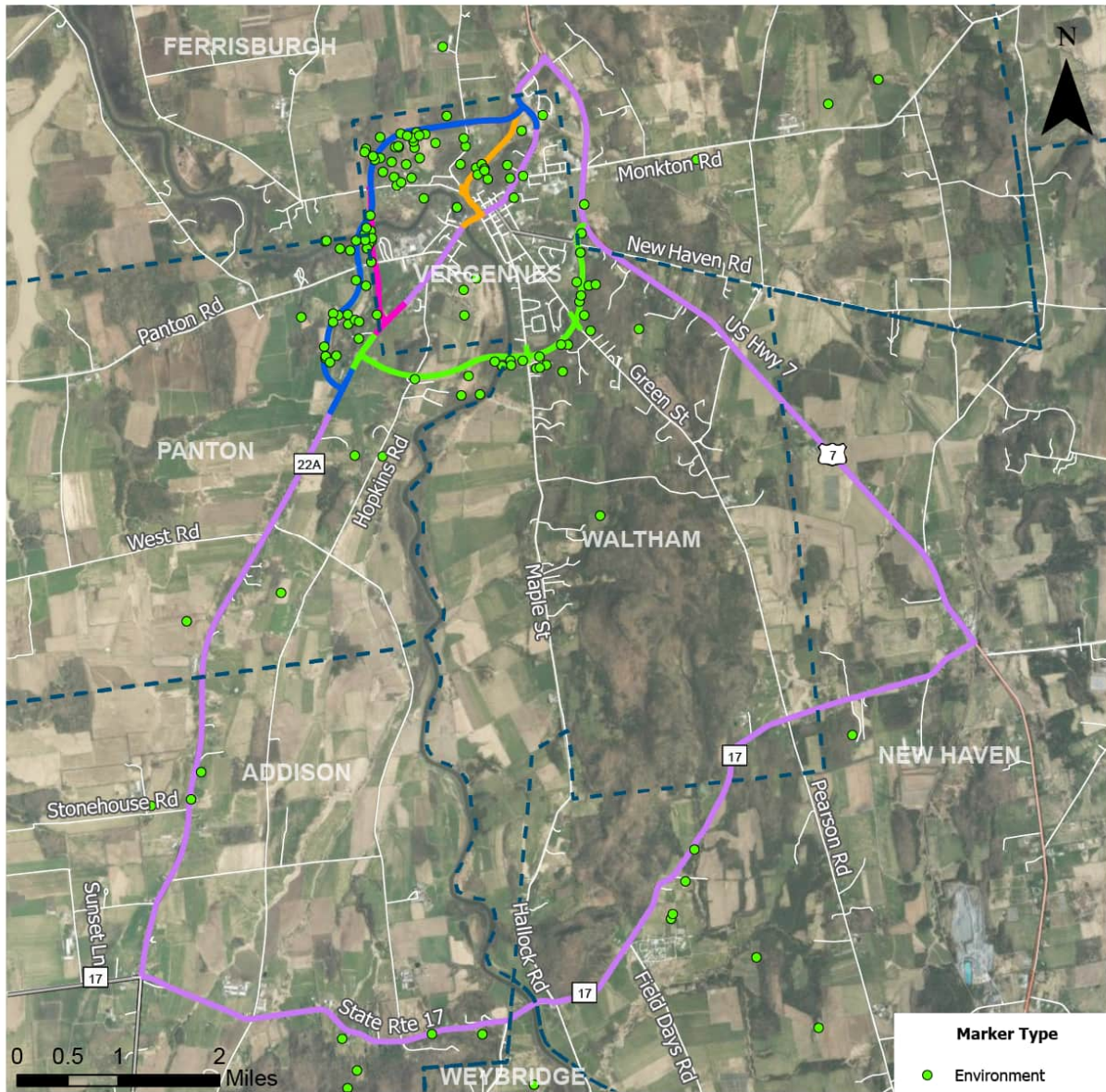
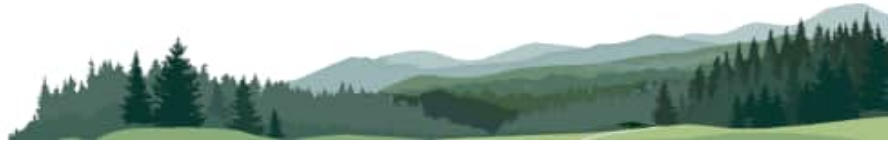


Figure 35: Map of Environment Comments, Regional Extent

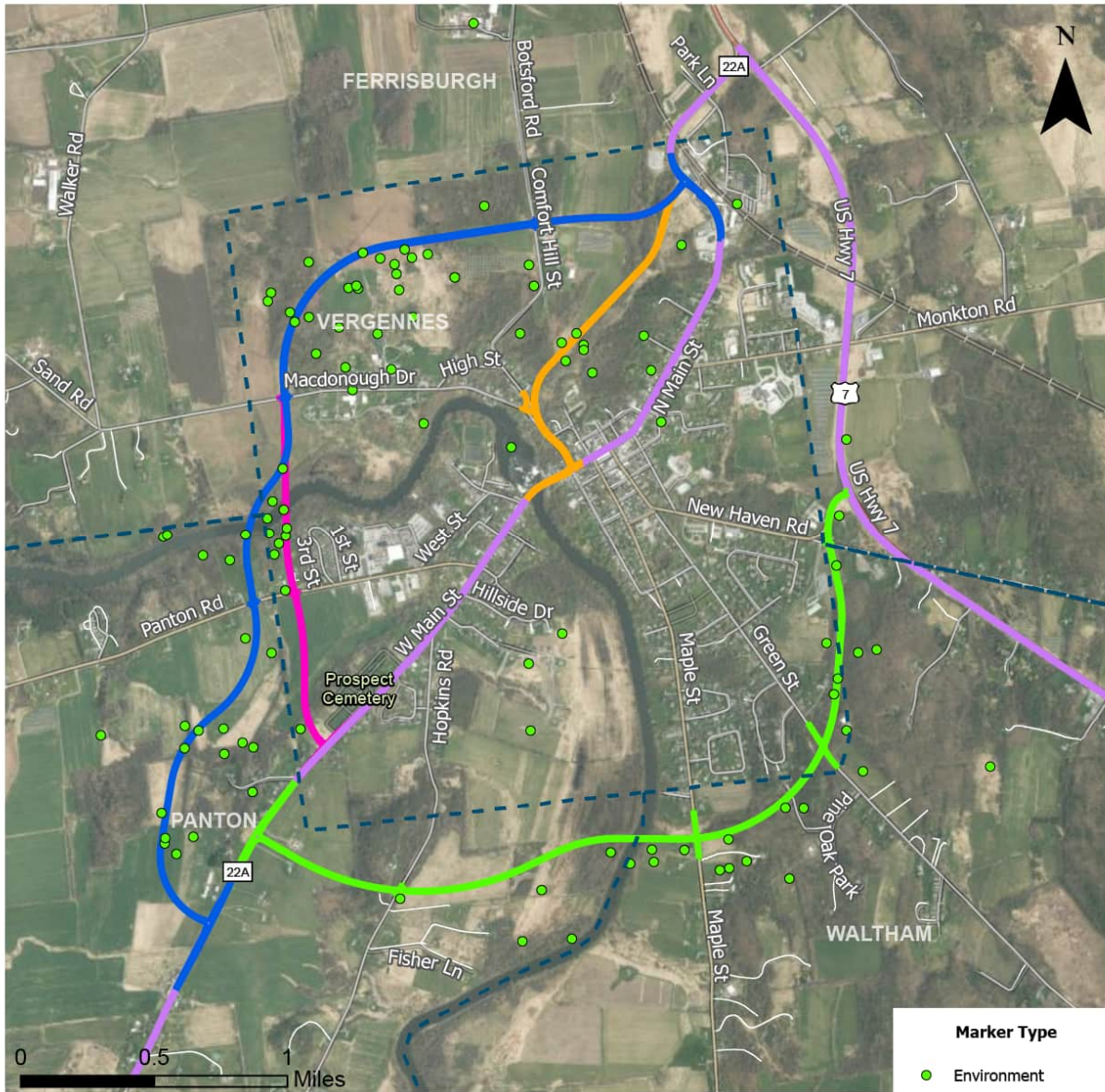


Figure 36: Map of Environment Comments, Vergennes Extent



Table 4: Themes from Environment-Related Comments

Route(s)	Themes from Environment-Related Comments
Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concern about impacts to specific wildlife areas and wetland areas east and west of Otter Creek.
Pink and Blue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential impacts to farmland, animals, and animal movements, particularly in North Vergennes between Comfort Hill and MacDonough Drive. - Potential environmental impacts of a new bridge over Otter Creek, including a pier in the river.
Orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential wildlife impacts in the watershed area.
Purple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Few environmental impacts with some concern about potential impacts to wildlife habitat. - Mitigates negative environmental impacts.

Land Use

There were 83 land use markers placed on the map placed in the Interactive Map screen as shown in Figure 37 (regional extent) and Figure 38 (Vergennes extent focused on new route options). Among these markers, there were 56 open-ended comments; 31 were negative in sentiment, 20 were positive, and five were neutral. The most common themes in the comments related to new development (15 comments, with six specific to housing) and farmland (nine comments). Land use comments noted that more open land should become affordable housing and identified opportunities to add housing and development. Comments specific to routes are summarized in Table 5.

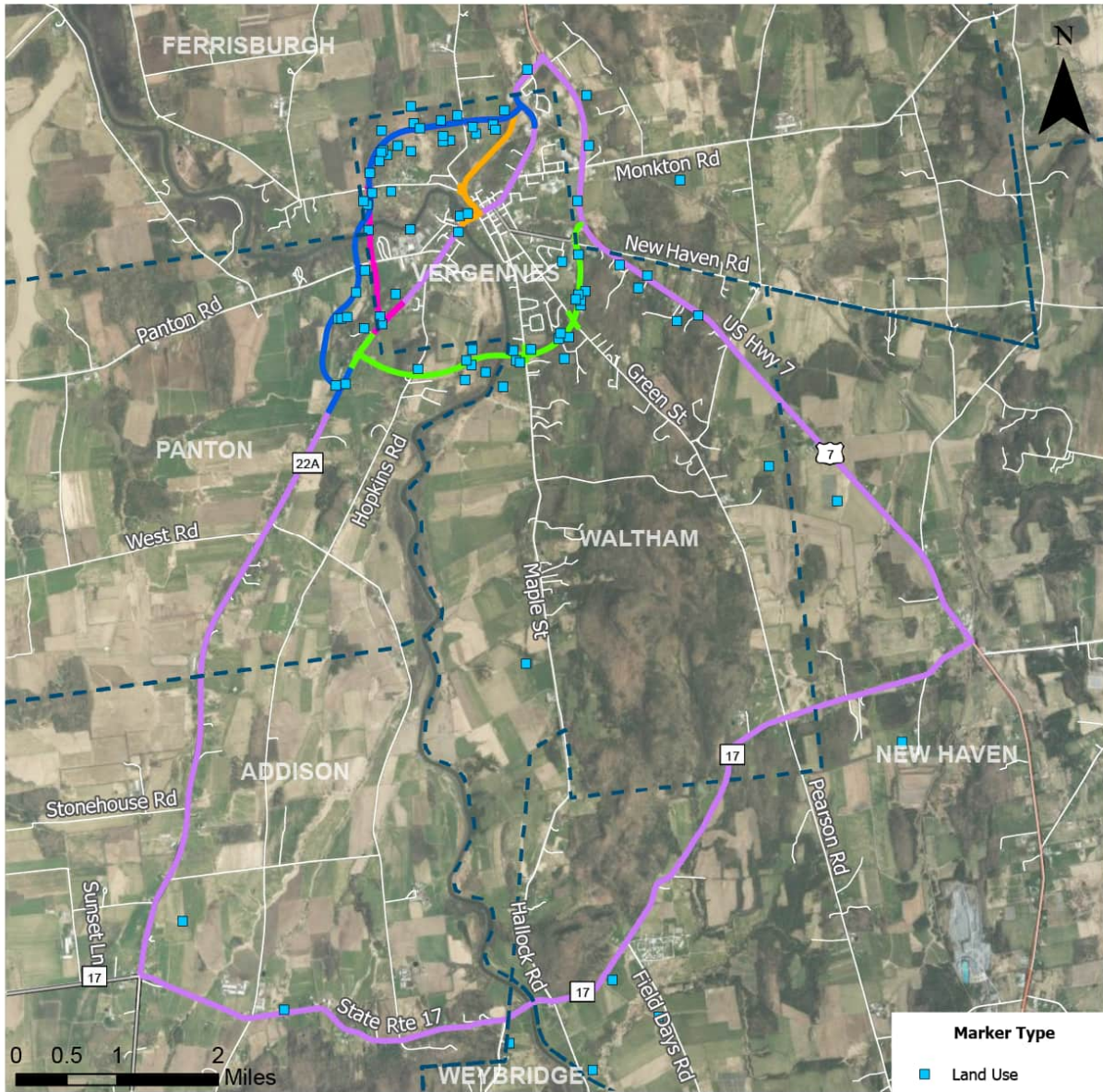


Figure 37: Map of Land Use Comments, Regional Extent

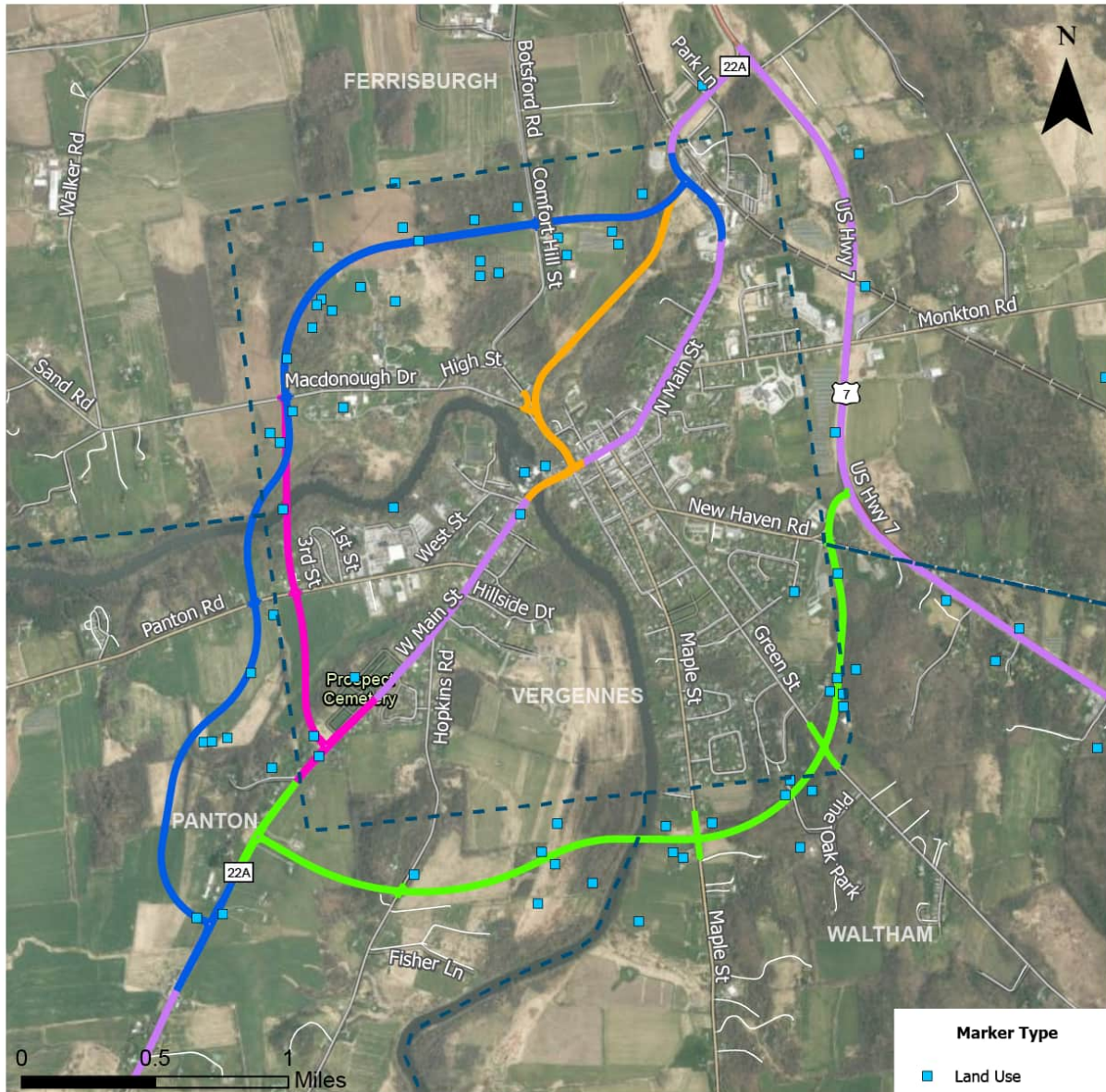


Figure 38: Map of Land Use Comments, Vergennes Extent



Table 5: Themes from Land Use Related Comments

Route(s)	Themes from Land Use Related Comments
Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concerns about the residential character and farmlands in the area.
Pink and Blue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Areas in Panton should remain rural. - Varied comments in Vergennes including a call for more open and accessible land, keep land use the same, and support growth and housing in Vergennes such as like Crosby Height.
Orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Few comments. - Concern over potential impacts to existing buildings. - Support keeping project within Vergennes.
Purple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support for route because it is perceived to not create new construction and uses existing roadways. - Preference for the land use to be kept agricultural.

Mobility and Access

There were 86 Mobility and Access markers placed on the map for the Interactive Map screen as shown in Figure 39 (regional extent) and Figure 40 (Vergennes extent focused on new route options). Among these markers, there were 59 open-ended comments; 26 were negative in sentiment, 10 were positive, and 23 were neutral. The most dominant theme was mobility and access for cyclists and pedestrians (26 comments.) Comments for this topic noted that downtown needs to be walkable, bikeable, and safer; pedestrians and bikers need their own lanes; and the current bridge across Otter Creek is too narrow for bikes and pedestrians. Comments specific to routes are summarized in Table 6.

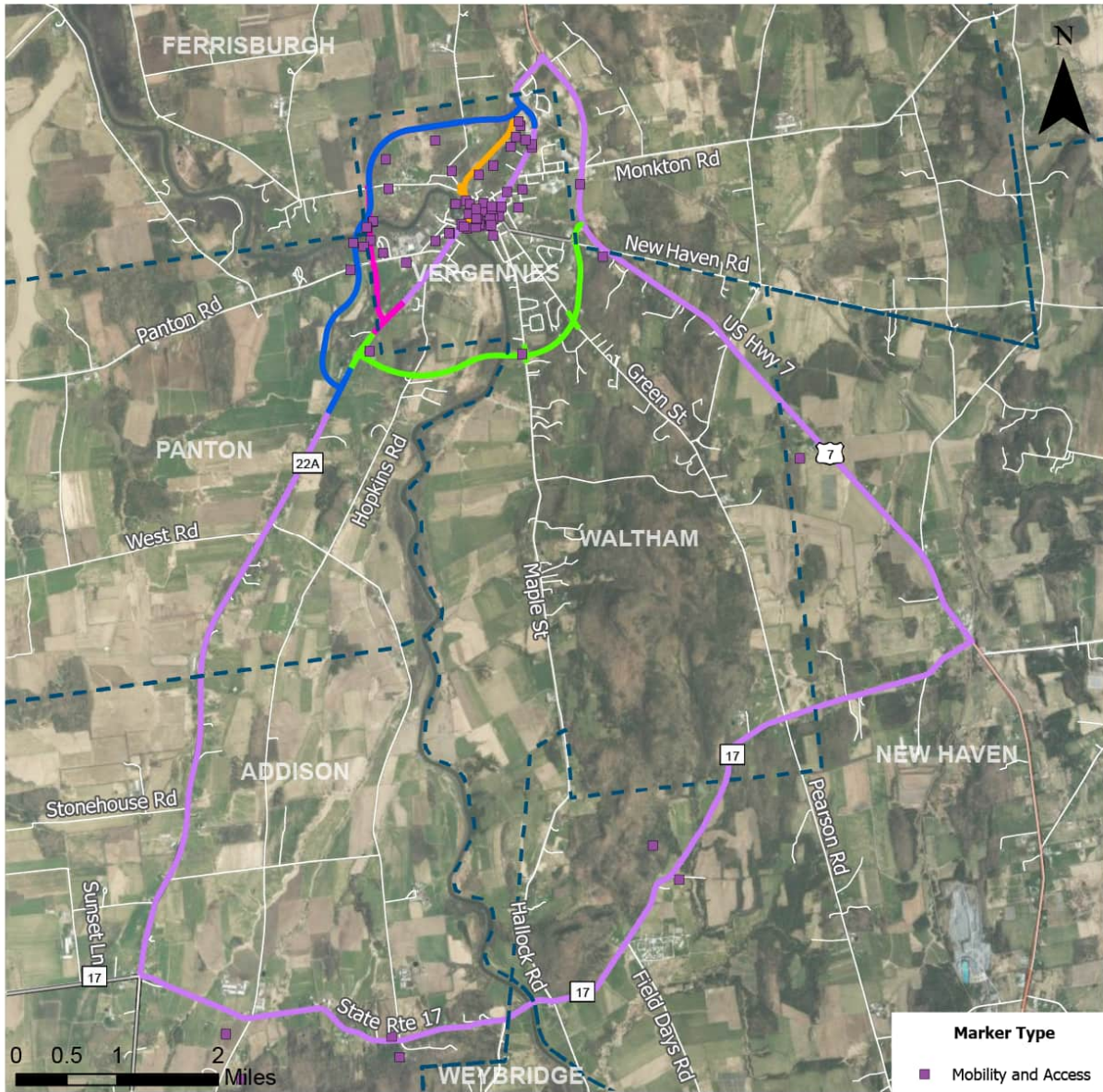


Figure 39: Map of Mobility and Access Comments, Regional Extent

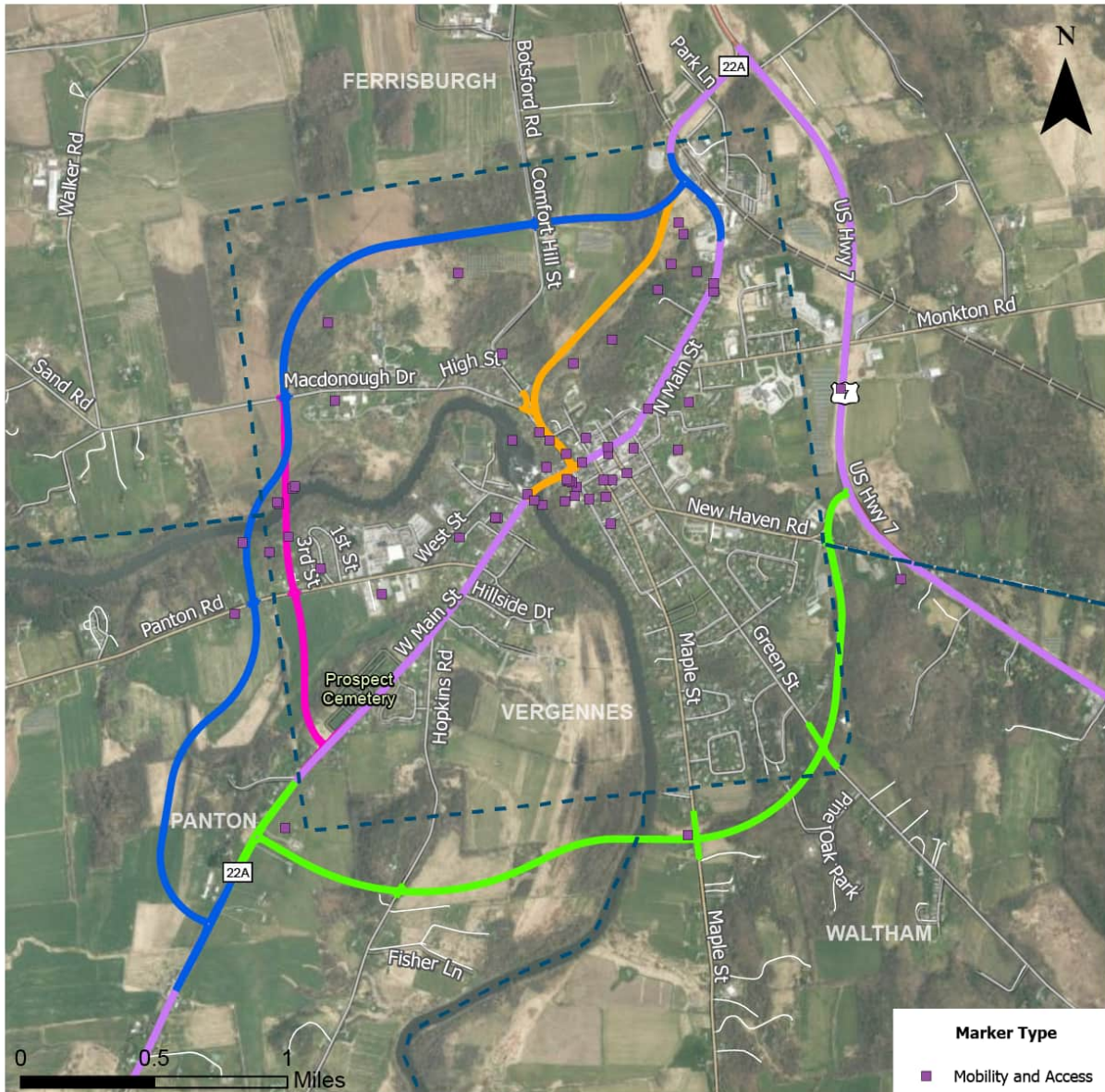


Figure 40: Map of Mobility and Access Comments, Vergennes Extent



Table 6: Themes from Mobility and Access-Related Comments

Route(s)	Themes from Mobility and Access-Related Comments
Green	No comments.
Pink and Blue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Routes would create traffic in area of Kingsland Bay. - High bicycle and pedestrian use on MacDonough Drive. - Pink Route would keep changes inside the City of Vergennes. - Keep walking and biking access along the current bridge across Otter Creek. - Pink Route would create a more walkable downtown. - Pink Route has significant environmental justice issues with the potential impact of Otter Creek mobile home park.
Orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Route would not decrease traffic and would limit walkability in downtown. - The MacDonough Drive/Main Street intersection is too hilly and congested with vehicle traffic, bikes, and pedestrians.
Purple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If the bypass ran northbound and southbound, it would remove trucks from Main Street.

Quality of Life

There were 181 quality-of-life markers placed on the map for the Interactive Map screen as shown in Figure 41 (regional extent) and Figure 42 (Vergennes extent focused on new route options). Among these markers, there were 156 open-ended comments; 95 were negative in sentiment, 27 were positive, and 34 were neutral. The most common themes were related to impacts to residents and residential areas (45 comments) and noise (27 comments). Comments for this topic noted that benefits and costs of a new route should not disproportionately affect one municipality over another and expressed concerns over noise, impacts of jake brakes (a type of compression release brake that helps truck drivers to slow down), and increased traffic. Comments specific to routes are summarized in Table 7.

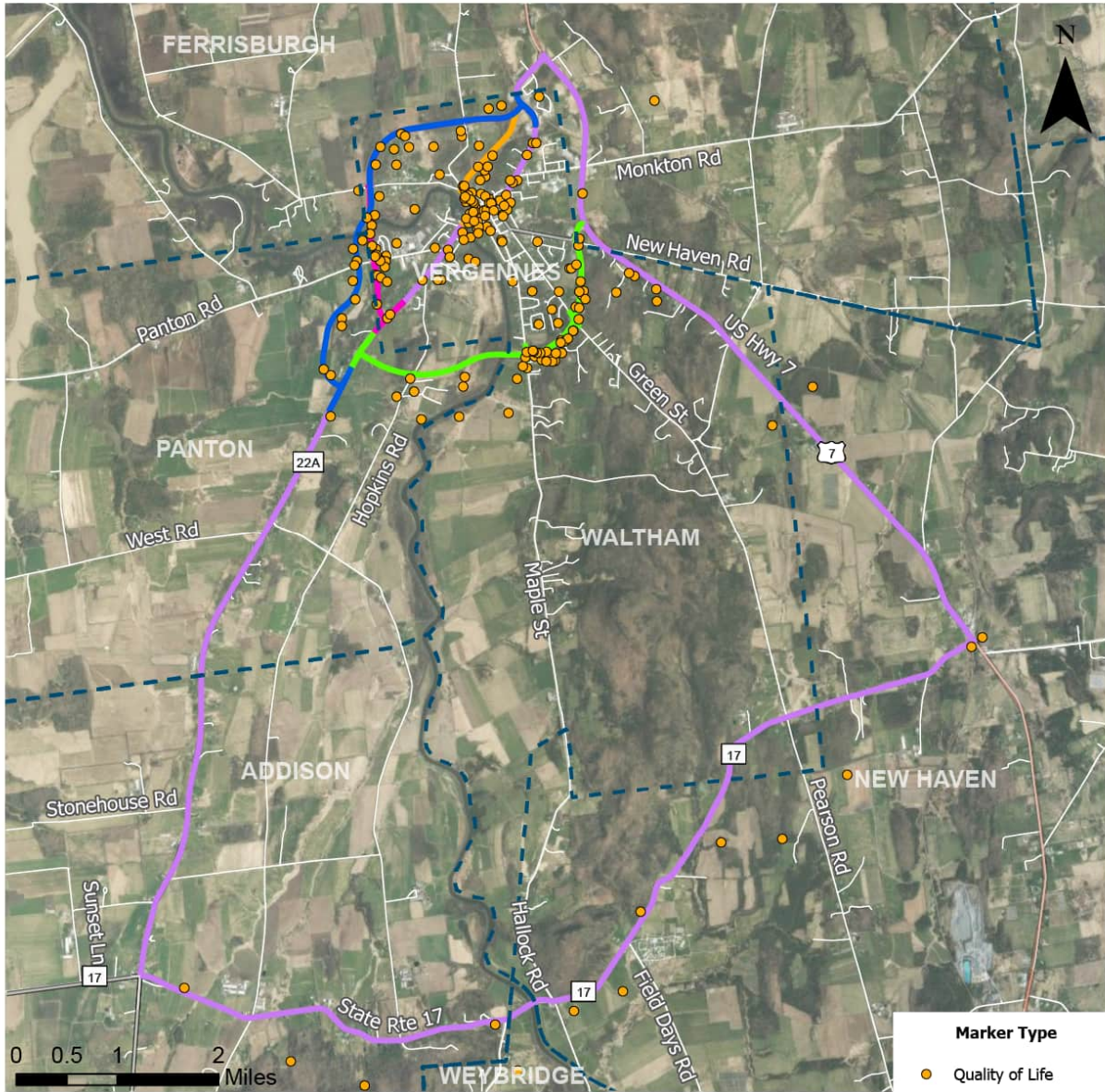


Figure 41: Map of Quality of Life Comments, Regional Extent

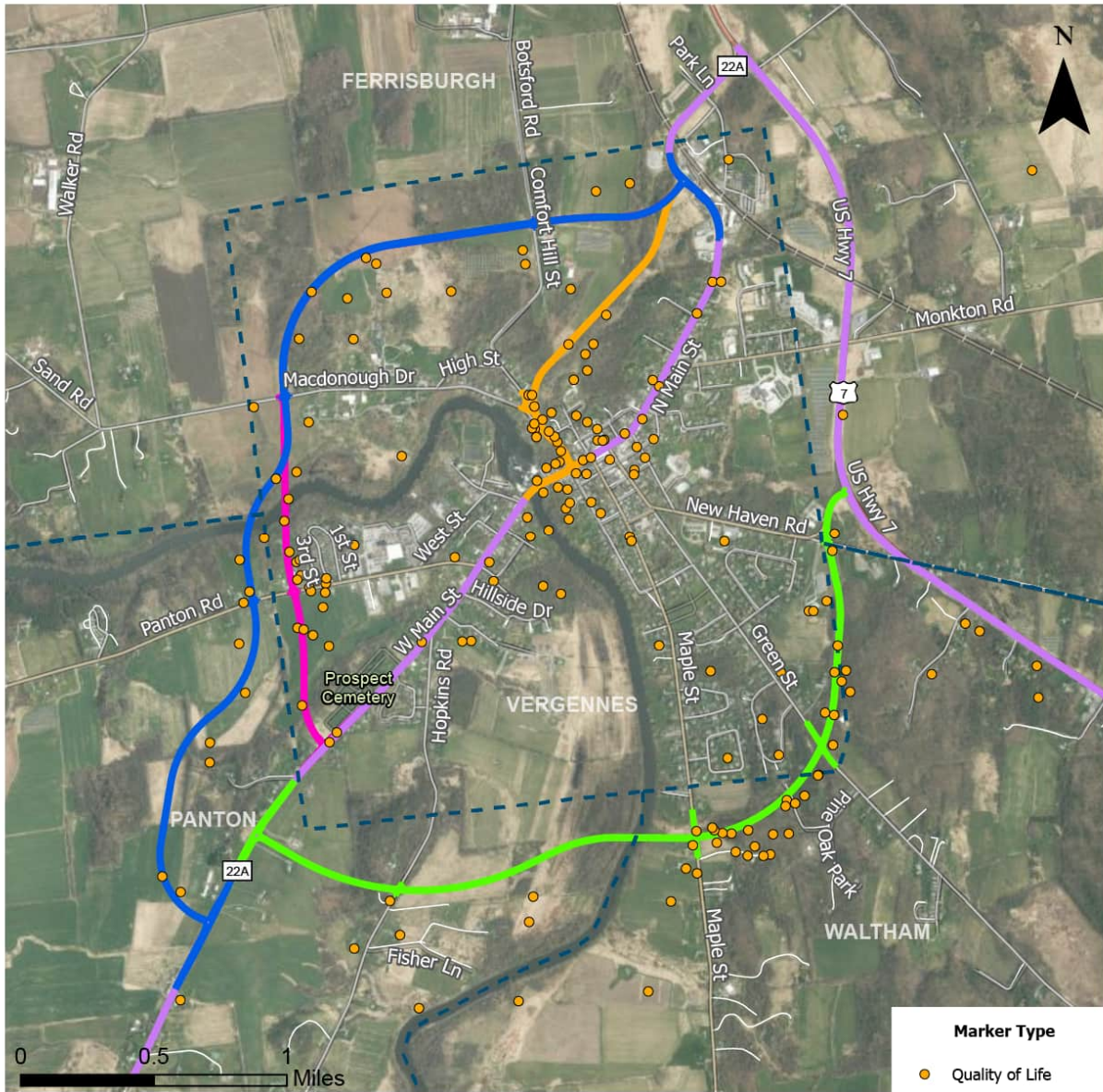


Figure 42: Map of Quality of Life Comments, Vergennes Extent



Table 7: Themes from Quality of Life Related Comments

Route(s)	Themes from Quality of Life–Related Comments
Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Route would burden Waltham residents. - Concern about noise and proximity to neighborhoods (such as Thomas Circle).
Pink and Blue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concern about potential impacts to residential communities including Sand Road and Panton. - Support for routes because they would remove trucks from Main Street and downtown Vergennes. - Concern about potential impacts of Pink Route to the Otter Creek Mobile Home Park. - Pink Route would require adding noise barriers west of Third Street.
Orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concern about impacts of truck traffic and noise. - Concern that pollution and noise impacts would increase along MacDonough Drive due to the grade issues. - Preferences to reduce car traffic and increase bicycle and pedestrian access. - Support for route because it keeps costs lower with less infrastructure and time.
Purple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support for reducing truck volume in downtown Vergennes. - Calls for removing all traffic and impacts from Vergennes. - Shifting trucks to Route 17 is not adequate, and the route needs wider shoulders even without a trucking route.

Economic Vitality

There were 109 economic vitality markers placed on the map for the Interactive Map screen as shown in Figure 43 (regional extent) and Figure 44 (Vergennes extent focused on new route options). Among these markers, there were 70 open-ended comments; 16 were negative, 35 were positive, and 19 were neutral. The most common themes were related to businesses and economic activity (25 comments) and new development (18 comments). Comments for this topic included concern about potential impacts to property values, observations that the north and west of Vergennes have potential for commercial or housing development, and desires to keep trucks off Main Street but encourage other traffic in downtown Vergennes. Comments specific to routes are summarized in Table 8.

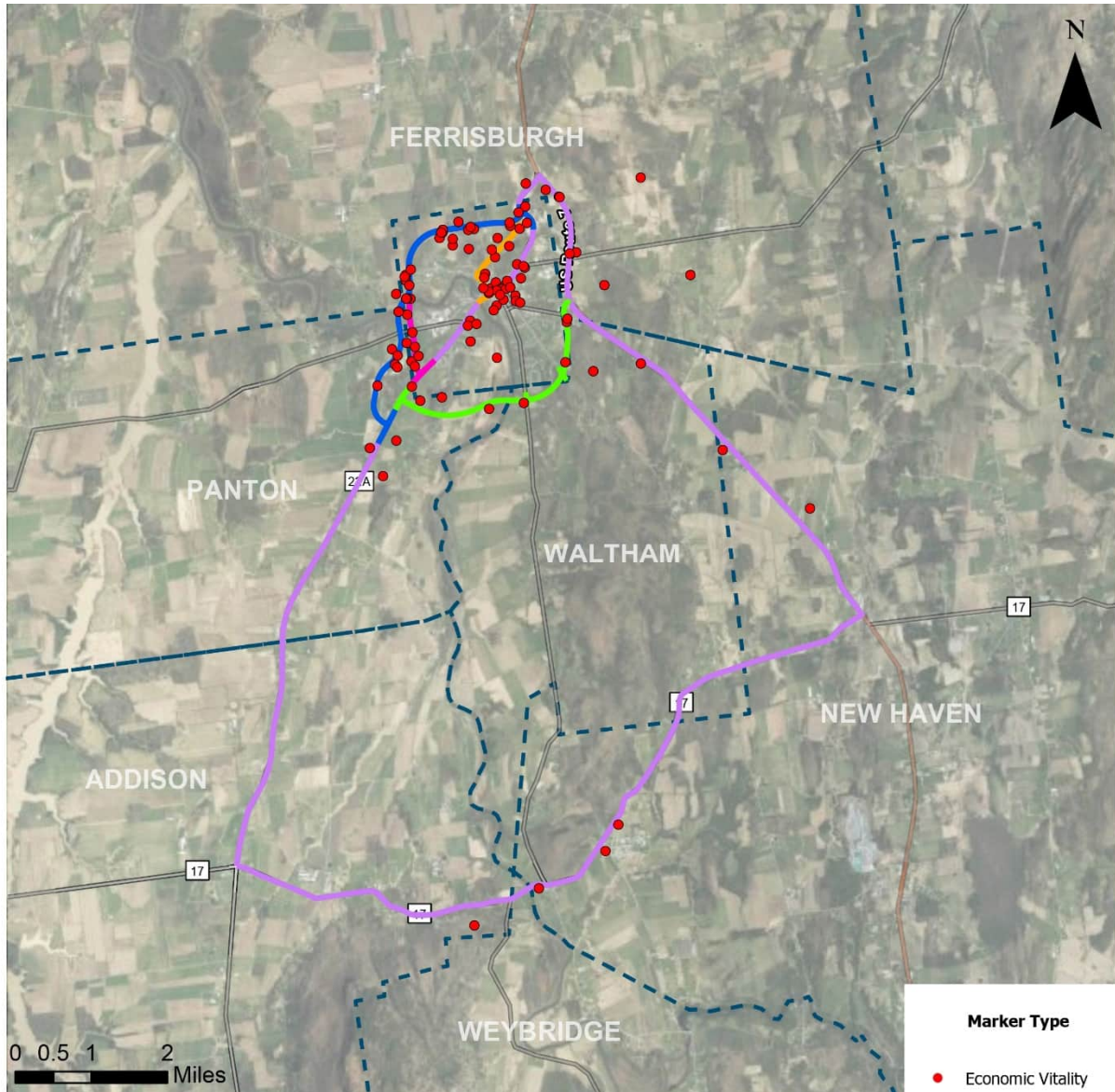


Figure 43: Map of Economic Vitality Comments, Regional Extent

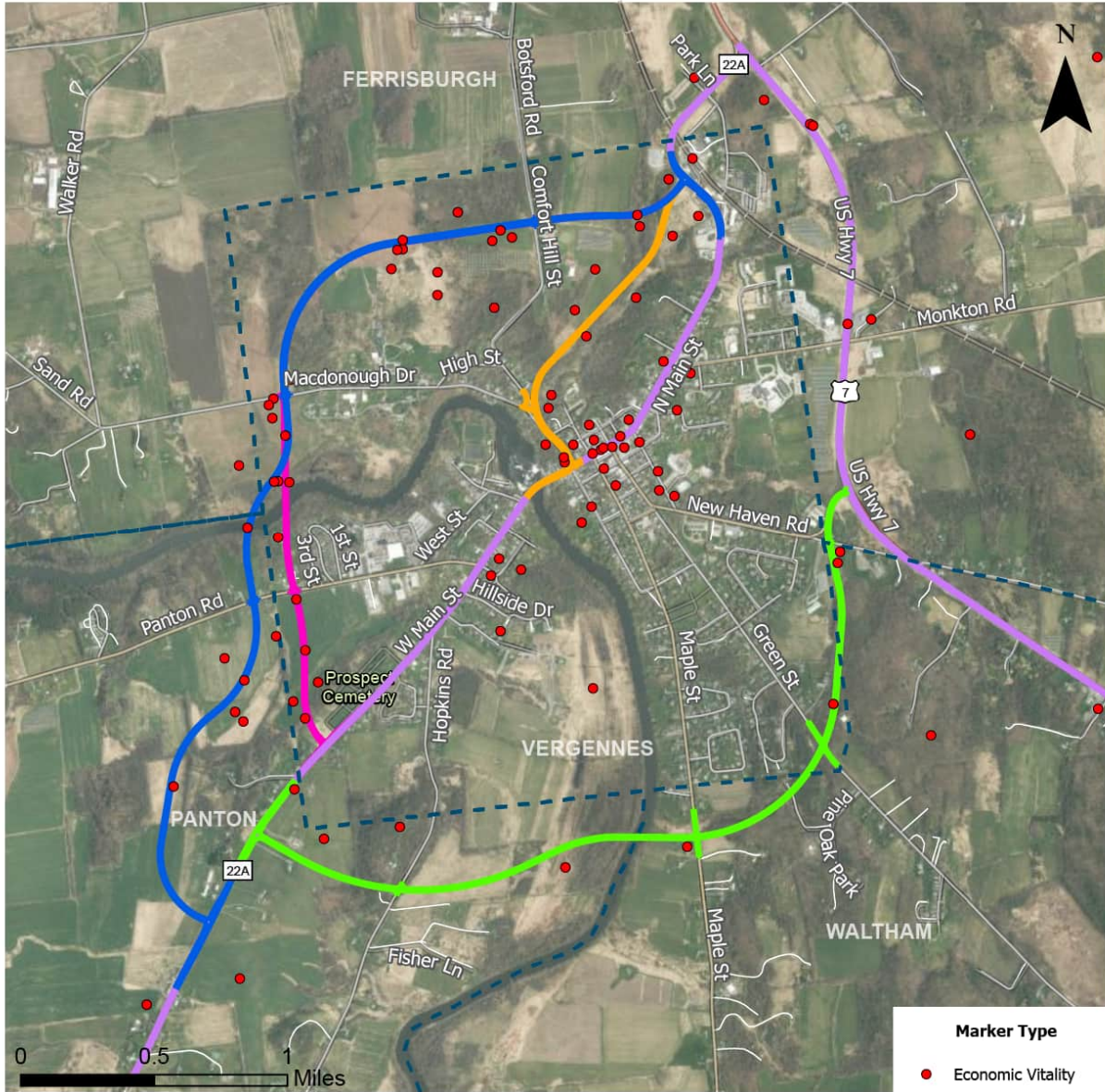


Figure 44: Map of Economic Vitality Comments, Vergennes Extent



Table 8: Themes from Economic Vitality Related Comments

Route(s)	Themes from Economic Vitality Related Comments
Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support for this route due to perception of having the least economic impact. - Concern about impacts to property values. - Concern that the route would lead to decreased business in downtown Vergennes.
Pink and Blue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential areas for growth and development north of MacDonough Drive. - Great economic development opportunity for underutilized job corps. - Could encourages industrial business to move industrial business away from downtown. - Concern that bypass routes would take business away from downtown Vergennes.
Orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support for this route as improving the conditions (reduced truck traffic and noise) for more economic growth. - Opportunity for concentrated development in undeveloped land in the northeast of Vergennes.
Purple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modifying an existing route is more cost efficient than building a new road. - Support for keeping some traffic within downtown Vergennes so businesses can benefit from car traffic.

Other

There were 39 “other” markers placed on the map for the Interactive Map screen as shown in Figure 45 (regional extent) and Figure 46 (Vergennes extent focused on new route options). Among these markers, there were 36 open-ended comments; 16 were negative in sentiment, 10 were positive, and 10 were neutral. The most common themes were construction or maintenance costs (seven comments) and safety and circulation (five comments). Comments generally voiced frustration and reiterated points in the specific marker categories. Comments unique to the other category included concern over cost of improvements including building the new roadway and bridge and concern over the impact of additional miles and fuel that would be required for the new roadways. Comments also noted concern about the Purple and Green routes shifting problems to Monkton Road.

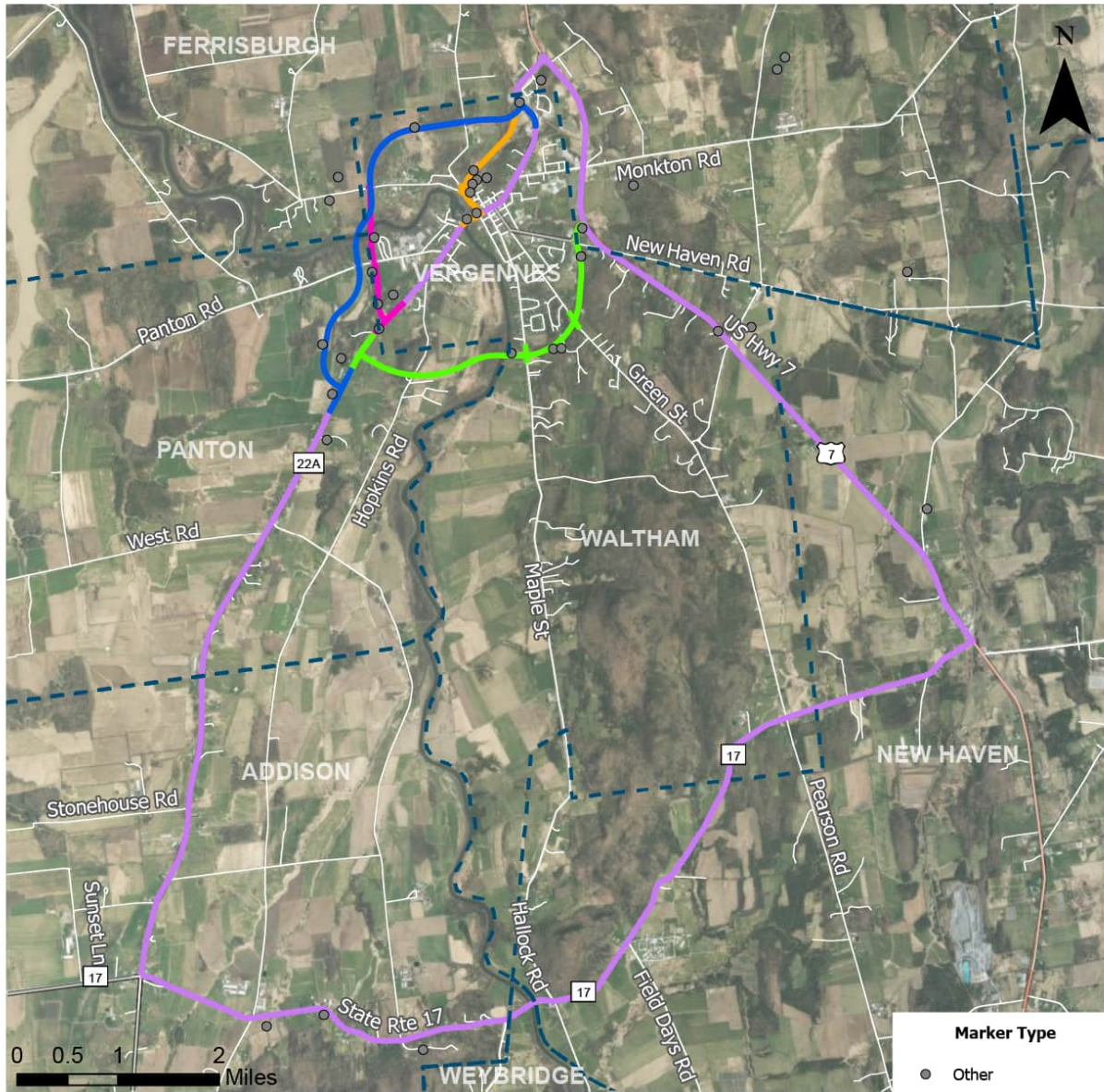
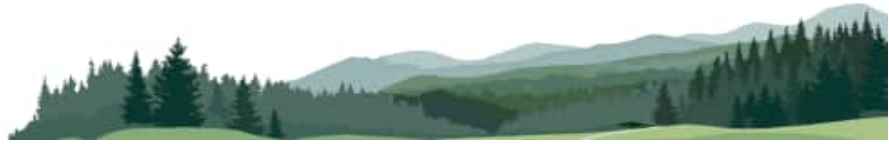


Figure 45: Map of Other Comments, Regional Extent

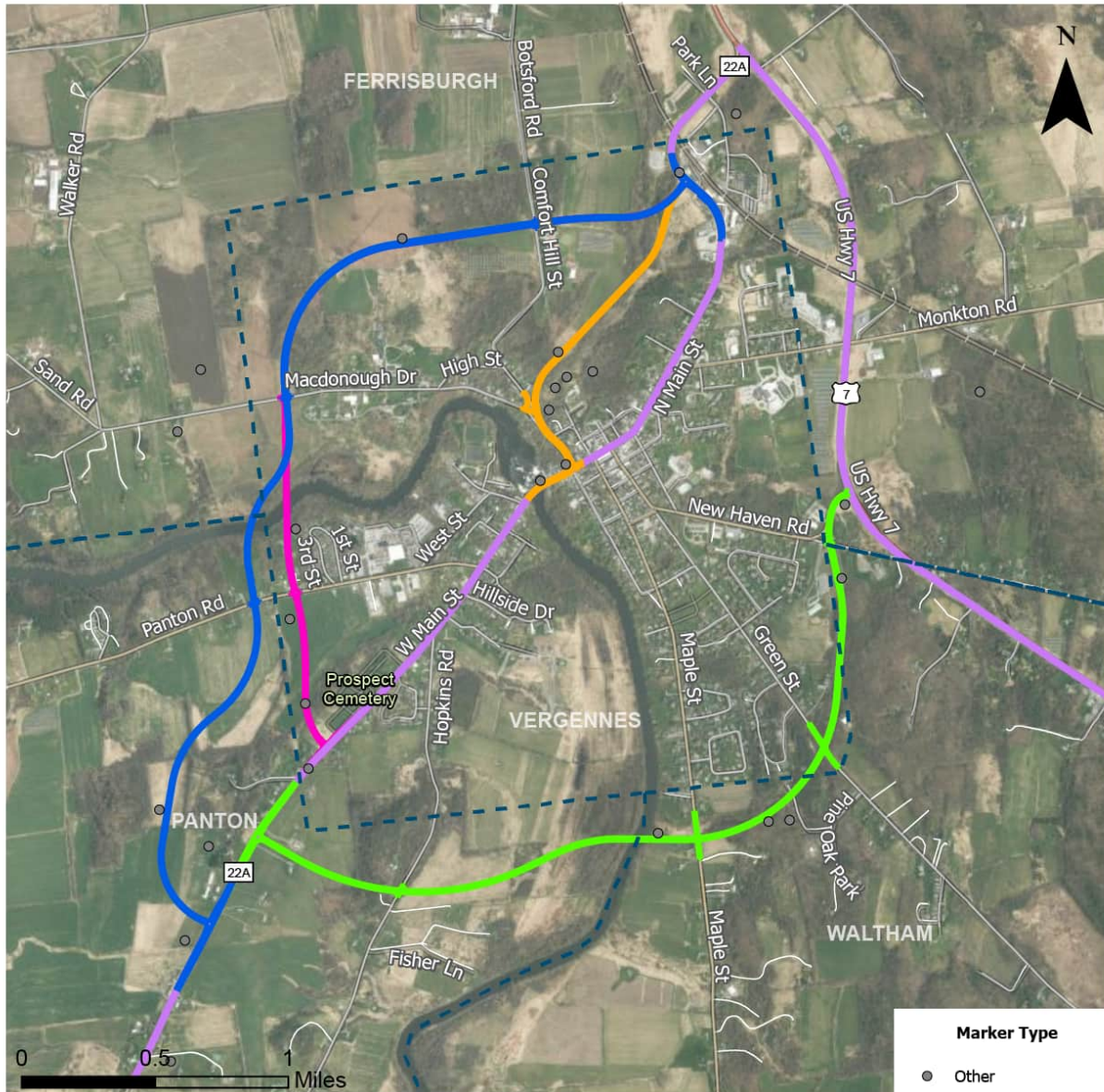
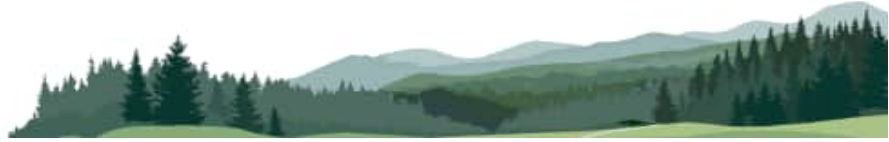


Figure 46: Map of Other Comments, Vergennes Extent

Key Takeaways on Location Specific Comments

- 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. Many of these markers were concentrated in downtown Vergennes and along the Pink and Blue routes on the west edge of Vergennes.
- The second largest group of map markers address quality-of-life concerns. These markers were concentrated in downtown Vergennes, along the Pink and Blue routes on the western edge of Vergennes and near the southeastern corner of the Green Route. Comments expressed 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. These markers were concentrated around the Blue, Pink, and Green routes and focused on concerns about impacts on wildlife, wetlands, wooded areas, and farmland.
- Open-ended comments were generally negative in sentiment across all map markers. The exception was the economic vitality markers, where only 23% of open-ended comments were negative. Positive comments in this category referred to the positive effects of route options on businesses and new development.



Screen 5: Wrap Up

The Wrap Up screen (Figure 47) collected demographic information from survey participants. All questions were optional but encouraged. Survey participants were also able to sign up for email updates from the PEL Study and could visit the PEL Study website from this screen.

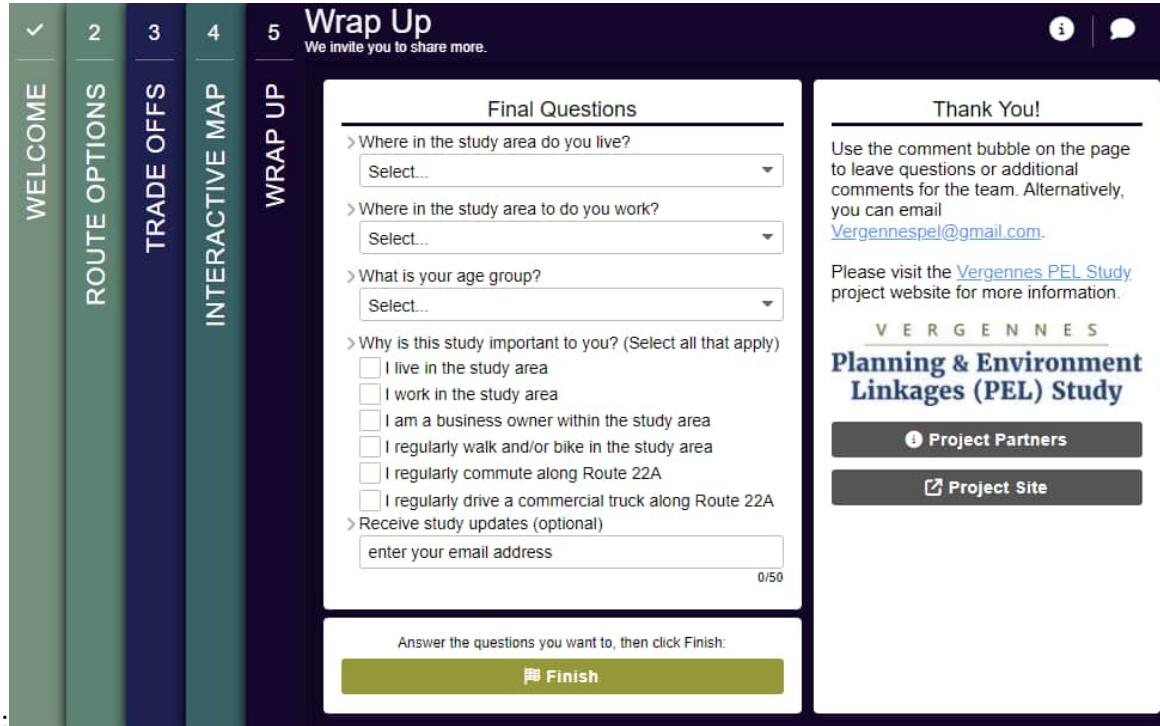


Figure 47: Wrap Up Screen

Demographics of survey respondents are summarized in Figure 48 below. The survey received participation from all age groups. The largest group of participants were 65 years of age or older (32%), followed by respondents between 55 and 64 (21%), 45 and 54 (17%), and 35 and 44 (17%). The survey received the smallest number of responses from those aged 17 to 24 (1%). The median age of survey respondents was between 55 and 64, which was higher than the median age of municipalities in the study area (ranging from 43.7 in Vergennes to 54.7 in New Haven based on the 2020 Census.) This suggests that survey respondents represent an older demographic than the general population of the study area.

About one-third of respondents either live (34%) or work (30%) in Vergennes, and 12% of respondents live outside the study area. Figure 49 compares the resident population distribution by municipality between survey respondents and the study area. Study area population data was obtained from the 2020 Census. Survey respondents overrepresent the resident populations of Vergennes, Panton, and Waltham, and they underrepresent the resident populations of Ferrisburgh, Addison, New Haven, and Weybridge.



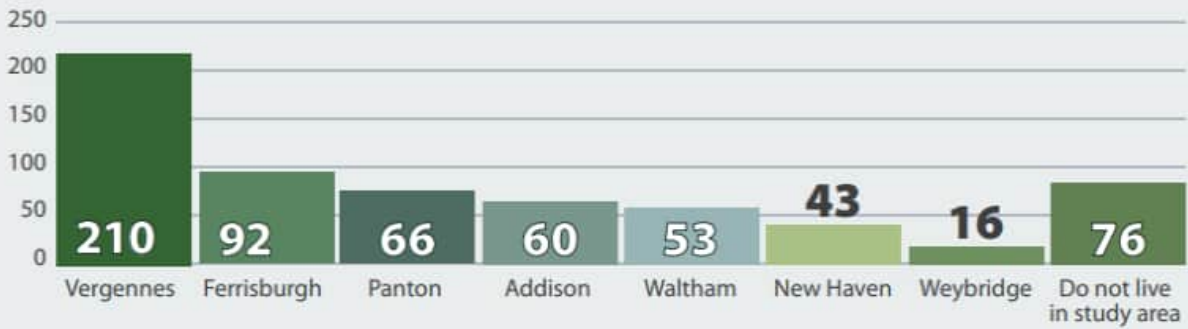
Respondents' age range:



TOTAL SURVEY RESPONSES: 903



Where respondents live:



Where respondents work:



Figure 48: Demographics of Survey Respondents

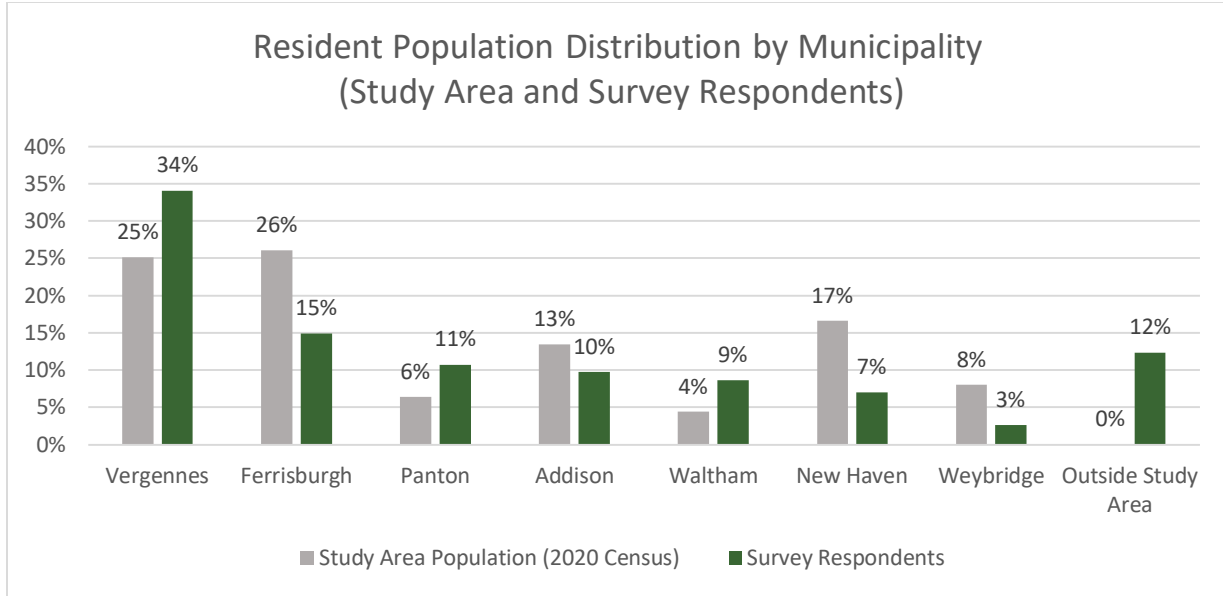


Figure 49: Resident Population Distribution by Municipality (Study Area and Survey Respondents)