



# Vergennes Planning and Environment Linkages Study: Purpose and Need Statement Review Meeting

Vergennes Planning and Environment  
Linkages Study:

Technical Committee Meeting

February 8, 2022

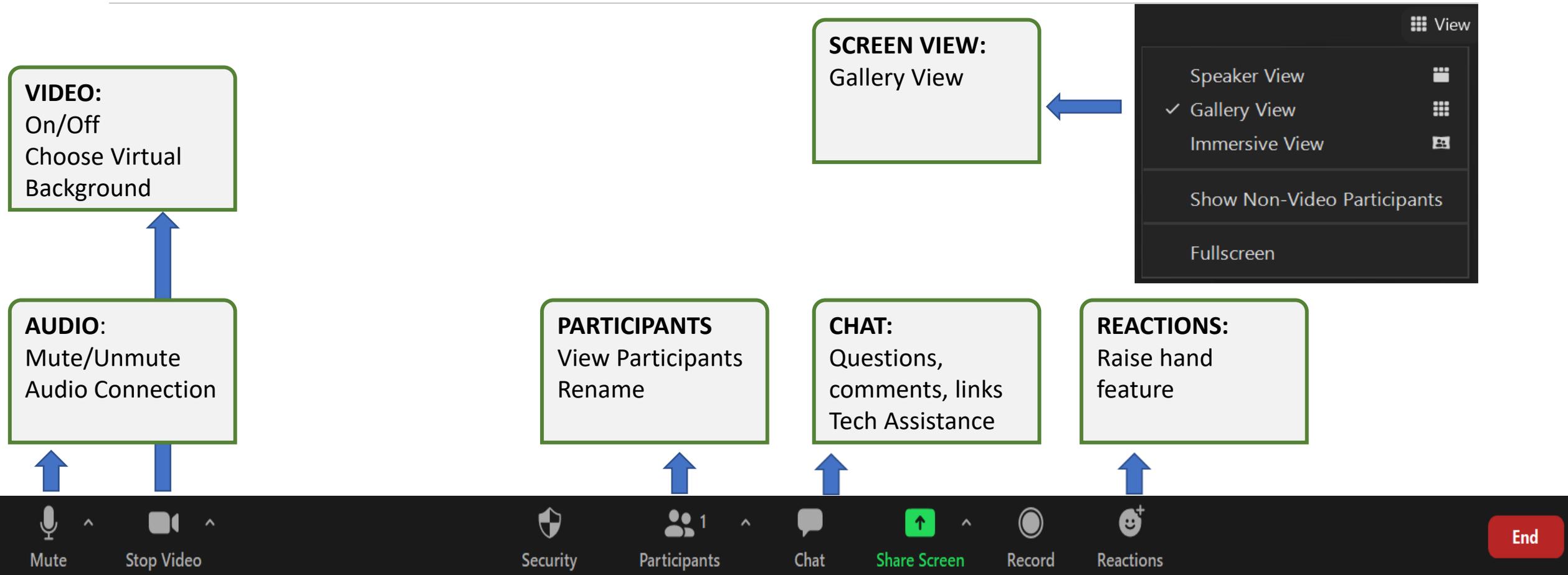


# Agenda

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1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Presentation: Public Outreach Updates
  - a) Discussion/Questions/Comments on public outreach
4. Presentation: Overview of Purpose and Need Technical Memo
  - a) Discussion/Questions/Comments on the Purpose and Need Memo
5. Action Item: Consensus to Accept the Purpose and Need (Vote if needed)
6. Next Steps
  - a) Next steps for consultants and management team
  - b) Next committee meeting date and time
7. Member Updates/Announcements

# Zoom Orientation





# Public Outreach Updates

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# Public Outreach



Expanded and more inclusive than previous studies

Seeks local ownership and buy-in within decision-making process

Gathers public feedback on draft concepts at well-defined stages of the process

Conduct community land use visions to be considered in the PEL Study

Provide transparency throughout the study process

## Completed elements include:

Vermont Truck and Bus Association survey

Targeted Selectboard/City Councils presentations

Focus Groups (Equity, Mobility, Environment, Economic)

Public Meeting

One on One Interviews

# Public Outreach: What We've Heard So Far....

## Vermont Truck and Bus Association Survey (September 2021)

- 10-question survey sent to 335 members (11% response rate)
- Almost 70% of trips have no origin/destination in Vergennes
- Primary cargo is related to timber and dairy industries
- Key issues are: Congestion, Roadway grade/features and Parked Vehicles
- Most respondents believe a detour from Route 22A would be greater than 10 minutes
- 86% of respondents indicated that they would use Route 7 as an alternate route



Source: Vermont Public Radio

# Public Outreach: What We've Heard So Far....

## Selectboard and City Council Meetings

*September – October 2021*

### Communities Visited:

Ferrisburgh      New Haven

Vergennes      Waltham

Weybridge      Addison      Panton

- Acknowledging the need to address truck traffic through downtown Vergennes
- Maintaining the economic vitality of downtown Vergennes as the economic center of the region
- A desire for inclusivity and increased participation from all interested and potentially impacted parties in the study
- A desire for clarification on what alternatives may be considered
- For towns served by US Route 7 or Route 17, an understanding of potential impacts to those routes
- Maintaining “rural character” of surrounding area

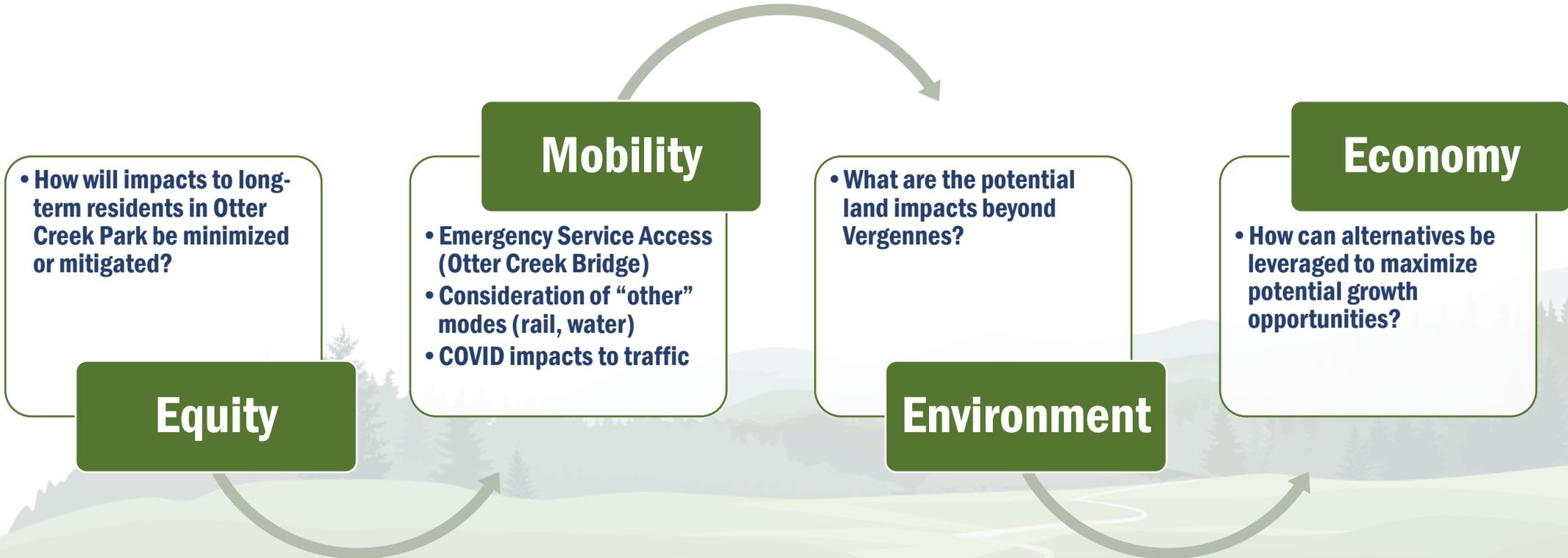
# Public Outreach: What We've Heard So Far....

Public Meeting (Vergennes Opera House / Microsoft Teams)

*November 4, 2021*

Public input focused on key themes considered in the study, listed below.

Attendees:  
Approximately 40 in person,  
76 Online



# Former Purpose and Need Statement (2019)

Enhance the economic vitality and quality of life in downtown Vergennes by reducing the noise, vibration, fume and dust impacts of truck traffic while:



Maintaining a high level of service for the movement of freight in the region



Minimizing and/or mitigating traffic impacts to other transportation corridors



Minimizing property and environmental resource impacts in neighboring communities

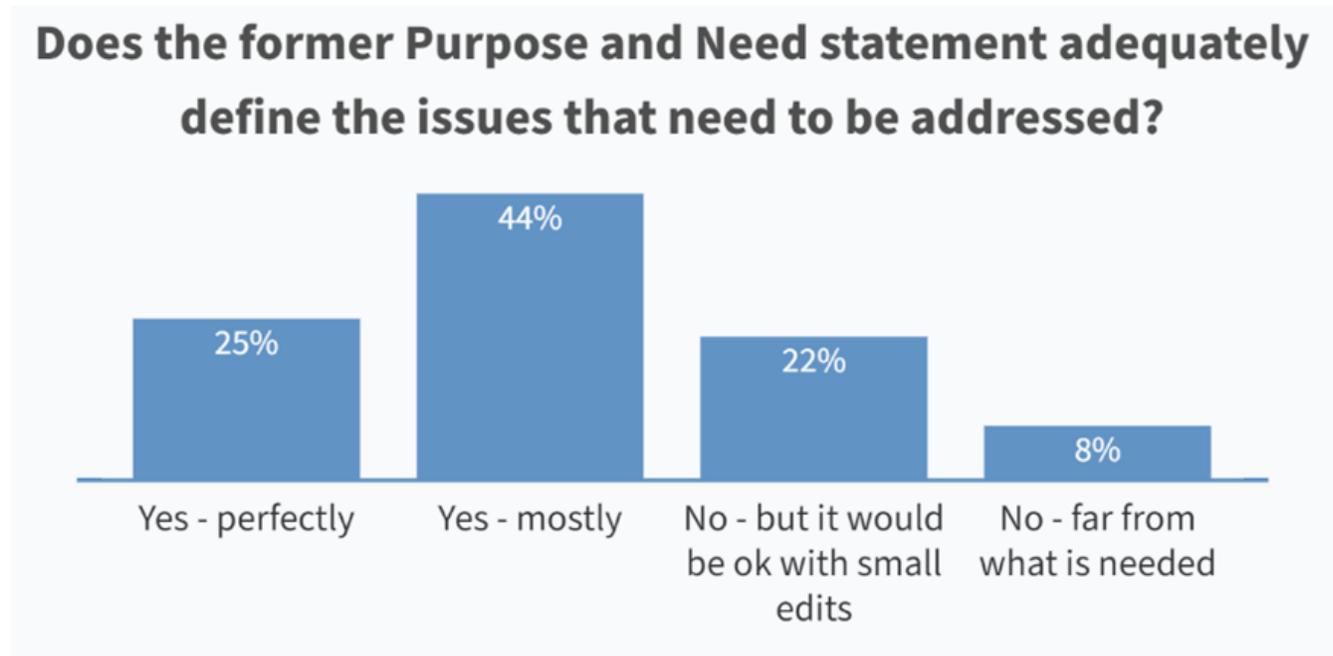


Supporting the continued movement of non-truck traffic through Downtown Vergennes



Providing a cost-effective use of resources.

# Former Purpose and Need Statement (2019)



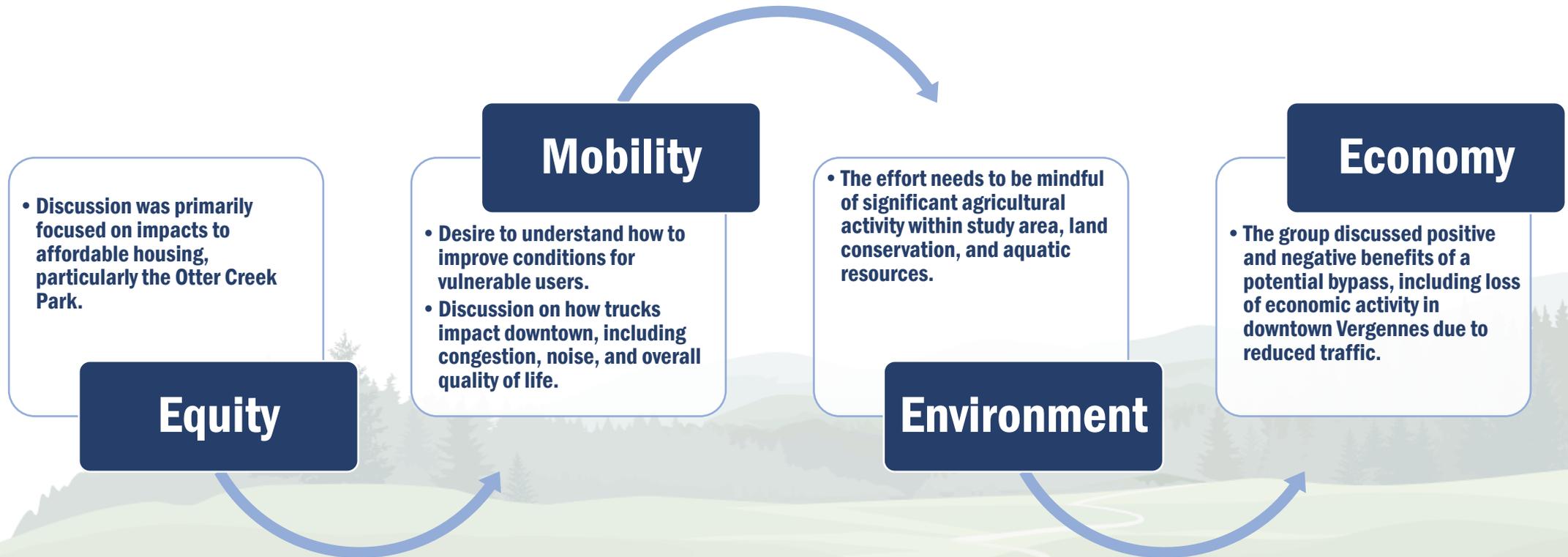
*Note: Feedback shown via “live polling” at the November 4, 2021 Public Meeting (36 responses)*

# Public Outreach: What We've Heard So Far....

## Focus Groups

*November 2021*

Focus Groups were comprised of subject matter experts on the four key themes



# Public Outreach: What We've Heard So Far....

## One on One Interviews

*December 2021*

### Otter Creek Mobile Home Park

- Representative from the Otter Creek Mobile Home Park noted that some residents may not be opposed to development, there are major concerns about impacts to or the possible loss of their homes.

### Vermont Land Trust

- Highlighted the need to improve truck traffic along Route 22A, but would like to identify a solution that has little or no impact on conserved land

### Vergennes Rescue Squad

- Safety is a major concern and any improvements that make it easier for emergency vehicle access and travel on Route 22A is welcomed.

### Ferrisburgh Volunteer Fire Department

- Emergency responses on Route 22A are most impacted during peak summer months by seasonal traffic. Emergency vehicle preemption should be considered as a part of any improvements.

### Vergennes Volunteer Fire Department

- Trucks do not necessarily impact emergency response times; Emergency vehicle preemption was installed at Green Street (in Vergennes) but should be considered at additional intersections within the study area.

# Discussion / Questions

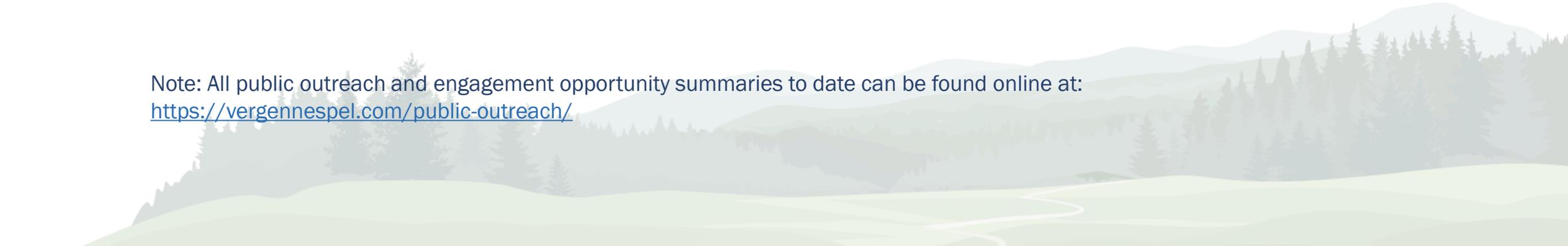
## Questions:

Is there anything that surprises you about the public feedback received to date?

As the Study progresses, are there any stakeholders, agencies, or specific parties which should be engaged that we may not be thinking of?

Note: All public outreach and engagement opportunity summaries to date can be found online at:

<https://vergennesspel.com/public-outreach/>





# Purpose and Need Technical Memorandum

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Vergennes Planning and Environment Linkages Study:

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# Why are we establishing a Purpose and Need for this Study?

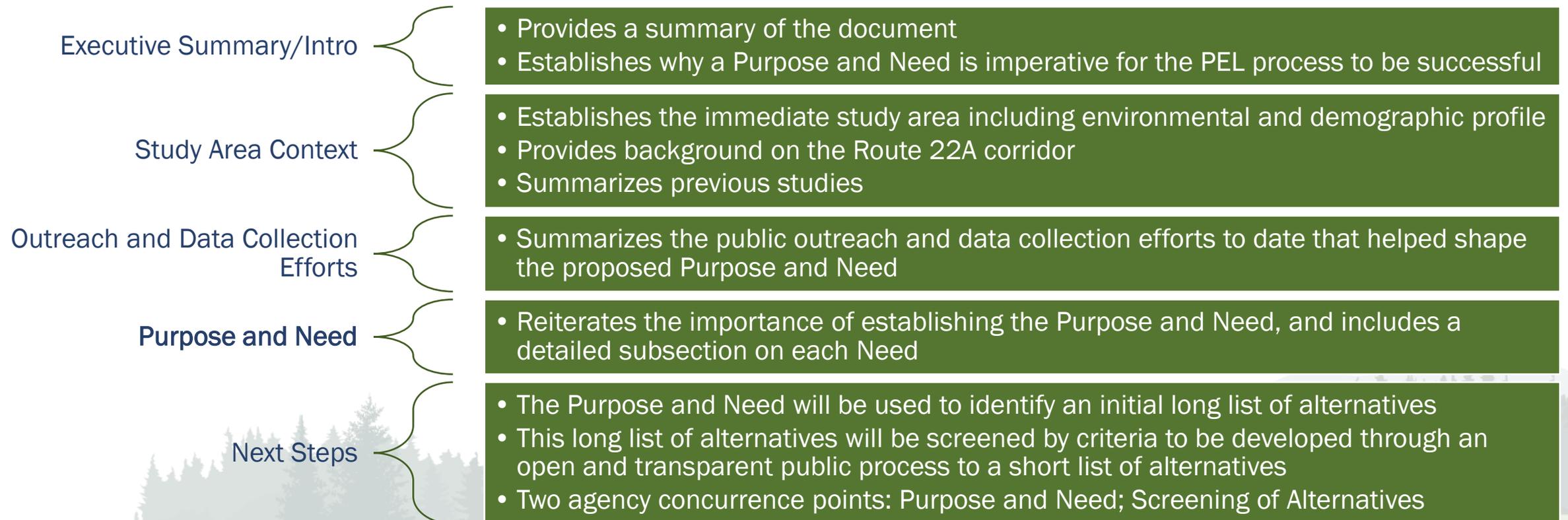
Development of the Purpose and Need Statement

Identification of all reasonable Alternatives that address the Purpose and Need Statement

Detailed evaluation of the most promising Alternatives and Land Use Visioning

Narrowing to a short list of Alternatives to advance for Federal Environmental Review

# Overview of the Purpose and Need Technical Memo: Sections



# Proposed Purpose and Need: Vergennes PEL Study

## PURPOSE

The **purpose** is to reduce the impacts of through truck traffic, including safety, congestion, noise, vibration, and dust on Route 22A in downtown Vergennes. Identified transportation solutions should:

- support goods movement and regional and downtown economic vitality;
- mitigate traffic, property, and environmental impacts;
- improve safety for all users that drive, walk, or bicycle along or across Route 22A in Vergennes;
- and provide a cost-effective use of transportation funding opportunities.

## NEEDS

Transportation solutions identified through the Vergennes PEL Study should address the following **needs**:



Mobility and Access



Land Use



Quality of Life



Safety, Circulation and Resilience



Economic Vitality

# Needs



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

Route 22A serves many different types of users simultaneously, including passenger vehicles, large trucks, buses, cyclists, and pedestrians. Balancing the needs of those users is an integral part of this study and identifying long-term solutions.



**Land Use:** Support local and regional land use plans and policies and state land use goals. Land uses have a direct impact on the adjacent and regional transportation network.

Understanding current and future land uses in Vergennes and the neighboring communities within and surrounding the study area is an important element of the Vergennes PEL Study.



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

Trucks have a visible presence along Route 22A in Vergennes, resulting in quality-of-life impacts, such as increased noise, vibration, and emissions.



**Safety, Circulation and Resilience:** Support the continued movement, resilience and improve the safety of non-truck traffic travel through downtown Vergennes and in the neighboring communities.

Portions of Route 22A lack redundancy, resulting in congestion, and long detours, when disruptions and shutdowns occur that reduce emergency vehicle access and travel for all vehicles. In addition, the lack of shoulders within downtown Vergennes can make it challenging for vehicles to yield to emergency response personnel.



**Economic Vitality:** Promote economic vitality in downtown Vergennes and goods movement in Vergennes and the neighboring communities, including support for regional agriculture.

From a regional perspective, goods movement and agriculture are driving economic and cultural forces in the study area and plays an important role in land-use, social, and community patterns.

# Need: Mobility and Access (Truck Traffic)



**Mobility and Access:** Maintain opportunities for the movement of freight in the region and minimize and/or mitigate traffic impacts to other transportation corridors. Route 22A serves many different types of users simultaneously, including passenger vehicles, large trucks, buses, cyclists, and pedestrians. Balancing the needs of those users is an integral part of this study and identifying long-term solutions.

## *Previous 2019 Study Identified:*

- VT 22A carries a high volume of trucks. Up to 800 trucks/day
  - 500+ tractor trailers daily
- Similar Routes/Downtowns in Vermont carry smaller truck volumes:
  - US 7 in Brandon – 190/day
  - VT 116 in Bristol – 50/day
  - VT 103 in Ludlow – 370/day
  - VT 9 in Wilmington – 360/day



## *July 2021 Vergennes PEL Study traffic data*

- 22A (North of Vermont Discount Store):
  - Medium Truck: 230/day
  - Large Truck: 530/day
- 22A (South of Hopkins Road):
  - Medium Truck: 200/day
  - Multi-Unit (Large): 540/day

*Many trucks using VT 22A are regional (New York-based), traveling via US 4 (Fair Haven) or VT 17 (Lake Champlain Bridge)*

# Need: Mobility and Access (All Modes)

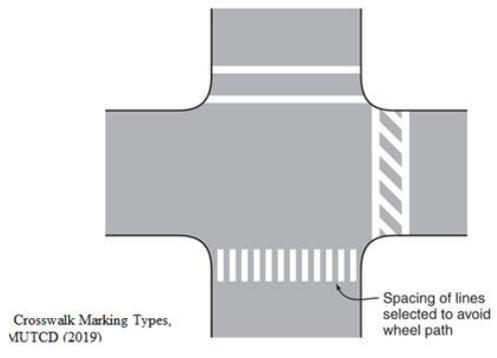


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## ■ Non-Motorized Transportation

- Provide opportunities for travel utilizing non-motorized transportation options such as walking or bicycling.
- Maintain and install infrastructure to support these transportation options.
- Provide a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment for all users regardless of age or ability.

Figure 3B-19. Examples of Crosswalk Markings



## ■ Transportation Access

- Promote equitable use for all transportation types including personal vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, trucks, transit, etc.
- Understand the importance of freight traffic in the region and identify opportunities to support the freight industry while minimizing local impacts.
- Identify long term solutions to balance the varied transportation types in the region to create a sustainable transportation network.

# Need: Safety, Traffic Circulation and Resilience



**Safety, Circulation and Resilience:** Support the continued movement, resilience and improve the safety of non-truck traffic travel through downtown Vergennes and in the neighboring communities. Portions of Route 22A lack redundancy, resulting in congestion, and long detours, when disruptions and shutdowns occur that reduce emergency vehicle access and travel for all vehicles. In addition, the lack of shoulders within downtown Vergennes can make it challenging for vehicles to yield to emergency response personnel.

- Support the movement, resilience, safety, and functionality of all travel through a vital economic corridor.
- Ensure access for emergency vehicles and general traffic flow if disruptions occur along the VT 22A corridor.
- Limit impacts of congestion along the downtown corridor including traffic and air pollution.
- Reimagine the roadway to provide additional safety measures including widened shoulders to more readily allow emergency vehicles to by-pass vehicles during emergency events.
- Identify options to improve traffic flow at key intersections, particularly close to major employment centers and through downtown Vergennes.
- Minimize conflict points at a known high traffic incident corridor.
- Identify options to rethink on-street parking to minimize impacts, particularly traffic incidents and congestion due to angled and parallel parking .



Source: K. Trombley, VT Redemption, Inc.

# Need: Quality of Life



**Quality of Life:** Improve the quality of life and minimize negative property and environmental resource impacts in downtown Vergennes and neighboring communities. Trucks have a visible presence along Route 22A in Vergennes, resulting in quality-of-life impacts, such as increased noise, vibration, and emissions.

## ■ Noise and Vibration, Air Quality

- Minimize quality of life impacts on the local community, particularly in terms of airborne pollutants, dust, and noise-related side effects of truck traffic.
- Minimize visual impact of truck presence along the corridor, which often conflicts with both existing and desired community character.
- Monitor vibration levels to understand any potential impacts to historic structures.

## ■ Equity

- Ensure marginalized, disadvantaged, underserved and underrepresented people and communities (low income, those with disabilities, BIPOC, LGBTQ, limited English proficiency, etc.) are not disproportionately burdened by future transportation alternatives.
- Utilize planning, public involvement, and implementation techniques that provide thoughtful and meaningful opportunity for participation for all.



# Need: Economic Vitality & Land Use



**Economic Vitality:** Promote economic vitality in downtown Vergennes and goods movement in Vergennes and the neighboring communities, including support for regional agriculture. From a regional perspective, goods movement and agriculture are driving economic and cultural forces in the study area and plays an important role in land-use, social, and community patterns.



**Land Use:** Support local and regional land use plans and policies and state land use goals. Land uses have a direct impact on the adjacent and regional transportation network. Understanding current and future land uses in Vergennes and the neighboring communities within and surrounding the study area is an important element of the Vergennes PEL Study

## ■ Economic Vitality

- Understand the regional importance of the Route 22A corridor to Vergennes and the surrounding communities.
- Promote continued economic vitality along the key regional corridor.
- Support continued movement of goods through the region, particularly agriculture, which is a known economic and cultural staple in the neighboring communities.

## ■ Land Use

- Encourage future land use that incorporates both the local and regional vision.
- Integrate land use plans with transportation alternatives



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# Committee Roles and General Membership



## Management

VTrans – Joe Segale and Katharine Otto

ACRPC – Adam Lougee and Mike Winslow



## 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 & Municipalities



## Policy Committee

### Role

- Endorsement of key assumptions and recommendations to VTrans

### Members

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

## Discussion / Questions

### Questions:

**If no changes are proposed by the Committee:** Do you recommend the Purpose & Need statement, as written, be presented to the Policy Committee for approval?

OR

**If changes are proposed by the Committee:** Do you recommend the Purpose & Need statement, as modified, be presented to the Policy Committee for approval?

# Next Steps (Calendar Year 2022)

Next Technical Committee Meeting  
(Late Spring/Early Summer 2022)

Participating and  
Cooperating  
Agency  
Coordination  
(February 2022)

Vergennes PEL  
Policy Committee  
Meeting:  
March 7, 2022  
10AM-12PM

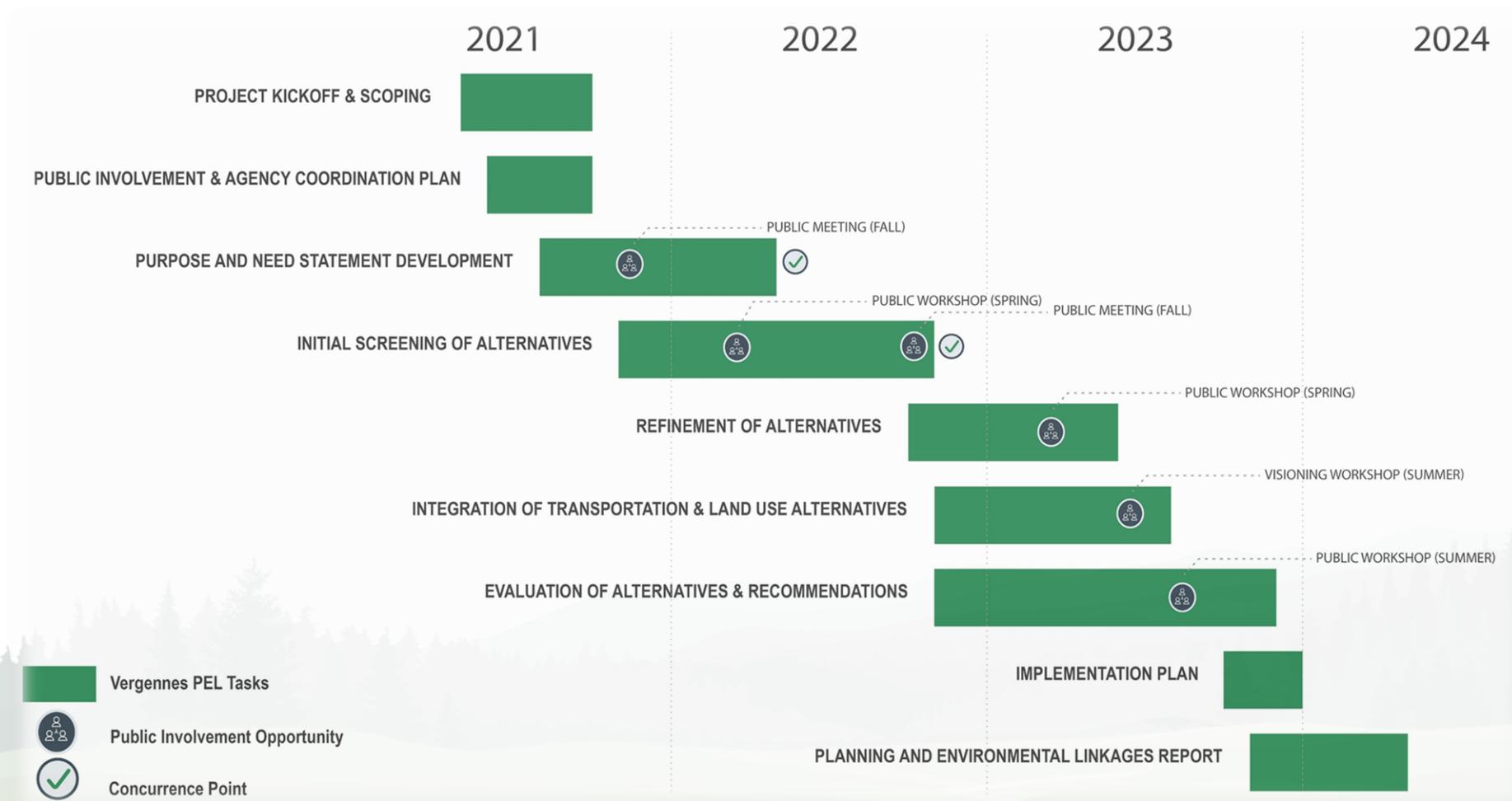
Cooperating  
Agency  
Concurrence:  
Purpose and  
Need  
(March 2022)

Spring Public  
Workshops:  
Long List of  
Alternatives /  
Screening Criteria  
(April 2022)

Public Meeting:  
Alternatives  
Screening  
(Fall 2022)

Cooperating  
Agency  
Concurrence:  
Alternatives  
Screening  
(Fall 2022)

# Study Schedule Overview



# Thank You!



We welcome your input and appreciate your feedback.

Please visit email us at [vergennespel@gmail.com](mailto:vergennespel@gmail.com) for further information, to submit comments or to contact the Study team.