

Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Subject	Vergennes PEL Study Policy Committee Meeting - Purpose and Need Statement Review
Date and Time	March 7, 2022, 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Location	Zoom Virtual Meeting
Policy Committee Member Attendees	<p>Voting Members:</p> <p>Chair – Adam Lougee (ACRPC), ACRPC Bill Smith (Vermont Truck and Bus Association), Trucking Diane Lanpher (State Representative from Vergennes), Legislature Dickie Austin (City of Vergennes), Municipal Appointee Ian Huizenga (City of Vergennes), Municipal Appointee* Jeff Nelson (Town of Addison), Municipal Appointee Jesse Devlin (VTrans), VTrans Joe Segale (VTrans), VTrans Mary Rudd (Town of Panton), Municipal Appointee* Matt Birong (State Representative from Vergennes), Legislature Mike Audy (Town of New Haven), Municipal Appointee Renny Perry (Vergennes Partnership), Business Tim Glassberg (Town of Waltham), Municipal Appointee* Will Sipsey (ACRPC Transportation Advisory Committee), ACRPC Brian Shupe (VNRC), Environmental** Clark Hinsdale (Town of Ferrisburgh), Municipal Appointee** Harvey Smith (State Representative from New Haven), Legislature** Phil Summers (Addison County Chamber of Commerce), Business**</p> <p>Non-Voting Members:</p> <p>Chris Jolly (FHWA), FHWA Katharine Otto (VTrans), VTrans, Observer Mike Winslow (ACRPC), ACRPC, Observer Elizabeth Shipley (FHWA), FHWA**</p>
Study Team Attendees	<p>Ken Robie (D&K) Rich Tetreault (D&K) Bryan Pounds (WSP) Stephen Chiaramonte (WSP) Stephanie Camay (WSP) Annabelle Dally (WSP) Delia Makhetha (WSP) Laura Toole (WSP) Lawrence Pesesky (WSP)**</p>

Members of the Public Attendees	Laura Mack Linda Harmon Pradeep Prajapati
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*Joined late

**Invited, but not present

Meeting Minutes

Adam Lougee, Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC) and Chair of the Policy Committee (the committee), welcomed everyone to the Policy Committee meeting and explained the purpose of today’s meeting to present the Purpose and Need Technical Memorandum (memorandum) and for the Policy Committee to vote and approve the memorandum. He called the committee meeting to order on March 7, 2022, at 10:01 am. Adam reviewed the agenda for the meeting and asked if the committee had any questions. Hearing none, Adam turned the meeting over to WSP.

Delia Makhetha, WSP, conducted roll call. Fourteen of the eighteen voting members and three of the four remaining non-voting members of the committee were present. The Policy Committee Meeting had a quorum. Eleven additional participants were in attendance including representatives from the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), the ACRPC, WSP, DuBois & King (D&K), and members of the public.

Laura Toole, WSP, provided an update on public outreach activities conducted during the Summer, Fall, and Winter of 2021 and common feedback and reoccurring themes received during public outreach efforts. The committee was asked if there was anything that surprised them about the public feedback received to date.

Representative Lanpher from Vergennes stated she was surprised that eighty-six percent of truckers that completed the survey responded that they would use Route 7. She asked if someone could clarify if truckers were indicating they would use Route 7 if there was a corridor or if there wasn’t.

Bryan Pounds, WSP, clarified that eighty-six percent is the percentage of truckers that responded to the survey itself and the way the question was framed was if Route 22A was not available to them in the existing condition, what route would they take.

Jeff Nelson, a municipal appointee from the Town of Addison, stated he had a few questions about the Vermont Truck and Bus Survey. The first question was regarding the comment that the eleven percent response rate was a high response rate. He stated he wasn’t sure he would agree with that statement as eleven percent seems low and questioned if that was high for these types of surveys. The comment that the survey indicated that the primary cargo is timber and dairy doesn’t seem representative of what is seen on Route 22A which carries a lot of fuel and dry goods with large 53-foot trailers and he questioned how the information was going to be used as it was not indicative of the existing conditions.

Stephen Chiamonte, WSP, explained it is always a challenge to gather input for trucking companies as they are not always near a computer or device and we try not to impose on their

schedules. He stated we wanted to be able to get information from them that would be useful to our project and in his experience getting any response from freight groups is a success. As far as cargo types, he explained the survey data is just a sample and that comments collected at the public meeting indicated that the most common cargo on Route 22A is fuel. He stated that it is important to remember that the responses from the truck and bus association are mostly local and will likely not capture those long-haul truckers along Route 22A. He informed the committee that the study team is coordinating with the parties involved in the State Freight Plan to see what commodity flow data has been collected as part of that plan. He explained that the purpose of the survey was to get the primary research completed so the study team had some understanding of what is moving through the corridor.

Jeff Nelson stated that based on the cargo that was reported in the survey it makes sense the respondents tended to be more locally based operations and it explains why fuel was not indicated as part of the survey. He stated he was pleased to hear that the study team was coordinating with the State Freight Plan to round out the freight data.

Renny Perry, from Vergennes Partnership, followed along with Jeff's comments and stated that while the results of the survey must be presented as was indicated by the respondents it should be noted in the study that the type of commodities transported along Route 22A differs from those represented in the survey results.

The committee was asked if there are any stakeholders, agencies, or specific parties which should be engaged that the Study Team did not consider. None were suggested.

Bryan Pounds, WSP, reviewed the reason for establishing a Purpose and Need for this study, provided an overview of the components of the memorandum, and summarized the Purpose and Need statement.

Stephen Chiamonte and Stephanie Camay, WSP, presented the Needs data and descriptions.

Bryan Pounds, WSP, explained that the study team is asking for the committee's feedback and ultimately the adoption of the Purpose and Need Statement. Bryan stated there has been an extensive amount of public outreach completed to date and the study team had met with the Technical Committee that reviewed the memorandum and made slight modifications. Bryan reviewed the roles of VTrans, the ACRPC, and the committees. Bryan opened the meeting up for discussion and asked the committee if they recommend the Purpose and Need Statement be adopted as written or if modifications should be made.

Katharine Otto, VTrans, asked if the committee members that had joined late could unmute and state their name for the record. Hearing none. Katharine stated Tim Glassberg and Mary Rudd had since joined the meeting. Bryan Pounds asked if there were any comments or questions on the Purpose and Need Statement.

Jeff Nelson stated the Purpose and Need Statement does a good job of balancing and considering the impacts and opportunities for not only Vergennes but also the neighboring communities. He stated that Addison and other towns along Vermont Route 17 would be heavily affected by an alternative that would reroute truck traffic through the area and the statement addresses that.

Jeff explained he had several questions specific to the memorandum. Jeff asked why Figure 4.2 on page 38 of the document which shows traffic volumes at different locations over time indicates that there was no truck traffic present on Route 22A at the southernmost location between 2016 and 2020.

Bryan Pounds, WSP, explained that it was likely due to gaps in the data. Stephen Chiamonte, WSP, confirmed that the figure shows the available data, which was intended to show trends, but that the data was not consistent across time and location which explains that discrepancy.

Jeff Nelson asked if representatives from the Vermont Natural Resources Council (VNRC) or Conservation Law Foundation (CLF), major environmental groups involved in transportation-specific projects, were included in the environmental focus group described on page 30 or if not, why they were not included.

Bryan Pounds, WSP, stated he believed both groups were invited but might not have attended. Stephanie Camay, WSP, stated she would have to confirm this based on the invite and attendance lists.

Joe Segale, VTrans, stated that Brian Shupe from the VNRC is a member of the committee and that CLF was invited to participate in the committee as well, but declined due to staffing resources. Joe indicated that an effort would be made to include feedback from these groups as the study progresses.

Bryan Pounds, WSP, asked if there were any additional questions or comments on the statement itself. Hearing none, Bryan explained the next step would be to pose the question to the committee if they would like to adopt the purpose and need statement for the remainder of the study.

Renny Perry moved to make this a motion. Motion: To adopt the Purpose and Need Statement. Jeff Nelson seconded the motion.

Delia Makhetha, WSP, polled committee members:

Chair - Adam Lougee (ACRPC), ACRPC – in favor
Bill Smith (Vermont Truck and Bus Association), Trucking – in favor
Brian Shupe (VNRC), Environmental – not present
Clark Hinsdale (Town of Ferrisburgh), Municipal Appointee – not present
Diane Lanpher (State Representative from Vergennes), Legislature – in favor
Dickie Austin (City of Vergennes), Municipal Appointee – in favor
Harvey Smith (State Representative from New Haven), Legislature – not present
Ian Huizenga (City of Vergennes), Municipal Appointee – in favor
Jeff Nelson (Town of Addison), Municipal Appointee – in favor
Jesse Devlin (VTrans), VTrans – in favor
Joe Segale (VTrans), VTrans – in favor
Mary Rudd (Town of Pantton), Municipal Appointee – in favor
Matt Birong (State Representative from Vergennes), Legislature – in favor
Mike Audy (Town of New Haven), Municipal Appointee – in favor
Renny Perry (Vergennes Partnership), Business – in favor

Phil Summers (Addison County Chamber of Commerce), Business – not present
Tim Glassberg (Town of Waltham), Municipal Appointee– in favor
Will Sipsey (ACRPC Transportation Advisory Committee), ACRPC – in favor

The Motion passed unanimously.

Bryan Pounds, WSP, highlighted the importance of this milestone and thanked the committee for their involvement. He explained the next step is to present the Purpose and Need Statement to the lead federal agency (FHWA), and the likely cooperating agencies: the US Army Corps of Engineers and the US Coast Guard, to formally accept this statement and provide concurrence. He reviewed the next steps for the project including the spring workshops. Joe Segale, VTrans, elaborated on the spring workshops explaining the first of which will be held at the Otter Creek Mobile Home Park which will include targeted stakeholders in those communities followed by two public workshops. Bryan stated the dates of the spring workshops:

- Tuesday, May 24 Stakeholder Workshop at Otter Creek (rain date of Wednesday, May 25)
- Thursday, May 26 Public Workshop at the Opera House
- Wednesday, June 1 Public Workshop via Zoom

Bryan asked if Adam Lougee, Joe Segale, or Katharine Otto had anything final to add. Joe Segale and Adam Lougee thanked everyone for coming and participating in the committee meeting. The meeting was closed around 11:00 am.

Subsequent to the meeting, Stephanie Camay emailed Policy Committee to follow up on the question regarding CLF and VNRC inclusive in the environmental focus group. The email confirmed that representatives from Vermont CLF and VNRC were in attendance including Dale Azaria with Vermont CLF and Brian Shupe with VNRC.