

Technical Committee & Agency Partners Meeting Minutes

Subject	Vergennes PEL Study Technical Committee & Agency Partners meeting to approve land use visioning technical memorandum and discuss evaluation criteria
Date and Time	June 12, 2024, 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon
Location	Zoom Virtual Meeting
Agency Coordinating Partners	<p>Federal Agencies</p> <p>Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Elizabeth Shipley* , Patrick Kirby & Jacqueline DeMent</p> <p>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Michael Adams</p> <p>U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), Gary Croot*</p> <p>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Beth Alafat, Tim Timmerman & Alex Dwyer</p> <p>U.S.D.A – Natural Resource Conservation Service, Obediah Racicot* & Jason Fleury</p> <p>Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), David Robbins* & Erik Kuns*</p> <p>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Susi von Oettingen*</p> <p>State Agencies</p> <p>Agency of Natural Resources (ANR), Billy Coster*</p> <p>Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, Laura Trieschmann*</p> <p>Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), Department of Housing and Community Development, Chris Cochran* & Gary Halloway</p> <p>Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, Ari Rockland-Miller & Ryan Patch*</p> <p>Buildings and General Services (BGS), Vermont Agency of Administration, Eric Pembroke*</p>
Technical Committee Member Attendees	<p>Voting Members:</p> <p>Chair – Matthew Arancio (VTrans), Transportation Planning</p> <p>John Bull (Town of Ferrisburgh), Municipal Public Works</p> <p>Alysha Kane (VTrans), District Maintenance*</p> <p>Shannon Haggett (City of Vergennes), Planning</p> <p>Fred Kenney (Addison County Economic Development), Economic</p> <p>Jim Larrow (City of Vergennes), Municipal Public Works</p> <p>Bruce Martin (VTrans), Roadway Design</p> <p>Joel Perrigo (VTrans), Municipal Assistance</p>

	Katie Raycroft-Meyer (ACRPC), Planning Jeff Ramsey (VTrans), Environmental Mike Winslow (ACRPC), Planning Non-Voting Members: Jacqueline DeMent (FHWA), Planning Elizabeth Shipley (FHWA), Environmental* Patrick Kirby (FHWA), Environmental James LaCroix (VTrans), Structures Adam Lougee (ACRPC), Planning, Observer Amanda Holland (VTrans), Bicycle and Pedestrian
Study Team Attendees	Stephanie Camay (WSP) Stephen Chiaramonte (WSP) Maya Miller (WSP) Annabelle Dally (WSP) Delia Makhetha (WSP) Ken Robie (D&K) Dan Mallach (D&K) Aimee Rutledge (D&K) Jim Gish (VHB) Faith Dall (VTrans) Amy Bell (VTrans)
Community Attendees	Terry Pelletier, Panton resident Mel Hawley Terry Chris Lapierre Bonnie

*Invited, but not present

Meeting Minutes

Matthew Arancio (VTrans), Chair of the Technical Committee (the committee), called the meeting to order on June 12, 2024, at 11:05 am. Matthew reviewed the agenda and noted we have enough Technical Committee voting members to take a vote on a consensus point to approve the land use visioning technical memorandum. Matthew explained there will also be time for the Technical Committee and Agency Partners to provide comments and ask questions on the evaluation criteria. Matthew noted that members of the public may be in attendance as observers, but the study team will not be taking questions or comments from observing members of the public.

Delia Makhetha (WSP), conducted roll call. Ten of the eleven voting members and six of the seven remaining non-voting members of the committee were present, and eleven additional participants representing VTrans, WSP, DuBois & King (D&K), and VHB were in attendance. There were five members of the public in attendance.

Stephanie Camay (WSP), reminded the Technical Committee that their role is to review the methodology, the analysis and recommendation(s) that are brought forward by the study team. The consensus point today will ask the Technical Committee to approve the land use visioning technical memorandum. This technical memorandum was provided to the Technical Committee ahead of this meeting for review by the committee.

Stephanie presented on the Vergennes PEL Study background, including a study overview and study timeline. The study is moving from Task 5, Integrated Transportation & Land Use Alternatives to Task 6, Alternatives Evaluation and Recommendation. Stephanie also summarized the land use visioning timeline and a land use scenario for the Orange Route alternative.

Matthew called on the Technical Committee to vote on the following consensus point: “Based on your review of the Land Use Visioning Technical Memorandum, do you recommend the land use visioning scenarios for approval by the Policy Committee?”

Delia called on each Technical Committee member for their vote:

John Bull – In favor
Alysha Kane – Not present
Shannon Haggett – In favor
Fred Kenney – In favor
Jim Larrow – In favor
Bruce Martin– In favor
Joel Perrigo – In favor
Katie Raycroft-Meyer – In favor
Jeff Ramsey – In favor
Mike Winslow – In favor
Matthew Arancio – In favor

The motion reached consensus to recommend the land use visioning scenarios be presented to the Policy Committee for approval.

Stephanie noted that if there are any major revisions following the presentation to the Policy Committee, the project Team will be sure to bring it back to the Technical Committee.

Following consensus, Steve Chiaramonte (WSP), presented the evaluation criteria and metrics for mobility and access, safety and traffic circulation, including the following:

- Traffic volume will be measured by the change in truck volumes on Main Street.
- Existing routes within the study area will be measured by notable traffic operations degradation and change in travel times along Main Street.
- Proposed routes will be measured by change in travel times for freight vehicles and diversion length.
- Traffic infrastructure will be measured by the number of signalized interactions, number of unsignalized intersections, and number of bridges.

- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities will be measured by the potential for expansion of regional bicycle networks, linear feet of new sidewalks, and number of additional marked crosswalks.

Steve then transitioned to the initial results of the traffic operations analysis. During the analysis, the project team reviewed existing and future traffic and turning movement volumes at key intersections for the following scenarios:

- Existing conditions
- Future 2046 No Build conditions
- Future 2046 Build – Purple Route
- Future 2046 Build – Blue Route
- Future 2046 Build – Pink Route
- Future 2046 Build – Green Route
- Future 2046 Build – Orange Route

The analysis focused on an analysis of level of service to determine minimum improvements such as stop control, signalization, turn lanes. The analysis also focused on a review of travel times, including northbound and southbound between VT 22A/VT 17 (south) and VT 22A/US 7 (north).

The initial review of the level of service (LOS) analysis indicated that only a few intersections will require signalization and that turn lanes will not be required at most intersections (signalized nor unsignalized). Based on the findings, the team will have a secondary discussion with VTrans Traffic Engineering staff to better understand these types of situations. Additional findings include that travel times on Route 22A will be a shorter trip time than all scenarios.

Steve paused and asked the committee members if they have any questions regarding the traffic analysis or the evaluation criteria.

- Question from Jim Larrow (City of Vergennes): Are you saying that it's quicker to stay on 22A by speed or time? I'm curious if this is an average through 24 hours or how you came up with that?
 - o Response from Steve: The travel time analysis is looking at the AM or PM peak hour specifically. That's based on our analysis of typical traffic conditions given the traffic counts that we have access to, and those initial analyses are showing that Route 22A, again, given expected new traffic conditions would have a shorter travel time than the same trip taking place on a new route.
- Question from Mike Winslow (ACRPC): How the bike/pedestrian criteria will be used in an evaluation? How will bike/pedestrian quantify the potential for expansion of the network?
 - o Response from Steve: primary expansion of the bicycle network mainly looks at opportunities to provide a shoulder or parallel route for those longer regional bicycle trips that would connect to the established bicycle route. Again, it will

determine whether, a given route allows for that kind of facility. For crosswalks it comes down to improved pedestrian circulation, we will be looking at the number of intersections that would be considered or require additional pedestrian accommodations.

- Question from Mike Winslow: In terms of evaluation, a route that generated more crosswalks would be viewed more favourably than a route that generated fewer crosswalks, is that correct?
 - o Response from Steve: Correct.
- Question from Fred Kenney (Addison County Economic Development): What will this evaluation criteria be used for, what is the next step; is it to eliminate some of the routes or are we evaluating all of the routes on these criteria for the record?
 - o Response from Stephanie Camay: All of the criteria will be used to evaluate the routes. It is possible that one or more could be eliminated, but the focus of the evaluation is to identify one or more recommended routes so that the Technical and Policy Committees can make a recommendation to VTrans about which routes, or route will be best to implement in the future.
- Question from Fred Kenney: That's what I thought—that also leads me to another question if you don't mind. Is there a reason that one of the evaluation criteria does not include the level of infrastructure that will be required? I'm not talking about cost, but using level of infrastructure as criteria, I'm wondering about that.

Response from Stephanie Camay: The purpose of today's call is to get the input from technical folks on what's missing. We are planning to include cost and can look at adding infrastructure elements as well. Matthew Arancio explained that the matrix is complex and there are many parts to it. He reiterated that the team does not expect the group to absorb the matrix in real time, and he recommended that if folks have follow up questions to contact himself, Faith, and Amy. Matthew Arancio also thanked Fred Kenney for his question.

- Comment from Amanda Holland (VTrans): I had the same questions as Mike regarding the bicycle and pedestrian criteria. It would seem these criteria should be that which focuses more on creating a safer and more connected non-vehicle trip.
 - o Comment from Katie Raycroft-Meyer (ACRPC): I agree with that metric.

Stephanie Camay transitioned to the evaluation criteria for the quality of life and equity. The criteria are as follows:

Quality of Life Criteria

- Noise will be measured by the number of sensitive receptors within screening distance for new routes, forecasted change in traffic noise on Route 22A and Main Street based on traffic forecast.

- Vibration will be measured by the number of sensitive receptors within screening distance.
- Air quality will be measured by the change in emissions.
- Visual resources will be measured by the number of critical visual resources potentially impacted and number of viewsheds potentially impacted.

Stephanie asked if any committee members have questions on the quality-of-life criteria.

- Jacqueline DeMent (FHWA): Does the study take into account air quality and change in emissions? Does the study reflect potential lowering of emissions on 22A or take into account the increased emissions on other routes if the route is taking longer?
 - o Stephanie Camay: This would be looked at later, during NEPA, at a quantitative level. A qualitative measure could be added for the new routes by identifying sensitive receptors, similar to noise. The study team will discuss with the team's air quality specialists and report back.
- Matthew Arancio: Followed up with Jacqueline Dement to ask if there are any sensitivities that the team should be aware of from a FHWA perspective as it's related to change in emissions. Matthew asked Jacqui to expand on the FHWA perspective.
 - o Jacqueline DeMent: From FHWA's perspective, air quality has looked more at congestion. That conversation is now starting to look at greenhouse gas emissions as a whole, not just congestion. I think it's a nuance, and I understand the PEL study has a certain purpose and need, but recognizing the balance of the nuance of balancing potential congestion and air quality benefits in one area with potentially increasing emissions in other areas if a route is much longer for instance.
 - o Matthew said the team will follow up with Jacqui regarding the nuance of benefits and impacts.
- Question from Timothy Timmerman (EPA Region 1): Does the analysis at this point distinguish between construction versus operation impacts? Will the metrics do that, understanding that the analysis isn't completed yet?
 - o Stephanie Camay: The analysis will not get into construction impacts at this point because they do not have that level of detail that would be needed.
- Question from Mike Winslow: It was said that the viewsheds were identified during outreach efforts. I want to encourage the team to be a little more objective about identifying those, it shouldn't be just who showed up and happened to make a comment at that time there should be some vetting of that number.
 - o Stephanie Camay thanked Mike for the comment.

Stephanie discussed the Equity evaluation criteria, including the following:

- Environmental justice populations will be measured by the total of EJ population impacted
- Property impacts will be measured by the acreage of property acquisitions and number of full acquisitions.

Stephanie Camay paused and asked committee members if they have any questions.

- Question from Fred Kenney: Can you define what you consider an environmental justice population to be or based on what you said, is that someone who's getting their property acquired or being displaced?
 - o Stephanie Camay explained how an environmental justice population is identified and that there is a lot of different criteria, but typically it is based on minority, low-income. She explained that the team is looking at communities like the mobile home park and others that could be adversely impacted.
- Fred Kenney: Follow up question; would it include a business who's being impacted?
 - o Stephanie Camay explained that this is a more high-level analysis but that would be something that is incorporated into a future NEPA study which will look at the impacts to business displacements and whether they are disproportionately averse to an environmental justice population.
- Comment from Tim Timmerman: The environmental justice population criteria in the technical memorandum felt very clunky and broad to him. He recommended refining the language to how it was discussed today, so it has a broader meaning.
 - o Stephanie Camay agreed that the team should have a follow up conversation with Tim at EPA. Stephanie Camay stated that it would be beneficial to have insight from FHWA on the best way to incorporate environmental justice analysis at the PEL level.

Stephanie Camay then presented on the economic vitality and land use criteria.

Economic Vitality

- Downtown Vergennes Economy will be measured by strongly supports, neutral support, weakly supports and changes in sales tax revenue generated.
- The regional economy will be measured by strongly supports, neutral support, weakly supports, and changes in sales tax revenue generated.

Stephanie paused for questions.

- Question from Amanda Holland: Status of economic analysis – will these two object measures be based on information from this component? Amanda referred to the company that was hired to conduct an economic analysis and asked about the outcome of that analysis.

- Stephanie Camay explained that Tripp Muldrow is conducting the economic analysis. He is in the process of wrapping up the assessment and working on the next steps.
- Question from Fred Kenney: Is Tripp Muldrow looking at what kind of development along that route might generate taxes or is it just change in traffic?
 - Stephanie Camay explained that Tripp is looking at the demand now and the potential for future growth along a new route and how that could result in changes or increases in sales tax revenue.
- Comment from Fred Kenney: The economic analysis is going to be making a lot of assumptions. Is that study going to be available?
 - Stephanie Camay confirmed that the study will be available.
- Comment from Mike Winslow: I encourage the team to utilize some Technical Committee members (e.g. Fred) as a sub-committee for economic criteria, as you did with pre-evaluation of the land use visioning memo.
 - Stephanie Camay stated that the team welcomes expertise and review once the memo is wrapped up on the economic piece.

Stephanie Camay presented on the Land Use Evaluation Criteria:

- The team plans to use the local land use plans to advise and develop
 - Vergennes Municipal Plan (2020-2028)
 - Vergennes Downtown-Basin Master Plan (2016)
 - Addison Town Plan (2016-2021)
 - Ferrisburgh Town Plan (2017-2025)
 - New Haven Town Plan (2017)
 - Waltham Town Plan (?)
 - Panton Town Plan (?)
- Question from Mel Hawley (Community Attendee): Is there a reason why the Waltham Town Plan and the Panton Town Plan are not on the resource list?
 - Stephanie Camay explained that Waltham and Panton should be on the list.
- Question from Amanda Holland: How would you be using a plan as a measurement?
 - Stephanie Camay noted that it will be measured based on how it aligns with existing plan as well as the study future land use scenarios. She added that further detail and analysis will occur in other phases of the PEL study. Plans will also identify next steps.

- Comment from Katie Raycroft-Meyer: I wanted to make sure you are aware of a project going on along the Route 7 corridor looking at transit-oriented development in Ferrisburgh and Middlebury. The project will identify recommendations for the town's land use plans.
 - o Stephanie Camay and Matthew Arancio thank Katie for flagging it. Matthew noted VTrans will follow up with ACRPC on the timeline and data points.

Aimee Rutledge (D&K) provided the overview of the evaluation criteria for the environmental impacts.

- Wetlands will include an area within the wetlands including vernal pools, Class II wetland impacts, Class III wetland impacts.
- Surface waters (streams, rivers, lakes, ponds) will include the area within surface waters and impaired waters.
- Floodplains will include the area within the floodplain and the area within State River Corridors.
- Significant Communities and Wildlife Habitats will include areas within uncommon species area, natural communities, deer wintering areas, significant habitats, habitat blocks.
- Rare, threatened, and endangered species will include areas within RTE areas.
- Farmland will include area within primary agricultural soils.
- Public lands will include number of park and recreation areas, and area of conserved and Section 6(f) lands.
- Historic resources will include the number of known archaeological sites potentially impacted, area of encroachment of high archaeological sensitivity (SF), and number of known resources eligible for or listed on NRHP impacted.

Aimee provided an overview of the approach for the environmental impacts using the Orange Route as a pilot. The approach included a desktop and drone UAV review survey of routes, agency coordination, field investigation, regulatory agency site visit, and ArcGIS analysis.

Aimee paused and opened up the floor for questions.

- Question from Fred Kenney: Does the mapping include contours or elevations?
 - o Aimee Rutledge confirmed that the team does look at contours especially with wetland areas.
- Question from Fred Kenney: This map captures the area I'm concerned about, it's not always wet but it's a wetland. Fred confirmed that it was just behind the police station, where the green/blue shade, the concern is that the land drops off suddenly and is deep and wide. By watching the flyover, it shows a lot of fill there. He is concerned about how deep and wide it is.

- Aimee Rutledge confirmed that during the agency site visit they walked back to the edge of the ravine and viewed the wetland complex. The rest of the design team is aware of the constraints in the area.
- Stephanie Camay reiterated that the team has identified that a structure may be needed in the area and this will be identified as a potential mitigation.
- Comment from Mike Winslow: Recommend using number of RTE area impacts rather than area of impacts.
 - Aimee Rutledge thanked Mike for the suggestions.

Stephanie thanked the committee members and reviewed the next steps including:

- Collecting feedback on the alternatives
- Evaluation of concepts and data analysis
- 2-3 technical committee meetings
- Completion of the final PEL Report which will include:
 - Recommended alternatives
 - Local land use regulations
 - Funding and financing
- Question from Patrick Kirby: Is cost a criteria?
 - Stephanie Camay said yes, cost will be incorporated into the next steps.

Stephanie thanked attendees for staying on the call longer than scheduled and shared the study team's contact information for feedback. She reminded the committee that comments should be emailed to the Study Team by June 19.

Matthew Arancio adjourned the meeting at 12:20 pm.