



Vergennes Planning and Environment Linkages Study: Secondary Screening

Technical Committee and
Agency Partners

March 1, 2023



Agenda

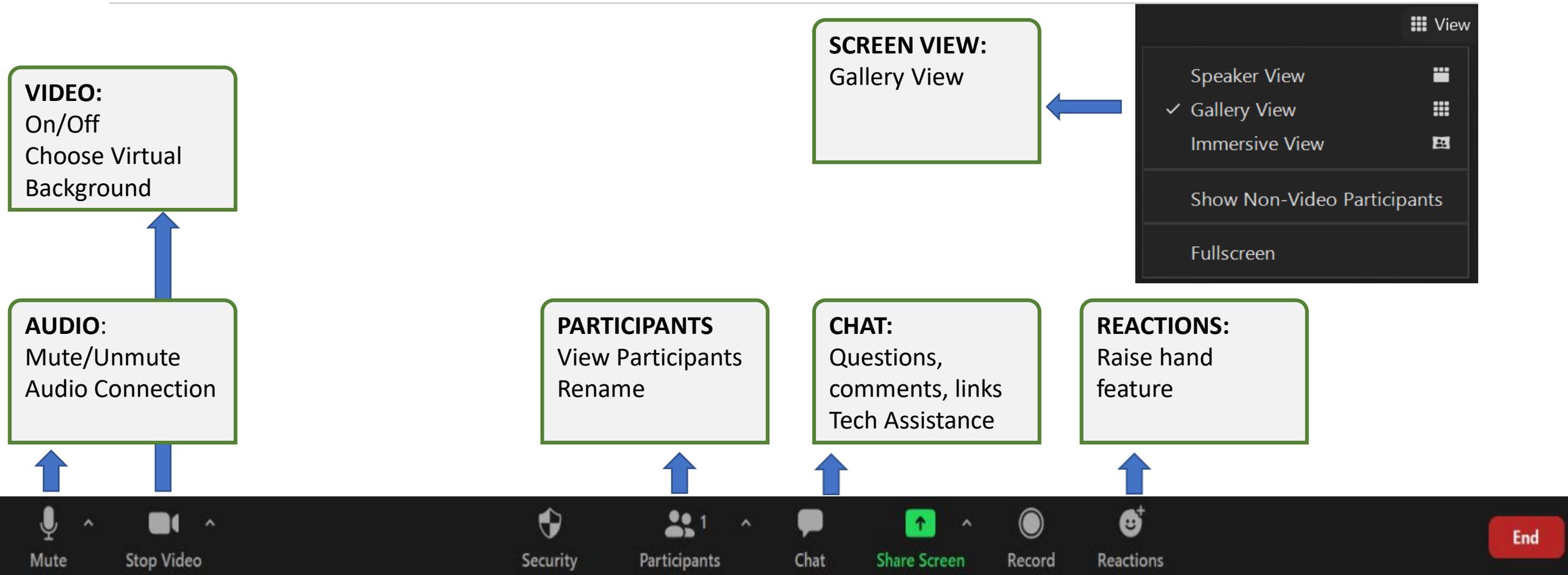
1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. PEL Study Goals
3. Initial Screening
4. Secondary Screening Methodology
5. Secondary Screening Results
6. Concepts Proposed for Further Study
7. Committee and Agency Discussion
8. Next Steps

V E R G E N N E S

Planning & Environment Linkages (PEL) Study



Zoom Orientation



Roll Call – Technical Committee

VOTING members

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

NON-VOTING members

- Jacqueline DeMent, VTrans
- Chris Jolly, FHWA
- Jon Kaplan, VTrans
- James LaCroix, VTrans
- Adam Lougee, ACRPC
- Elizabeth Shipley, FHWA



Roll Call – Agency Partners

Federal Agencies

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

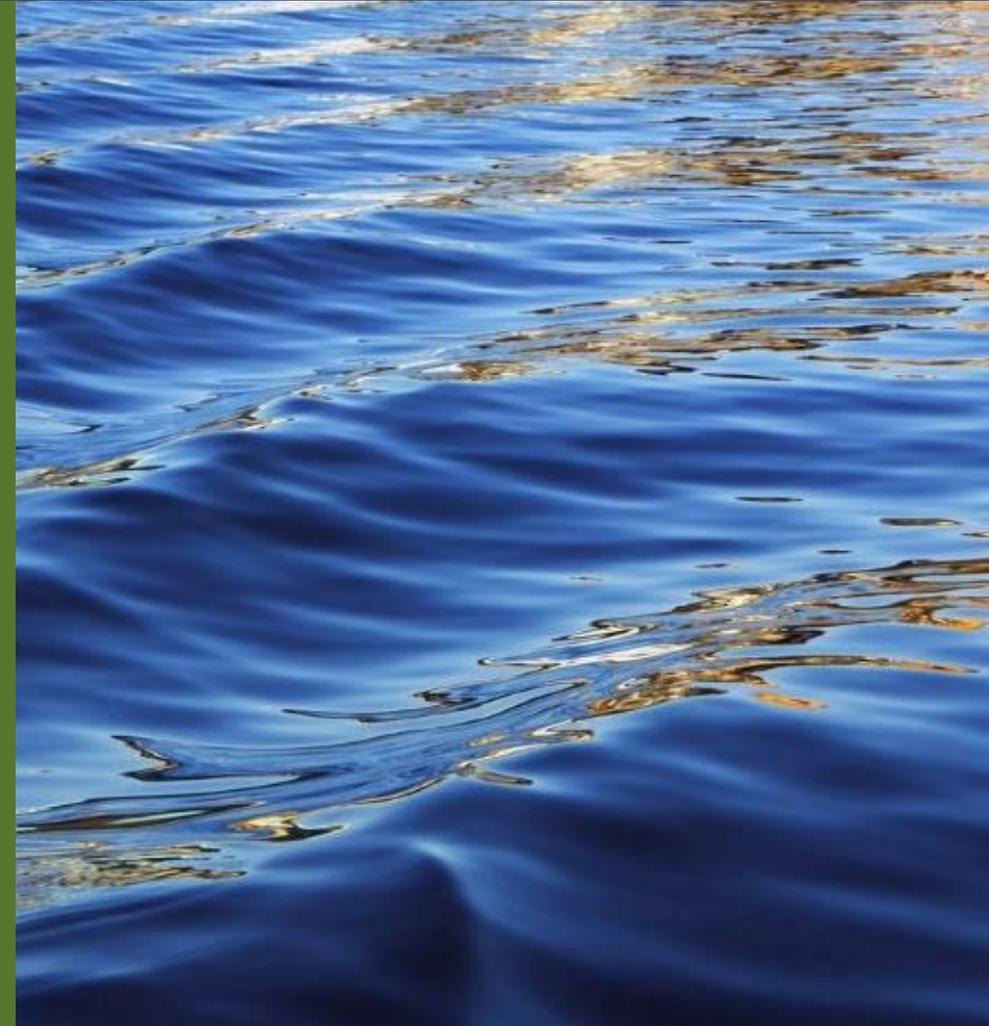
State Agencies

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

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PEL Study Goals



What is a Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL) study?

- PEL is a collaborative approach to transportation decision-making that considers environmental, community, and economic goals
- The goal of PEL is collaboration with stakeholders to better inform and accelerate a project moving forward and being built



Why are we doing a PEL study in Vergennes?

- Previous studies indicated regional agreement that truck volume in downtown Vergennes should be addressed.
- PEL study allow us to go:
 - Wider in our outreach and engagement
 - Deeper into details, including conceptual design and land use

Goal is for region to come to *consensus* on path forward

- VTrans and ACRPC role in PEL study is to facilitate regional process, NOT to decide path forward
- In absence of consensus from the region, change is unlikely



Summer 2021 – Spring 2022

Task 1: Project Kick-Off and Scope Refinement

Task 2: Purpose and Need Statement



Spring 2022 – Spring 2023

Task 3: Alternatives Development and Concept Screening



2023

Task 4: Alternatives/Concept Refinement

Task 5: Integrated Transportation & Land Use Alternatives

Task 6: Alternatives Evaluation & Recommendations



2024

Task 7: Implementation Plan

Task 8: PEL Report

Recent and Upcoming Meetings

- 12/21 – Policy Committee meeting
- 3/1 – Technical Committee and Agency Coordination meeting
- March-April – Policy Committee informal working sessions and meeting
- Federal agency concurrence



What does consensus mean?

Levels of Consensus

1. I like it, am on board and can easily accept this decision.

2. I accept this decision but may have some questions/points to clarify at a later time.

3. I can live with this decision even though it may not be my preferred option.

This is our goal for everyone

4. I don't agree but I will not block this decision.

5. I loathe it and cannot accept this decision.



Source: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/levels-consensus-group-decision-making-success-leah-mether/>

Overall Process – Planning through Construction

PROJECT INITIATION

- PEL Study – complete in 2024
- Funding Authorization – *unknown timeline*



PROJECT DEFINITION

- Conceptual Design
- Environmental Studies

3-5 years



PROJECT DESIGN

- Preliminary Design
- Permitting
- Right-of-Way Acquisitions
- Final Design

4-8 years



CONSTRUCTION

- Pre-Construction Activities
- Active Construction

2-4 years

Technical Committee and Agency Roles



Technical Committee

Role

Guide, review, and validate the consultant's methods, analyses, findings, and recommendations on which the Policy Committee will make its decisions

Members

Subject matter experts from VTrans, region, and municipalities



Agency Coordination

Role

Guide coordination activities through the duration of the study with interested, involved agencies that may be likely cooperating and participating agencies under NEPA

Members

Likely Cooperating and Likely Participating Agencies

Technical Committee and Agency Roles

- PEL is a collaborative decision-making **planning** process
- Goal to reduce the number of alternatives and identify potential impacts that will be looked at further during NEPA
- **Recommendations** only – **not binding** until NEPA process



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Initial Screening



Purpose and Need Statement: Vergennes PEL Study

The **purpose** is to reduce the impacts of through truck traffic, including safety, congestion, noise, vibration, and dust on Route 22A in downtown Vergennes. Transportation solutions that reduce truck related quality of life impacts should also meet the mobility, safety, and economic vitality needs of Vergennes and the neighboring communities.

A summary of the **needs** identified are detailed below.



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



Safety, Circulation and Resilience: Support the continued movement, resilience and safety of travel through downtown Vergennes and in the neighboring communities.



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



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



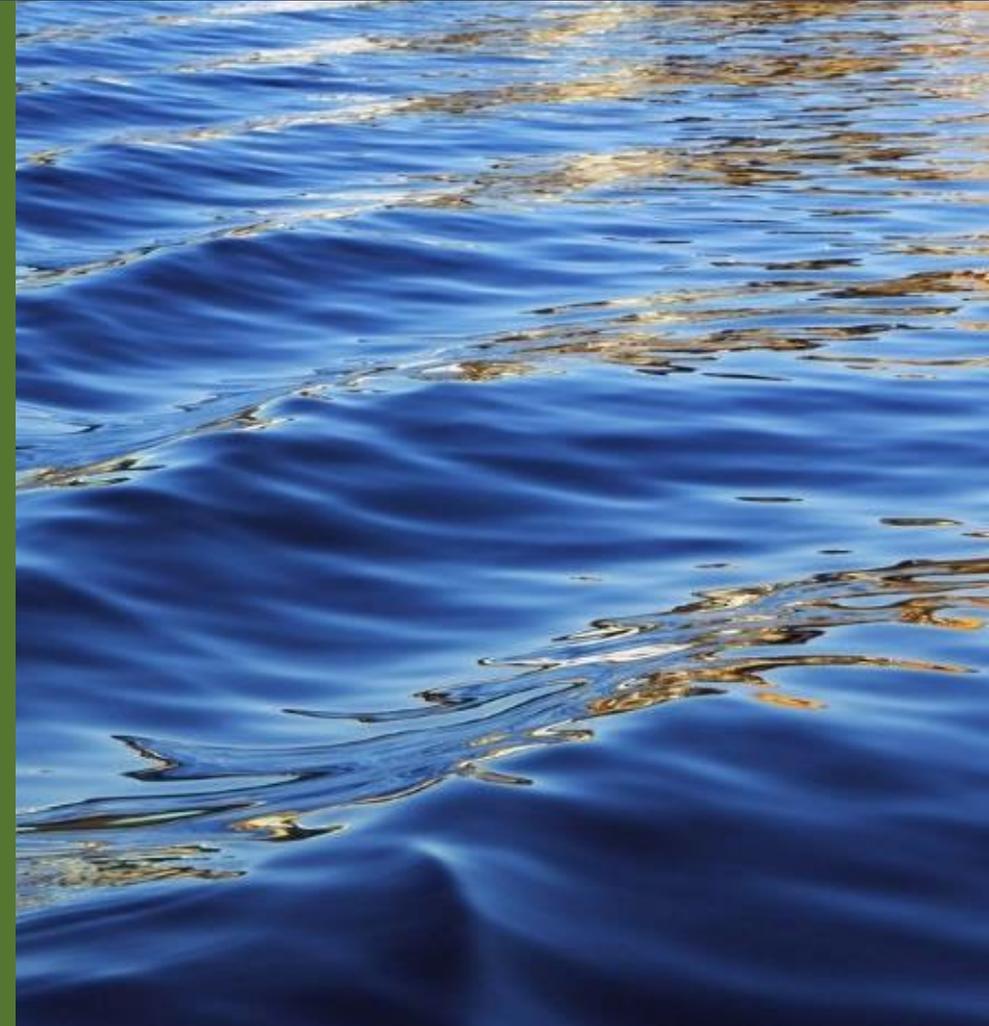
Economic Vitality: Promote economic vitality of downtown Vergennes, goods movement in Vergennes and neighboring communities, and support rural economy.

Concepts Proposed for Further Study

Concept Screening Results	Systemwide	VT-17 / Route 7	VT-22A Corridor Improvements	VT-17 Northbound/VT-22A Southbound (Purple)	Panton-Ferrisburgh New Roadway (West Routing Option 1) (Red)	Vergennes New Roadway (West Routing Option 2) (Turquoise)	Vergennes New Roadway (West Routing Option 3) (Pink)	Vergennes-Panton New Roadway (West Routing Option 4) (Blue)	Panton-Vergennes-Waltham New Roadway (Southeast Routing) (Green)	Vergennes Main Street New Parallel Route (Orange)	Rail Mode Options	Water Mode Options	Smart Freight Solutions
Total Score	5	1	-3	6	1	5	5	7	0	6	0	-7	5
Meets Purpose and Need and No Fatal Flaws	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No

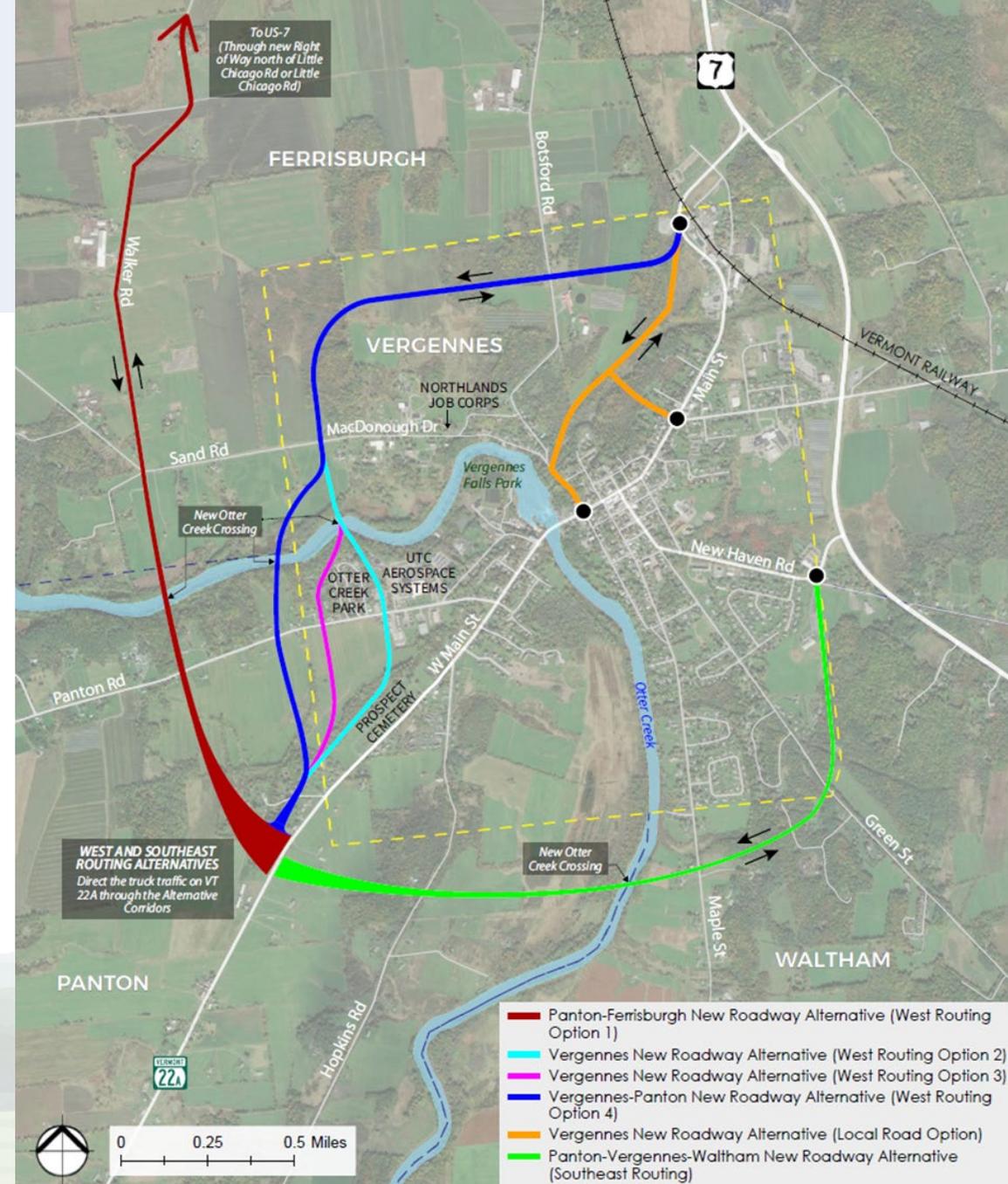


Secondary Screening Methodology



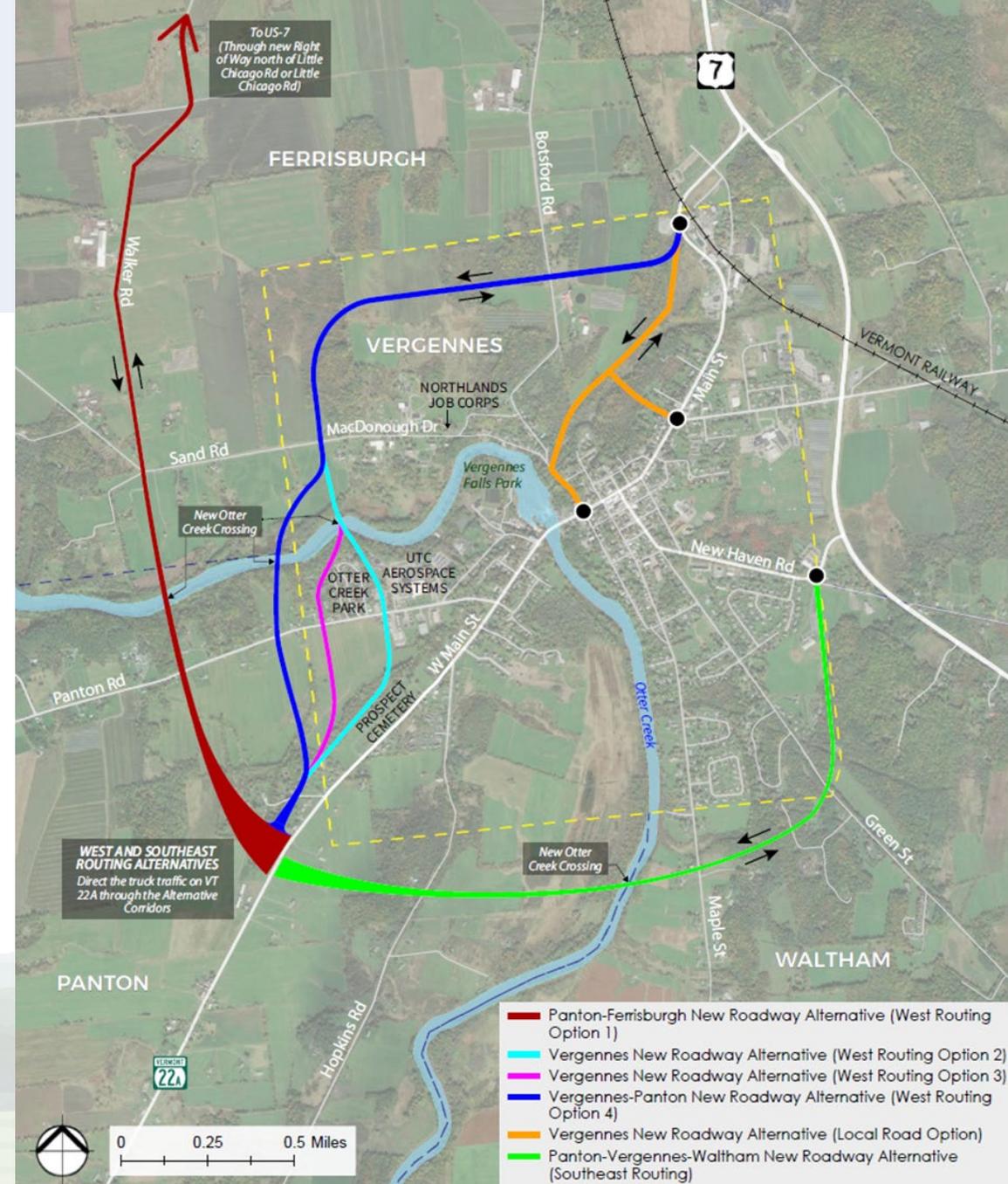
Secondary Screening Methodology

- Use available GIS data
- Data organized by environmental features, protected lands/agricultural, human considerations
- New roadway concept alignments with a 500-foot buffer as ‘swath’
- Existing roadways with a 150-foot buffer
 - May require widenings and intersection improvements



Secondary Screening Methodology

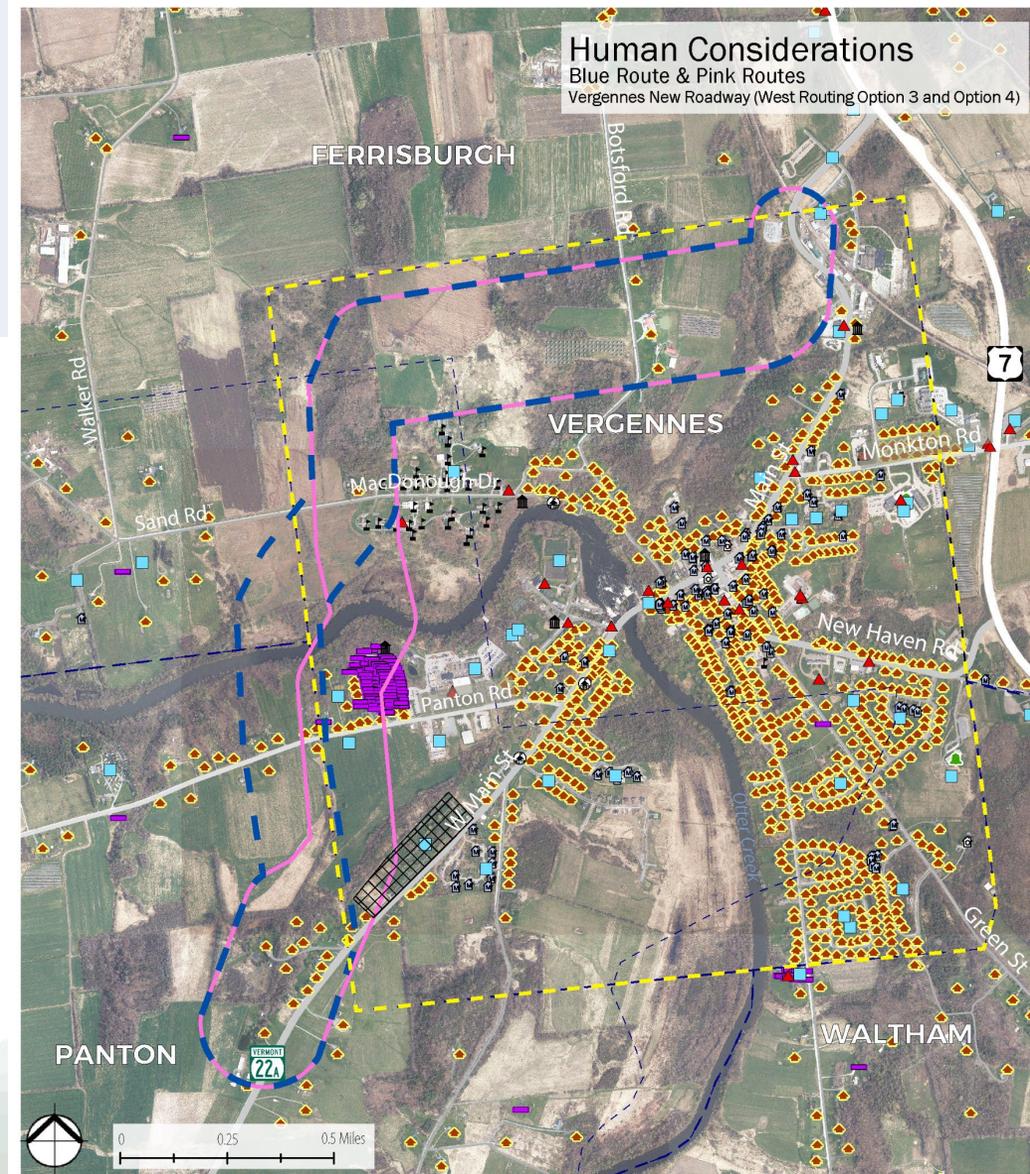
- Avoid-minimize-mitigate
- Identify potential fatal flaw
- Adjusted buffers where potential resources were unavoidable



Human Considerations



- Residential properties
- Nursing homes, hospitals/medical centers
- Government and educational facilities
- Cemeteries
- Historic buildings/structures
- Hazardous sites



Blue Route	Hazardous Sites	Hospital / Medical Center	Other Residential
Pink Route	Act250 Permits	Mobile Home	School K / 12
Vergennes	E911 Data Points	Multi-family Dwelling	Seasonal Home
Municipal Boundaries	Educational	Nursing Home / Long Term Care	Single Family Dwelling
Historic Structure	Government	Prospect Cemetery	
Historic Building	Cemetery		

Hazardous Sites, (ANR 2016); Act 250 Permits, (ANR 2016); RDSALL (VTans 2016); Town Boundaries (VCGI 2016); Historic Structures (NPS 2012); Historic Building (NPS 2012)

Natural and Water Resources



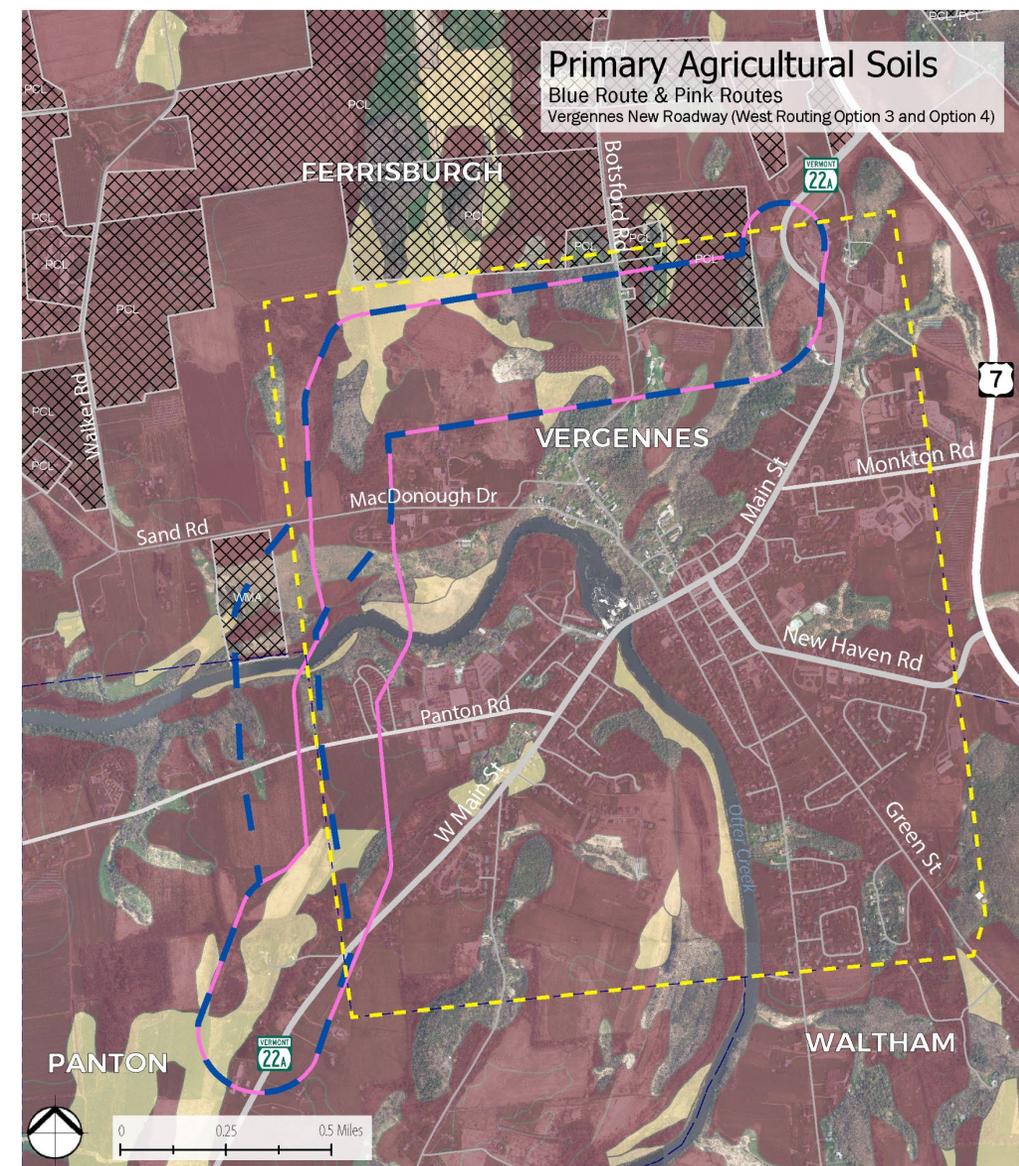
- Rivers and streams
- Vermont defined River Corridors
- Vermont designated significant wetlands class 2 and advisory wetlands
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood hazard areas



Protected Land and Agricultural Resources

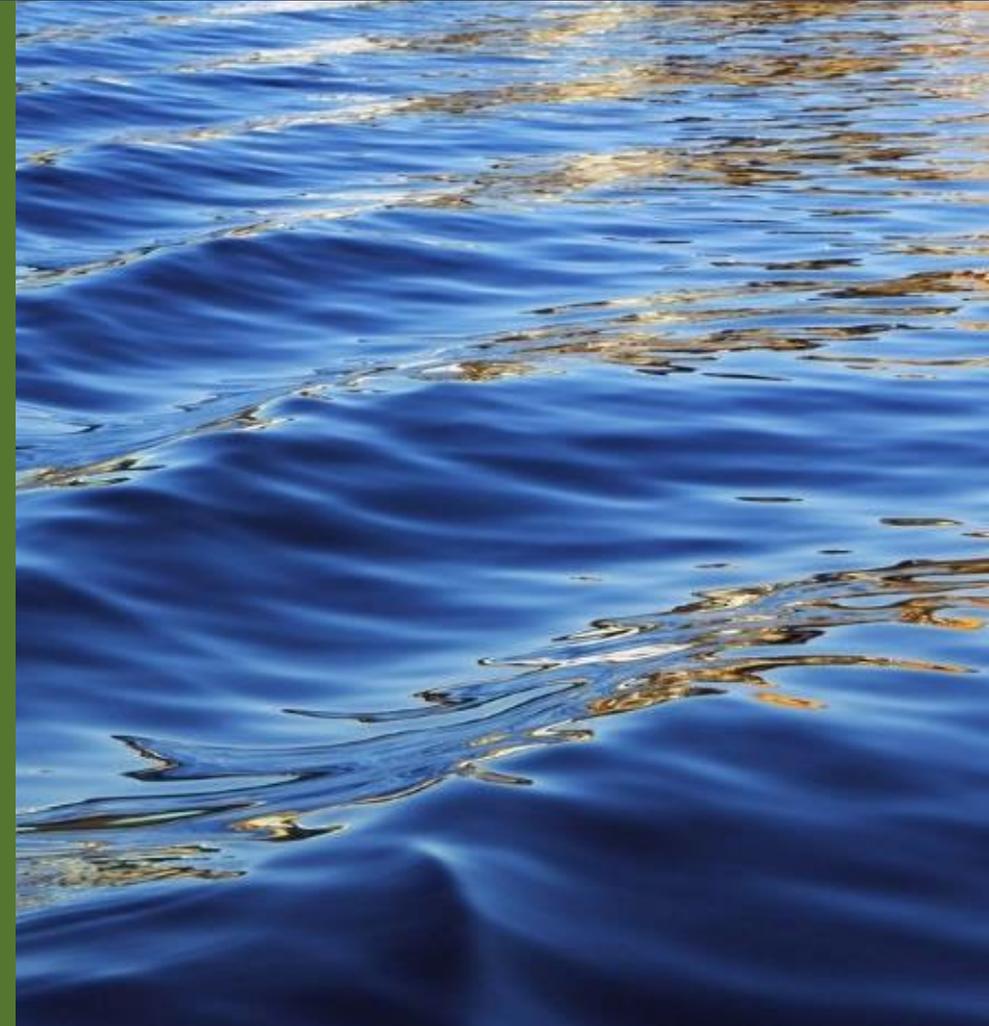


- Prime Agricultural Soils
 - Local and state
- Protected Lands
 - Conserved land
 - Wildlife management area
 - State and municipal land





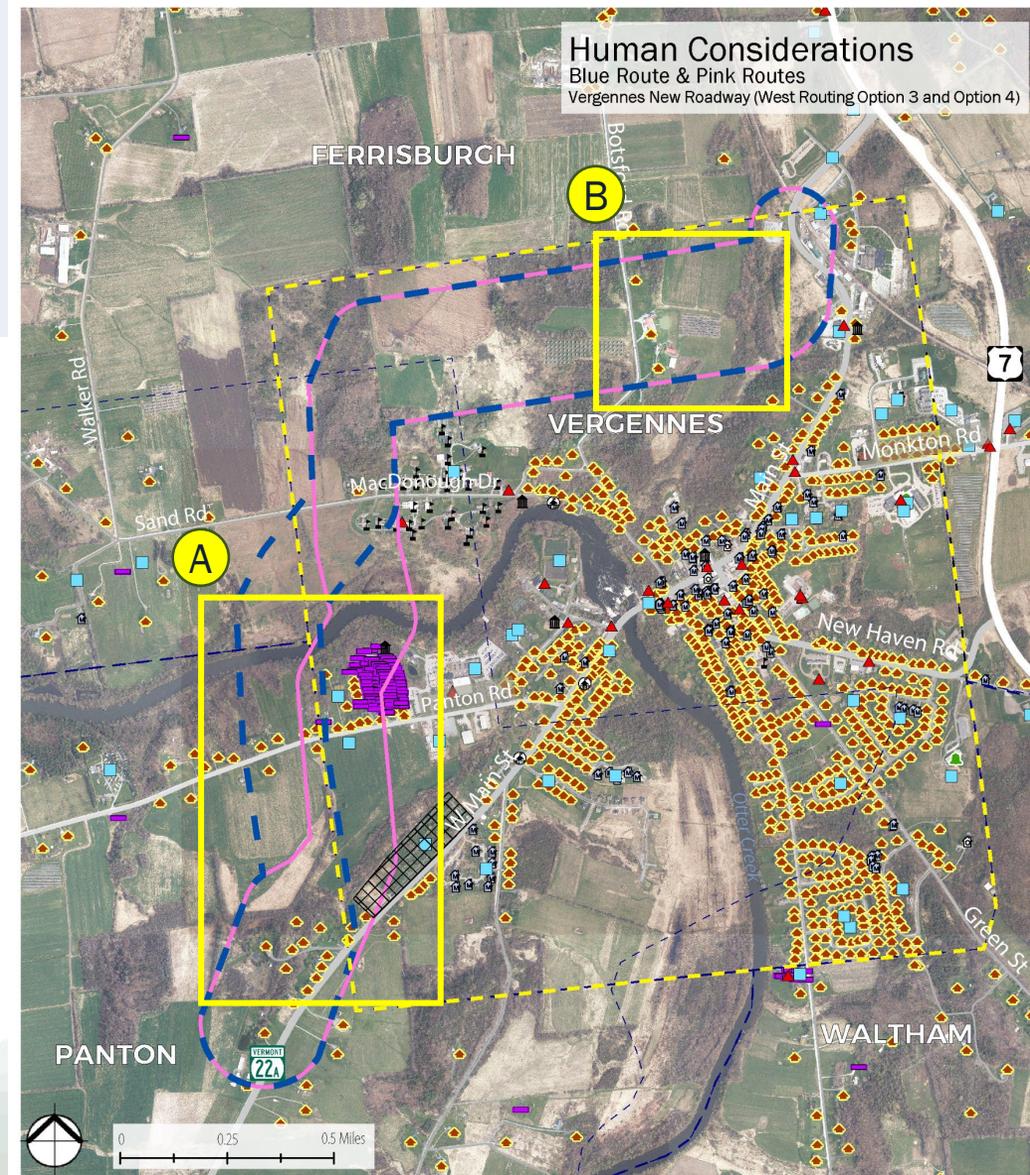
**Secondary Screening
Results and Discussion**



Vergennes-Panton New Roadway [Blue and Pink routes] Results

Residential properties located nearby:

- A. Route 22A and Panton Road
- B. Comfort Hill Street

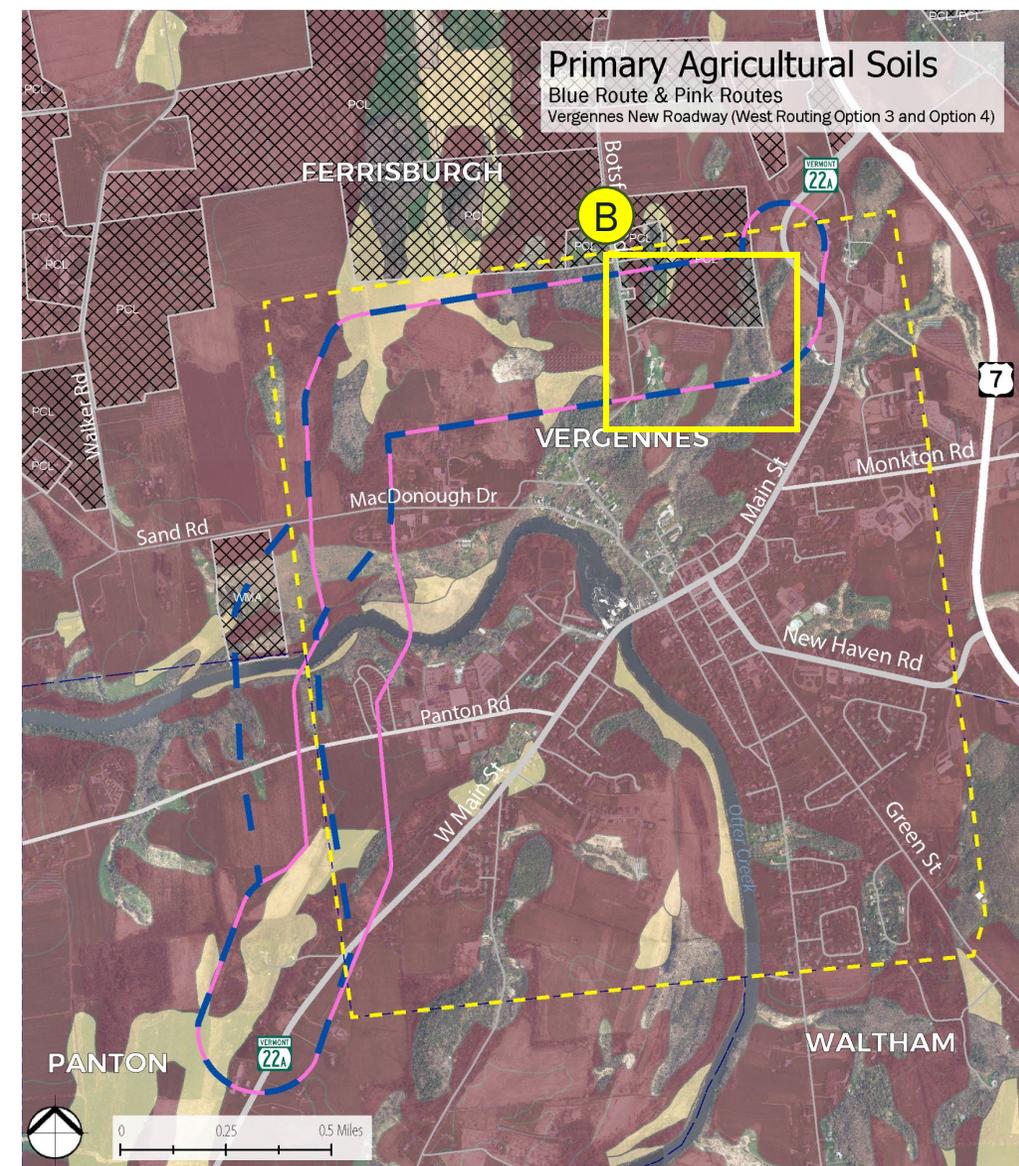


Blue Route	Hazardous Sites	Hospital / Medical Center	Other Residential
Pink Route	Act250 Permits	School K / 12	Seasonal Home
Vergennes	E911 Data Points	Mobile Home	Single Family Dwelling
Municipal Boundaries	Educational	Multi-family Dwelling	Single Family Dwelling
Historic Structure	Government	Nursing Home / Long Term Care	Prospect Cemetery
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Hazardous Sites, (ANR 2016); Act 250 Permits, (ANR 2016); RDSALL (VTans 2016); Town Boundaries (VCGI 2016); Historic Structures (NPS 2012); Historic Building (NPS 2012)

Vergennes-Panton New Roadway [Blue and Pink routes] Results

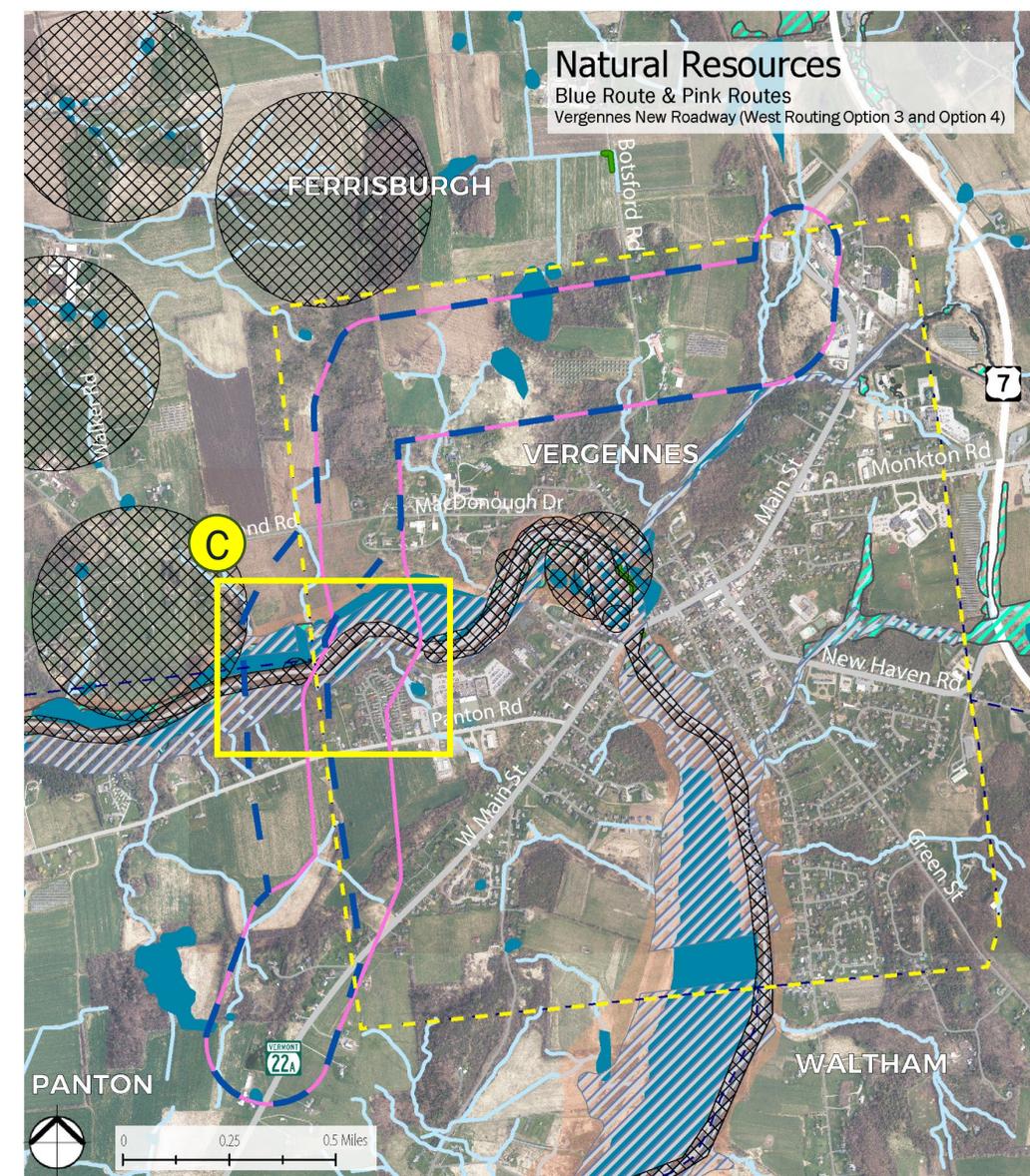
- B. An area east of Comfort Hill Street is protected as private conserved land
- The 500-foot swath was extended to the south to avoid this potential impact.



Vergennes-Panton New Roadway [Blue and Pink routes] Results

- C. Crossing downstream of the falls may be more challenging
 - Meets the Purpose and Need
 - Scored high during the initial screening
 - No fatal flaws identified during the secondary screening

The study team recommends that the Blue and Pink Routes move forward for further study.

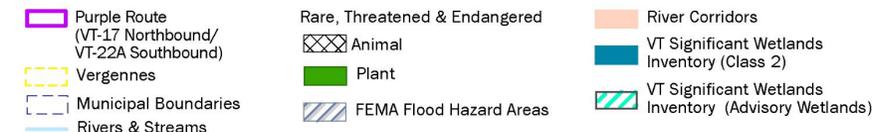
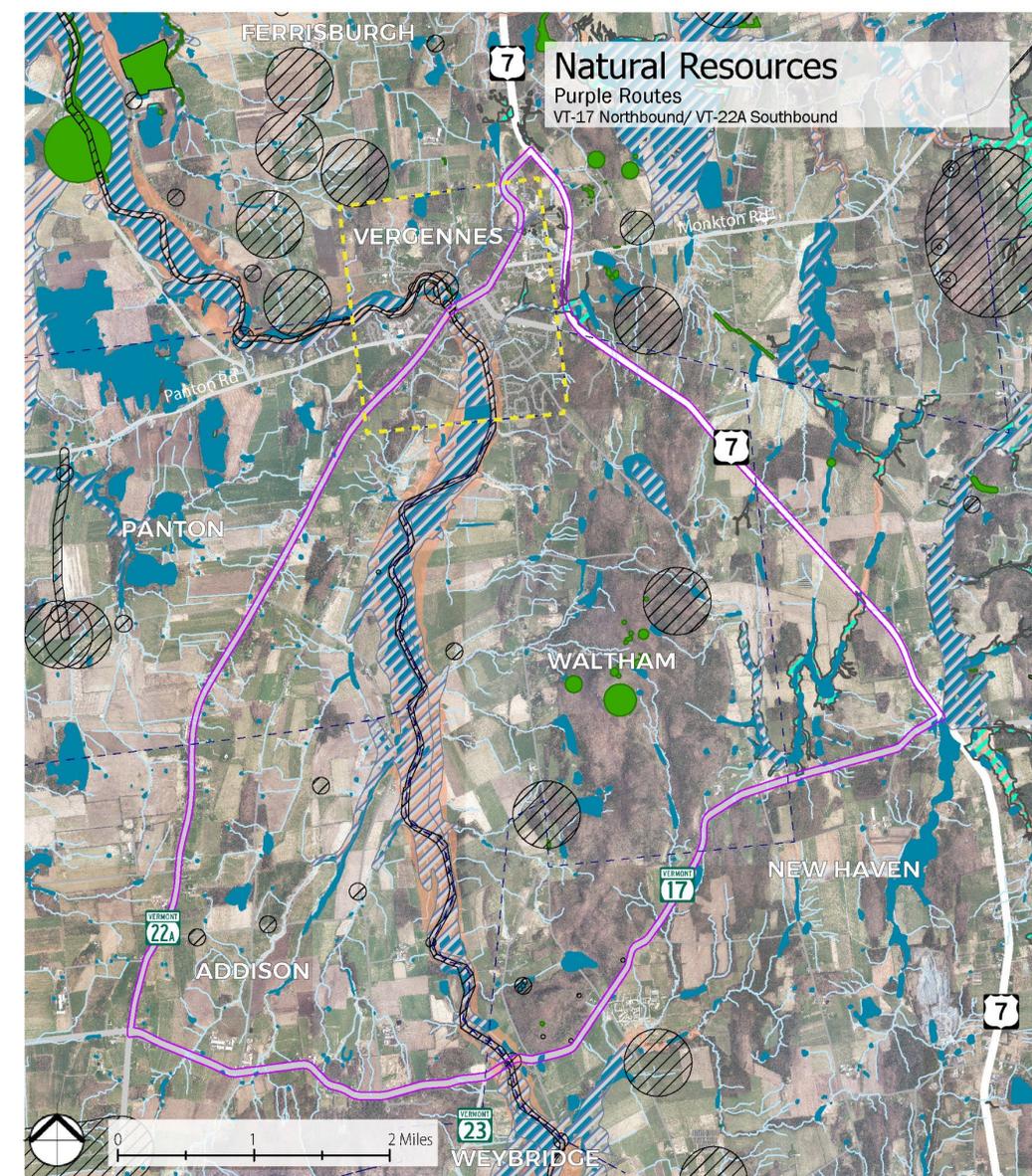


Data Sources: FEMA Flood Hazard Areas (ANR 2022); VT Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species (VNHI 2023); River Corridors, (ANR 2019); Rivers & Streams (USGS 2021); VT VSMI, (VCGI2020); VTORTHO (VCGI 2022)

VT-17 Northbound/VT 22A Southbound [Purple route] Results

- Existing roadways; 150-foot swath on each side
 - Areas surrounding roadway are developed
 - Small sections of state wetlands adjacent to the roadways
- Meets the Purpose and Need
- Scored high during the initial screening
- No fatal flaws were identified during the secondary screening

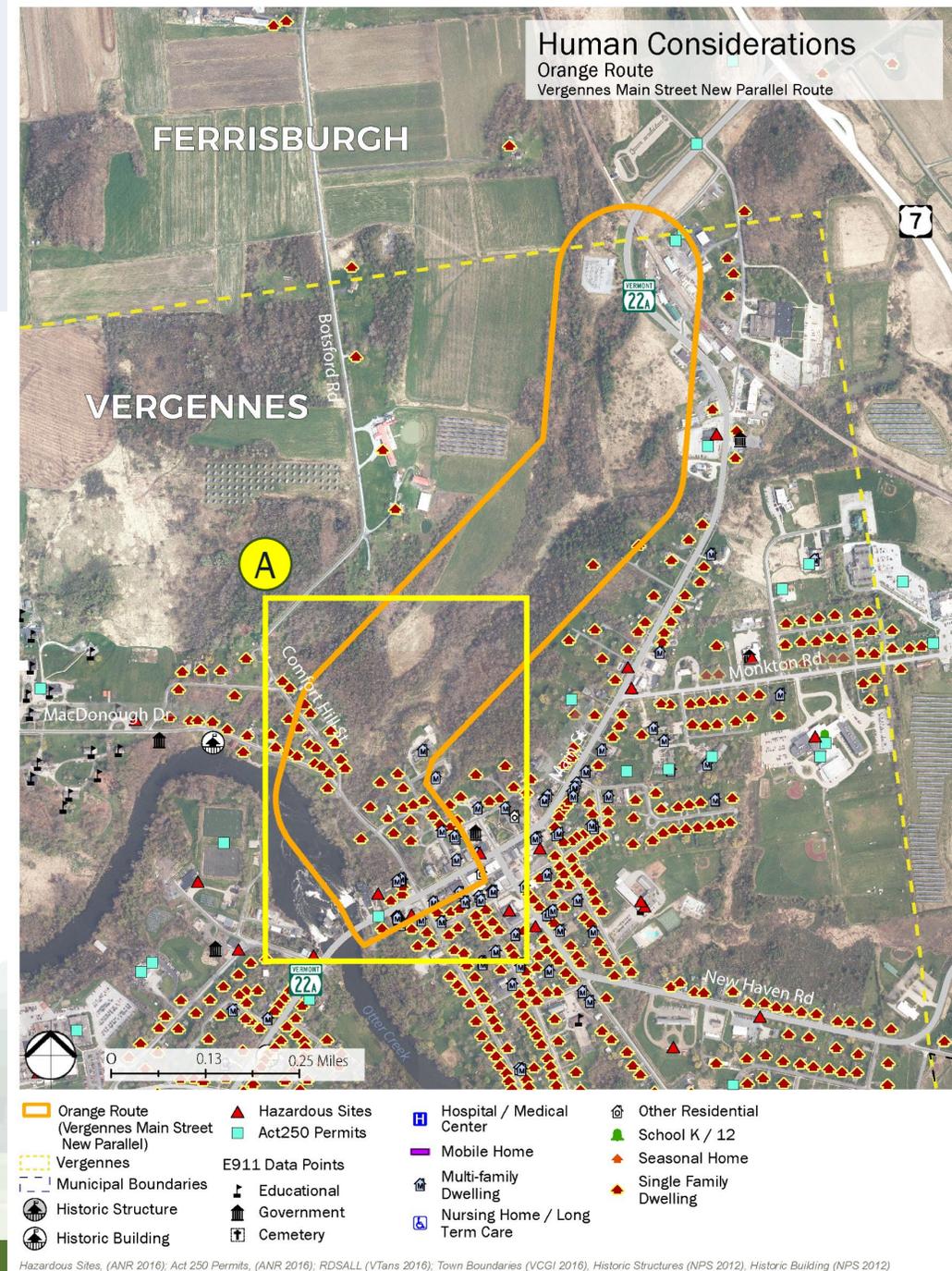
The study team recommends that the Purple Route move forward for further study.



Vergennes Main Street New Parallel Route [Orange route] Results

A. Within the City of Vergennes, the Orange Route is proximate to several single-family residences along:

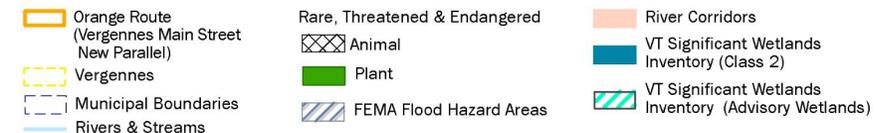
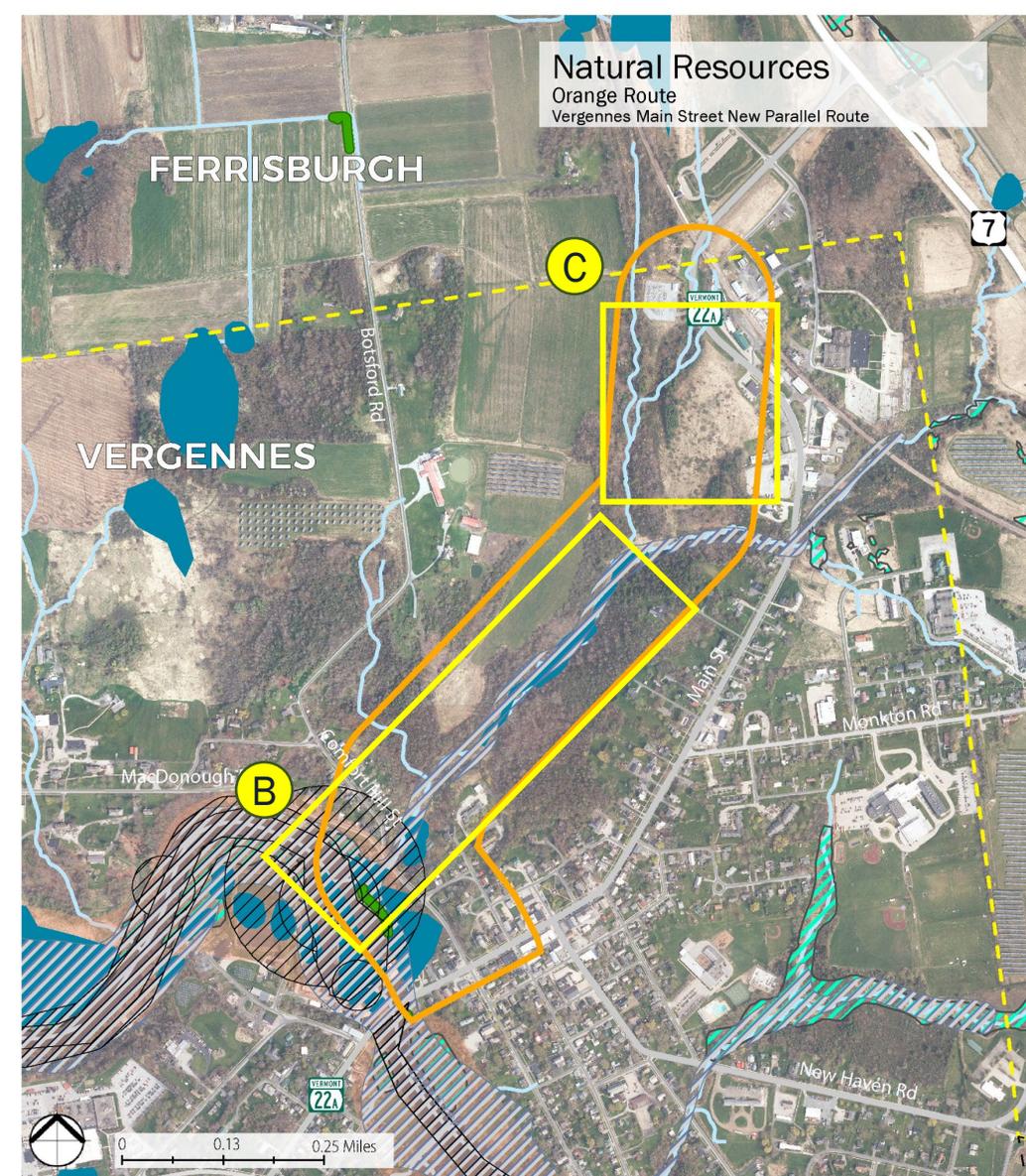
- Main Street
- MacDonough Drive
- Comfort Hill Street



Vergennes Main Street New Parallel Route [Orange route] Results

- B. The area southwest of the concept includes portions of Otter Creek, FEMA flood hazard areas, and Vermont significant wetlands (Class 2).
- C. Northeast is a stream and smaller sections of flood hazard area & class 2 wetlands that extend to the southernmost point of a group of streams in the northern area of the concept.

Note: There are several sections of prime agricultural soil that surround Route 22A, as well as east of Comfort Hill Street. However, the areas adjacent to Route 22A are residential and commercial uses and the soils were mapped prior to these developments.



Vergennes Main Street New Parallel Route [Orange route] Results

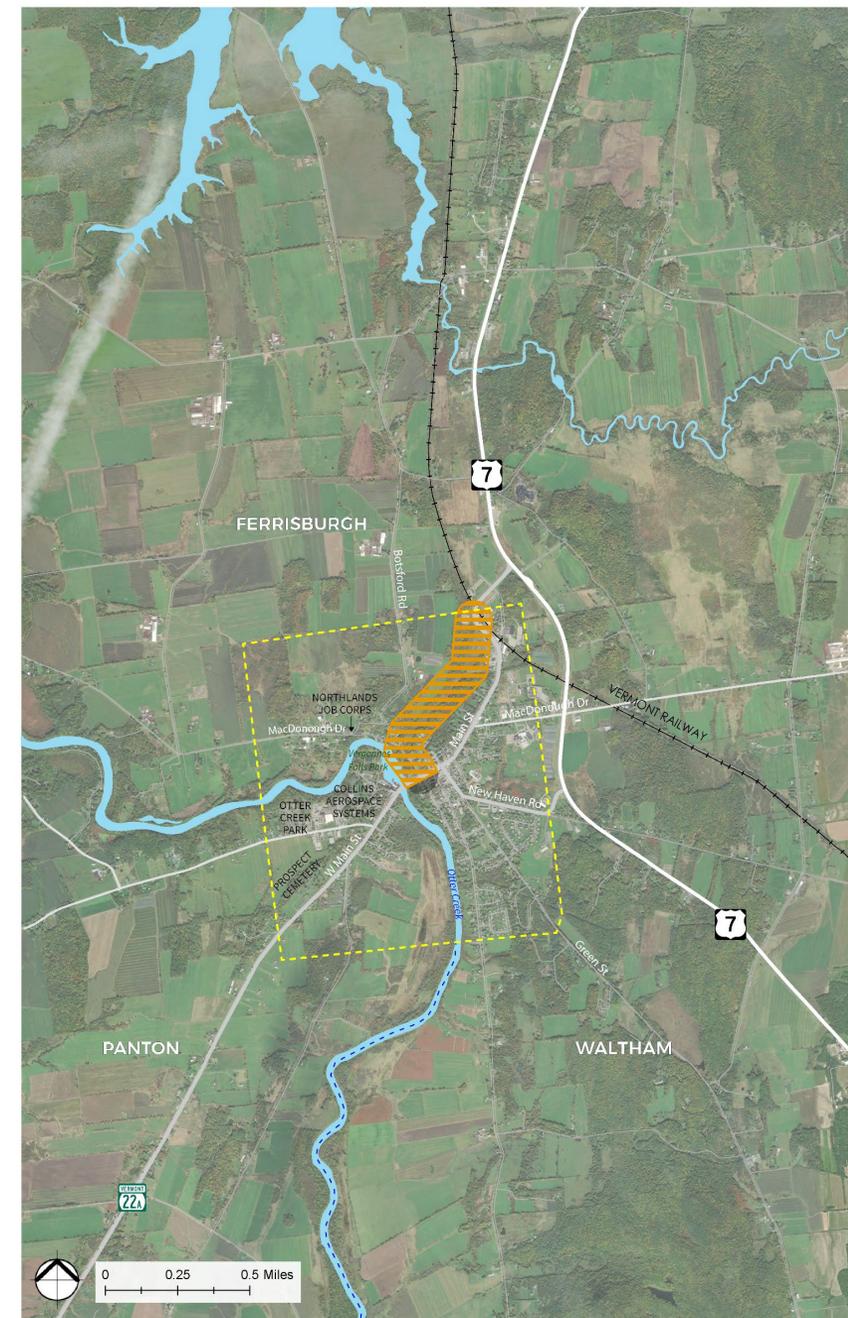
- Reviewed existing conditions to determine the feasibility of new roadway construction
 - Utilizing existing roadway and new alignment near MacDonough Drive
- Following state and federal design standards, the route is feasible (no greater than 6%) though challenging
 - Feasibility and traffic engineering will continue to be analyzed throughout the PEL Study

➤ Meets Purpose and Need

➤ Scored high during the initial screening

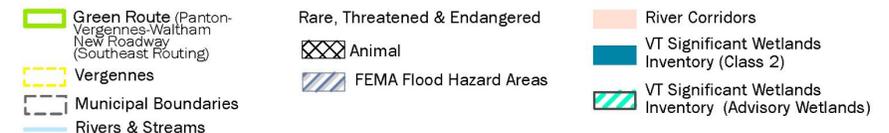
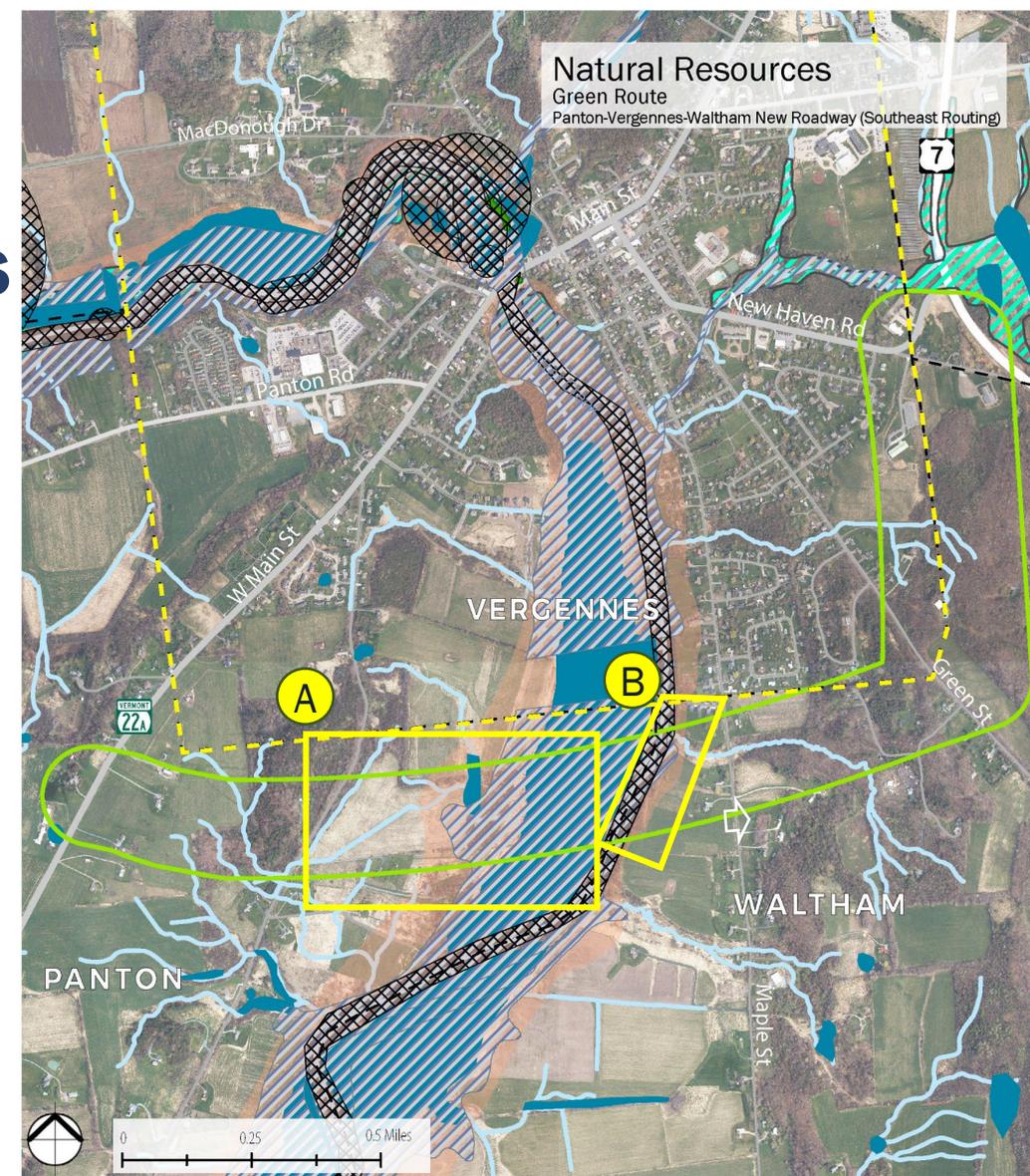
➤ Topographic challenges identified but are not a fatal flaw

The study team recommends that this concept move forward for further study.



Panton-Vergennes-Waltham New Roadway (Southeast Routing) [Green route] Results

- The majority of the 500-foot swath is designated as Statewide Prime Agricultural Soil or Prime Soil.
 - A. Throughout the western segment of the concept, there is a concentration of streams and the areas west and east of the proposed new Otter Creek crossing are designated as flood hazard areas as well as state wetlands
 - B. East of the wetland area there is a habitat for freshwater mussels

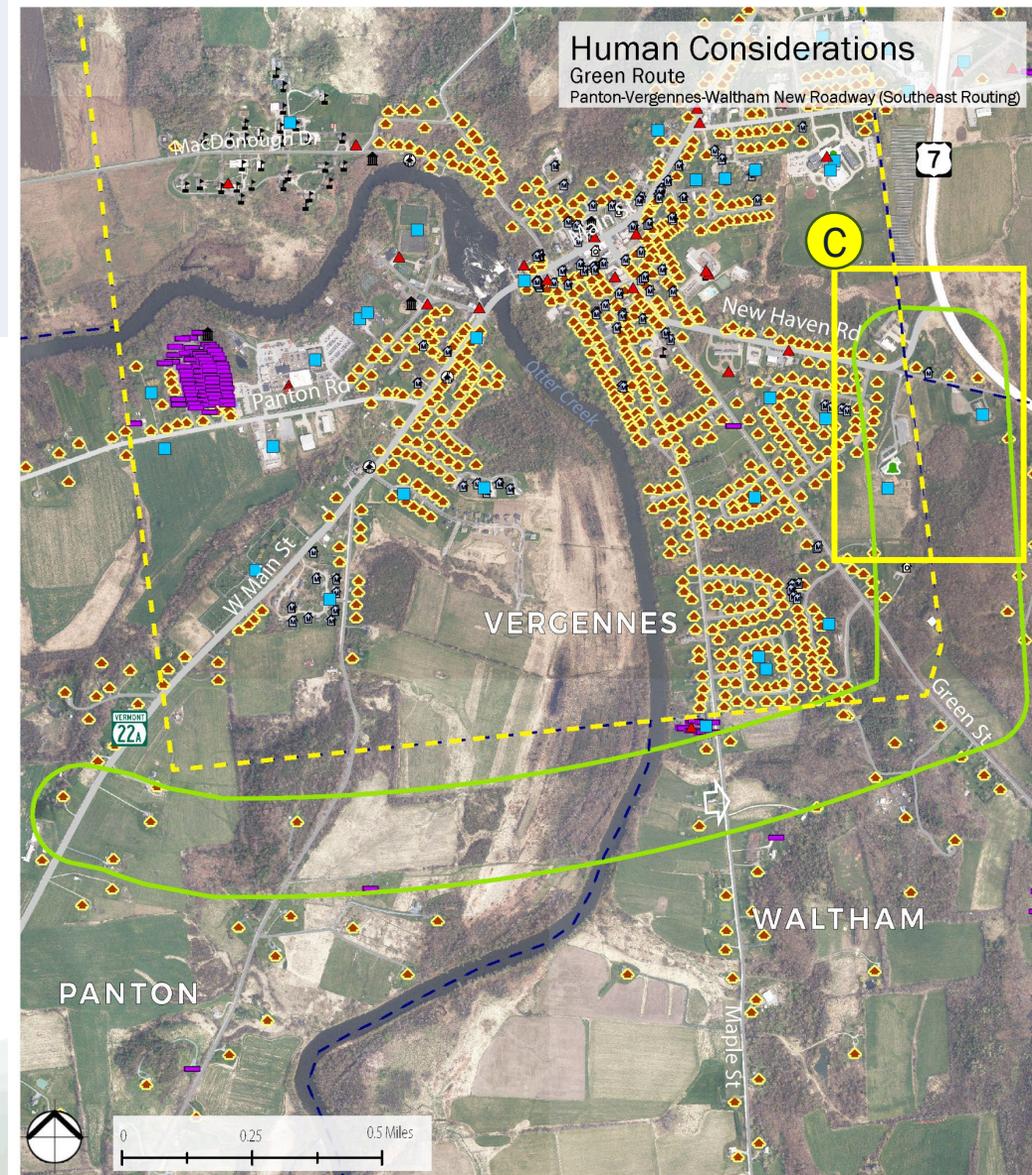


Data Sources: FEMA Flood Hazard Areas (ANR 2022); VT Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species (VNHI 2023); River Corridors, (ANR 2019); Rivers & Streams (USGS 2021); VT VSWI, (VCGI2020); VTORTHO (VCGI 2022)

Panton-Vergennes-Waltham New Roadway (Southeast Routing) [Green route] Results

C. There is a school near the intersection of Church Street and Route 7 in Vergennes and a cluster of residential properties

- Outreach and discussions with agency partners indicated that there may be protected land near the school property as part of an Act 250 permit
- The 500-foot swath was extended to the east to avoid this potential impact



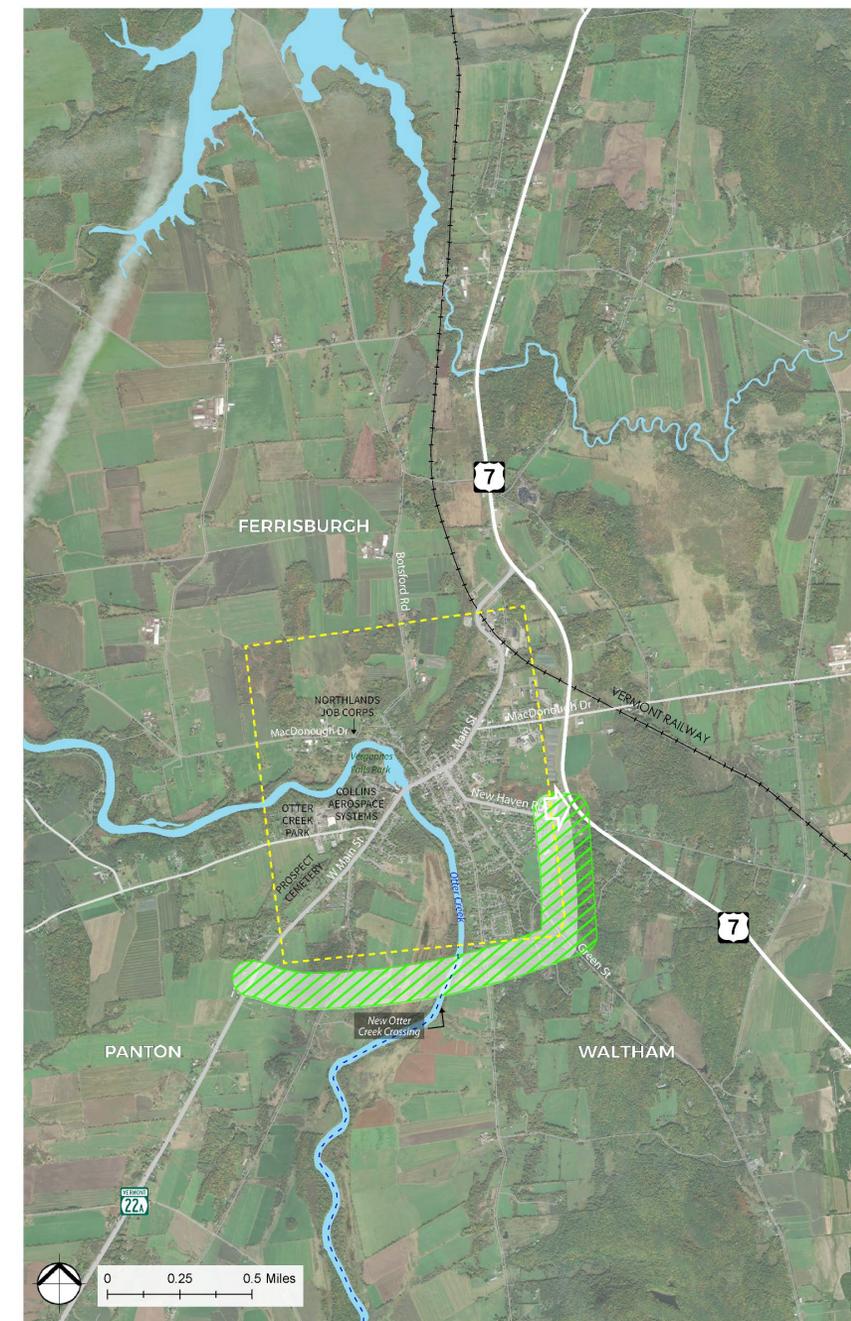
Green Route (Panton-Vergennes-Waltham New Roadway (Southeast Routing))	Hazardous Sites	Hospital / Medical Center	Other Residential
Vergennes	Act250 Permits	Mobile Home	Seasonal Home
Municipal Boundaries	Educational	Multi-family Dwelling	Single Family Dwelling
Historic Structure	Government	Nursing Home / Long Term Care	
Historic Building	Cemetery		

Hazardous Sites, (ANR 2016); Act 250 Permits, (ANR 2016); RDSALL (VTans 2016); Town Boundaries (VCGI 2016), Historic Structures (NPS 2012), Historic Building (NPS 2012)

Panton-Vergennes-Waltham New Roadway (Southeast Routing) [Green route] Results

- Meets the Purpose and Need
- Scored lower during the initial screening.
- During the secondary screening, potential impacts, particularly to wetlands, identified
- The new Otter Creek crossing upstream of the Vergennes Falls may be less challenging than the proposed crossings downstream (Red Route, Blue/Pink Route)

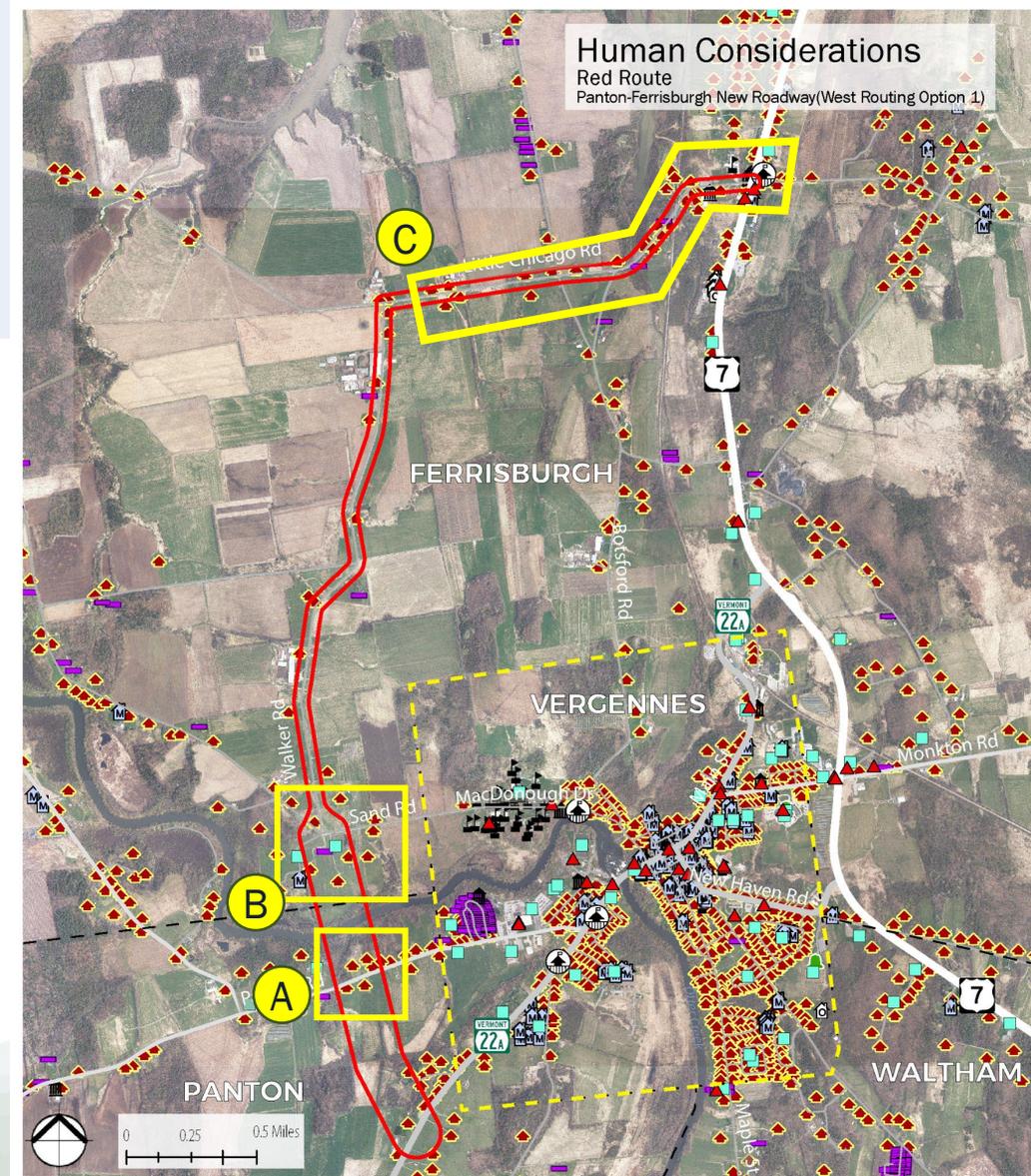
The study team recommends that the Green Route move forward for further study.



Panton-Ferrisburgh New Roadway Route (West Routing 1) [Red route]

Potential impacts to residential properties and a school along the following roads:

- A. Panton Road (residential)
- B. Walker Road (residential)
- C. Little Chicago Road (residential and school)



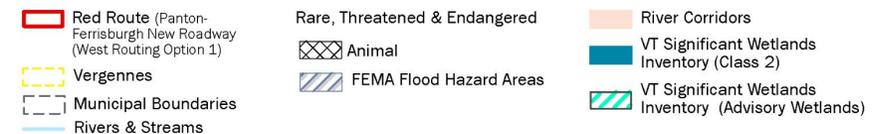
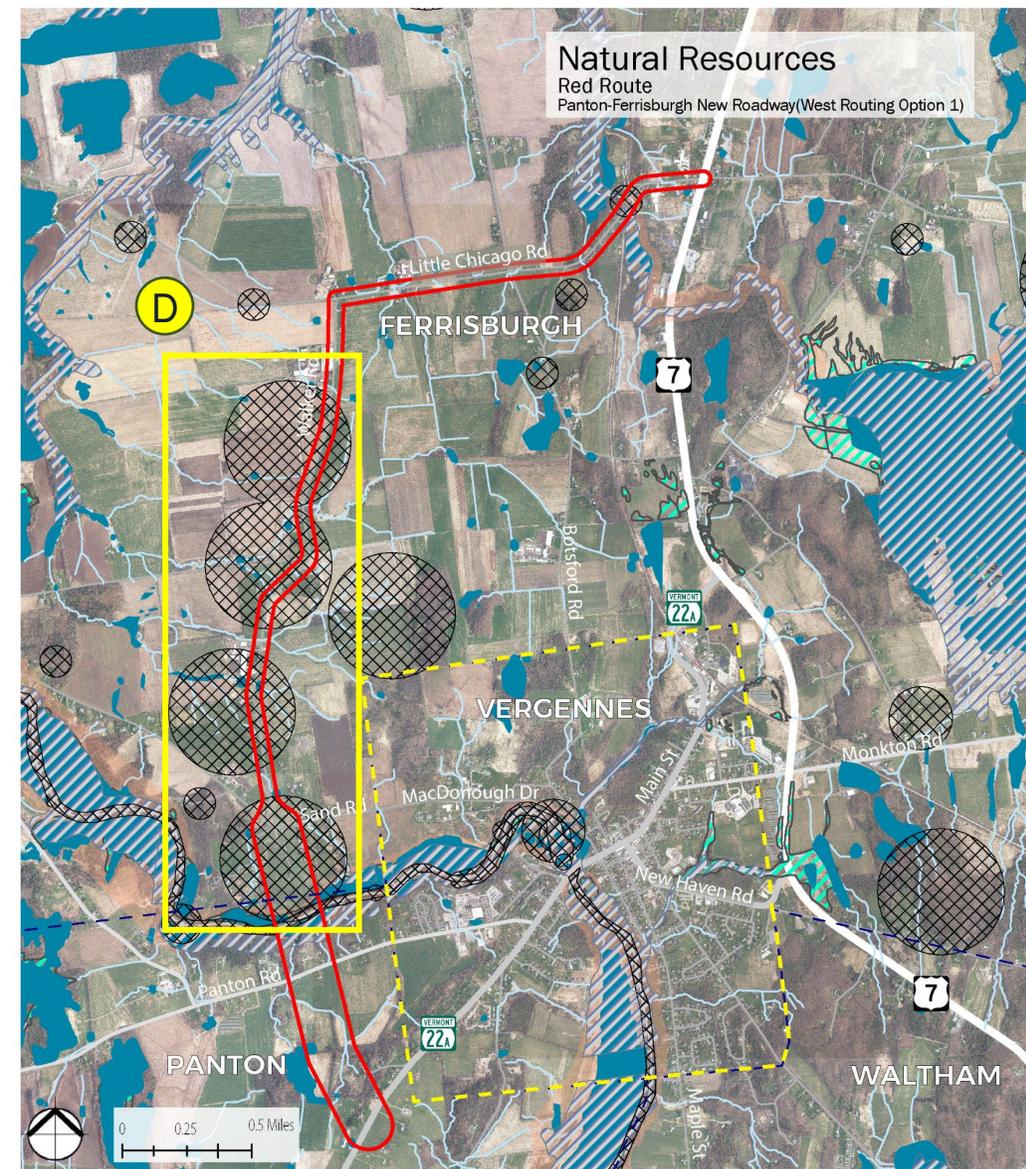
Red Route (Panton-Ferrisburgh New Roadway (West Routing Option 1))	Hazardous Sites	Hospital / Medical Center	Other Residential
Vergennes	Act250 Permits	Mobile Home	School K / 12
Municipal Boundaries	E911 Data Points	Multi-family Dwelling	Seasonal Home
Historic Structure	Educational	Nursing Home / Long Term Care	Single Family Dwelling
Historic Building	Government		
	Cemetery		

Hazardous Sites, (ANR 2016); Act 250 Permits, (ANR 2016); RDSALL (VTans 2016); Town Boundaries (VCGI 2016); Historic Structures (NPS 2012); Historic Building (NPS 2012)

Panton-Ferrisburgh New Roadway Route (West Routing 1) [Red route]

D. Several areas identified as a rare, threatened, or endangered species habitat along Walker Road in Ferrisburgh

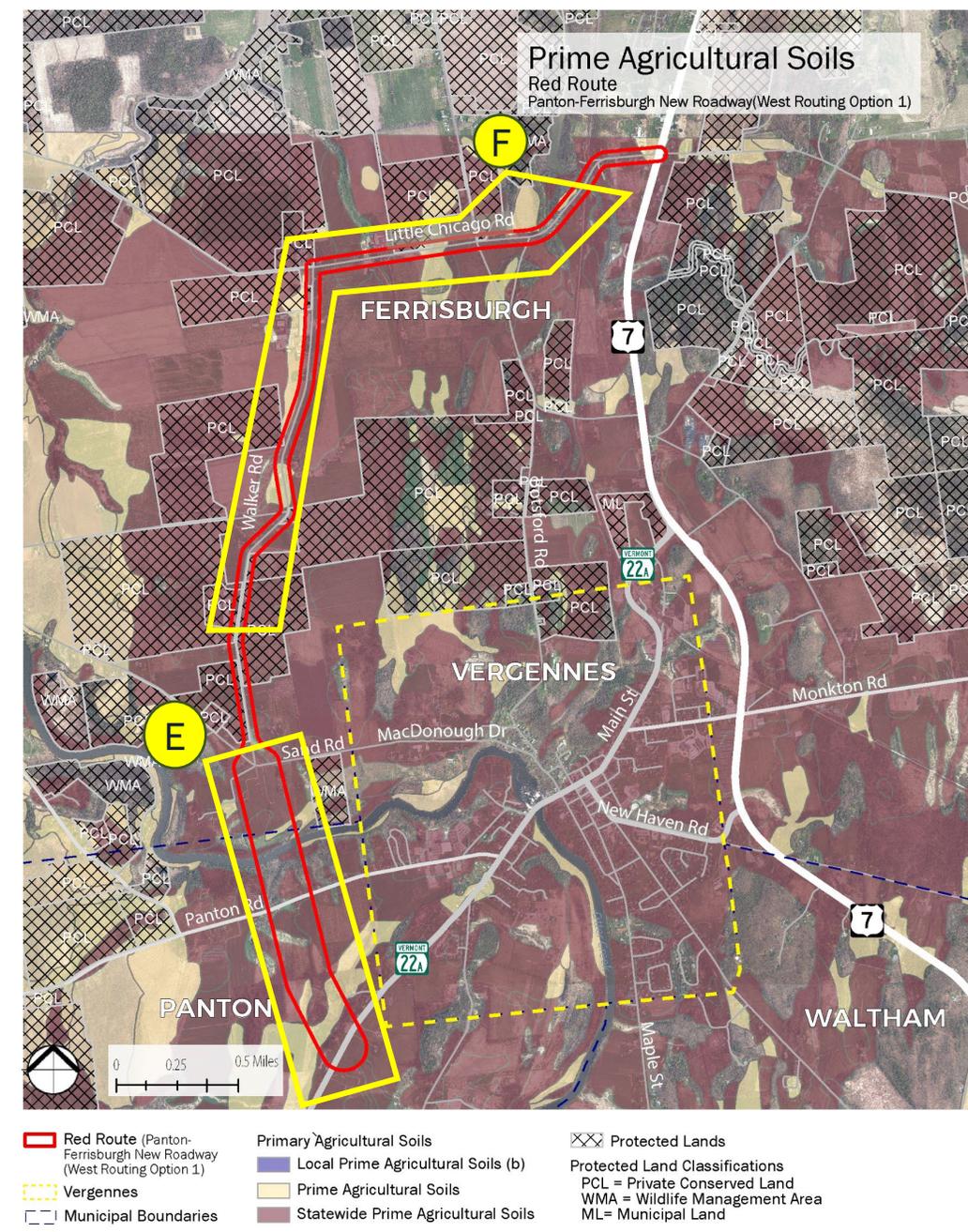
Federally and state listed threatened & endangered species include the Indiana Bat, Northern Long Eared Bat, Upland Sandpiper, Freshwater Mussels, and Silver Lamprey, among others



Data Sources: FEMA Flood Hazard Areas (ANR 2022); VT Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species (VNH 2023); River Corridors, (ANR 2019); Rivers & Streams (USGS 2021), VT VSWI, (VCGI2020), VTORTHO (VCGI 2022)

Panton-Ferrisburgh New Roadway Route (West Routing 1) [Red route]

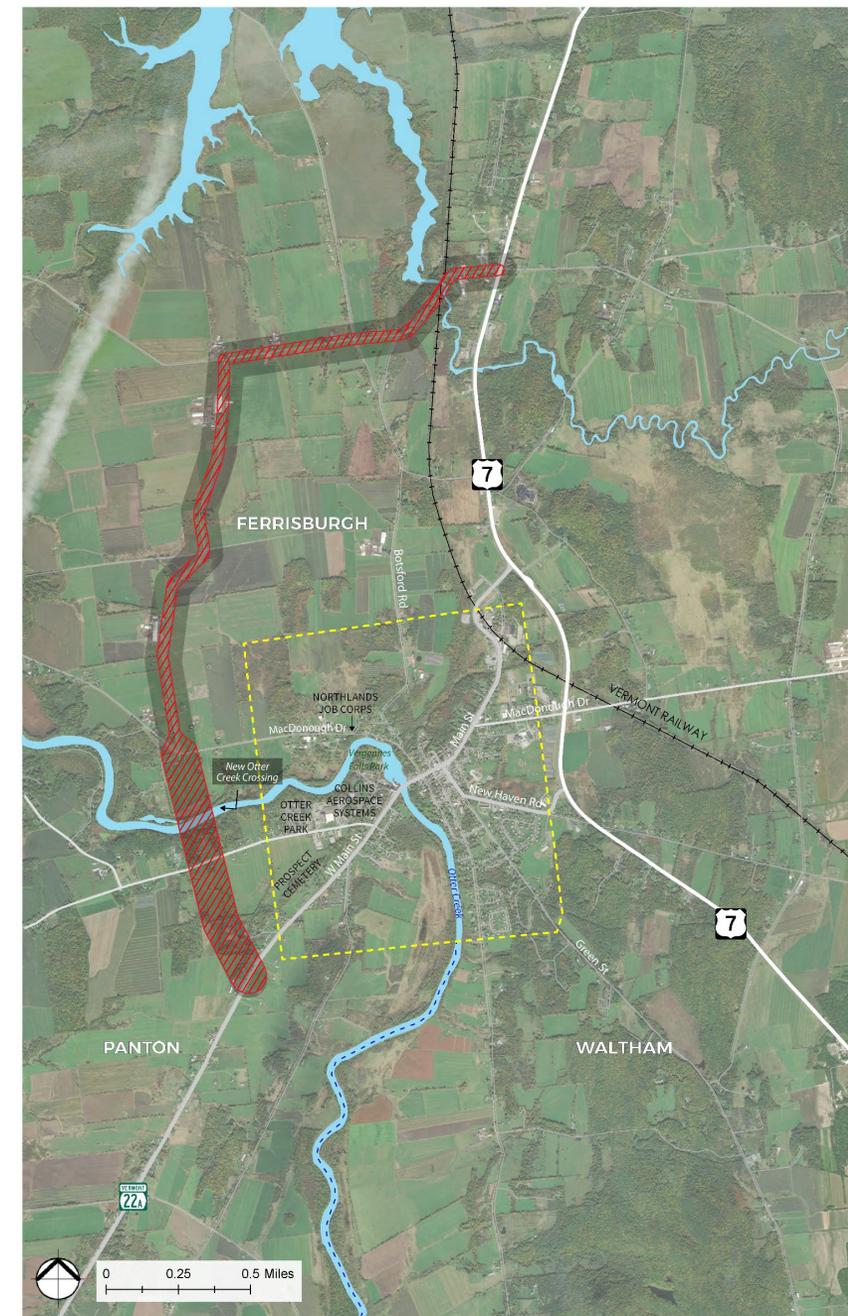
- E. Between Route 22A and the Panton/Ferrisburgh border, there is a mix of statewide prime agricultural soil and prime agricultural soil
- F. In Ferrisburgh, a significant portion of the land adjacent to Walker Road and Little Chicago Road is classified as private conserved land



Panton-Ferrisburgh New Roadway Route (West Routing 1) [Red route]

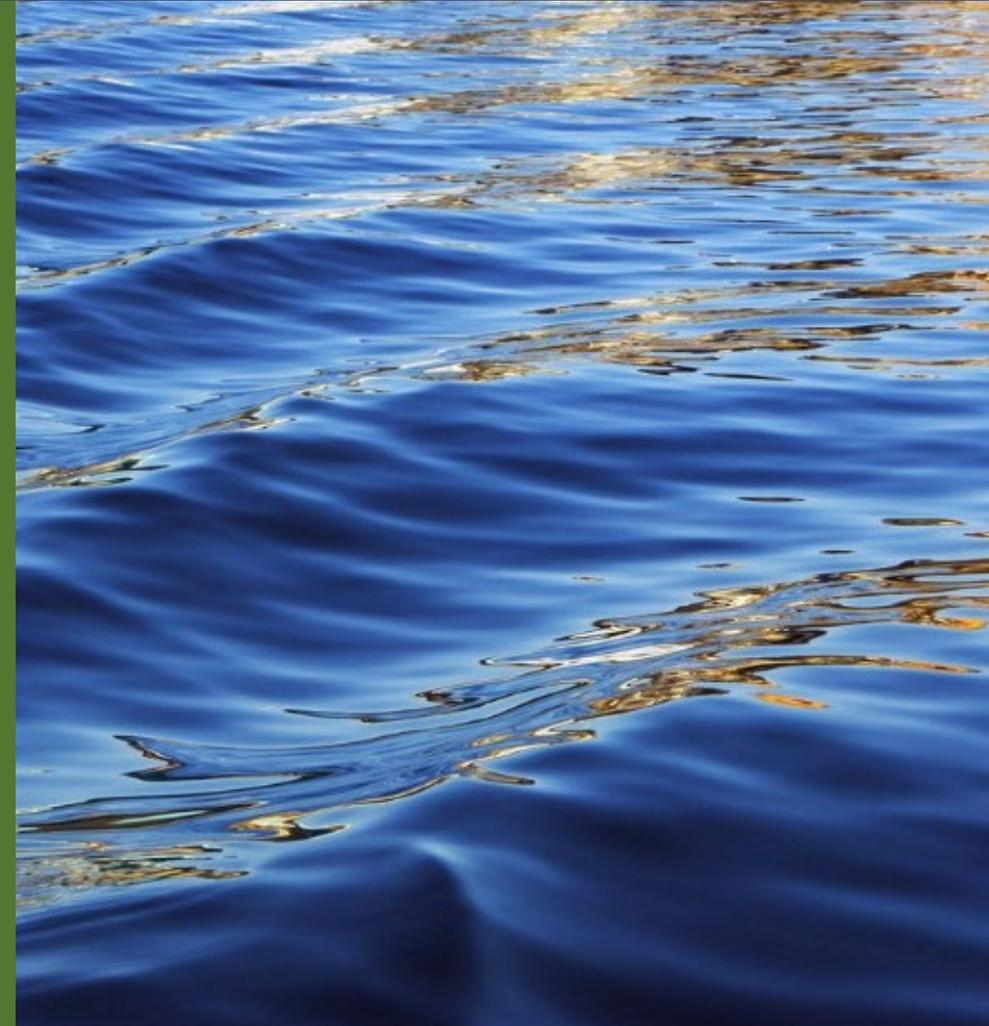
- Meets the Purpose and Need
- Scored lower during the initial screening
- Secondary screening confirmed the findings of the initial screening and added the presence of federal and state threatened and endangered species along most of the route
- Route has an equal or greater potential for impacts compared to the nearby routes

Considering that it scored much lower than those in the initial screening, the study team recommends that the Red Route be eliminated from further study.





**Conclusion and
Consensus Point**



Summary Slide with Table - Conclusion

Concept Screening Results	Systemwide	VT-17 / Route 7	VT-22A Corridor Improvements	VT-17 Northbound/VT-22A Southbound (Purple)	Panton-Ferrisburgh New Roadway (West Routing Option 1) (Red)	Vergennes New Roadway (West Routing Option 2) (Turquoise)	Vergennes New Roadway (West Routing Option 3) (Pink)	Vergennes-Panton New Roadway (West Routing Option 4) (Blue)	Panton-Vergennes-Waltham New Roadway (Southeast Routing) (Green)	Vergennes Main Street New Parallel Route (Orange)	Rail Mode Options	Water Mode Options	Smart Freight Solutions
Initial Screening Score	5	1	-3	6	1	5	5	7	0	6	0	-7	5
Meets Purpose and Need and No Fatal Flaws	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Recommended to move forward for further study	NA	NA	NA	Yes	No	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	NA	NA

Any additional thoughts or questions before decisions?

- **Technical Committee Members?**

- Ready for consensus point in a few minutes?

- **Federal Agencies?**

- Okay to provide Concurrence Letter after Policy Committee?
- Cooperating
- Participating

- **Vermont Agencies?**

- **Others?**

Secondary Screening Consensus Point (for Technical Committee)

- Summarize changes agreed upon during this meeting
- Consensus point question - Do you agree that that methodology and information considered in the secondary screen is sufficient to be recommended for agency concurrence and policy committee consideration (including changes agreed upon during this meeting)?
- **Note:** The consultant team will touch base with the Technical Committee if there are any notable changes as a result of the Policy Committee meeting. They will ask committee members to confirm they are still okay with their recommendation.

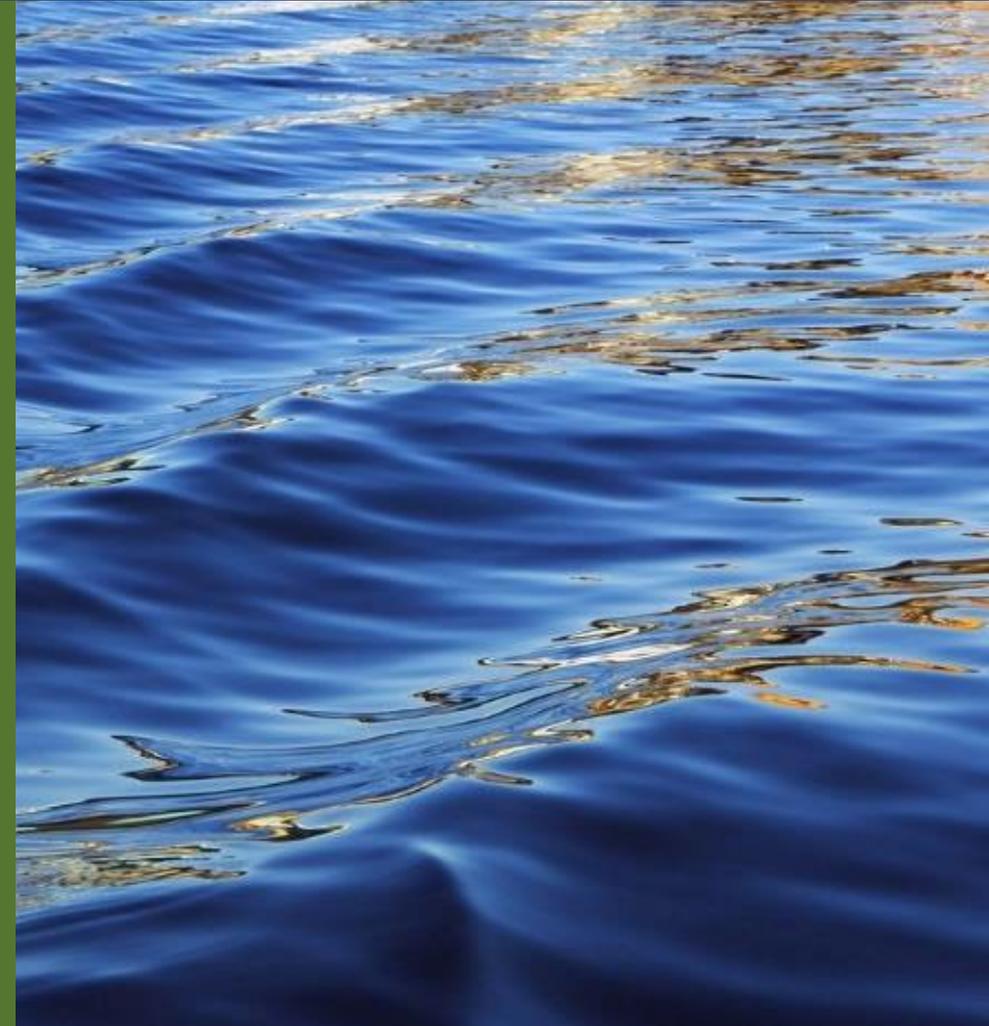
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- Joel Perrigo, VTrans
- Katie Raycroft-Meyer, ACRPC
- Jeff Ramsey, VTrans
- Mike Winslow, ACRPC

6



Next Steps



Current and Next Steps

DECEMBER

Policy Committee meeting to review study progress

MARCH (Today!)

Joint Technical Committee and Agency Partner Meeting to review final concepts recommended for further study

MARCH-APRIL

Policy Committee review and come to consensus on concepts recommended for further study

APRIL

Federal Agency concurrence on concepts recommended for further study

What Comes Next?

Technical Work

Concept Engineering

- Design constraints including existing ROW and land use, environmental resources, location of adjacent roadways, municipal boundaries

Transportation and Land Use Integration

- Local land use controls/zoning, economic conditions and growth trends, environmental constraints

Evaluation of Concepts

- Traffic impacts, multi-modal considerations
- Environmental impacts – wetlands, floodplains, habitats, noise

Outreach Activities

Public
Engagement

Land Use
Visioning

Public
Engagement

Future meetings of Technical Committee and Agencies

- Recent meetings have been combined, due to request from state and federal agencies
- Does the Technical Committee and state/federal agencies prefer to meet jointly or is there a preference for individual meetings?



Updates and Announcements



We welcome your input and appreciate your feedback. Please visit <https://vergennespel.com/> to join our email list for Study updates

Please visit email us at vergennespel@gmail.com for further information, to submit comments or to contact the study team.