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# Planning & Environment Linkages (PEL) Study

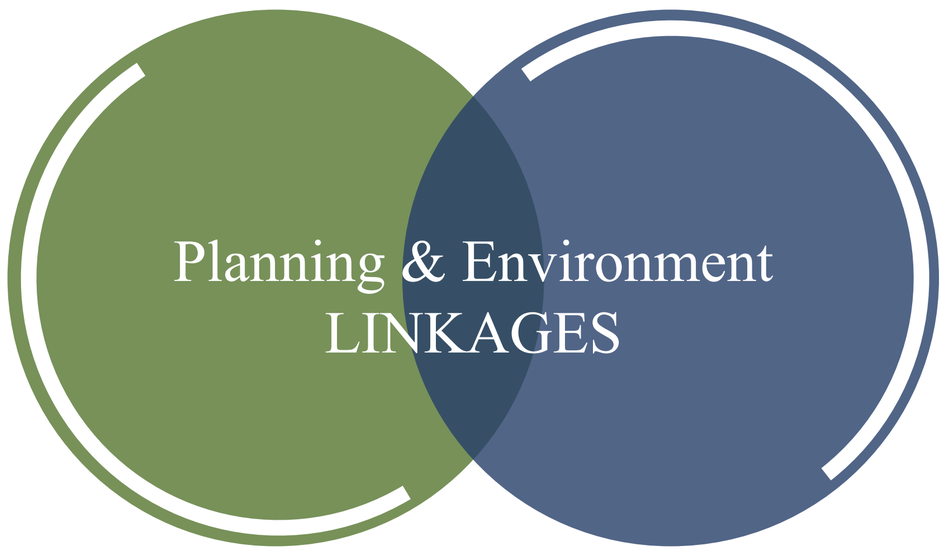
## What is a Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL) study?

PEL is a high-level early-planning study process to transportation decision-making. The process is intended to streamline environmental review through a preliminary vetting of project alternatives. A PEL study:

- Considers environmental, community, and economic goals
- Includes extensive collaboration with internal and external stakeholders
- Includes extensive public participation

The benefits of a PEL study include:

- Relationship-building
- Improved project delivery timeframes
- Enhanced environmental outcomes




## Why are we doing a PEL study in Vergennes?

Previous studies indicated regional agreement that truck volumes in downtown Vergennes should be addressed.

- 430 large trucks per day
- 300 medium trucks per day

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## Purpose and Need Statement

A **Purpose and Need Statement** explains why a transportation project is being undertaken and what its objectives are. It serves as the foundation for developing and evaluating project alternatives.

## 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 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 economic vitality of downtown Vergennes, goods movement in Vergennes and neighboring communities, and support rural economy.

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

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## Public Outreach Activities throughout PEL Study

### Public Meetings

- November 2021 and November 2022

### Public Workshops

- 2 workshops to gather feedback on the draft alternatives and criteria (Spring 2022)
- 5 land use visioning workshops (December 2023 – January 2024)

### Public Survey

- Over 900 survey responses (Summer-Fall 2023)

### Other

- Stakeholder interviews
- 5 focus groups

*Community engagement event held at the Vergennes Opera House Spring 2022*

## Community Liaison:

- 90 Stakeholder meetings with homeowners, business owners, town leaders
- 7 Planning Commission meetings to report on land use workshops
- 15 meetings with individual Policy Committee members to provide updates and share views

*Otter Creek Mobile Home Park Workshop Summer 2022*

*Information booth at Vergennes Day Summer 2023*

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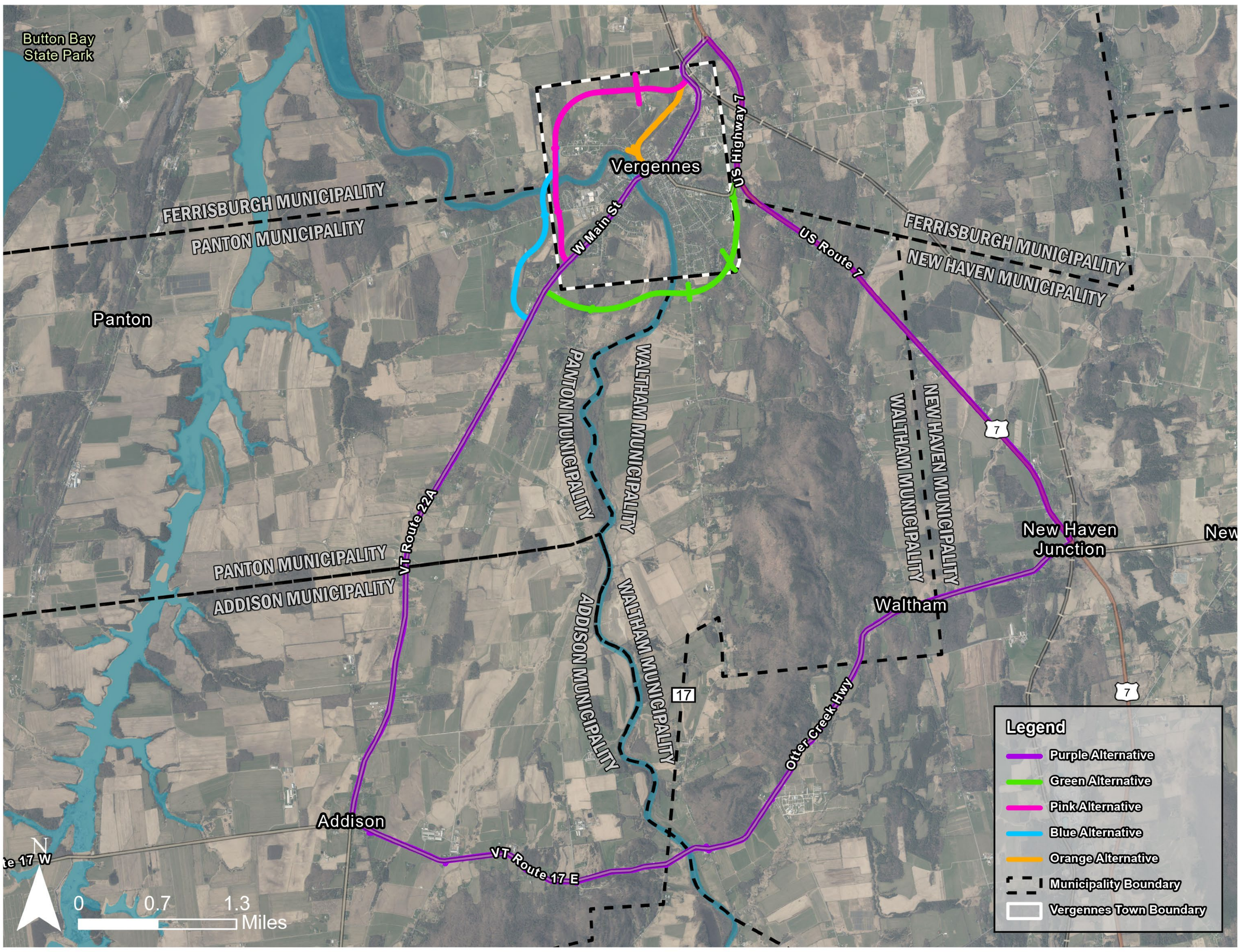
## Transportation Solutions Studied

- 13 alternatives studied narrowed down to 5 route alternatives
- 4 new roadways (pink, blue, green, and orange alternatives)
- 1 alternative that uses existing roads (purple alternative) and diverts northbound traffic only
- "No Build" option that would maintain Route 22A in its existing configuration
- All 5 alternative routes have strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities

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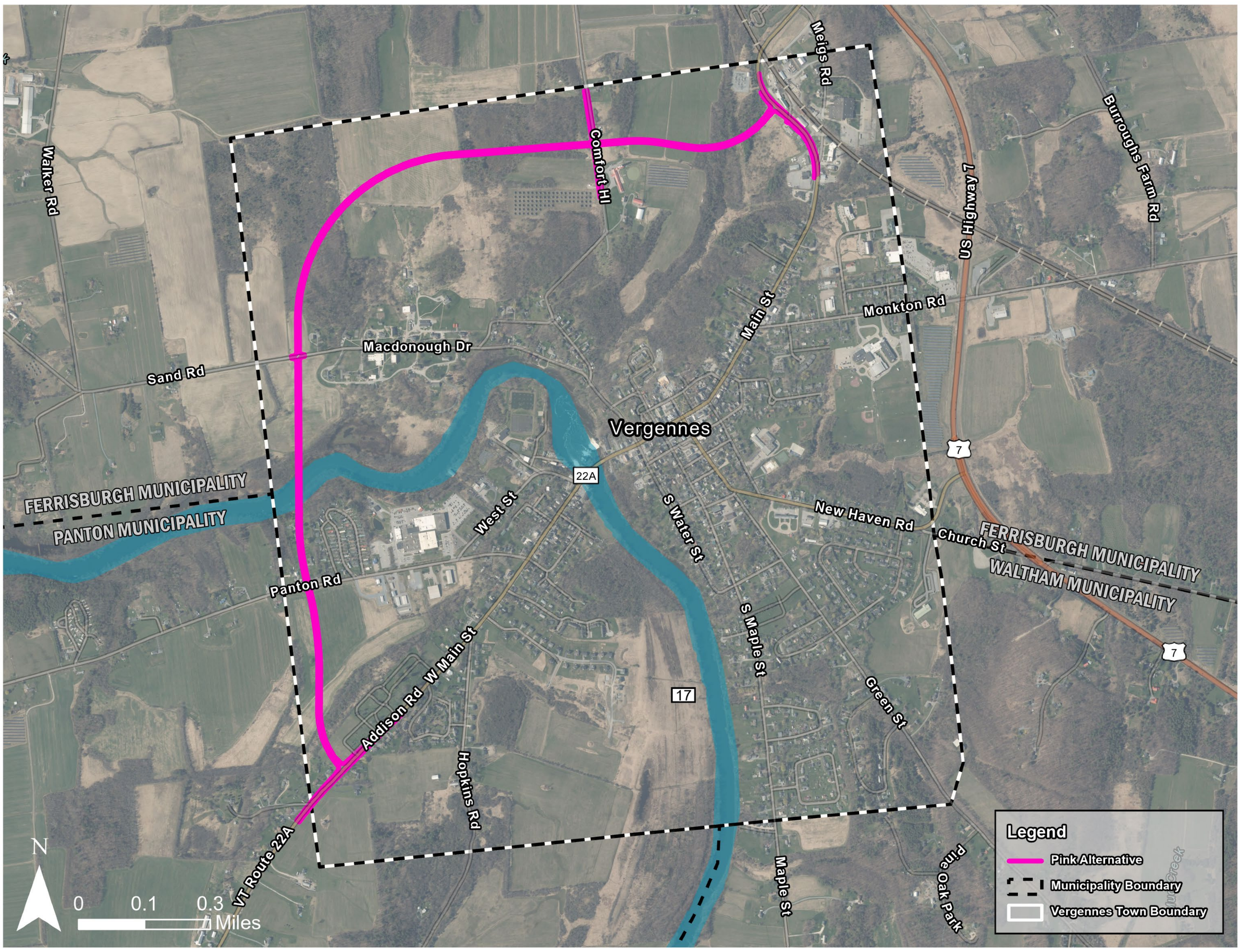
# Planning & Environment Linkages (PEL) Study

## Pink Route Alternative

New roadway within Vergennes, connecting with Route 22A approximately 0.75 miles south of the Panton Road and Route 22A intersection and reconnecting with Route 22A about 0.5 miles west of the Route 22A/US 7 intersection.

- **Proposed length:** 2.3 miles
- **Number of new intersections:** 5
- **Number of new structures:** 1 multi-span bridge over Otter Creek

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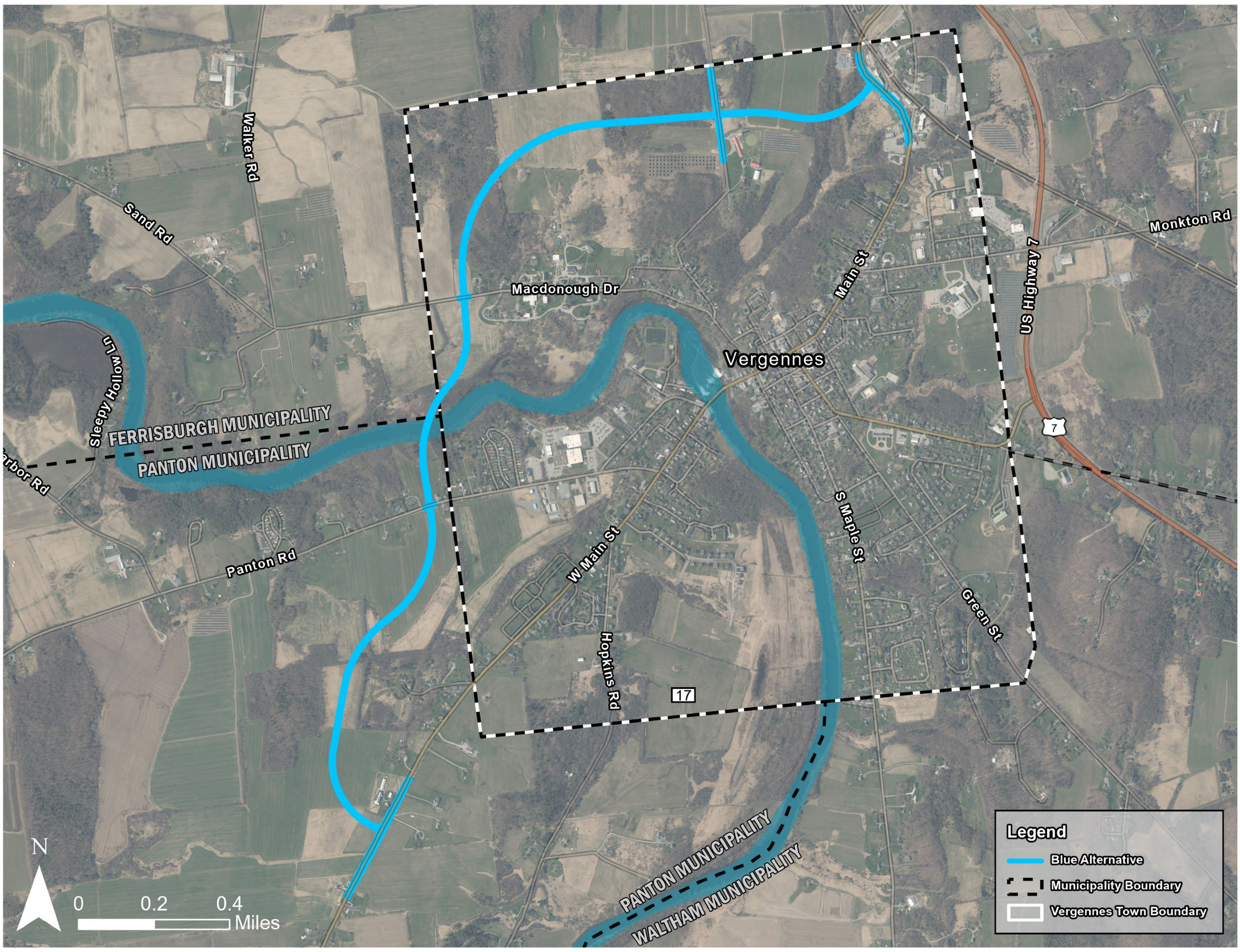
## Blue Route Alternative

New roadway within Vergennes and Panton, connecting with Route 22A approximately 1.25 miles south of Vergennes and reconnecting with Route 22A about 0.5 mile west of the US 7 intersection.

- **Proposed length:** 2.5 miles
- **Number of new intersections:** 5
- **Number of new structures:** 1 multi-span bridge over Otter Creek

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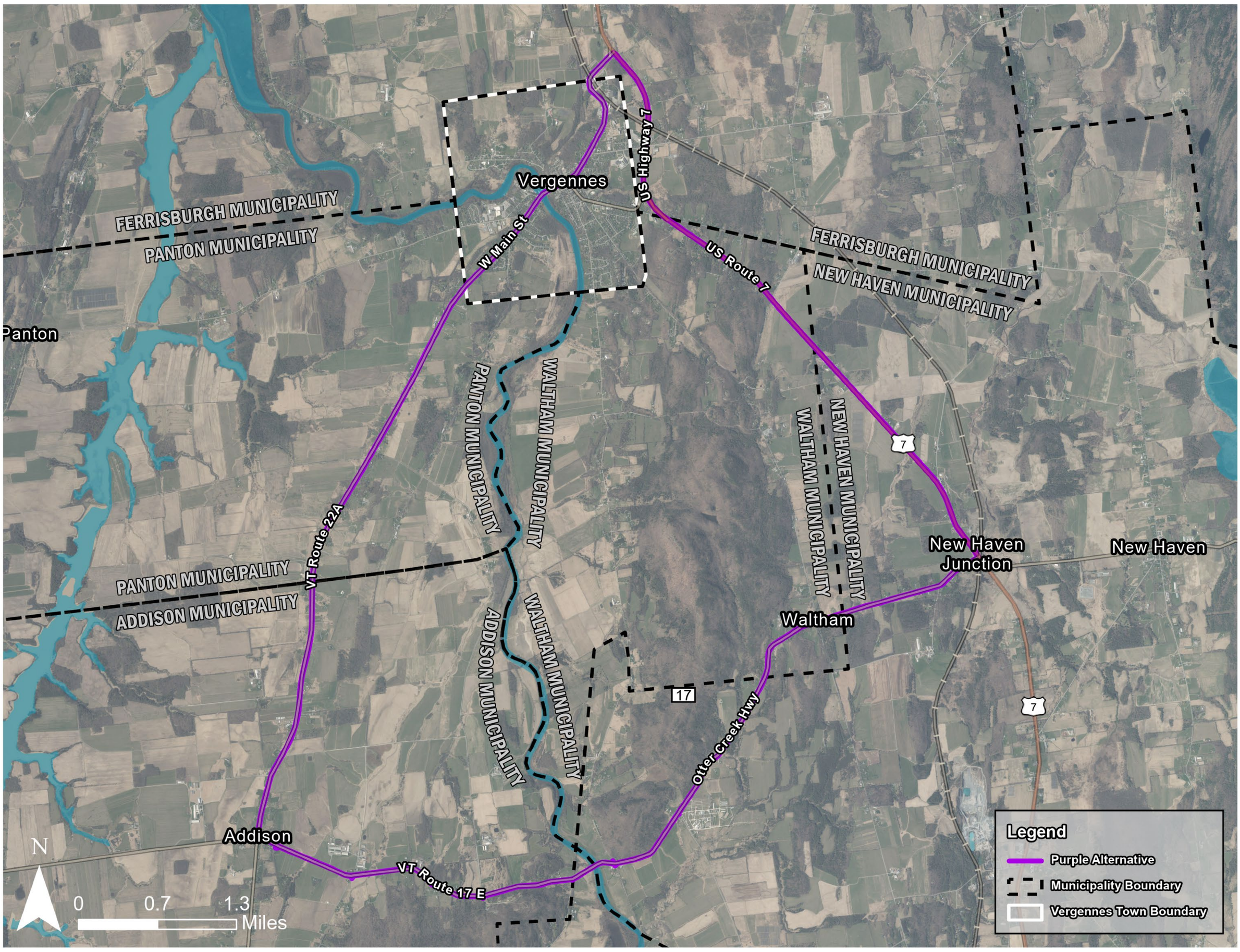
## Purple Route Alternative

Utilizes existing roadways with targeted improvements along Route 17. Northbound truck traffic would be shifted to Route 17 and Route 7 and southbound truck trips traffic would continue along Route 22A through Vergennes.

- **Proposed length:** 12.7 miles
- **Number of new intersections:** upgrade to Route 17 and Route 7
- **Number of new structures:** none

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## Alternatives Evaluation

Five alternatives were evaluated using detailed criteria (qualitative and quantitative). Based on the evaluation, the Blue Alternative and Pink Alternative meet the Purpose and Need. In addition, the Policy Committee voted to continue to study the Purple Alternative as an existing road alternative. The full evaluation is available in the Technical Memorandum on the study website (https://vergennespel.com).

| | PURPLE ALTERNATIVE | BLUE ALTERNATIVE | PINK ALTERNATIVE | GREEN ALTERNATIVE | ORANGE ALTERNATIVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Does the alternative meet the transportation needs (mobility and access, safety, circulation, and resilience)? | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Does the alternative meet the quality of life, economic, and land use needs? | No | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| Construction Cost Estimate | $54 M | $107 M | $132 M | $103 M | $19 M |
| Development Cost Estimate | $21 M | $44 M | $54 M | $45 M | $12 M |

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# Planning & Environment Linkages (PEL) Study

## PEL Study (2021-2025)

### Completed Tasks

- Define Purpose and Need Statement
- Narrow down list of alternatives
- Land use visioning
- Conceptual design
- Alternatives Evaluation

### Current & Upcoming Tasks

- Implementation Plan
- Finalize report

## Future Steps

### Obtain Funding

- Timeline: Unknown

### Design & Engineering

- Approximate timeline: 7-11 years
- Environmental Studies and NEPA
- Conceptual, Preliminary, and Final Plans
- Permitting
- Right-of-Way Acquisitions

### Construction

- Approximate timeline: 3-4 years

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