

A Public Meeting was held on September 26, 2018 to present existing conditions data and receive public comment on the VT 22A Truck Route Study. Comments made at the meeting were recorded by Stantec in meeting notes. These comments are listed below along with the responses prepared by the project team.

**Comment 1:** Are crashes that involved pedestrians included in the data?

**Response:** Yes, however there were no pedestrian crashes reported in the study area for the five-year period examined.

**Comment 2:** Fatalities should be documented.

**Response:** The collected crash data were queried to identify fatal crashes. A single crash related fatality was reported in the study area for the 2013-2017 study period. The fatality was the result of a head-on collision occurring on VT 17 approximately 1.5 miles north of VT 17 in December 2013.

**Comment 3:** Provide more data on bicycle and pedestrian use.

**Response:** Data as available from turning movement counts conducted by VTTrans were reviewed to determine levels of pedestrian and bicycle activity. Pedestrian and bicycle movements are counted cumulatively and shown in Table 1 for representative locations. All counts were conducted during summer months. As shown, there is very little pedestrian and bike activity at intersections outside of the downtown area. The busiest location is the Green Street/Main Street intersection where 116 pedestrian or bicycle movements were reported during the evening peak commuter hour.

Table 1 PM Peak Hour Pedestrian and Bicycle Activity

Intersection	PM Peak Hour Pedestrian and Bicycle Movements
Green Street/Main Street	116
Panton Road/VT 22A	4
Monkton Road/Main Street	37
VT 17/VT 22A	1
VT 17/US 7	1

**Comment 4:** Consider the impact on kids walking to school – how are they affected when crossing the street? Look at ages of pedestrians in the downtown. Vulnerable populations are present.

**Response:** The study team recognizes that vulnerable pedestrian populations are present and are included in the 116 pedestrian/bicycle movements per hour reported above for the Green Street/Main Street intersection. Pedestrian improvements proposed under Alternative A are intended to make crossings safer for all age groups.

**Comment 5:** Include data on noise and vibration impacts and how they impact health.

**Response:** The study scope does not include the collection of truck noise and vibration data. The study team recognizes that these factors impact residents' and visitors' quality of life and health. For the purpose of this study, these impacts are assumed to be reflected in assessed property values. Quality of life and, in turn, property values will be enhanced when truck impacts are reduced.

**Comment 6:** Forecasts of projected growth in freight demand are dated. Has any new data been collected to validate or update the earlier forecasts?

**Response:** No new freight data are available. Preparation of a new Freight Plan is scheduled to start in 2019.

**Comment 7:** Consider the effect of noise at different times of the day and night.

**Response:** The study team understands that truck noise impacts vary by the time of day or night that they are experienced. VTtrans periodically conducts vehicle classification counts on major roadways. Hourly truck volumes collected on VT 22A 1.2 miles north of VT 17 on August 31, 2018 are shown in Figure 1. As indicated, at least ten large trucks per hour use VT 22A for 23 out of 24 hours per day.

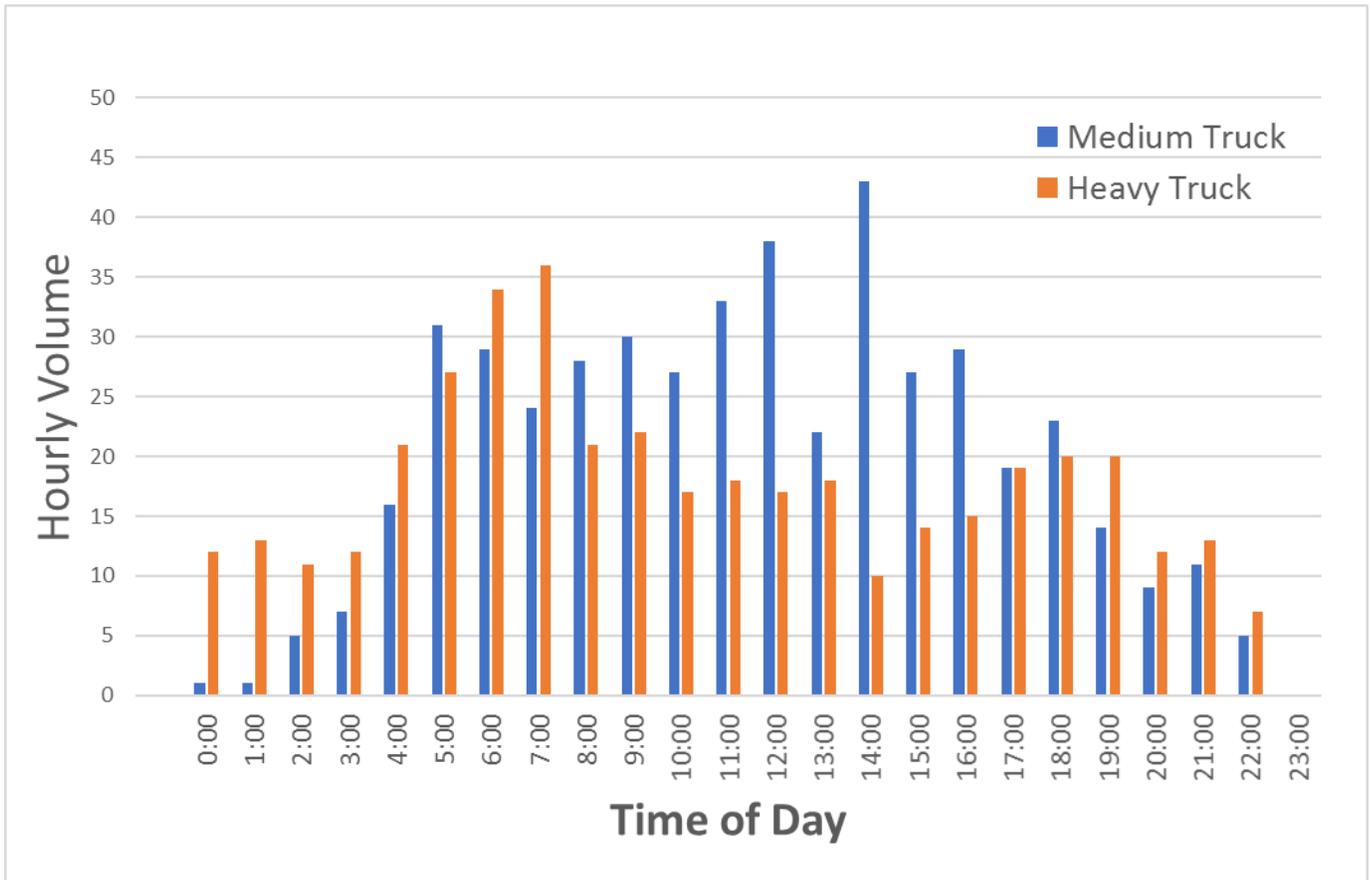


Figure 1 VT 22A Truck Volumes Just North of VT 17

**Comment 8:** Report on grades along US 7 as well. Trucks diverted to VT 17 will have trouble with the northbound uphill grade on US 7 after turning left from VT 17. This is already a problem for trucks exiting Phoenix Feeds.

**Response:** The grade on US 7 north of VT 17 is approximately seven percent. (This compares to an 11 percent on Main Street heading north from Otter Creek in downtown Vergennes.) Slow moving trucks on the upgrade can use the climbing lane provided to avoid delaying higher speed traffic.

**Comment 9:** Trains cause delays at the US 7/VT 17 intersection. Added truck traffic, assuming a rerouting of truck traffic to VT 17, will lead to long back-ups on VT 17. The alternatives analysis will consider the impact of train traffic at this intersection.

**Response:** The operations analysis for existing PM peak hour conditions indicates that this intersection operates at Level of Service B on a scale of A to F. An alternatives analysis will be conducted to determine expected operations with truck traffic added at this location. Design changes to better accommodate trucks at this location, if warranted, will be defined in the study.

**Comment 10:** Stantec should report on findings from past studies. What were the conclusions of the 1995 study?

**Response:** The study recommended the Alternative Alignment plan currently under consideration. VTrans noted that in 1995 there was not a process in place for prioritizing and adding new projects, such as a bypass, to the annual Capital Program for funding. VTrans is currently updating the project selection and prioritization process that will provide a path for new projects based on criteria and constrained by available funding.

**Comment 11:** Where will funds come from to construct a bypass?

**Response:** Representative Lanpher noted that it will be a competitive process to secure funds under the VTrans Capital Program; however, land areas that are opened for new development by the new roadway could help justify the funding. Recent designation of Vergennes as an Opportunity Zone could also help justify the roadway.

**Comment 12:** Maintenance costs for the existing bridge over Otter Creek should be considered in the Cost/Benefit Analysis. Also, construction of a new roadway and bridge should reduce the cost to rehabilitate the existing bridge when warranted.

**Response:** VTrans reported that there is no major rehabilitation or reconstruction project scheduled for the existing bridge (it's in good shape).

**Comment 13:** Adding trucks to VT 17 is "insane". There are safety issues at the VT 23 intersection and at the Hallock Road intersection.

**Response:** Stantec has confirmed sight line constraints at several intersections along VT 17. The locations are not identified as High Crash Locations by the state. The alternatives analysis will identify actions that would be necessary to address the safety concerns cited and the cost to implement these actions.

**Comment 14:** Can data on how vibration has required rehabilitation of buildings be included? Consider any building within 200 ft (or some justifiable distance) of the road as impacted.

**Response:** The study team recognizes that the effects of vibrations caused by trucks are a significant concern. For example, approximately \$2 million was recently spent to rehabilitate the Vergennes Opera House addressing many concerns including damage caused by vibrations. The study assumes that vibrations negatively impact the quality of life downtown. However, quantifying the impact of vibrations and determining building rehabilitation costs is outside the scope of the current study as it was felt the limited budget was better spent on finding solutions rather than further quantifying the problem.

**Comment 15:** There is concern for public safety and the environment with respect to trucks carrying hazardous materials through downtown Vergennes and upgradient of Otter Creek. A crash and spill on the grade could have dire consequences. The Town and County have limited capabilities in responding to a spill.

**Response:** Alternative strategies that would reroute trucks around downtown Vergennes would help mitigate these concerns.

**Comment 16:** Consider the number of homes within say, 200 feet of the roadway.

**Response:** The number of homes located within 200 feet of VT 22A along the segment between VT 17 and US 7 is notably higher than the number of homes located within 200 feet of VT 17 along the segment between VT 22A and US 7 (approximately 124 homes along VT 22A and 37 homes along VT 17).

**Comment 17:** Reach out to truck drivers. How do they feel about negotiating VT 22A in the downtown area?

**Response:** Stantec is engaged in ongoing discussions with the Vermont Truck and Bus Association to gain their perspective.

**Comment 18:** Field Days at the fairgrounds would conflict with truck traffic on VT 17. Turn lanes would be needed at access points.

**Response:** Access to the fairgrounds will be considered in the development and analysis of the VT 17 alternative.

**Comment 19:** Concern that people will bypass downtown.

**Response:** The Alternative Alignment plan will be developed such that the expected travel time on the new alignment is greater than the travel time on the existing route through the downtown. The longer travel time, and removal of many trucks from the downtown (which would be required to use the alternate route), should encourage non-truck traffic continue to travel through downtown.

**Comment 20:** Can we appeal to on-line apps like Google Maps to suggest alternative routes for trucks?

**Response:** On-line communications should be a part of any plan adopted by the ACRPC and VTrans to reassign truck trips however, no action should be taken until a plan is adopted.

**Comment 21:** What was the reduction in truck trips through Morrisville after the alternate truck route was opened?

**Response:** Approximately 75 tractor trailer trucks and 11,000 vehicles per day of all types passed through Morrisville on VT 100 in 2010 prior to the construction of the VT 100 Bypass. After completing the bypass the volume on VT 100 dropped to 7300 vehicles per day (2017) and 15 tractor trailer units per day.

**Comment 22:** When AOT designated VT 22A as a truck route, it did not meet standards.

**Response:** The designation of truck routes has been eliminated. There are no designated truck routes now. VTrans is studying potential upgrades to southern sections of VT 22A (just north of Fair Haven) to make it more suitable for truck traffic. These changes are not expected to significantly impact the volume of truck traffic passing through Vergennes.

**Comment 23:** Need to find some actions to implement soon – mostly more traffic calming.

**Response:** The Alternative A actions would be feasible as “near term” strategies.

**Comment 24:** In 1995, there was a public meeting related to a new alignment and someone from VTTrans had a plan that indicated the taking of some specific parcels and suggested an annual payment would be possible.

**Response:** VTTrans will need to compensate landowners for any land-takings resulting from the recommended action or actions.

**Comment 25:** Why did nothing happen 23 years ago?

**Response:** Rep. Lanpher noted a lack of consensus within Addison County.

**Comment 26:** We should be addressing truck issues on a mega scale. How can truck and all traffic volumes be reduced in Vermont?

**Response:** Strategies to reduce motorized travel demand statewide are outside the scope of this study.

**Comment 27:** There is an opportunity zone in Vergennes. If that benefits from the solution, could it help justify future funding?

**Response:** Potential new economic development associated with a bypass roadway will be considered in the study. New economic development would result in a more favorable benefit/cost ratio for the bypass alternative.

**Comment 28:** Need to identify process to move alternatives forward and designate champions to lead the next steps.

a) **Response:** The study will conclude with a recommended implementation plan.

**Comment 29:** As part of the two-phase approach, can one half of the truck traffic (Northbound only for example) be diverted to VT 17 in the short term?

**Response:** This is one of the alternatives under consideration

**Comment 30:** Can we motivate companies to move more freight by rail?

**Response:** Rail system upgrades are underway to help rail become more cost effective. Some shift in freight traffic to rail is anticipated because of these improvements. The project team held a meeting with Vermont Rail in October and identified other potential strategies that would help rail capture more market share.

u:\195311604\transportation\meetings\local concerns meeting\2018\_12\_05\_responses to local concerns meeting comments.docx