

# Update of Vermont Rail Plan & Vermont Freight Plan Presentation #2

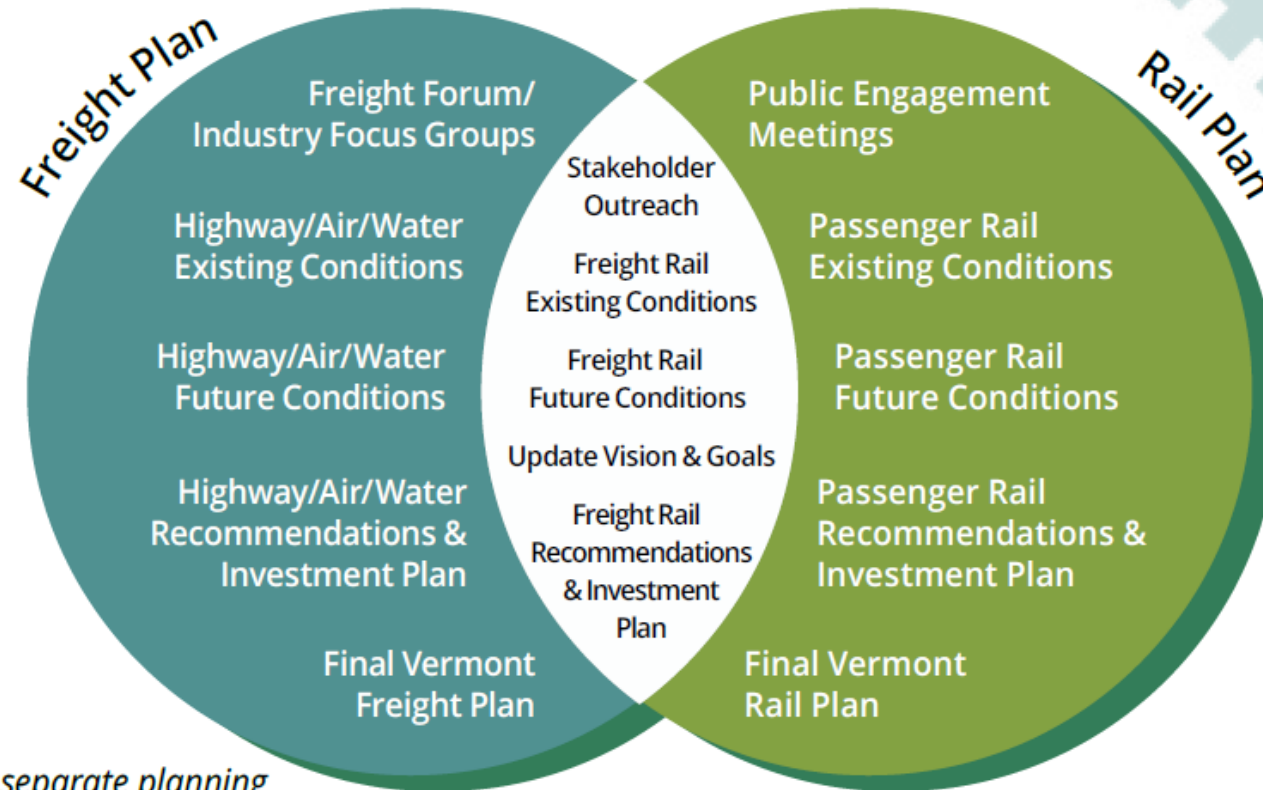
Vermont Town Hall  
December 17, 2020

# Background & Goals



- Good planning and follow-through makes for efficient passenger and freight rail for Vermont
- FRA requires a State Rail Plan at minimum every four years to be eligible for certain rail grants
- FHWA requires a State Freight Plan every five years in order to obligate Freight Formula funds
- **Public's Role:**
  - Provide input!

# Rail Plan & Freight Plan Overlaps



*Although two separate planning efforts, the Freight and Rail Plans share common tasks and work products.*

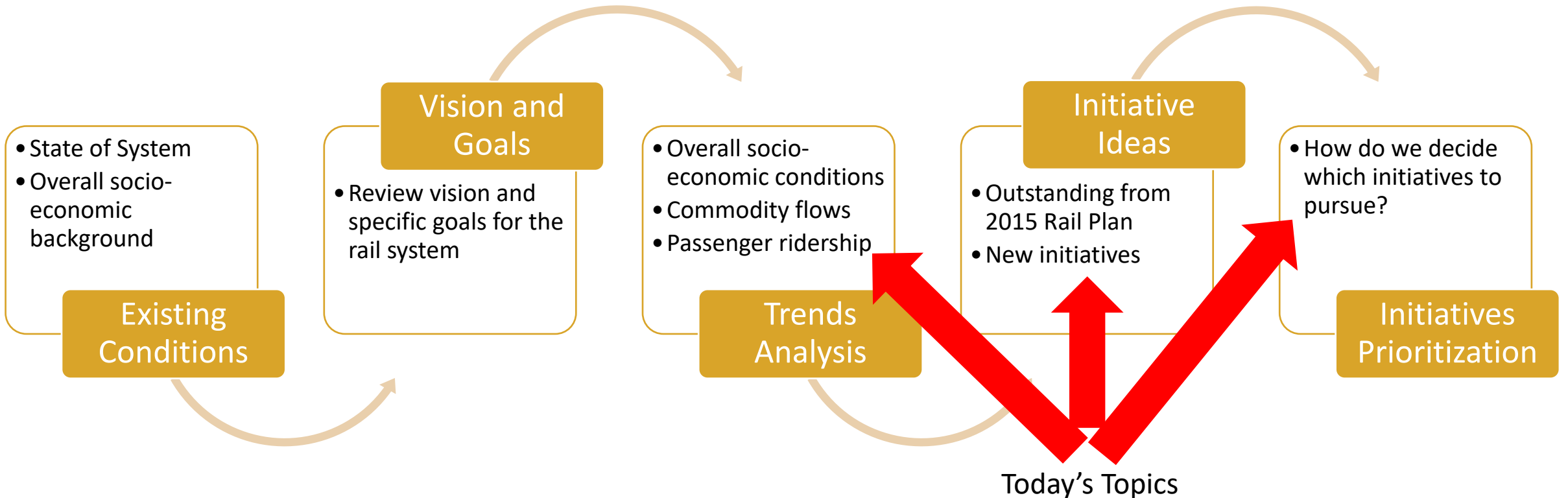
# Additional Information on Web Pages

- Newsletters
- Data Trends Summaries
- Existing Conditions Technical Memo
- Commodity Flow and Economic Futures Memo
- This presentation and handouts for the meeting (reasonable initiatives, screening criteria, draft screening)
- Vision, Goals, Needs & Potential Initiatives Memo (coming soon)
- Online map with information and initiative feedback tool (coming soon)
- Recording of Town Hall #1 full presentation and slides

Rail Plan: <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/rail/reports>

Freight Plan: <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/freight>

# Rail Plan Elements

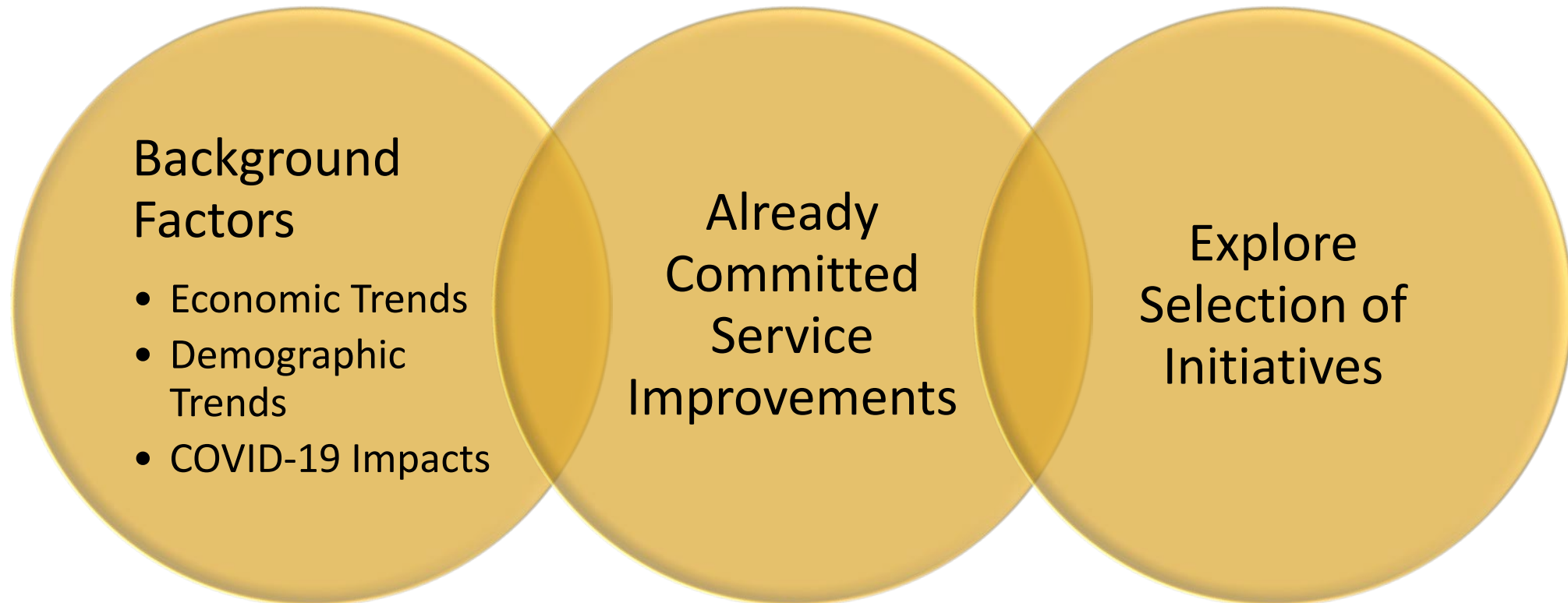


# Modeling Some Passenger Rail Initiatives



# Passenger Rail Modeling Approach

- Forecast Horizon: 20 years (2040)





# Passenger Rail Modeling Scenarios

## Rail Scenarios

### Vermont Corridor

No Build

*Vermont* train extension to Montreal, one round trip per day

*Valley Flyer* train extension, one round trip from Greenfield, MA to White River Jct.

Twice-daily *Vermont* service, with both terminating in Montreal

Connection to Boston at Springfield, MA from *Vermont* serving Montreal

79 mph service on *Vermont*

### Ethan Allen Express / Western Corridor

No Build (*Ethan Allen Express* extension to Burlington included)

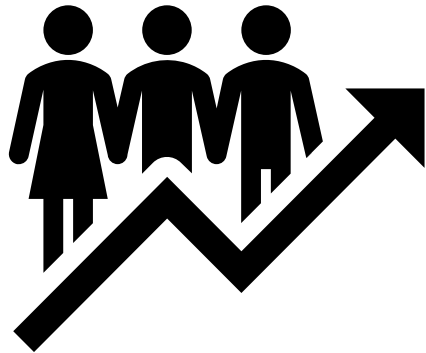
Albany - Burlington via Bennington and *Ethan Allen Express* extension to Burlington (separate trains)

79 mph service on *Ethan Allen Express*

Extend *Ethan Allen Express* to Essex Junction to connect with *Vermont* to Montreal



# 27 Potential Growth Scenarios Developed



*How quickly will rail service return to 2019 levels?*

- 2021, 2022, or 2023

*How long until passenger rail demand returns to pre-COVID ridership levels?*

- 1 year, 2 years, 3 years

*At what rate will population & employment grow by county?*

- Low, medium, and high projections

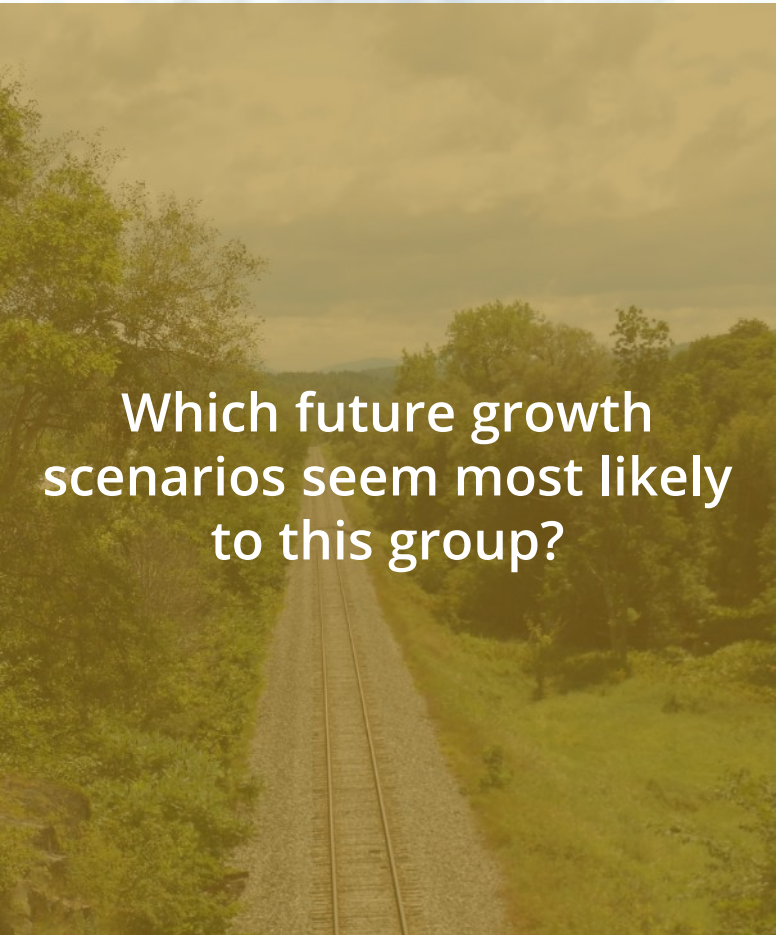
**Developed background growth scenarios using answers to above questions**

- 10<sup>th</sup> percentile of the 27 outcomes (low)
- 50<sup>th</sup> percentile of the 27 outcomes (medium)
- 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of the 27 outcomes (high)\*

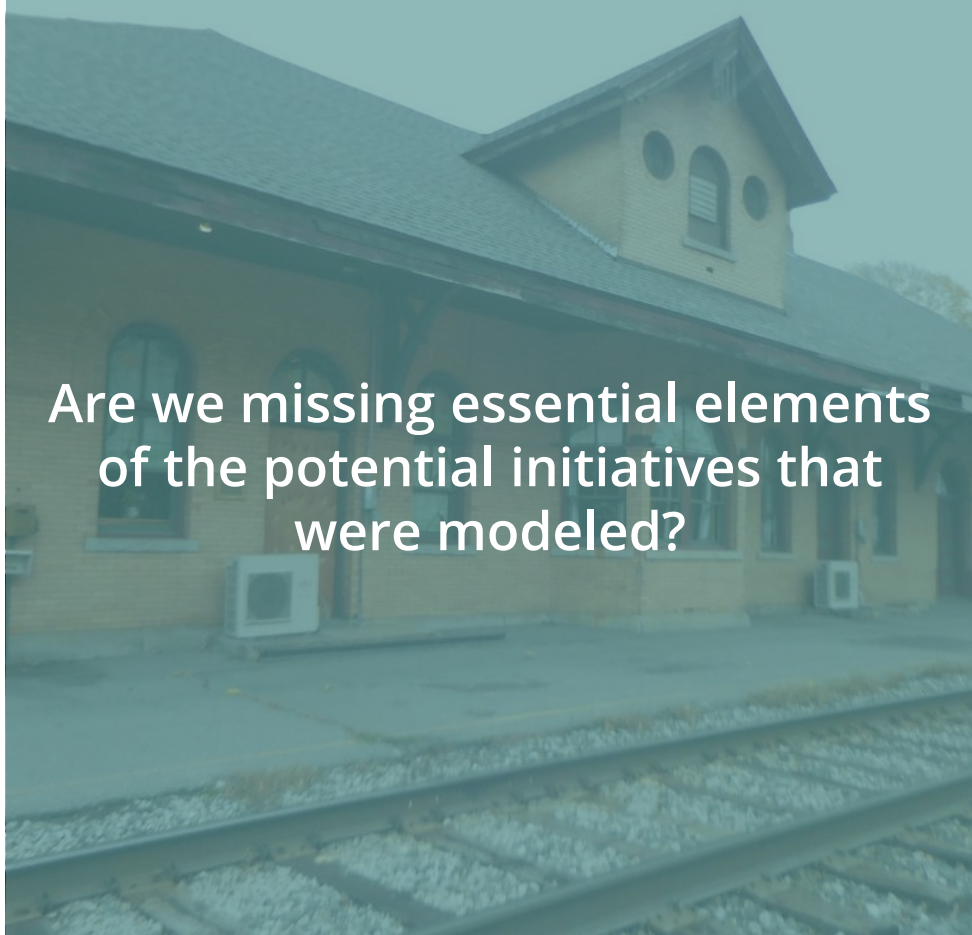
# Passenger Rail Modeling – Results (Preliminary)

Scenario	FY2019 Ridership	Low Growth (2040 Ridership)	Medium Growth (2040 Ridership)	High Growth (2040 Ridership)
<i>Vermont</i> – No Build	78,673	117,300	126,700	191,500
<i>Vermont</i> day train extension to Montreal	78,673	185,700	189,000	208,600
Twice-daily <i>Vermont</i> service, with both terminating in Montreal	78,673	362,100	368,900	407,100
Extension of one Knowledge Corridor Valley Flyer train to White River Jct.	0*	30,700	33,100	50,000
Connection to Boston at Springfield, MA from <i>Vermont</i> serving Montreal	78,673	201,700	205,400	226,800
79 mph service on <i>Vermont</i>	78,673	<i>Under development</i>		
<i>Ethan Allen Express</i> – No Build (includes Burlington extension)	16,561	34,900	37,300	56,300
Albany - Burlington via Bennington and <i>Ethan Allen Express</i> extension to Burlington (separate trains)	0#	<i>Under development</i>		
79 mph service on <i>Ethan Allen Express</i>	16,561	<i>Under development</i>		
Extend <i>Ethan Allen Express</i> to Essex Junction	16,561	<i>Under development</i>		

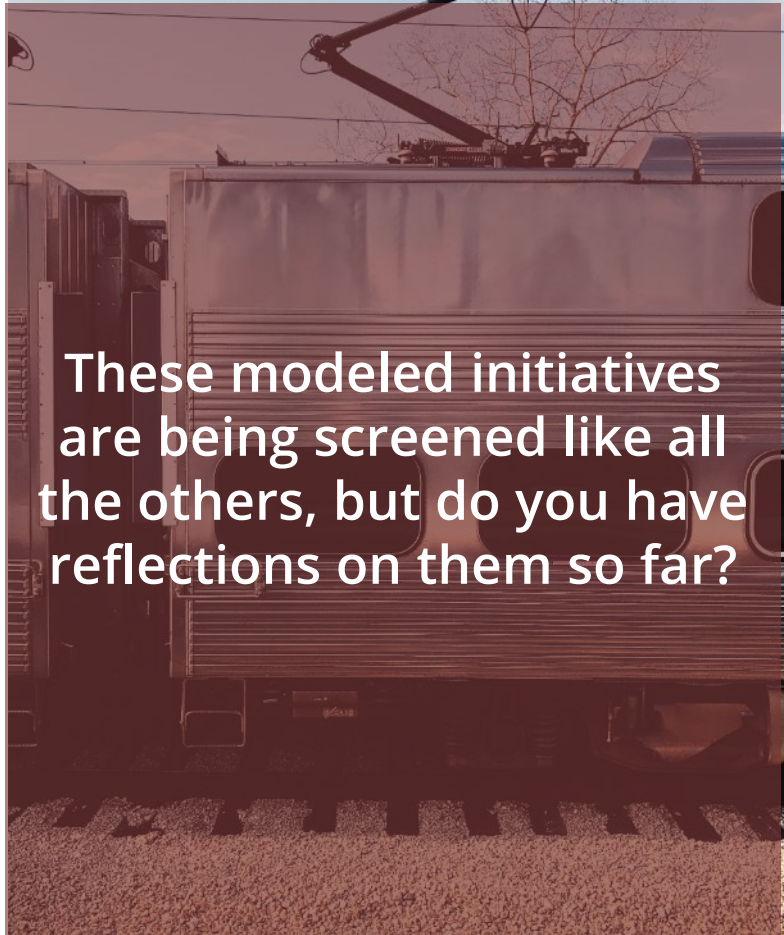
# Discussion & Questions



Which future growth scenarios seem most likely to this group?



Are we missing essential elements of the potential initiatives that were modeled?



These modeled initiatives are being screened like all the others, but do you have reflections on them so far?

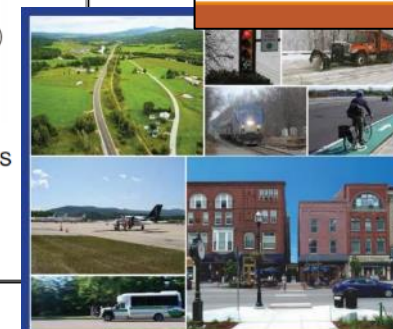
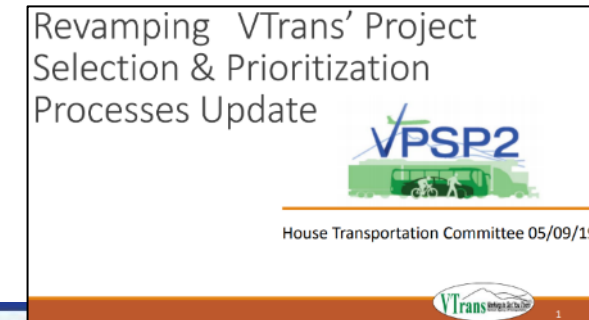
# Potential Initiatives



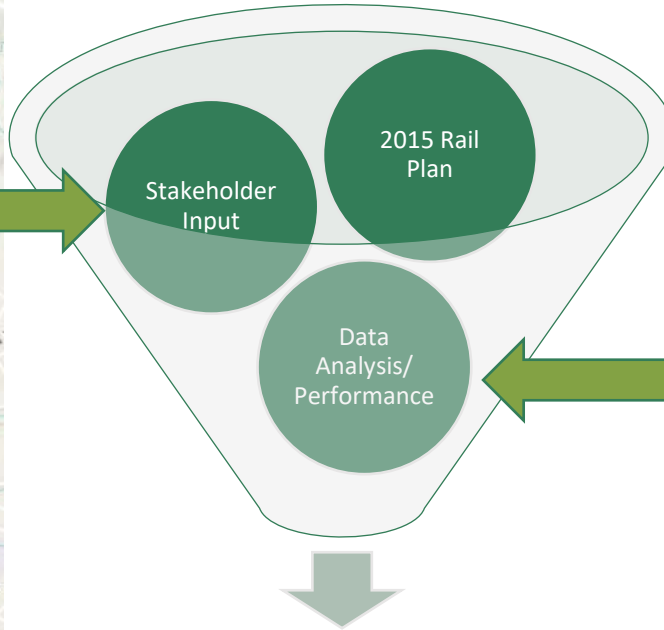
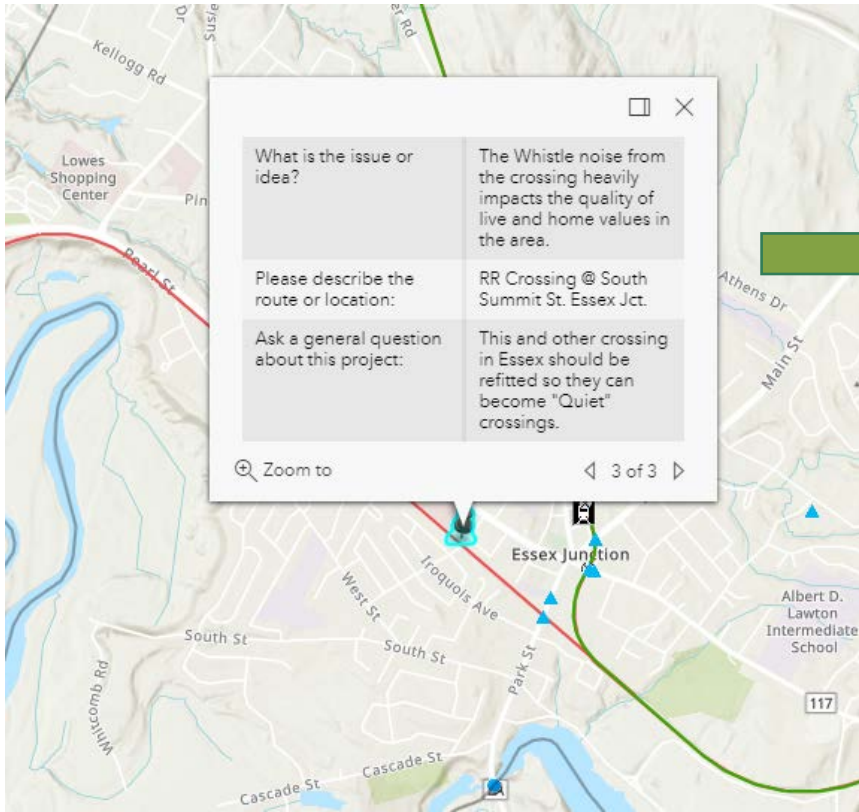
# 2020 Rail Plan Goals (Minor changes from 2015)

- Maintain existing system (State of Good Repair)
- Expand capacity to accommodate growth
- Increase rail system use (freight & passenger)
- Fund the rail system adequately and sustainably
- Improve intermodal connectivity (freight & passenger)
- Act on opportunities for ancillary economic development
- Enhance safety, security & resiliency

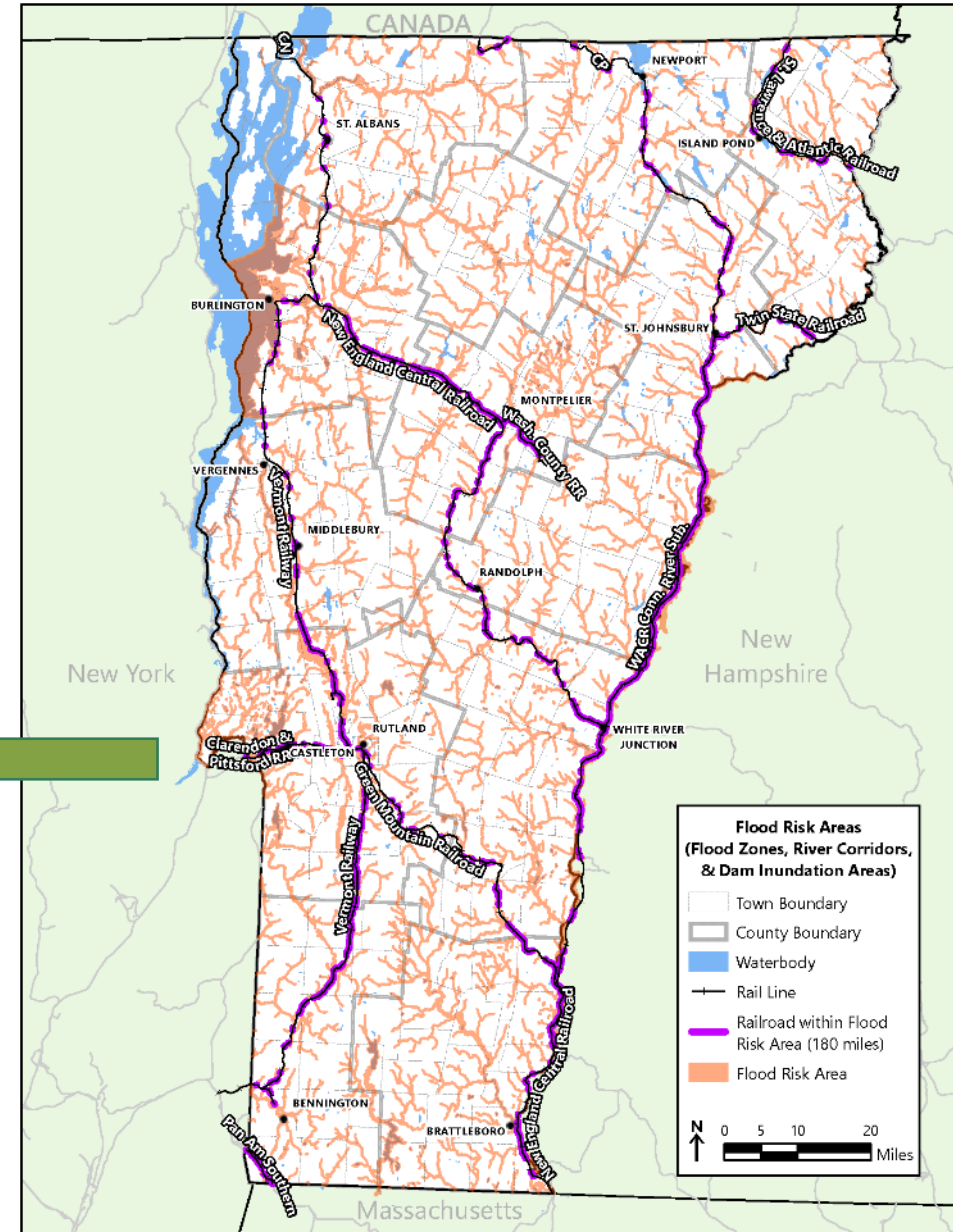
- Aligned with other efforts



# Sources for Potential Initiatives



Potential Initiatives



# Location-Specific Sample Initiatives

- Phased upgrade to gates/flashers of rail crossings of public roads on existing and planned Amtrak routes
- Improve wayfinding, explore transit-oriented development near stations
- Coordinate and increase marketing when Amtrak services resume
- GMRC bridges to 286,000 pounds and rail weight upgrades



The City of Valparaiso, Indiana transformed a downtown parking lot into an award-winning Downtown Central Park Plaza featuring greenspace and outdoor performance space.



A high-quality public park should be explored and incentivized by the city as part of future redevelopment of the gateway area. Uses of the park may include a dog park, splash pad, outdoor concert space, public art, or expanded farmers market and festival space. Photo source: SEHC

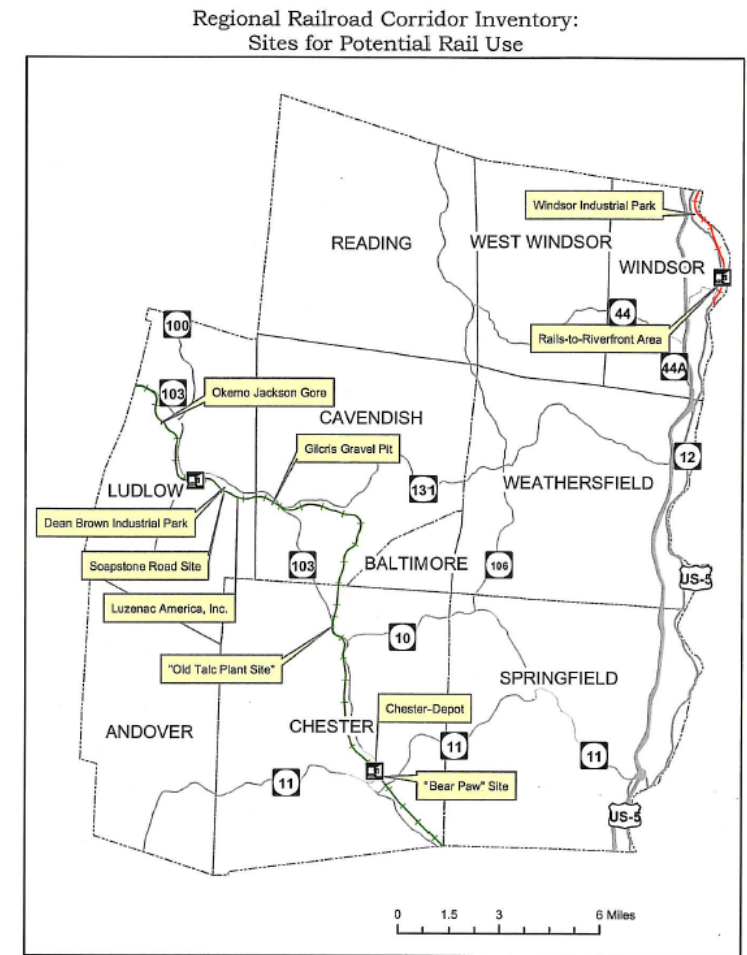


Mixed-use or multi-family (apartments) development would be an ideal use for the Amtrak Gateway Area in conjunction with a new community park. The Garden Street Apartments (shown to the left) with 60 mixed-income units in South Burlington is a good example of the type of project that would be a good fit for the site. Photo source: Champlain Housing Trust.

*Reimagine Rutland (2020)*

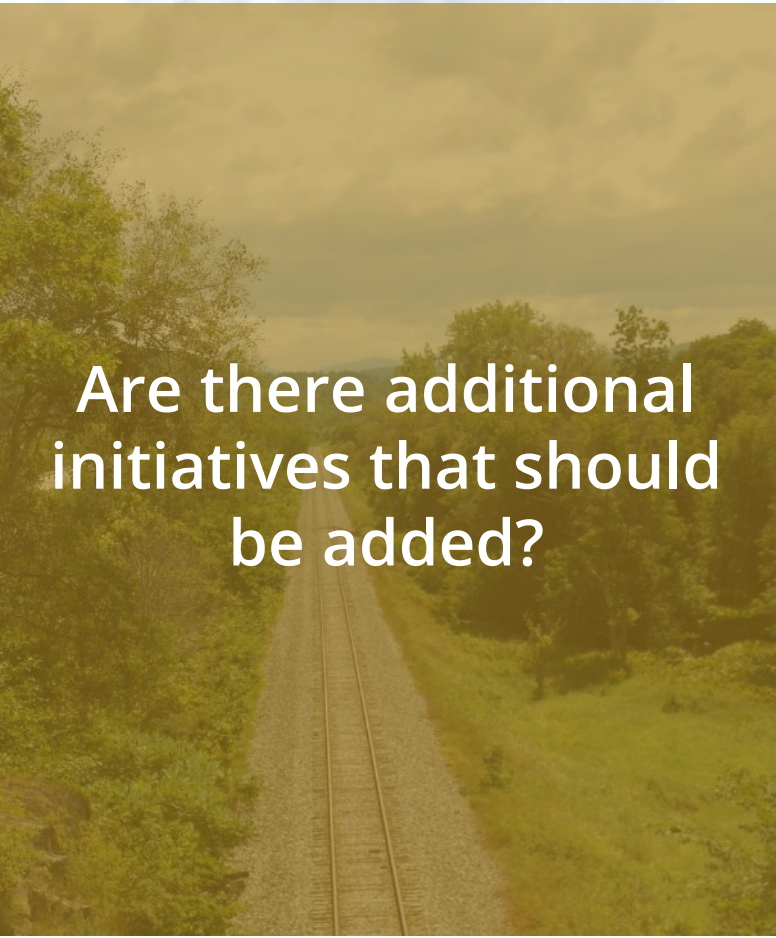
# Policy & Program Sample Initiatives

- Preserve rail siding access to existing industrial sites
- Publicize existing voluntary efforts of railroads and encourage “freight as a good neighbor” (NCHRP Syntheses 320) while respecting rail’s exemptions from local control
- Upgrade all lines to 286k pound weight bearing capacity





# Discussion & Question



Are there additional initiatives that should be added?



Is there more you want noted about any of the initiatives?



How much background is useful in the report & tech memos?

# Next Steps: Initiatives to Implementation Table

Table of potential initiatives



Model some potential passenger rail initiatives



Screen the full table & discuss next steps



Short set for VTrans implementation table

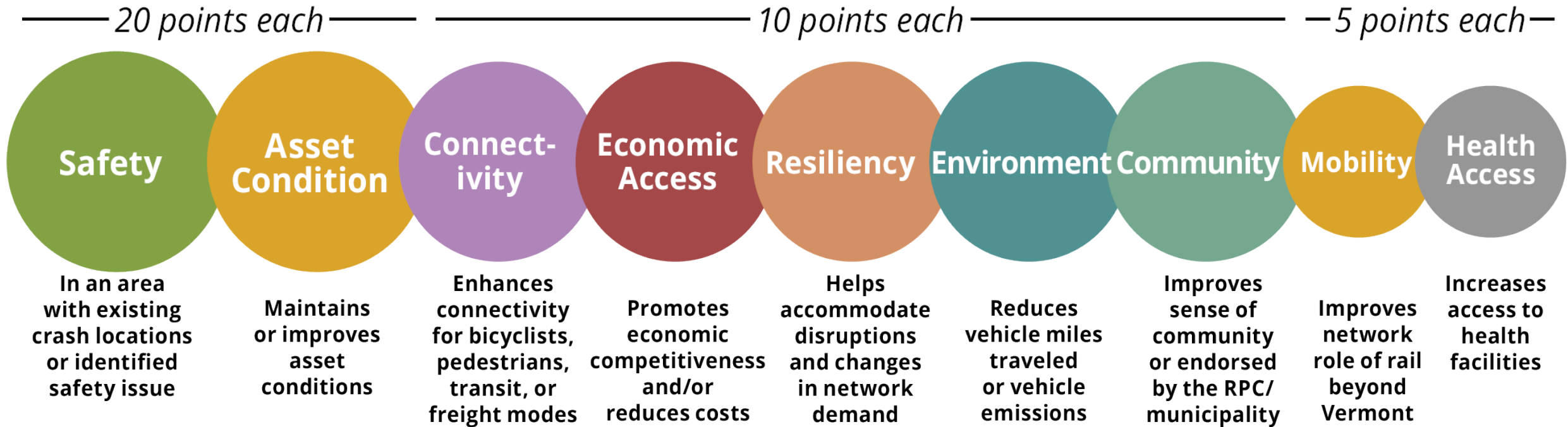
# Screening Rail Initiatives



# Screening is & is Not...

- The full table of potential initiatives can be pursued by anyone and may be helped by being listed in the Plan
- Screening IS quantitative, transparent background to assist in well-informed discussions
- Screening IS NOT “the” answer or commitment
- The 2015 Rail Plan used qualitative screening, but the state of the practice has moved on as tools like GIS have improved

# Screening to Short Set of Initiatives



# Introduction to Draft Results of Screening

## Location Specific Initiatives

*Preliminary for discussion only - not final*

Initiative #	Initiative Name	Goal Area	State-owned infrastructure?	Passenger or Freight	Total Score	Notes on Initiative	Cost	Feasibility	Discussion on Inclusion

## Program/Policy Initiatives

*Preliminary for discussion only - not final*

Initiative #	Initiative Name	Goal Area	State-owned infrastructure?	Passenger or Freight	Total Score	Notes on Initiative	Cost	Feasibility	Discussion on Inclusion

# Next Steps

- Provide input/comments on draft screening by Thursday Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>
  - By email
  - Through the online web map
- You will also have a chance to comment on the Draft Rail Plan
  - Coming after the holidays



# But Wait, There's More!

- The Freight Plan is on-going and will pick up steam once the Rail Plan is finalized
  - Will use relevant information developed in the Rail Plan
    - Freight rail existing conditions
    - Commodity flows
    - Needs and potential initiatives
  - Supplemented by information from other modes (truck, air, water)





# Thank You

For more information on the Vermont Rail Plan Update, visit [vtrans.vermont.gov/rail/reports](https://vtrans.vermont.gov/rail/reports) or contact Zoe Neaderland at [Zoe.Neaderland@vermont.gov](mailto:Zoe.Neaderland@vermont.gov) or (802) 793-2778.

For more information on the Vermont Freight Plan Update, visit [vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/freight](https://vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/freight) or contact Dave Pelletier at [Dave.Pelletier@vermont.gov](mailto:Dave.Pelletier@vermont.gov) or (802) 595-9675.