



Land Port of Entry Modernization Project - Richford, Vermont

National Environmental Policy Act - Public Meeting





Meeting Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Purpose of the Meeting
- Project Information and Background
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Overview and Process
- Project Resource and Impact Areas
- Submitting Public Comments



What is the purpose of this meeting?

The purpose of this meeting is to receive public input on the resources evaluated and the findings of the Draft EA. GSA welcomes your input on what resources and issues are important to you.

Today we will:

- Share project information with you
- Describe the NEPA Process and next steps
- Provide you with information on how to comment on the project



- Alan Bombardier, GSA, Project Manager
- Lindsey Veas, GSA, Acting Urban Planning and NEPA Branch Chief
- Pam Howe, GSA, Director, Public Buildings Service
- Sara Massarello, GSA, Realty Specialist
- Ryan Long, WSP USA Inc., Assistant Vice President, Environmental Planner

Project: Purpose & Need

- The **purpose** of the Proposed Action is to reconfigure, expand, and fully modernize the Richford Land Port of Entry (LPOE).
 - The Proposed Action would improve traffic flow, enhance safety and security, and increase the efficiency of operations at the Richford LPOE.
- The Proposed Action is **needed** to bring the Richford LPOE into compliance with federal infrastructure and security requirements and support the mission of CBP.
 - The existing facility does not meet the operational needs of the CBP due to its space constraints and limitations associated with its aging infrastructure.





What is the National Environmental Policy Act?

NEPA requires Federal agencies (GSA) to consider the potential impacts to the natural and human environment from their Proposed Action and disclose the potential impacts in a document that is circulated for public review.

GSA has prepared a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) to document potential impacts from the Proposed Action (the Richford LPOE Project).

The Draft EA evaluates the potential impacts of two alternatives: the Proposed Action Alternative and a No Action Alternative.

Throughout the NEPA process, the public has opportunities to submit comments to GSA about the Richford LPOE Project including the scoping period, and during public review of the Draft EA (now).

GSA will review all written comments and consider substantive comments during the preparation of the EA. All comments will be part of the administrative record.



The NEPA Umbrella



Clean Water Act

Clean Air Act

Endangered Species Act

National Historic Preservation Act

Archeological Resources Protection Act

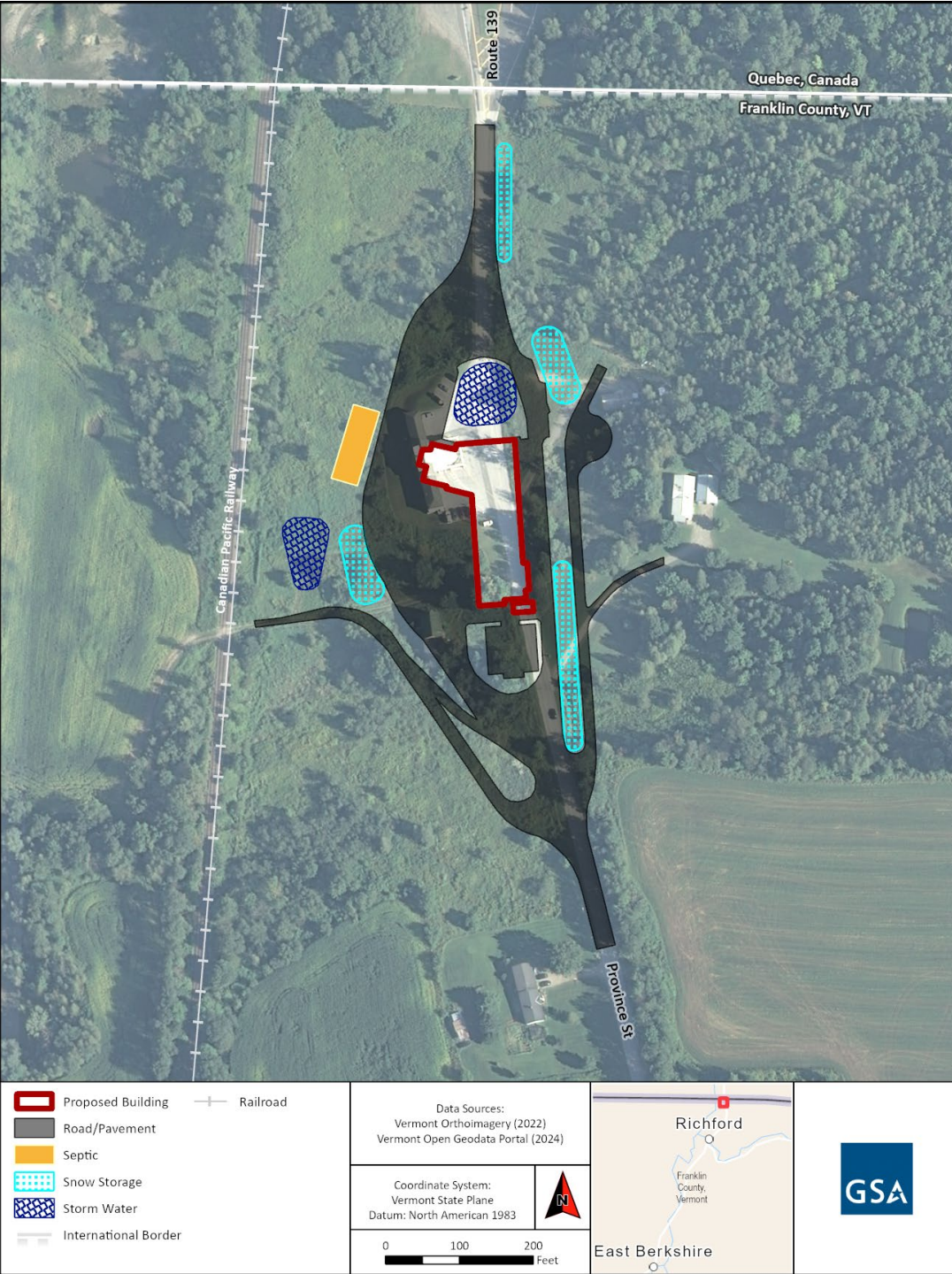
Farmland Protection Policy Act



Documenting Existing Conditions (the Affected Environment)

The EA includes a description of the resources that may be impacted by the Proposed Action.
For this project, the resource areas we analyzed are:

- Geology and Soils
- Water Resources (including Wetlands)
- Wildlife and Habitat
- Cultural Resources
- Socioeconomics
- Recreation
- Land Use and Zoning
- Traffic, Transportation, and Parking
- Aesthetics (including Dark Skies)
- Solid Waste and Hazardous Materials
- Utilities



Proposed Action Alternative

- The Proposed Action would include:
 - Demolishing the existing historic LPOE building
 - Acquiring approximately 6.7 acres of land from adjacent property owners and demolishing a house located on the parcel south of the existing LPOE
 - Constructing a modernized facility designed to meet federal infrastructure and security requirements.
 - The new LPOE would feature:
 - New roadways, mechanical gates and guardrails, and primary and secondary inspection canopies
 - A new office work area, secure hold and inspection areas, and upgraded utilities
- During construction, the LPOE would close for approximately 24 months
 - Commercial traffic would be diverted to the West Berkshire LPOE (~11 miles west)
 - Non-commercial traffic would be diverted to the Pinnacle LPOE (~3 miles west) or East Richford LPOE (~7 miles east)
 - GSA would maintain access points to the Pleasant Valley Farms property and railroad tracks throughout construction.



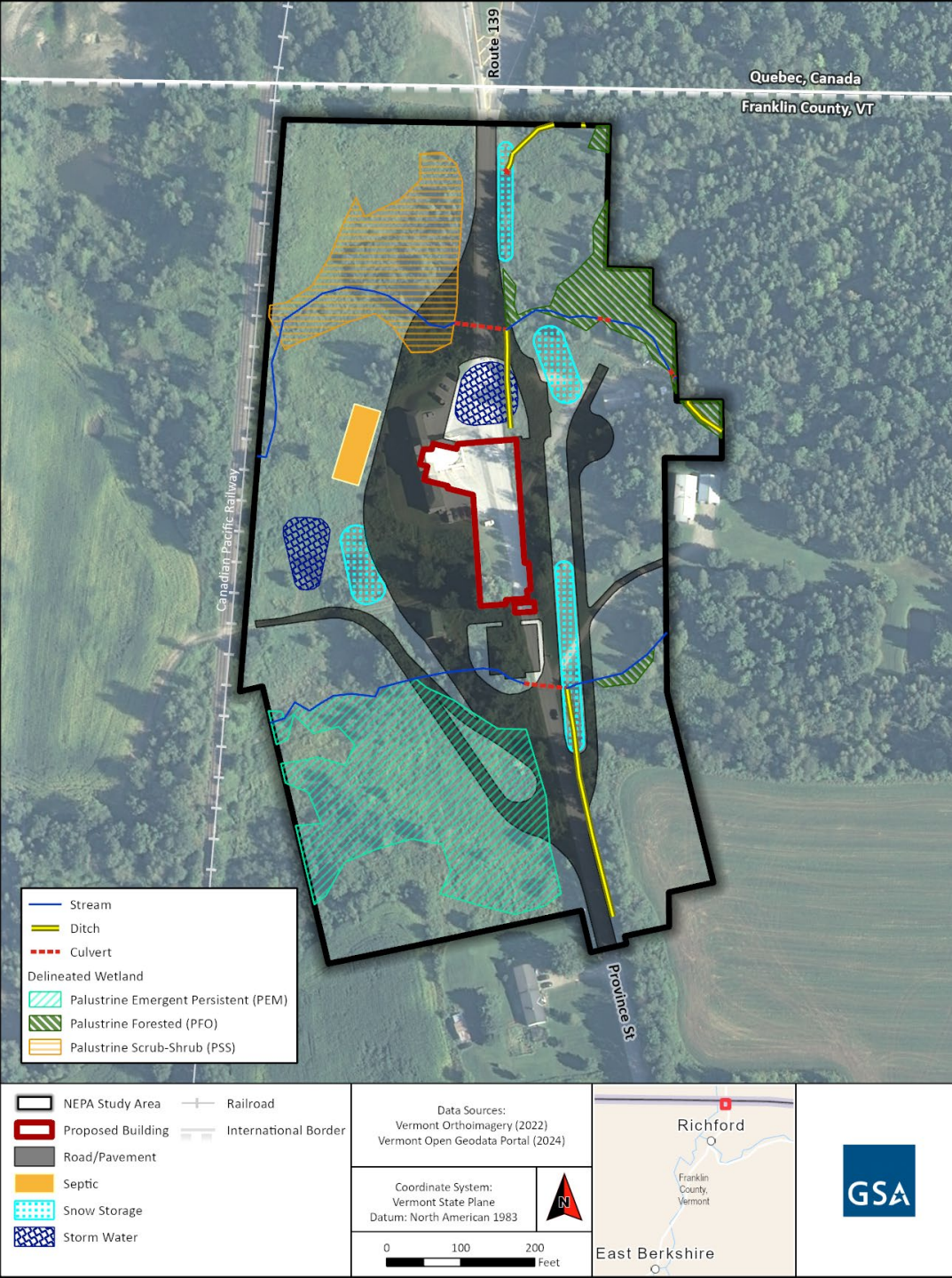
No Action Alternative

- The No-Action Alternative represents no change from current management and provides a baseline against which the Proposed Action Alternative is compared.
- Under the No-Action Alternative:
 - GSA would not construct a new Richford LPOE facility. The existing facility would continue to operate in its current condition, which does not comply with current federal infrastructure and security requirements.
 - The No-Action Alternative would not meet the project purpose and need.
 - The potential effects of the No-Action Alternative are evaluated in the Draft EA as required under NEPA.

Project Resource Area: Water Resources (including Wetlands)

Federal and state regulators have confirmed jurisdictional wetland boundaries based on field surveys. USACE has issued a preliminary Jurisdictional Determination (JD).

- Construction would result in permanent and temporary adverse impacts to water resources.
 - Placement of fill would permanently remove approximately up to 1 acre of wetlands.
 - Increased impervious cover would impact ~236 linear feet of streams.
- Impacts would be minimized by incorporating stormwater bio-retention methods into the final design.
- A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan and a Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plan would be developed prior to construction to avoid or minimize impacts.
- GSA would mitigate adverse impacts to wetlands through compensatory mitigation, which would be determined through consultation with USACE and Vermont DEC.



Project Resource Area: Wildlife and Habitat

An official species list obtained from USFWS confirmed no listed species or protected habitats are present, but one ESA candidate species (Monarch butterfly) may occur.



- The Proposed Action would result in permanent and temporary habitat loss or modification from vegetation clearing, tree removal, and impacts to wetlands and streams.
- Noise and visual disturbances may temporarily impact wildlife as well.
- GSA would revegetate temporary disturbance areas a native seed mix.
- If migratory bird nests are present in the project area, GSA would minimize brush clearing and tree removal during the nesting season and establish a buffer around any active nests to protect them from construction-related disturbance.
- If the Monarch butterfly or any other species that have the potential to occur in the action area become listed under the ESA, GSA would consult with the USFWS to identify measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts.
- GSA would minimize effects to the Monarch butterfly and its habitat to the greatest extent practicable regardless of listing status.

Project Resource Area: Cultural Resources

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1996 (NHPA) requires GSA to consider the effects of federal undertakings on cultural resources, including historic properties.

- Historic Resources:
 - The Proposed Action would require demolition of the historic Richford LPOE, resulting in permanent adverse impacts.
- Archaeological Resources:
 - GSA conducted a Phase 1A archeological survey in August 2024.
 - Phase 1B archaeological testing would be conducted prior to ground-disturbing activities.
 - If necessary, temporary fencing would be placed around sensitive areas prior to any ground-disturbing activities.
 - In the unlikely event of an unanticipated discovery of cultural resources during construction, GSA would halt work in the immediate vicinity until a qualified archaeologist could inspect.
- Through the Section 106 consultation process, GSA would identify impacts on cultural resources and, if necessary, negotiate measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects.





Additional Resources

- **Geology and Soils:** The Proposed Action would result in permanent and temporary adverse impacts on soils from excavation, grading, clearing, and expanding impervious cover. GSA would implement Best Management Practices to avoid or minimize impacts, as described in the Draft EA.
- **Traffic, Transportation, and Parking:** The Richford LPOE would close for approximately 24 months. Drivers would be detoured to one of three nearby LPOEs, spanning from 3.3 to 11 miles away. Traffic at these LPOEs may temporarily increase due to increased visitation.
- **Aesthetics:** The Proposed Action would alter the existing visual landscape by constructing a modernized facility. The improved facility would be designed to reduce light pollution.
- **Land Use:** GSA would acquire approximately 6.7 acres of privately-owned land from two landowners along Route 139, along with a portion of Route 139. Remaining tax parcels would continue to be zoned as Rural Residential.

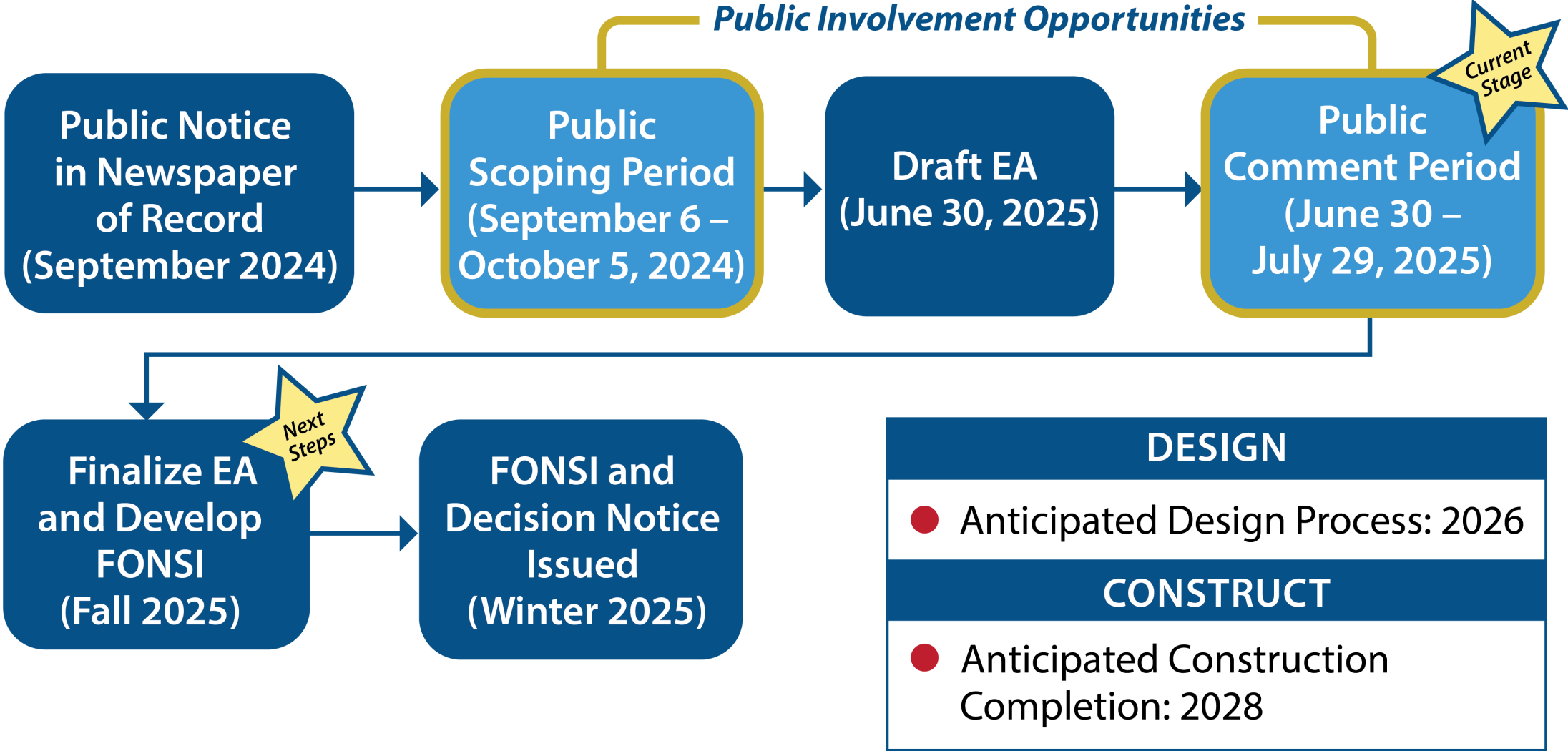


Additional Resources

- **Socioeconomics:** During closure of the LPOE, local businesses relying on visitors traveling through the LPOE may experience decreased patronage. GSA would maintain points of access to the Pleasant Valley Farms property and railroad tracks throughout construction.
- **Recreation:** Recreation was carried forward for full EA analysis in response to comments received during the public scoping period.
 - The 24-month LPOE closure and associated detours would slightly increase travel time and potentially result in delays for users crossing the border to access recreational opportunities.
 - The detour would be more impactful for cyclists crossing the border to access the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail, compared to recreational users traveling by vehicle.
 - Cyclists who are rerouted at the Richford LPOE would need to travel an additional 3.7 miles to reach the Pinnacle LPOE.



Estimated Environmental Assessment (EA) Timeline





Tell us what you think!

Comments must be submitted by July 29.

In Person: Fill out a comment form and leave it here tonight. A stenographer will capture comments voiced during tonight's meeting.

Send written comments to:

U.S. General Services Administration – Region 1
Alan Bombardier, Project Manager
Design & Construction Division
50 South Main Street, Suite 136
St. Albans, VT 05478

Send email to:

Richford.LPOE@gsa.gov
Reference “Richford LPOE EA” in
the subject line



Commenting Etiquette

- We will start with participants in the room and then move to the virtual attendees.
- For those in the room please use the microphone.
- Say and spell your first and last name at the start of your comment.
- Remain quiet while others are speaking.
- Verbal comments will be held to a 2-minute time limit.
- If time allows, participants may speak again after all commenters have had the opportunity to speak. Additional comments may also be submitted in writing.
- A recording of the meeting will be made available on the project website, and your comments will be included in the administrative record.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

