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## How to Get Your Share of \$2.8 Billion in Transportation Funding

Over the next two decades, an estimated \$2.8 billion will be invested to maintain and enhance the Lehigh Valley's transportation network, but if your community wants a share of that pie, the time to act is now.

Lehigh Valley Transportation Study, part of the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, Wednesday sent out an Open Call for Plans and Projects that could be added to the updated Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

Getting on the LRTP is the only way a project, study or plan can get the kind of federal and state money that is currently being used to fund such projects as widening Route 22, rebuilding the Cementon Bridge or replacing a fleet of LANta buses.

The current call for plans and projects will remain open until 4 p.m., January 25, 2019, but then the window closes until the next Open Call in 2023.

Plans that make it on to the LRTP will become part of FutureLV: The Regional Plan for Lehigh and Northampton Counties. And while that doesn't guarantee they'll be funded, it's the only way priority projects and plans can be funneled into the four-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Over the next four years, the current TIP includes more than \$534 million to fund more than 100 road, bridge, trail, bicycle, pedestrian and transit projects and plans.

While county and municipal governments typically make most of the requests to get into the plan, most anyone, including non-profit and for-profit agencies and individuals are eligible to propose a project. The Commission is making a concerted effort to reach every community because it's important not only to prioritizing what projects should be done, but to build a list of unmet needs that may determine whether the region's is eligible for more federal funding.

"The projects and plans that we receive are critical to determining where and how our infrastructure system is maintained and prepared for the future," said LVPC Executive Director Becky Bradley, who also serves as LVTS Secretary. "The open call for plans and projects provides insight on what county and municipal governments, non-profits and the private sector value, and allows the Commission to invest collaboratively over the next two decades."

Anyone proposing a plan or project must attend one of two instructional meetings scheduled for December 12 at the LVPC offices. More information about how to propose a plan or project can be found at [lvpc.org](http://lvpc.org).

Anyone can apply, but not every project is eligible. All projects will be submitted to a rigid criteria based on need, safety, environmental impact and whether they are consistent with the FutureLV: The Regional Plan.

So why is all this so important? Because everything from the region's commuting and development patterns to its air quality and health of its economy are impacted by what's in the LTRP.

"Quality, reliable and prepared roads, bridges, transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities underpin society and commerce," Bradley said. "The federal and state governments rely on the LVPC to coordinate and invest tax dollars in the transportation system to ensure mobility and access as our community continues to grow."