



Lehigh Valley Transportation Study

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Four-Year Plan Invests \$452 Million in Transportation Projects

Nearly \$452 million will be invested in communities across the Lehigh Valley for road, bridge, trail, multimodal and transit projects over the next four years.

The first ever Lehigh Valley plan to include performance metrics continues key road and bridge projects along major roadways like Routes 22 and 378, and advances improvement projects in dozens of communities, while putting a greater focus on making the region more welcoming to pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and people with disabilities.

The 2021-24 TIP is the first plan drafted under the new policies of *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*, which was adopted in late 2019, and the *Walk/RollLV: Active Transportation Plan*, which was finalized this month.

The plan includes \$6.2 million for multi-use trails and bicycle projects and another \$2.3 million for pedestrian and safe routes to schools projects.

“Walking, riding, rolling and driving are all being looked at as equal modes of travel in this plan,” said LVPC Executive Director Becky Bradley, during the first of three public hearings that gave people a chance to review the TIP. “Until recently, we tended to favor cars and trucks. This is designed to bring about culture change.”

The TIP was the subject of virtual public hearings on May 20, May 27 and June 3. The plan will remain open for public review and comment until June 16. Comments can be made at <https://lvpc.org/tip.html>

The TIP is a four-year plan that is generally 80% funded through Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) dollars, with the remaining 20% coming from state and local funding sources. It's fiscally constrained, which means no more money can be budgeted than is expected to come in over the four years. As such, there's always more need than money, so projects go through a rigorous vetting process that includes detailed air quality, equity and environmental justice analyses, as well as analysis of cost and need.

For this plan, more than 120 projects made the cut, with \$167.6 million being invested in road, trail and multimodal projects, \$134.5 million for bridge projects and \$149.7 million invested to operate and improve the region's transit system.

The four-year TIP is updated every two years and the new TIP is scheduled to take effect in October of 2020. Nearly 90% of the money budgeted for roads, trails, multimodal projects and bridges will be spent to continue projects already started on the previous TIP.

“While we are always eager to add new projects and programs to the Transportation Improvement Program, the TIP is, after all, a living document, where many of its elements require significant time for implementation from original programming to successful completion,” said LVPC Director of Transportation and Data Management Charlie Doyle.

The 2021-2024 TIP will be the first in the region that’s based on three new federally set performance measures designed to reduce injuries, save lives and better manage maintenance of the region’s transportation network. Set by FHWA and most recently adopted by the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study (LVTS) in January of 2020, the safety measures require recording data on fatalities and injuries, and setting new safety goals to reduce those.

A second set of measures, adopted in 2018, collects data on National Highway System and National Interstate System pavement and bridge surface conditions, and sets standards to improve those conditions.

The third set of measures was added in 2019 to collect data on congestion and air quality impacts, by cars and trucks, on the National Highway System and National Interstate System. With all three measures in place for the first time, the goal is clear: Collect data and target transportation investments to improve the system.

Annually, the FHWA will determine whether PennDOT and the LVTS have met or made progress in meeting their goals.

“We have always focused on safety, congestion and asset management,” said Michael Rebert, PennDOT District 5 Executive and chairman of the LVTS Coordinating Committee. “The performance metrics will help us determine if our projects are having the intended impact, or whether we need to adjust things in the future.”

The public comment period remains open for another two weeks.

“This is probably the most collaborative and open TIP process I’ve ever been part of,” Rebert said. “There’s been a lot of positive dialogue and a lot of public input. It’s a trend I hope continues into the future.”

The full project list and an interactive map with details of every project can be found at <https://lvpc.org/2021-2024-tip.html>