



STEPHEN REPASCH  
Chair

GREG ZEBROWSKI  
Vice Chair

STEVEN GLICKMAN  
Treasurer

BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP  
Executive Director

## Still Time to Comment on *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*

The Lehigh Valley is growing fast and the world is changing even faster.

*FutureLV: The Regional Plan* is designed to help us prepare for all that change as a thriving region works to manage its growth and prepare for the arrival of more people, more visitors, more online shopping, more autonomous vehicles and well, just plain more of almost everything.

After nearly three years that included more than 170 public meetings and events and participation by 8,500 residents, a draft of the plan is now available at LVPC.org and at public offices across the region. Serving as the plan for Lehigh and Northampton counties, **FutureLV will remain open for public comment through September 23.**

The plan includes an innovative approach toward managing a successful region's continued growth, while protecting the key aspects – farmland, open space, scenic vistas, prime locations – that are so important in defining its high quality of life. But the challenges ahead are many, and will require we work together.

"*FutureLV* is a blueprint for a vibrant, sustainable, resilient and forward-moving region," said Becky Bradley, LVPC Executive Director. "Rising to the challenges before the community, being mindful of the diverse and important assets we have and positioning the Lehigh Valley for the future the community wants and needs, will require everyone to contribute. The most successful regions in the US and World are built on collaboration, partnerships and a collective understanding that everyone is an owner. We must start now."

The plan strives to bring about five goals:

1. Efficient and Coordinated Development Pattern
2. Connected-Mixed Transportation Plan
3. Protected and Vibrant Environment
4. Competitive, Creative and Sustainable Environment
5. Safe, Healthy, Inclusive and Livable Communities

The plan, designed to carry the region to 2045 and beyond, is built around a Centers and Corridors concept crafted to build up economic centers, create more walkable neighborhoods and enhance our transportation network. It lays out 57 Centers -- ranging from downtown Allentown to Madison Farms in Bethlehem Township to Portland Borough's commercial district where people live, work or shop. It recommends virtually all future development be focused around those centers, or along the road-and-trail-based corridors that connect them. Doing that will help preserve the region's farmland and open space, while driving activity into business districts and creating more walkable neighborhoods. The resulting density will increase the activity and vibrancy of neighborhoods, while strengthening the transportation system in a way that makes it more usable for pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers.

As the region grows to a projected 837,000 by 2,045, creating more transportation options will be necessary to help contend with funding that is falling behind demand. Recommended options to get people out of their cars include supporting more LANta express bus service, more bike paths and a street system that allows greater – and safer – pedestrian access.

“We’re at a tipping point that requires we take action now or risk losing the things we love,” Bradley said. “We must reuse, recycle and revitalize. We’re laying the foundation for culture change.”

For the first time since 1964, the regional plan also includes the Long-Range Transportation Plan, which lays out the spending of \$2.2 billion for more than 220 projects and mass transit over the next 25 years, but also details \$4.4 billion in needed projects that aren’t funded – revealing the transportation challenges ahead.

But among those challenges will be opportunities to prepare for a future dominated by the impacts of 3D printing, autonomous everything, blockchain currency, the shared economy and the decline of in-store retail. The 188-page plan includes nine special sections that cover key issues for the region including, future forces, farming, climate change, healthy communities, entrepreneurialism and regionalism.

Perhaps the most striking part of the plan are conceptual renderings that reimagine what eight Lehigh Valley locations could be, under the right circumstances, if the policies of the plan are followed.

One shows how the Delaware & Lehigh Trail could become a pedestrian and commuter corridor, another depicts how the former industrial sites like Lehigh Valley Dairy or Dixie Cup could be transformed into new industrial maker space with green roofs and solar panels, while a third reimagines Hanover Avenue as a vibrant, green neighborhood with a bike lane.

Evolving retail sites like the Whitehall Mall or Palmer Park Mall sites would become office, retail and housing districts, while MacArthur Road could become a tree-lined, pedestrian-friendly thoroughfare with express bus lanes.

Like much of *FutureLV*, the renderings are not prescriptions of what must happen, but rather possibilities of the opportunities ahead.

The plan will be available for comment at <https://www.lvpc.org/futurelv.html> through September 23.

After the comment period, the plan will be revised, based on the comments, finalized and taken for approval before Lehigh County Commissioners, Northampton County Council and Lehigh Valley Transportation Study (LVTS), which serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for transportation projects in the region. The plan is scheduled to be approved by LVTS before the current Long-Range Transportation Plan expires in October.

In addition to finding FutureLV at LVPC.org, it will also be at public locations across the region, including the LVPC offices, PennDOT District 5 offices in Allentown, LANTA’s Allentown offices, Allentown Public Library, Bethlehem Area Public Library and the Easton Area Public Library. Comments can be delivered on the website, by calling the LVPC at 610-264-4544 or by email at [planning@lvpc.org](mailto:planning@lvpc.org).