



## Lehigh Valley Transportation Study

**MICHAEL REBERT**  
Chair, Coordinating Committee

**RAYMOND C. GREEN**  
Chair, Technical Committee

**BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP**  
Secretary,  
Coordinating Committee +  
Technical Committee

# Freight Leaders Tout Linking Land Use and Transportation

How land is developed impacts the transportation system, just as where transportation investment are made affects how land will be developed. Yet, in most regions the comprehensive land use plan and transportation plan are separate documents.

And that was the case in the Lehigh Valley, until October, when *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* was approved by the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study and LVPC. For the first time, the region's plan links \$2.5 billion in transportation investment over the next 25 years to land use policies designed to build active centers and corridors, while preserving farmland and open space.

As members of Multi-State Freight Working Group met at LVPC in October, some of the Northeast's foremost transportation and freight leaders viewed the concept as something that could, and maybe should, be duplicated across the nation.

"That's been a challenge for us forever," said Gerry Bogacz, Planning Director for the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council. "What you're doing here is way ahead of the game."

FutureLV is based on a "Centers and Corridors" concept that recommends most development be located around activity centers and the corridors that link them. It also includes a transportation plan that links investment into roads, trails, bridges, pedestrian safety and transit around that concept, effectively putting the region's money where its policy is.

"The way this plan looks at warehouse development and transportation is a model for others to use this kind of thought process," said Mary Ameen, Executive Director of the New Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA), referring to a section of FutureLV that recommends any new warehouse development be done with an eye to how those buildings can be adapted to other uses 10 to 20 years down the road.

The Multi-State Freight Working Group was formed to allow planning organizations in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Connecticut to meet to discuss freight issues and share best practices. The October 8 meeting was held at LVPC, in part because of the Lehigh Valley is the nation's fastest-growing freight corridor. FutureLV was among several issues covered during the meeting, including one detailed by NJTPA Freight Planning Director Anne Strauss-Wieder that has become an issue in the Lehigh Valley: The truck driver shortage.

"It's the No. 1 issue nationwide for the trucking industry," Strauss-Wieder told more than three dozen transportation planning officials. "We're 60,000 truck drivers short, nationwide. It's an economic issue. If you can't get coffee to Dunkin, then Dunkin can't drive America."

Semi-autonomous trucks will eventually change the job, but drivers will still be needed, Stauss-Wieder said. Eliminating the alarming shortage will require better amenities such as lounge areas for drivers, more places to park, better recruitment of drivers that include more women, better training programs and a willingness to work with authorities on regulations to enable drivers as young as 18 years old to begin training at multi-state haulers.

“It’s not just about pay,” Strauss-Wieder said. “It’s working conditions, training, regulations and really, changing the perception of what it is to be a truck driver.”

The next meeting of the Multi-State Freight Working Group will be scheduled for spring of 2020.