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Last Chance to Get Your Piece of the \$2.8 Billion Transportation Funding Pie

After more than 80 people representing 49 Lehigh Valley municipalities, several non-profits and private citizens attended Open Call project meetings last week, the LVPC has scheduled a last chance Open Call, to give the remaining 13 municipalities, non-profits and individuals an opportunity to get their projects into the 20-year Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

The final Open Call meeting – and final chance to compete for a share of an expected \$2.8 billion in federal transportation funding – will be held from **9 a.m.-10 a.m., January 3**, at the LVPC offices.

Over the next two decades, an estimated \$2.8 billion will be invested to maintain and enhance the Lehigh Valley's transportation network, but 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 when the LRTP is updated in 2023.

Projects and 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 have attended one of two instructional meetings that were held December 12 at the LVPC offices, or the upcoming meeting January 3. More information about how to propose a plan or project can be found at 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 federal and regional goals.