



## Executive Summary

Development. Technology. Climate change. Equity. The future is coming at us faster than ever before and the Lehigh Valley is in position to lead the way. *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* sets the vision and direction to carry this region to 2045 and beyond.

Seven decades of uncommon growth and a unique identity -- built on a foundation of beautiful natural resources, a strong workforce and close access to most anything anyone could want -- has created a prime opportunity to compete in the global economy.

The region's town centers can be the focus of new growth, while its historic, cultural and natural assets remain a selling point for people and businesses looking for a high quality of life. An already-robust transportation system is poised to become the multimodal network of the future, connecting walkable and bikeable neighborhoods, workers and job centers.

But getting there will require overcoming the challenges of balancing growth against preservation and bringing about profound change while resources remain limited.

This plan provides a blueprint for managing future growth, making the most of our assets and creating a Lehigh Valley where everyone has access to health, opportunity and a livable neighborhood.

FutureLV strives to achieve five primary goals for the region:

### **1. Efficient and Coordinated Development Pattern**

A booming economy, beautiful topography and a diverse variety of arts and cultural activities define a region that is growing in people, jobs and opportunities. Managing that growth is key as our 62 municipalities strive to build on a regional sense of place that attracts more than 4,000 new residents every year. Directing growth toward a series of centers and corridors will help create the dynamic communities of the future, while preserving our natural beauty, history and agricultural land. Working together as a region, we can prepare for a future in which lifestyles, technology and climate are changing dramatically.

### **2. Connected Mixed-Transportation Region**

A seamless network where roads, trails, sidewalks and technology connect everyone to every place – that's the goal. For the Lehigh Valley to reach its potential, we must design a transportation system that is welcoming to drivers, walkers and rollers – regardless of age, income or ability – and lay the groundwork for the next generation of technology and communications. Our network of the future will provide transportation and communications options that connect work, home and places where people want to go, locally and regionally.

Compact walkable, bikeable and safe neighborhoods improve job accessibility and enable people to spend less time in a car. Investing in existing roads, bridges, transit lines and utilities,

while using next generation technology to manage freight traffic and enable new job opportunities, will create a dynamic system that improves the flow of goods, services and people.

### **3. Protected and Vibrant Environment**

Lehigh Valley residents have come to consider our urban parks, rolling farmlands and scenic vistas as core to the regional identity. Whether it's enabling people to have active lifestyles, providing food or helping to make the region more resilient against climate change, those assets provide health, economic and environmental benefits that are key to our success.

Protecting our land, water and air preserves our region's character, and makes it an attractive place to live, work and visit. Enhancing those assets will improve our quality of life and puts the region on a path to a sustainable future.

### **4. Competitive, Creative and Sustainable Region**

Our dynamic economy draws on our location, people and natural assets. Nearly 100,000 people commute to the Lehigh Valley daily for its bustling jobs market. Another 15 million flock here each year to experience recreation and cultural attractions. To keep the region's advantage in a global economy, we need to leverage our prime location and unique character, diversify the regional economy and train the workforce of tomorrow. A key part of that plan includes supporting agriculture and natural resources as economic assets, and giving everyone equal access to attainable housing, jobs and transportation. Cooperation among local governments and institutions will be essential to reaching these targets and preparing the region for the challenges to come.

### **5. Safe, Healthy, Inclusive and Livable Communities**

The Lehigh Valley's identity begins and ends with quality of life. It rests in safe, walkable neighborhoods where housing is attainable and public space is designed for everyone. We'll get there through targeted investments, innovative community design and the integration of housing, jobs and transportation that everyone can use. The American Dream is here for the taking.

## **Centers & Corridors**

In order to maximize a limited transportation funding budget and prepare for future investments that capitalize on our existing infrastructure, it was critical to identify our assets. Centers & Corridors is the core concept for planning the future of our transportation network. The goal is to concentrate future development in mixed-use locations that will increase the accessibility and diversity of housing, strengthen retail, support more active lifestyles and reduce sprawl. This shift in development will help meet growing demand for housing, while relieving development pressure on our remaining farms and open space.

Centers are opportunities for mixed-use areas with economic districts near residential neighborhoods that are interconnected by busy roads, trails and transit corridors. This network already makes up the economic and transportation backbone of our region and offers the best and most sustainable opportunity for meeting the future needs of our community.

Corridors are opportunities for linear mixed-use districts that connect centers with high-quality roads, trails and mass transit lines. Each corridor contains a variety of uses and development types that help to support all transportation modes. Anchored by a center on each end, corridors connect more residential neighborhoods to social, cultural and economic opportunities and make the Lehigh Valley a more livable, equitable and connected place.

For the first time since 1964, FutureLV has combined the two-county comprehensive plan and the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The \$2.5 billion LRTP covers more than 240 road, bridge, public transit, pedestrian safety, trail and multimodal commuter corridor projects through 2045 in Lehigh and Northampton counties. It also includes an unmet needs list of 147 projects, totaling \$4 billion in costs, that cannot be funded based on the money expected for that period.

## **Long-Range Transportation Plan Projects & Selection Process**

The Long-Range Transportation Plan spans a more than 25-year horizon, beginning in 2019 and continuing through 2045, with a budget of \$2,480,130,108. The budget for projects and programs was calculated by referencing years 2019-2020 of the existing Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), years 2021-2032 of the 2021 Financial Guidance twelve-year expenditure projections published by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, and years 2033-2045 projections of future funding at a 3% inflation rate.

Funding stages for the Long-Range Transportation Plan consist of short-range, mid-range, and long-range elements. The short-range element is comprised of programming for projects and plans included in the 2019-2022 TIP, with a budget of \$534,440,108. Projects and programs included in the TIP are considered high-priority, having phases of work started or completed during the four-year program timeframe.

The budget for the mid-range element is \$815,772,065. It is comprised of projects that were programmed onto, but not completed during the 2019-2022 TIP timeframe, and projects listed on the State Transportation Commission's 2019 Twelve Year Program. The long-range element covers years 13 through 25, calculated using a 3% annual inflation rate. The long-range element budget consists of \$1,129,917,935 and comprises of projects programmed onto, but not completed during the State Transportation Commission's Twelve Year Program, as well as candidate projects or plans selected from the FutureLV: Open Call for Plans and Projects list.

## **Transportation Public Outreach Process & Implementation**

The FutureLV: Open Call for Plans and Projects program was a formal process for public outreach to 62 municipalities, two counties, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and potential project sponsors, fulfilling State Long Range Transportation Plan goals of extensive public and stakeholder involvement in project programming. It was open to the public, providing everyone an opportunity to propose a project or program that will improve operating efficiency and preservation of transportation assets for all modes within the region. These plans and projects were submitted during an open call period from December 5, 2018 through January 25, 2019.

## **This is Your Plan**

More than two years in the making, *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* has been the collaboration of dozens of government and community organizations, and nearly 8,500 people who attended the more than 170 public meetings and events that went into creating a vision for the region's future. That vision has been established through a continuing, collective and comprehensive planning process, reliant on contributions from

the entire Lehigh Valley. Tell us what you think. The plan remains open for comment through September 23. Comments can be made by calling 610-264-4544 or by emailing [planning@lvpc.org](mailto:planning@lvpc.org). You can find the full plan at public buildings around Lehigh and Northampton counties or at [www.lvpc.org/futurelv.html](http://www.lvpc.org/futurelv.html). The future is yours...