

Attention walkers and bikers: LVPC drafting a Regional Active Transportation Plan (5)

The Bethlehem Gadfly Gadfly's posts, Serious Issues, Walkability and Bikeability January 15, 2019
(5th in a series of posts on Walkability and Bikeability)

From the Gadfly's clipping file from December—

Tom Shortell, "Road Warrior: Is biking or walking to work in the Lehigh Valley's future?" Morning Call, December 7, 2018.
Work/Roll LV

Next meeting Wednesday, January 23, 3:00 – 4:30 PM, Northampton Community College/Fowler Family Southside Center, 511 E. 3rd Street, Bethlehem, PA 18015

LVPC: Walk/Bike Lehigh Valley wikimap

"If you hate your morning commute, would you consider a walk instead? Or a bike ride? I'm not suggesting you quit your job and enjoy a brisk morning stroll, as pleasant as that might sound. But instead of being secluded in steel box, hurtling down the street at high speeds next to stressed out people doing the exact same thing, would you jump on a bike and pedal?"

"For the first time, the Lehigh Valley is getting serious about promoting walking or biking as a way to get around the region. The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission has created a special committee to draft a Regional Active Transportation Plan. A final report is due in May."

"One interesting [idea] being pursued by LVPC, local government and some nonprofits is building a better trail and sidewalk system. It's a radically different way of thinking about how we use the transportation grid."

"Since World War II, the Lehigh Valley has been designed around cars. Trolley and railroad tracks were dug up to allow smoother car rides, and

rural townships surrounding the cities transformed into suburbs where driving is the only reasonable way to get around. But promoting trails and sidewalks has a certain logic to it. The cheapest way to alleviate congestion isn't to build more roads but to rely less on cars and more on our own feet."

'The culture will need to change, too, for this plan to succeed. If we expect people to bike to work, for example, they'll need training on how to bike in traffic and how to change a flat tire. Motorists need reminders on how to share the road with bikers.'

"Personally, I don't expect this to be a game-changing plan for most commuters. The [2010 Census](#) found just 0.2 percent of Lehigh Valley workers biked to their jobs every day. People who walk tallied just 2 percent of the workforce. If this strategy doubles that combined total to 4 percent, we're not exactly redefining transportation here."

"But the project can still be worthwhile despite those limitations. Creating a more pedestrian friendly environment can have positive effects on our culture, health, quality of life and economy. And that's worth exploring."