A Major Correction is needed to the Comprehensive Plan – Transportation Section

The Plan should reference the Lebanon County Bicycle Transportation Map which has been available since 2010. The Plan uses the Lebanon County scenic bike rides/tourism map and mistakes these roads as being the significant transportation roads for bicyclists. LVBC provided notice of this mistake in 2010.

- LVBC requests that the bike routes identified on the Transportation Map, located after page 160 be removed. LVBC recommends that the following narrative be included in the Transportation Section of the Plan due to the cost of adding bicycle roads to the existing map or including a new map.

A Lebanon County Bicycle Transportation Map has been developed by Lebanon Valley Bicycle Coalition, with the technical and financial assistance of LEBCO MPO and Penn DOT. This Map is available at [http://www.lebcounty.org/Planning/Pages/MPO.aspx](http://www.lebcounty.org/Planning/Pages/MPO.aspx). Roads are identified that are most important for bicyclists’ travel in the County as well as roads that have scenic, tourism value. Roads and road segments have been identified that have four feet or greater shoulders.

The purpose of the Bicycle Transportation Map is to enable planners, municipalities, Penn DOT, developers to know which roads should be improved when road segments are scheduled for resurfacing, rehabilitation, reconstruction. An equally important function of the Map is to identify which roads should not become less safe due to changes being made in the roadways.

These roads have been prioritized above other state and municipal roads in Lebanon County because they are deemed most important for connectivity.

Reference to LVBC (page 182)

The description of Lebanon Valley Bicycle Coalition is very dated. It is not a Club.

- LVBC requests that this reference be removed. If this request is denied, then the description of LVBC found at [www.bikelebanon.org](http://www.bikelebanon.org) should be used or state that Lebanon Valley Bicycle Coalition is an advocacy organization for safer, better bicycling in Lebanon County and Pennsylvania.

Descriptions of scenic bicycle rides

- LVBC requests that these descriptions be removed. Presently, the scenic bicycle map is being revised for republication. A specific ride or rides may be eliminated to allow for advertising space. Revisions can occur throughout the life of this Plan.

The illustration of a complete street (page 166) excludes bicyclists. The text includes bicycling.

“As discussed above, new streets constructed within the urban areas of the Region should incorporate “Complete Street” designs that balance the needs of all users including bicyclists. The characteristics that make these streets safe for pedestrians have a similar effect on their use by bicyclists. Narrower cartways with pedestrian crossings all tend to lower vehicle speeds and alert motorists of the need to be aware of other users of the streetscape. This should facilitate a safe and convenient system of local roads and sidewalks that will accommodate enjoyable and functional bicycling.”
LVBC greatly appreciates the inclusion of **Complete Streets** in the Plan; however, the illustration does not include bicyclists. Most illustrations for *complete streets* do include bicyclists as shown below.

- LVBC requests that the Plan’s illustration be replaced by an illustration that includes bicycling. If one of these three are not acceptable, others can be found.

**Improving existing roads identified by LVBC**

The Plan states:

“As presented earlier in this Chapter, many of the Region’s collector roads lack sufficient shoulder width. At the same time these roads have relatively high traffic volumes and speed limits

*Local Officials should seek to improve the shoulders along these designated bike routes as a priority or as opportunities arise through programmed road projects or as part of adjoining land use development projects*.”

LVBC appreciates very much that the Plan wants collector roads that have poor facilities for bicyclists to be improved as soon as financially feasible. However, the Plan does not identify these roads, nor which of these roads are owned and maintained by Penn DOT and which are the responsibility of either N. Londonderry Township or S. Londonderry Township.

- LVBC has made requests for these roads to be identified because Penn DOT roads can be brought to the attention of LEBCO MPO for inclusion on the LRTP and eventually the TIP. Regular scheduled resurfacing by Penn DOT may allow for improvements
SR 241 has been resurfaced and where there were noncompliant edge line rumbles, they have been covered and the danger removed. In 2012, a grate was replaced at the request of LVBC due to the risk for bicyclists to crash. A major section of SR 117 is scheduled for resurfacing. Palmyra Bellegrove Road was resurfaced in 2012. The noncompliant edge line rumbles received one layer of asphalt which reduces the risk of bicycle crashes. A second layer is needed on both this road and Ridge Road.

LVBC has worked with Penn DOT County Maintenance for several years on a short section of Palmyra Bellegrove Road that has curves and poor sighting. The photograph below was taken prior to Penn DOT’s shaving some of the hillside at our request in 2010 and the recent resurfacing which provided a few more inches of shoulder. The noncompliant edge line rumbles added to the risk. This and other photographs were provided to alert Penn DOT to the need to fix this section for bicyclists and pedestrians’ safety. It is conceivable that with the Region’s support that additional work could be undertaken. Part of the problem is that a heavy rain will wash debris onto the slight shoulder. At the very least, signage could be erected prior to the curve that bicyclists may be present. Experienced cyclists ride far enough in the travel lane to be seen by motorists and they wear high visibility clothing.

LVBC supports requiring a developer to improve the shoulder widths on roads impacted by a project.
The Plan provides for Tasks 66, 67, 68 and 69 which will benefit bicyclists.

LVBC is very pleased to note that Tasks 66 and 67 recommend upgrading arterial and collector roads to minimum recommended standards. Such actions will greatly improve bicycling facilities on these roadways. Going beyond minimum would, of course, improve bicycling safety.

Task 68 for local road improvements should also improve bicycling conditions.

Task 69 in regard to adopting uniform road design criteria would be most helpful for bicyclists. LVBC recommends that the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities be used as well as other resources available from Penn DOT and national organizations including NACTO.

The Plan provides strategies to lessen the risks for bicyclists. Travel lane “dieting” and road markings are not included.

The Plan states

“While lower posted speed limits have helped in some instances, enforcement in rural areas is difficult and motorists tend to disobey what they perceive as unnecessarily low speed limits. Cycling awareness signs and bicycle route signs can be helpful in alerting motorists of likely bicycle traffic.”

LVBC is pleased that signage is recommended.

In 2009, MUTCD approved Bikes May Use Full Lane signage; Penn DOT subsequently approved the signs in 2011. The other sign that is used frequently is Begin Right Turn Yield to Bikes. Signs that direct bicyclists to Lebanon, Hershey, Elizabethtown, Campbelltown, Palmyra, Mt. Gretna, etc. and provide distances would be very helpful.

- LVBC recommends that MUTCD approved road markings be included as a strategy. Appropriate bicycle symbols alert motorists that bicyclists may also be using the same roadway. Shared lane markings are an approved MUTCD road symbol application.

- LVBC recommends that travel lane “dieting” become part of the mix to make roads safer for bicyclists and pedestrians. For the past two years, LVBC has worked with Penn DOT to have several state road travel lanes reduced in width after resurfacing and before restriping was done. This allowed for shoulders to be widened. Narrower travel lanes also reduce speeds travelled by motorists. The Smart Transportation Guidebook states “Encouraging alternative transportation modes is a key principle of smart growth development. All reconstruction or restriping projects should routinely consider the best means of accommodating bicyclists.”

For state roads, Penn DOT traffic engineers determine whether road “dieting” is acceptable. Identifying the roads that are possible candidates for “dieting” can be undertaken now and reviewed by Penn DOT traffic engineers as their schedules permit.

- LVBC recommends the following editing – Cycling awareness signs, road markings and bicycle route signs can be helpful in alerting motorists of likely bicycle traffic. Dieting travel lanes, where possible, will provide greater shoulder widths and reduce driving speeds.
The Plan does not identify the roads that are described as very dangerous for bicyclists.

The Plan states

“Furthermore, the sinuous alignments of these rural roads often reduce roadway visibility around sharp turns, over abrupt rises and below quick dips. A motorist travelling 45 miles per hour, or faster, along one of these roads has very little reaction time and distance when overtaking or approaching a slow moving bicycle. One such unfortunate conflict between a cyclist and a motor vehicle can prove deadly to the cyclist who is impacted or the motorist who swerves off of the road to avoid impact with the cyclist and loses control of the motor vehicle. The LVBC designated bike routes follow these roads for many miles, particularly within South Londonderry Township.”

Due to the fact that the Plan has used the wrong map to denote the roads prioritized as bicycle transportation routes, there will be a different set of roads to review.

Examples: Lawn Road from SR 322 to SR 241 and SR341 to the Dauphin County line; Gravel Hill and Ridge Roads and Palmyra Bellegrove Road in N. Londonderry Township. Lingle Avenue that includes all three municipalities

- LVBC requests that South and North Londonderry Townships partner with LVBC and other bicyclists to identify the rural roads depicted as having sinuous alignments.

- LVBC requests that this description be revised or removed as it is based on the Scenic Bicycle Rides and not the Transportation Map.

The Plan proposes bicyclists not use connector roads that cannot be made sufficiently safe

“If none of these measures can be accomplished effectively, then local officials should suggest that the LVBC redirect cyclists to fewer and safer routes. It may be unrealistic for the Region to protect all of those identified bike routes advocated by local bike clubs and cycling enthusiasts.”

The Plan recommends that LVBC redirect cyclists to fewer and safer routes. LVBC cannot direct bicyclists where to ride. There is a wide range of bicyclists from experts to beginners. There are bicyclists who have ridden for decades, and others who have just begun to use their bicycles. Please note that many of the roads designated as transportation roads for bicyclists are the responsibility of Penn DOT and not the Region’s responsibility. If the Region and LEBCO MPO support improvements for these identified state roads, there will be a greater possibility for having bicycle facilities improved. An example is Lingle Avenue which is located in all three municipalities.

The Lebanon County Bicycle Transportation Map identifies roads that are important for bicyclists to reach destinations and continue into other counties. The Map is not a “suitability map” which would classify the roads as to level of comfort to bicyclists. LVBC will be pleased to partner with the region’s municipalities to develop a suitability map for bicyclists

Also, if bicyclists live on a road with sinuous alignments, abrupt rises, and/or quick dips, they still have to use the road as they have no choice.

Example: A commuter bicyclist lives in Bellegrove and commutes regularly to the Giant Arena. Palmyra Bellegrove Road is the road that he uses when he leaves his driveway. Yes, there are sinuous alignments in one section of this Road, (noted earlier in this document) but there are no alternative roads.
Example: A North Londonderry Township resident bikes to and from his home, south of Palmyra northward to his destination. The first road that he uses is Lingle Avenue which lacks good shoulders, has dangerous grates that must be avoided and there is considerable traffic during periods of rush hour. The road is not rural and does not fit the description provided in the Plan.

Dangerous grate on Lingle Avenue that must be avoided by bicyclists

- LVBC requests that this statement, “If none of these measures can be accomplished effectively, then local officials should suggest that the LVBC redirect cyclists to fewer and safer routes. It may be unrealistic for the Region to protect all of those identified bike routes advocated by local bike clubs and cycling enthusiasts.” be deleted for the reasons noted above.

Advocacy organizations including LVBC understand that there are limited funding sources as well as right of way limitations. They also realize that bicyclists need good skills and an understanding of how best to ride their bikes and obey the traffic laws. Nowhere in the Plan are recommendations for the Palmyra Area School District or the Palmyra Area Recreation and Parks Commission to offer bicycle safety classes or to teach some of the traffic laws that bicyclists must obey. There are many resources provided by Penn DOT’s Safe Routes to School Program. The Police Departments with their Bike Patrol Officers can also undertake this endeavor when and if time and finances permit. Municipal websites and newsletters can communicate bicycle safety information. LVBC does mentor and educate.

The Smart Transportation Guidebook states “bicyclist education is highly recommended for supplementing all facility types. Well designed bike facilities cannot substitute for good judgment on the part of the cyclist.” Penn DOT has undertaken a major effort to expand bicycle education resources through the website, www.saferoutespa.org.

Bicyclists’ wrong way riding and making careless stops at Stop signs and Traffic Signals are causes for bicyclist/motorist crashes. Motorists turn into the paths of cyclists instead of yielding and pass without providing adequate space. Distracted drivers pose a great risk for bicyclists. It is not a difficult and time consuming task to educate about these wrong behaviors in order to make bicycling safer on urban, suburban and rural roads.

For your information, LVBC has made major efforts to educate the motoring and bicycling public by airing PSAs on local radio stations, having articles published in newspapers and municipal newsletters, sponsoring bicycle skills classes, and installing signs that alert motorists to pass bicyclists legally. At a Bike Summit in 2010, municipalities were encouraged to apply for a Bicycle Friendly Community status from the League of American Bicyclists. Perhaps, the Palmyra Region would be willing to undertake this endeavor.

- LVBC recommends that a statement be included in the Plan that education of bicyclists will lessen the possibility of crashes and resulting injuries of bicyclists on the roads and shared use paths in the Region.
The Plan suggests bicyclists be directed to one or two roads

“Instead local Officials may want to steer bicyclists to one or two designated roads where targeted cartway, shoulder and signage improvements can be accomplished.”

LVBC cannot fathom how one or two roads can enable all bicyclists, including the three municipalities’ residents and bicyclists who are traveling through, to reach their varied destinations.

How does a bicyclist leave his home to reach these one or two designated roads?

There are major bicycle fundraisers that use many roads in the townships; these include fundraisers to eradicate diseases such as cancer and MS, raise money for housing needs, agricultural preservation and bicycle safety. Harrisburg Bicycle Club offers at least two rides each week during the Spring- Fall season and these rides may include many roads in the Palmyra Region as their rides range from 20 – 35 miles.

Bicycling is an activity that enables many to have better health and fitness.

Bicycling is a tourism niche and Lebanon County has great scenery including farmland and historic sites. The purpose of the Lebanon County Scenic Bike Rides Map is to lure bicyclists to come to the County and spend money for lodging, dining, purchasing. Steering them to one or two roads will not suffice.

Most importantly, bicyclists are recognized in the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code as legitimate roadway users; there are only a few roads where bicyclists are prohibited. In the Palmyra Region, the prohibited road is the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

- LVBC requests that this statement to “direct bicyclists to one or two designated roads” be removed.

- LVBC recommends that the Plan include data of crashes between motorists and bicyclists.

Such information about motorist/bicyclist crashes will also enable authorities to determine if it was road conditions or motorist or bicyclist error or a combination that led to the crash. LVBC retrieves such data from Penn DOT and also uses other sources to identify where and why bicycle/motor vehicle crashes occurred. It would of great value if the Region would compile this information.

For example, too many bicyclists do not know that they must ride with the flow of traffic and they ride facing traffic. Parents teach their children to ride illegally and dangerously. This is the cause of many bicyclist/motor vehicle crashes. With the use of data and Police officers’ observations, posting of wrong way riding signage may have value.
Unsafe bicycling conditions that are not noted in the Plan

Intersections with turning lanes

The Plan states

“A similar traffic accident intersection is located at the eastern edge of the Village of Campbelltown where PA Route 117 crosses US Route 322. Again, this busy intersection conveys over 15,000 vehicles per day. This intersection had been notorious for lengthy traffic backups during peak traffic periods due to limited cartway width to accommodate dedicated turning lanes. Also, the angled alignment of PA Route 117 across US Route 33(322) reduces motorist visibility of oncoming vehicles. These conditions promoted risky driver behavior when motorists attempt to beat the stop signal and or swerve around turning vehicles. However, with the recent addition of dedicated left turn lanes on both sides of PA Route 117, this intersection should have greater capacity to safely convey more traffic in a controlled manner.”

The description of this intersection provides a backdrop for how bicyclists must contend with conditions.

This intersection became less safe for bicyclists to travel through or make left turns because the new turn lanes reduced the shoulders and also made it necessary for bicyclists to move away from the shoulder where the right turn lane was added. No bicycle signage has been posted; nor a minimal bike lane provided. In 2010, Penn DOT officials met with LVBC and Senator Mike Folmer to determine what might be done. Restriping the lanes was a suggested, low cost, option. Discussions are ongoing.

Shoulder widths were taken at both the east and west sides of SR 322 to make turning lanes

Bicyclists must move from the shoulder to the travel lane or left turn lane; traffic flow is considerable at rush hours, events at the Hershey venues, and during traffic signal intervals from SR 934/SR 322

- LVBC recommends that the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities be used to make this intersection and other intersections in the Region safer for bicyclists. These include Lingle Avenue and SR 422, SR 322 and Palmyra Road, SR 422 and Forge Road.
Traffic Signals that do not detect bicycles

When traffic signals do not detect bicycles, bicyclists are allowed to go on Red when conditions are safe. However, this is very difficult to do when crossing SR 422 and SR 322. Waiting for a motor vehicle to arrive and trigger the sensors may require a long wait and possibly lead the bicyclist to make a risky decision to try to cross through.

The lack of shoulders or bike lanes in Business/Commercial Areas

Bicyclists must be in the travel lane with motor vehicles when traveling on SR 422 through sections of Palmyra and North Londonderry Township. Where parking is permitted, they must be cognizant of vehicle doors being opened. Where there are turning lanes at intersections and driveways, they must be observant for motorists who may not yield to them.

In Campbelltown, South Londonderry Township, SR 322 has similar hazards for bicyclists.

- LVBC recommends that the MUTCD and Penn DOT approved Share the Lane road markings (sharrows) be installed and related MUTCD approved signage also be installed at appropriate locations. Penn DOT traffic engineers would undertake a review and make the decisions as to where these road markings and signs could be located.

Bike Ped Safety Improvements on LRTP – what are these improvements? (Page 178)

Lebanon County 2011-2035 Long Range Transportation Plan includes implementing “Bike-Ped Safety Improvements, All phases $400,000 1-4 years”

- LVBC is pleased that Bike Ped Safety Improvements listed on the LRTP are noted in the Plan. It would be very helpful to have these improvement projects identified. “Review of the list suggests a thoughtful and reasonable set of proposed transportation system improvements that could be considered as high priorities. Officials should periodically review and update a list of priority projects for the Region. A consensus should be reached by the Region’s officials about the highest priority improvements, so that regional support is apparent when candidate projects are considered by the Lebanon County Metropolitan Planning Organization (LCMPO) (LEBCO MPO)

- LVBC would appreciate having bicycle facilities improvements for safety be included on a “high priority” list when all three municipalities advise LEBCO MPO.
The Plan recommends bike parking be required at important destinations.

“Often these routes also serve as important bike routes and the municipalities should require that important destinations provide for permanently installed bike racks.”

LVBC applauds this recommendation and the use of the term, “permanently installed”. This language should prevent the use of bike racks that provide poor security and can damage a bicycle.

The AASHTO Guide states: “Wave racks or ribbon racks are not recommended. While they offer some perceived economic and aesthetic benefits, they are commonly used incorrectly and when used as intended do not provide adequate support or spacing. School yard racks, also referred to as “dish-rack” or “comb” style are not recommended and those still in use should be replaced. These racks are poorly designed as they support the bike only by the front wheel, which can bend the rim, and they do not support proper locking and thus provide inadequate theft prevention to the user. “

- LVBC requests that the Plan statement include the following language or similar language ---
  The Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP) guidelines for bike parking should be used or reference the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities.

The photograph of a bike rack on pages 167 and 182 meet these guidelines as do the following bike racks located in Lebanon County.

Cleona playground
Cumberland Street, Lebanon
N.Cornwall Township

The Plan recommendation for trails/paths to be used by bicyclists – requirements(p.182)

“Cross-country trails and paths can provide the same pedestrian linkages and/or offer key interconnects with established sidewalk networks. Some municipalities are beginning to earmark mandatory dedication fees-in-lieu for target linear park projects. Trails for bicycles should have suitable stable surfaces, lane painting and signage.”

Missing from the requirements for trails is the width of trails. The AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities provides guidance on how wide paths/trails should be for safety and comfort of users. This Guide is available from LVBC as well as the LEBCO MPO. The section is 5.2.1.

“The usable width and the horizontal clearance required for a shared use path are primary design considerations.... The appropriate paved width for a shared use path is dependent on the context, volume, and mix of users. The minimum paved width for a two-directional shared use path is 10 feet (3.0 m). Typically, widths range from 10 – 14 feet (3.0 – 4.3 m), with the wider values applicable to areas with high use and/or a wider variety of user groups.”
Adequate lighting is another element that should be considered. At a neighboring comprehensive planning session, a resident voiced the need to add lighting to their existing and future shared use path network for safety reasons. If paths and trails are expected to serve both recreational and transportation needs, lighting should be installed.

Of extreme importance is the maintenance of paths and trails throughout the year especially if they are to serve for transportation.

- LVBC recommends the following language or similar language: Trails for bicycles should have suitable stable surfaces, sufficient widths based on national guidelines, adequate lighting, lane painting and signage. The trails should be maintained throughout the year including snow and ice removal.

**The locations of existing paths and downtown bike racks in Palmyra**

The Plan states

"The Borough has an integrated system of safe and well-maintained sidewalks, adequate street lighting, and safe intersections throughout the transportation network.... Designated bike routes and walking trails are well signed and interconnect environmental and man-made features.... Specialty retail shops and restaurants draw people back to the downtown and Main Street. Designated parking lots have been identified and are within an easy walk of the downtown area. The downtown area has well maintained sidewalks, trash receptacles, visible identification signs, benches, bike racks, and well-marked public transit stops."

- LVBC has requested since 2010 the location of the downtown bike racks and the designated bike routes and walking trails with connectivity.
LVBC was represented on the Main Street Corridor Study and one of the recommendations of the final report was to install bike parking in the corridor study area.

If the Borough had approved bike lanes on Cherry Street, as recommended by the Main Street Corridor Study and the SRTS audit report, the bike lanes could have been part of a connectivity with the Derry Township road and path system that may be improved as a result of the Derry Township comprehensive planning that is ongoing presently.

With the present prohibition of bike lanes, the other possibility is bicycle directional signage to assist less confident bicyclists on how to leave SR 422 when traveling east through Palmyra and use Cherry Street as an alternative. The Plan references bike signage.

The Coalition is engaged with Derry Township officials and residents to develop safer bicycling that provides connectivity with neighboring municipalities. If signage is undertaken, there should be continuity of signs used between and among the municipalities regardless of which county they are located.