Attn. Mr. Jon Fitzkee  
Lebanon County Planning Department  
Room 206, Municipal Building  
400 South 8th Street  
Lebanon, PA 17042  
Via email: jfitzkee@lebcnty.org

Dear Mr. Fitzkee:

On behalf of Bicycle South Central Pennsylvania (BSCPA) I submit comments regarding the draft Update to the Long-Range Transportation Plan developed by the Lebanon County MPO. BSCPA is a bicycling advocacy organization that strengthens the collective voice of bicyclists throughout PennDOT District 8. We advocate for safe cycling infrastructure and facilities for all riders. Our vision is to make this region a place where cycling is commonplace for both transportation and recreation that is safe for riders of all ages and levels of experience.

Lebanon County is a wonderful place for bicycle riding. Recreational cyclists and bicycle tourists enjoy miles of quiet, low trafficked, country roads. The Lebanon Valley Rail Trail (LVRT) provides wonderful recreational opportunities that draw families and bicycle riders from throughout the region. Large bicycling events like the Chocolate Tour, Hope Ride, MS Tour, Tour de Lebanon Valley and other large, organized events travel the roadways of Lebanon County.

Each week from April through September the Harrisburg Bicycle Club sponsors nearly a dozen organized rides leaving from Hershey that ride throughout western Lebanon County. The Lancaster Bicycle Club sponsors regular rides throughout the year that travel the roadways of southern Lebanon County. These bicycle riders spend money in restaurants, convenience stores, bicycle shops and other establishments as they travel throughout the county.

As such we have a strong interest in the transportation infrastructure of Lebanon County. We experience its beauty and well-maintained country roads while also experiencing its heavily traveled roads, without berms, to get to and from the quiet country roads. Many of those wishing to commute to and from work, run errands or simply ride from their home beyond their neighborhood face busy, narrow roads that inhibit all but highly experienced bicycle riders from sharing the road.

Given the likelihood that Lebanon County will continue to be one of five fastest growing counties in Pennsylvania, by making targeted investments to improve roadway safety for bicycle riders and pedestrians in this plan, Lebanon County can improve its multi-modal transportation options for ALL roadway users before growth and increased traffic volume will overwhelm its ability to do so in a cost-effective manner.
Numerous intersections along the Routes 22, 322 and 422 corridors present dangerous conditions for bicycle riders as they travel across the county. Without bicycle friendly roadway design at these key locations and along key roadways heavily travelled by bicycle riders their interest in using Lebanon County roadways will decline.

A first step to address roadway safety for bicycle riders and pedestrians is to establish a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. Three of your neighboring MPOs have such a committee (Berks, Lancaster, Tri-County) that provide voice to bicycle riders and pedestrians for the improvement of the multimodal transportation infrastructure on an ongoing basis. These groups can provide practical, first-hand knowledge of dangerous situations that can be addressed during planning for paving and construction projects that can help mitigate hazardous situations prior to construction. The committee can also assist in conducting periodic bicycle and pedestrian counts at key intersections to better information your work with actual usage by active roadway users. We urge you to amend the plan to include such an advisory group.

The LVRT is a tremendous asset for both Lebanon County and the region and we fully support the dedication of transportation resources to its expansion and maintenance. However, we believe the LRTP provides insufficient investment in the improvement of Lebanon County’s roadway network to support and improve safe use of bicycles as a principal transportation option. As growth of the county continues the narrow roads without shoulders will make their use by bicycle riders nearly impossible without posing serious safety issues to the rider.

Roadways that are heavily used by bicycle riders such as Lingle Ave., Campbelltown Road, Gravel Hill Road, S. Forge Road, Colebrook Road, Mount Wilson Road, Mt. Gretna Road, Louser Road, Elizabethtown Road, Clear Spring Road and Killinger Road are each heavily used by bicycle riders but because of lack of shoulders or bike lanes present increasingly challenging conditions bicycle riders. Additional investments are needed on these and other roadways identified on the Lebanon County Bicycle Transportation Map.

We appreciate having the opportunity to provide comments on the draft Lebanon County LRTP and look forward to seeing expanded investments in making Lebanon County roadways a safe transportation option for ALL roadway users.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Chastek
President
Bicycle South Central PA