



Lincoln Trail

Area Development District
- established 1968 -

2023

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

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**2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
Lincoln Trail ADD**

Resolution

WHEREAS, the Lincoln Trail Area Development District is one of fifteen Area Development Districts within the Commonwealth of Kentucky; and

WHEREAS, the Kentucky Area Development Districts, in coordination with the US Department of Commerce – Economic Development Administration, engaged in a Commonwealth-wide community-based, strategic planning process known as a **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)**; and

WHEREAS, the Lincoln Trail Area Development District CEDS Committee completed an overall economic analysis of the region (including the development of an action plan and performance evaluation); and

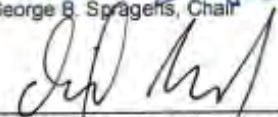
WHEREAS, the CEDS is a process enabling Kentuckians to strategically plan for themselves through consensus management of all resources; and

WHEREAS, the Lincoln Trail Area Development District Board of Directors recognizes the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy as a vital component necessary for the enhancement of growth and revitalization of the region.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Lincoln Trail Area Development District Board of Directors approve and adopt the 2020 Lincoln Trail Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

Adopted this 14th day of November 2022


George B. Spragens, Chair


Daniel London, Executive Director

BRECKINRIDGE GRAYSON HARDIN LARUE MARION MEADE NELSON WASHINGTON

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Collective Goal of all Area Development Districts in Kentucky is:
*“To bring those local, civic and governmental leaders together
to accomplish those objectives that could not be achieved
by the governments acting separately.”*

Kentucky’s Area Development Districts originated with the establishment of Statewide Area Development Councils in 1961. These Councils became the impetus behind Kentucky’s recommendation to place the Area Development authorization in a number of Federal acts such as the Appalachian Regional Development Act and the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965. The local-state-federal partnership was formalized in federal acts that recognized and made funds available for the establishment of the fifteen Kentucky Area Development Districts (ADDs) in 1968.

The Lincoln Trail Area Development District was incorporated into this system of ADDs in January 1968. It was funded as an Economic Development District under 301B of Title III, of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965. The Kentucky General Assembly provided state statutory authorization for the fifteen ADDs with enactment of Kentucky Revised Statutes 147A.050 in 1972.



Lincoln Trail

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LTADD Background Summary



The organization and management goal of Lincoln Trail Area Development District is:

To assist local units of government in provision of optimal services to citizens by enhancing and strengthening their public management and administration capabilities.

The Lincoln Trail Area Development District (LTADD) is an eight-county region located in central Kentucky, consisting of Breckinridge, Grayson, Hardin, LaRue, Marion, Meade, Nelson, and Washington Counties.

A strategic focus on several key areas allows the Area Development District to help its local governments come together to seek solutions to complex issues. The ADD works through various Councils, Committees, and professionally staffed departments to meet needs. The primary ADD functions are carried out through the following:

- 1) Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
- 2) Regional Transportation & Highway Safety Committee
- 3) Workforce Development Board
- 4) Regional Planning Council
- 5) Regional Economic Development Council
- 6) Water Management Planning Council
- 7) Area Agency on Aging

These Councils, as well as several other committees, provide a flexible framework and local representation to deal with many issues. Key functions of the associated Councils are discussed in more detail below.

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The Radcliff/Elizabethtown Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the transportation policy-making agency for the Radcliff/Elizabethtown urbanized area.



Planning for the transportation needs of the region.

A Policy Committee that consists of local elected officials from Hardin County, Meade County, Elizabethtown, Radcliff, representatives from Fort Knox, and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC), governs the MPO. The MPO also includes a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) which provides technical support and makes recommendations. The MPO sets priorities to ensure that existing and future expenditures for transportation projects and programs are based on a comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing (3-C) planning process. A Metropolitan Transportation Plan (long-range document) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) are developed and maintained by the MPO.

The Regional Transportation & Highway Safety Committee focuses on the development of an efficient, economical,

and safe transportation system for the region as a whole. The ADD's planners strive to find and implement solutions to the problems of congestion, outdated or inadequate facilities, and unsafe transportation conditions. The Committee works with several key groups including the KY Transportation Cabinet to facilitate development of the Statewide Transportation Plan and help determine highway project priorities.

The Lincoln Trail Workforce Development Board (WDB) is a 23-member board responsible for managing local workforce development projects for the eight counties of the Lincoln Trail Workforce Development Area.



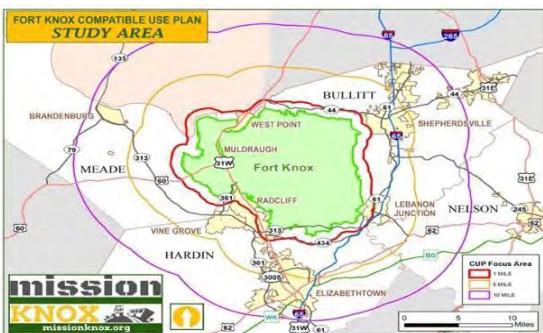
The board members, in partnership with local elected officials, are responsible for being strategic analysts/innovators, investors, brokers, collaborators, and conveners in the region. In addition, they host conversations within the region to better align workforce resources and understand the complexities of the regional labor markets. Many of these strategies and services are delivered through the Lincoln Trail Career Center, <http://www.ltcareercenter.org/>.

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Eighteen planning and zoning commissions exist in the Lincoln Trail Region with planning and zoning regulations governing approximately 79 percent of the area. Several jurisdictions are currently updating or have recently updated, their comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, and subdivision regulations. Several of these efforts are coordinated through the Lincoln Trail Regional Planning Council.

LTADD completed the Compatible Use Plan (CUP) for Fort Knox Military Reservation in January 2022. This study was done to identify methods that will allow cooperative relationships between Fort Knox and its surrounding communities to the benefit and consensus of all parties. This study outlined existing data of various types such as demographic, economic, infrastructure, governmental policies, and others in order to understand the current dynamics of the relationship. Reviewing that data, opportunities were identified and the results were presented as implementation recommendations.

These recommendations are currently being implemented via efforts by Fort Knox and the communities coordinated by LTADD.



The Regional Economic Development Council provides a forum for the many economic development agencies and industrial development authorities in member communities. It combines public and private representation to shine a light on the region's economic attributes and needs. With oversight through its Revolving Loan Fund Committee, the ADD's RLF program provides local collaboration with other State and Federal economic development agencies.



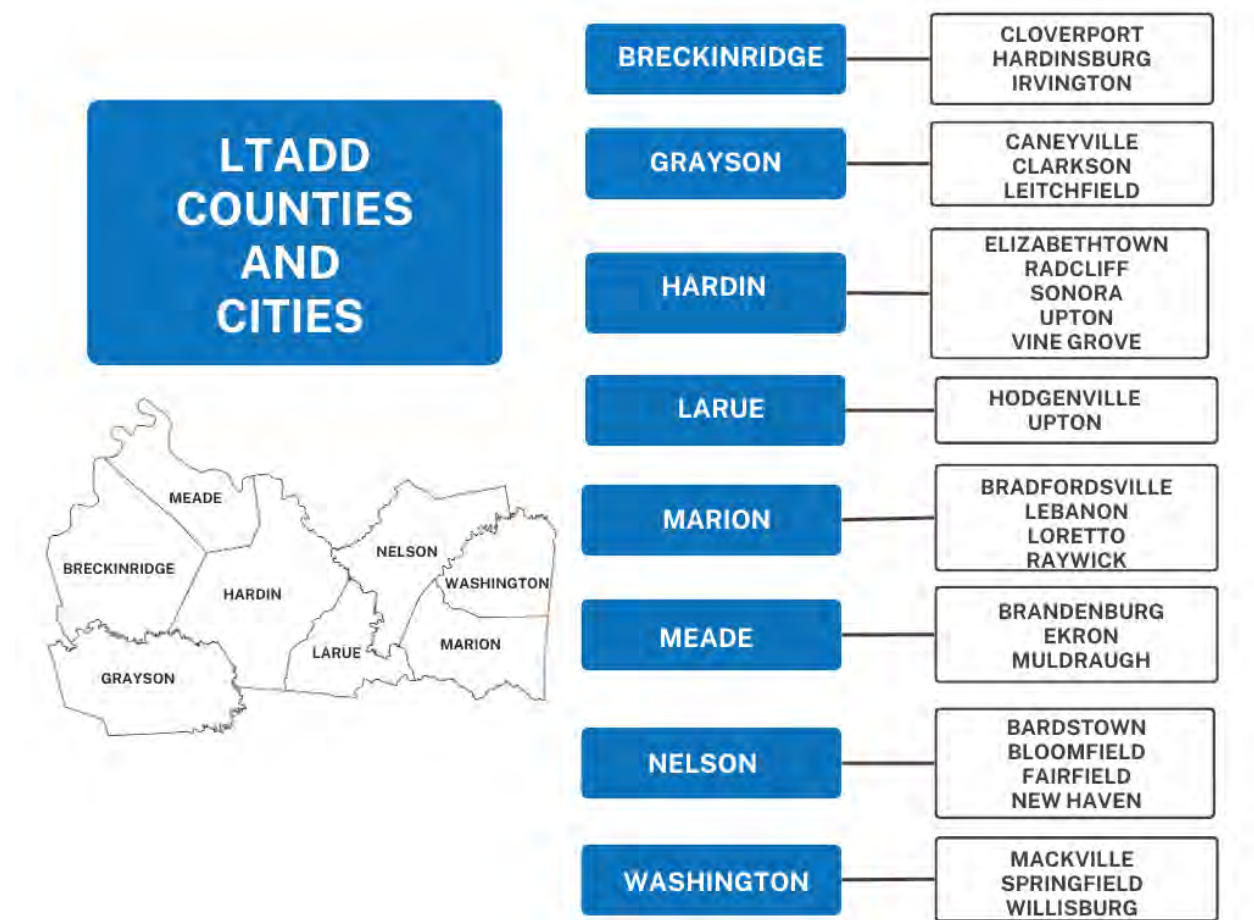
Water Management Planning Council members oversee the region's water and wastewater planning initiatives. First among these is the statewide planning effort directed by the 2000 KY Senate Bill 409. In conjunction with the Kentucky Infrastructure Authority and the KY Division of Water, the Council and the associated ADD staff seek to optimize the use and availability of the region's water resources. The Council provides a framework for review and discussion of local utility projects and priorities. LTADD maintains an infrastructure planning database with GIS technology to assist in this regional effort, <http://wris.ky.gov/portal/SysData.aspx>.

2023 DRAFT

Lincoln Trail Area Agency on Aging administers federally and state funded aging programs. Local funds received provide additional support for various programs. The Lincoln Trail AAA strives to enable citizens to live the highest quality of life possible. The Older Americans Act (OAA) was passed by Congress in 1965 as a response to policymaker concerns about the lack of services for older adults. The OAA is now viewed as the primary vehicle for the organization and delivery of social and nutrition services to seniors and caregivers. The Act authorizes a wide array of service programs through a network of State Units on Aging, 655 Area Agencies on Aging, 244 Tribal organizations, and 2 Native Hawaiian organizations.

The Area Development District's Board of Directors, executive leadership and its professional staff work with each of these Committees and Councils and collaborate with many others in the public sphere and private sector to carry out their important functions and undertake innumerable other tasks on behalf of the region. (<http://www.ltadd.org/>).

Illustrated below is a chart of the eight counties served by LTADD and each county's corresponding cities.



Update Methodology and Process

On August 11, 2005, the “Economic Development Administration Reauthorization Act of 2004 Implementation, Regulatory Revision” was published as an interim final rule in the Federal Register, Volume 70, No. 154. As part of this published rule, various revisions were made to the development and adoption of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). A major change in the focus of the CEDS was that the emphasis for the implementation of its action plan was to be results-driven.



In December 2011, the Economic Development Administration published revised regulations (Final Rule) which included new CEDS requirements. The new

Final Rule took effect in January 2015. A summary of the Final Rule changes may be found at <http://www.eda.gov/ceds/>

LTADD’s process to update the current CEDS began by seeking input from the community. To provide guidance, the update utilizes both staff input as well as the seven committees of the LTADD Board.

Based upon data and information gathered by staff, input from local officials, the public, and advisory committees, as well as examination of previous plans, revisions to the regional goals and objectives and development strategies were made by staff in the draft document.

Copies of relevant sections of the CEDS were provided to the advisory committees to review and comment, particularly on goals and objectives. A CEDS draft document was made available for public review and comment on the ADD’s website. The CEDS information was also presented and reviewed at regional meetings of the relevant councils. The document will also be published at regular meetings of the LTADD Board of Directors.

Economic Analysis

ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Although the regional economy struggled in 2020 as a result of the global COVID- 19 pandemic, in 2021, the LTADD region experienced significant unemployment percentage decreases in all counties in the region ranging from 5.2% to 3.4%. This is a tremendous rebound from an April 2020 unemployment rate of 20.2%, which at the time was the highest unemployment rate in the state by region.

The addition of the US Army Cadet Command and Summer Training Program at Ft. Knox has continued to stabilize the military and economic presence in the community. The reactivation of V Corps to Ft. Knox in 2020 has also helped in that regard. Unemployment decreased in each county in the region.



Demographic Background

The region had a 2021 Census Bureau population estimate of 282,836, an increase of 0.74% over the 2020 census population. The most populous city in the region is Elizabethtown with a 2021 population of 31,931, and the most populous County is Hardin with a 2021 population of 111,607.

282,836

Regional Population as of 2020 Census



\$51,817

Median Household Income

123,711

Owner Occupied Housing

Median Rent

\$708

Unemployment Rate

4.8%

87.15%

Percent of Persons 25 or Older with a High School Diploma

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Census figures below show recent estimated changes in populations for the Cities in the LTADD region. Most communities have experienced slight growth over the past decade.

SubCounty Population Estimate														
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division														
	Census								Census	Pop. Est July 1	Population Change			
		Population Estimates (As of July 1)									2010-2021		2020-2021	
Incorporated	2010	2010	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Kentucky	4,339,367	4,348,181	4,414,349	4,425,976	4,438,182	4,452,268	4,461,153	4,467,673	4,505,836	4,509,394	170,027		3,558	0.08
Bardstown	11,700	12,578	12,902	12,970	13,071	13,089	13,142	13,253	13,567	13,621	1,921	15.17	54	0.39
Bloomfield	838	1,020	1,041	1,047	1,054	1,056	1,060	1,066	961	971	133	14.70	10	1.04
Bradfordsville	294	293	295	296	297	298	297	297	270	271	-23	-8.14	1	0.34
Brandenburg	2,643	2,702	2,899	2,814	2,835	2,832	2,881	2,877	2,894	2,913	270	9.72	19	0.65
Caneyville	608	610	612	613	608	611	607	607	529	526	-82	-14.46	-3	-0.57
Clarkson	875	875	879	881	880	883	883	886	933	939	64	7.06	6	0.64
Cloverport	1,152	1,151	1,135	1,139	1,140	1,143	1,147	1,152	1,119	1,128	-24	-2.11	9	0.80
Ekron	135	156	155	147	147	147	151	150	175	173	38	24.68	-2	-1.15
Elizabethtown	28,531	28,425	29,435	29,003	29,175	29,510	30,108	30,289	31,394	31,931	3,400	11.25	537	1.70
Fairfield	113	113	116	115	115	117	116	118	118	122	9	7.66	4	3.33
Hardinsburg	2,336	2,357	2,306	2,302	2,314	2,326	2,338	2	2,385	2,397	61	2.58	12	0.50
Hodgenville	3,206	3,230	3,205	3,204	3,180	3,214	3,233	3,249	3,235	3,338	132	4.03	103	3.13
Irvington	1,181	1,173	1,170	1,173	1,168	1,172	1,181	1,189	1,231	1,241	60	4.95	10	0.81
Lebanon	5,539	5,552	5,572	5,614	5,595	5,642	5,685	5,708	6,274	6,355	816	13.72	81	1.28
Leitchfield	6,699	6,663	6,766	6,770	6,760	6,821	6,829	6,858	6,404	6,409	-290	-4.42	5	0.08
Loretto	713	694	694	698	694	697	698	693	723	728	15	2.08	5	0.69
Mackville	222	222	222	223	222	223	224	223	207	208	-14	-6.51	1	0.48
Muldraugh	947	948	1,034	978	983	979	994	986	1,040	1,032	85	8.59	-8	-0.77
New Haven	855	856	875	879	885	884	887	894	798	804	-51	-6.15	6	0.75
Radcliff	21,688	22,604	22,988	22,365	22,440	22,569	22,885	22,914	23,042	22,942	1,254	5.62	-100	-0.43
Raywick	134	134	135	136	135	136	136	135	155	154	20	13.89	-1	-0.65
Sonora	513	520	512	501	503	507	518	520	565	566	53	9.82	1	0.18
Springfield	2,519	2,808	2,971	3,021	3,079	2,887	2,931	2,961	2,846	2,834	315	11.77	-12	-0.42
Upton	683	693	685	678	675	684	692	698	704	707	24	3.45	3	0.43
Vine Grove	4,520	5,187	5,774	5,774	5,893	6,110	6,316	6,439	6,559	6,700	2,180	38.86	141	2.13
West Point	797	932	891	865	867	869	877	876	952	943	146	16.78	-9	-0.95
Willisburg	282	283	281	282	283	281	284	285	300	264	-18	-6.59	-36	-12.80

*Data for all years except 2020 in the above charts can be found at:

<http://www.ksdc.louisville.edu/>

Manufacturing

Manufacturing production operations are significant in the region, with a particular concentration of automotive related industries. This region of the country has become, in some respects, an “auto alley” as automotive manufacturing has grown away from the Detroit area. Both U.S. and Japanese manufacturers have located several production facilities along the I-65 and I-75 corridors including in KY: Ford Motor Co. truck/SUV plant in Louisville, Toyota in Georgetown, and the Corvette Assembly Plant in Bowling Green. As a result, many suppliers and second and third-tier automotive companies have located in adjacent areas including the LTADD region.



Figure 1 Copyright Barton Marlow

On September 27th, 2021, Ford announced the addition of two battery manufacturing plants in Hardin County that will create 5,000 full time jobs. Recognized by Governor Beshear as “the single largest investment in the history of our state,” the BlueOvalSk Battery Park will produce batteries for electric vehicles. This is a \$5.8 billion investment in the LTADD region. In February 2022, the Governor announced that the conduction of the plants will include an on-site training facility that will also be a

satellite campus for Elizabethtown Community and Technical College. The facility will provide classrooms for training for the employees producing the electric batteries, and laboratories for research and development of the technology. It is anticipated that suppliers and other investments will also come into the state to support this project. More information about this project can be found at the link below.

<https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/politics/2021/09/27/gov-beshear-ke-ntucky-incentivizes-ford-south-korea-battery-park/5851302001/>

Advanced Nano Products, a Korean supplier of carbon battery nanomaterials used in electric vehicle battery production, is investing nearly \$50 million in a new location in Elizabethtown, a move that will create 93 high-wage jobs to supply battery producers, including BlueOvalSk Battery Park.



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Previously announced investments by the major auto manufacturing facilities in the state in 2013 (Ford in Louisville, Toyota in Georgetown, and GM in Bowling Green) are still having significant impacts to local second-tier auto manufacturing companies in the region. For more highlights see: <https://siteselection.com/cc/kentucky/2021/digital.html#page=28>.

Hardin County has seen a notable increase in manufacturing expansions. The Elizabethtown-Hardin County Industrial Foundation was recognized as a top U.S. Economic Development Organization in 2021 by Site Selection Magazine with the 2022 Mac Conway Award, which recognizes both large and small projects organized in the community. In 2023, the industrial foundation unveiled a new website, www.madehereelizabethtown.com, that offers additional insight into local manufacturing opportunities.



Figure 2 Copyright Site Selection Magazine

Several new manufacturing operations have been approved for construction in Elizabethtown. Kruger Packing invested \$114.2 million in a state-of-the-art manufacturing operation that will provide 500 new jobs to the region. LOTTE Aluminum Materials USA LLC of South Korea has invested \$238.7 million to locate an aluminum foil manufacturing operation in Elizabethtown that will provide 122 full-time jobs.

Major expansions were also announced at pipe manufacturer, WL Plastics; plastics fabrication company, Fischbach USA; and adhesive manufacturer, Soudal. In Radcliff, graphics communications company Taylor Corporation is expanding by 30,000 square feet with an investment of \$18.8 million and creating 28 new jobs. For more on Hardin County expansions, see the link below: <https://www.lanereport.com/157035/2022/07/hardin-county-epicenter-of-the-electric-vehicle-revolution/>

In Breckinridge County, Atlas Machine and Supply Inc. announced that it will be investing \$3.47 million to construct a new facility in Hardinsburg that will create 78 high-paying jobs for the community. INOAC Group North America LLC, a manufacturer of plastics, rubber, and polyurethane products for automotive and other industries announced an expansion in Washington County creating 49 high-paying jobs with an investment of \$13.7 million. Two steel manufacturing plants, Eddie Kane Steel and Nucor Corporation have opened in Meade County with a combined investment of close to \$6 million. As of January 2023, Nucor rolled its first steel plate and has 400 employees.

Processed Food and Beverage Production

Food and Beverage production in the region should be mentioned because of its unique properties. There is a concentration of bourbon liquor distillation in Nelson County, in the LTADD region, and in several adjacent counties. Several large distillers have operations in the region including: Maker's Mark, Barton Brands, Heaven Hill, and Jim Beam Brands. Bourbon production is important to the region both for its direct economic impact and its indirect impact from tourism and publicity.

Kentucky and the major distillers have taken notice of the tourism popularity surrounding the industry and have capitalized on this through the "Bourbon Trail." To find out more information on the Kentucky bourbon industry see <http://kybourbontrail.com/>



The Food and Beverage industry continued to exhibit very strong investment growth, primarily within the distilled spirits companies in the region. Log Still Distillery has invested \$36 million in Nelson County, where they have completed construction on a new tasting room, a bed and breakfast, and an amphitheater. Recently, another investment of \$60 million has been

announced for the Distillery which will create 146 new jobs in bottling operations, hospitality, event operations, and restaurant positions. Overall, this sector also has a high positive secondary impact to local agri-business production. Tariffs continue to be a cause for concern with added uncertainty for international distribution. For more highlights see: <https://siteselection.com/cc/kentucky/2021/digital.html#page=46>

This industry also benefits the area by utilizing local agricultural products in its processing, particularly locally grown corn, wheat, and barley. The area is also home to Bel/Kaukauna USA where select cheeses are made, including the notable Babybel brand, using regional dairy production. Additionally, an industrial park in Marion County has recently been recognized as certified for food processing industries. The food and beverage production industry's importance is not only from direct jobs and regional revenue. They also connect the region to the world market and provide a highly visible presence and a recognizable identity of place for the region. The addition of other supportive food industry companies such as Flex Films, USA (food product packaging) has had a significant impact as well.

Military

The presence of Ft. Knox means that there is a high concentration of military and military related civilian jobs in the area. Fort Knox is home to more than 30 commands and organizations and has a daytime population of about 26,260 soldiers, civilian employees, and family members.¹



Ft. Knox is currently home to the United States Army Human Resources Center for Excellence. The 109,000-acre military base was part of the last Dept. of Defense's Base Realignment and Closure plan (BRAC). The transition included the loss of the Armor Center and School and training personnel, but the addition of a deployable infantry brigade and other units and the Human Resources Command. The transition has meant a change to more civilian personnel and less directly deployable soldiers from military training personnel.

While the loss of direct military personnel from the base has been substantial, the addition of the Army's Cadet Command and Training Center has

been significant for the region as it brings upwards of 10,000 officer candidates into the region during each year for training. The addition of V Corps has also been a boost to the regional economy going forward. The V Corps was reactivated in February 2020 with Fort Knox serving as the headquarters location. In total, approximately 630 soldiers will be a part of V Corps, with about 200 based at the forward command post in Poznan, Poland on a rotational basis and the rest remaining at Fort Knox.²

Fort Knox will soon be home to a Digital Air-Ground Integration Range, or DAGIR. It will be only the second of its kind. This range will allow training for tanks, dismounted live-fire exercises, artillery, and aircraft. It will also allow for simultaneous air and ground training. Current construction has it on track for completion in 2023. It involves expending approximately \$52 million to convert the existing Yano Range.³

¹ www.army.mil

² Kyle Rempfer, *Army resurrects V Corps after seven years to bolster Europe*, *Army Times*, [https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2020/02/12/army-resurrects-v-corps-after-seven-years-to-bolster-europe/], (accessed 10 September 2020).

³ Eric Pilgrim, *Fort Knox official: Digital Air-Ground Integration Range construction on track for 2023 completion*, *Fort Knox News*, 11 May 2021, [https://www.army.mil/article/246226/fort_knox_official_digital_air_ground_integrat

Analysis and Impact

These concentrations of industry in the LTADD region point to a couple of items that should be considered in planning for future economic development success. The concentrations do indicate strengths in several areas. These strengths include the area's proximity and access to major markets in the East and Midwest. Industries with intrinsic ties to market proximity will continue to regard the area as a potential place for new or expanded locations.



Another item is the availability of resources and raw materials. The area has relatively low-cost power, water, and land. Additionally, lumber, steel, and agricultural products are fairly accessible within the area. A relatively low cost, manually adept workforce is also present.

This strength is also a point of high concern as well. Outside influences can have a great impact on power and labor costs. These things are not always within the control of the local area and as such can be volatile. As has been seen in many

manufacturing sectors, increasing technology has allowed companies to follow less skilled and lower wage labor out of the area. This has negatively impacted the area in the past and will continue to be a trend in several manufacturing sectors.

Goals and objectives for economic development should contain a focus on those things that will enhance area strengths, particularly those things that can be influenced locally, and also seek to minimize and improve area weaknesses.

REGIONAL INVESTMENTS

Following is a list of major new and expanding industrial investments announced for the Lincoln Trail region from October 2021 to September 2022, as compiled by the KY Economic Development Cabinet. These announcements include \$600,300,000 in new capital and an additional expected 214 jobs for the region.

COUNTY	COMPANY	INVESTMENT IMPACT	JOB IMPACT	PRODUCT
HARDIN	TAYLOR CORP	\$18,800,000	28	LABEL MANUFACTURING
MARION	COOPERAGE LP LTD.	\$4,100,000	20	USED BARRELS
NELSON	BARDSTOWN BOURBON CO.	\$28,700,000	29	BOURBON
NELSON	BEAM SUNTORY	\$400,000,000	50	BOURBON
NELSON	HEAVEN HILL DISTILLERY	\$135,000,000	38	BOURBON
WASHINGTON	INOAC GROUP NORTH AMERICA LLC	\$13,700,000	49	PLASTIC, RUBBER, POLYURETHANE, COMPOSITE PRODUCTS

4

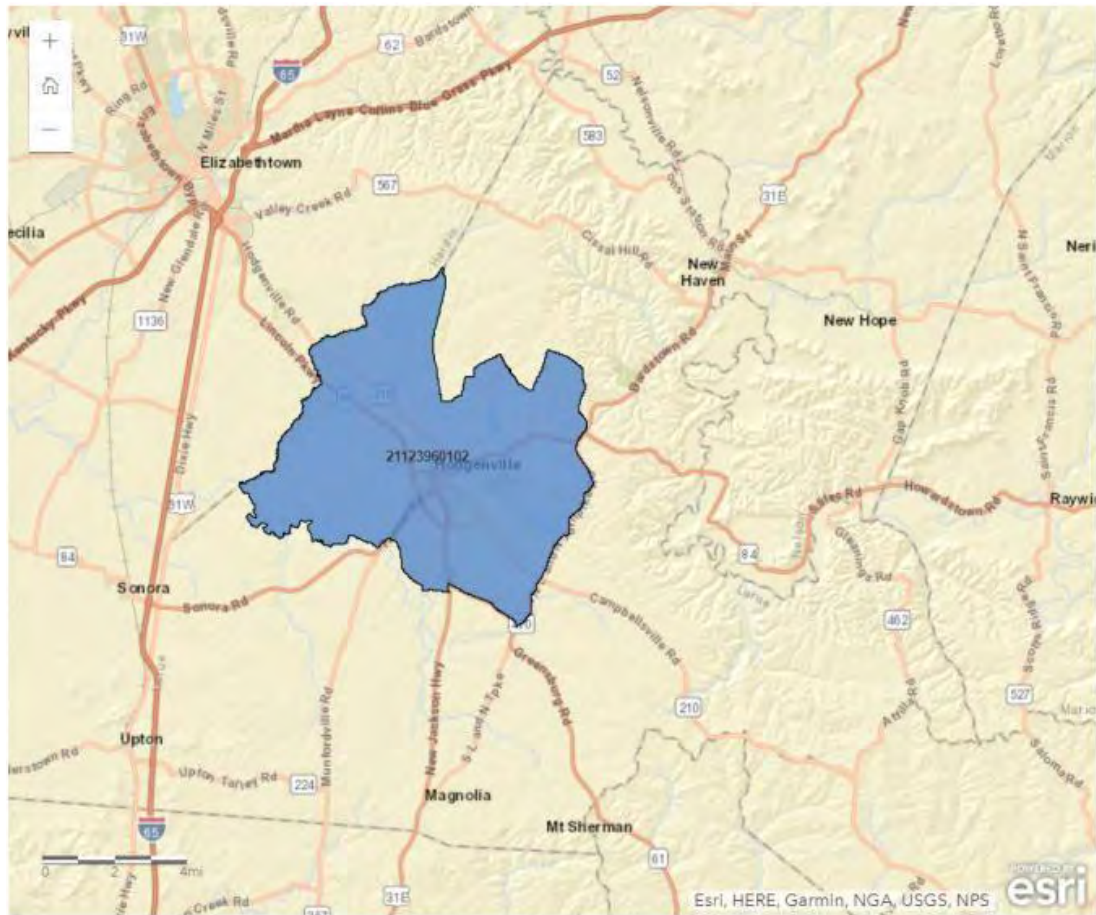


Figure 5 LTADD staff and KY economic development staff with Governor Andy Beshear

⁴ For additional information see: <https://ced.ky.gov/KBIIS/KBIISLocXpnsnSrch.aspx> and https://ced.ky.gov/Newsroom/News_Releases

Opportunity Zones

Opportunity Zones, created under the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, are a federal economic development tool focused on improving the outcomes of communities across the country, especially in areas that have suffered from disinvestment over many years. There is one opportunity zone located within the LTADD region. It is located in LaRue County, as seen below. It is adjacent to the City of Elizabethtown (the region's largest population center).



No projects have utilized the opportunity zone status yet. However, opportunity zones do provide the potential to introduce additional economic activity to the area. As such, LTADD and local governments in LaRue County will work to utilize the zone designation to meet the economic development goals articulated in this document.

WORKFORCE / EDUCATION



Figure 6 Meade County officials received their signs signifying their Work Ready certification

The new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law July 22, 2014, replacing the previous Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. WIOA's focus is on delivering integrated and coordinated services to eligible individuals and businesses. Local workforce partners are challenged to strengthen career pathways, work-based learning, sector strategies, and business engagement. Local workforce areas must also be able to deliver effective services to all individuals, including those with barriers to employment. The law allowed local workforce development boards to realign themselves by having a more manageable membership. The Lincoln Trail Workforce Development Board was able to shift to a 23-member board that is more streamlined and workable in achieving its goals. The region continues to provide innovative funding for skills training for eligible individuals, business and industry training,

entrepreneurial projects, and has partnerships with various groups.

Workforce trends in the region show a marked decrease in the unemployment rate in all counties in the region. Four counties in the region, Hardin, Nelson, Meade and Washington, have been designated as "Work Ready" by the KY Education and Labor Cabinet. Three other counties in the region, Grayson, Breckinridge, and Marion, are on track to become Work Ready.



Figure 7 Itcareercenter.org

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The Work Ready Communities Program requires communities to meet criteria in six areas that are critical to producing a productive workforce.

Criteria includes high school graduation rates, national career readiness certificate holders, community commitment, educational attainment, soft skills, and internet availability. Workforce estimates are provided below from the Kentucky Center for Statistics. This information and even greater detail on the regional labor market is available at: <https://kcews.ky.gov/KYLM/Index/>

AREA	CLF	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	ANNUAL RATE
LTADD	121,775	115,976	5,799	4.8%
BRECKINRIDGE	8,201	7,601	420	5.2%
GRAYSON	10,512	9,923	589	5.6%
HARDIN	47,078	44,845	2,233	4.7%
LARUE	5,803	5,517	286	4.9%
MARION	9,285	8,880	405	4.4%
MEADE	11,679	11,061	618	5.3%
NELSON	23,223	22,213	1,010	4.3%
WASHINGTON	6,177	5,937	240	3.9%

TRAINING THE FUTURE



Figure 8 Grand Opening celebration for the Kentucky Career Center-Lincoln Trail in Bardstown, Nelson County.

As the region continues to experience a boon of economic growth, training, attracting, and retaining a skilled workforce is imperative. In September 2023, the Kentucky Career Center-Lincoln Trail in Bardstown, Nelson County, celebrated its grand opening hosted by the Lincoln Trail Workforce Development Board. The facility underwent extensive renovations to expand workforce services

to the community, thanks to partnerships with Adult Education, Bethany Haven Career Team, Elizabethtown Community and Technical College, Express Employment Professionals, and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

In January 2023, a new avenue of engagement between job seekers and employers was introduced - the virtual job fair platform. In addition to the traditional job fairs, which offer the valuable opportunity for face-to-face interactions, the virtual job fair platform provides a new convenience and a way for employers to reach a new generation of digital natives. The virtual recruitment platform Premier Virtual allows employers to access a broad candidate pool while helping job seekers explore various opportunities. Job seekers can utilize the virtual job fair platform regardless of their employment history, educational background or income. This flexibility extends to employers, accommodating a small business looking to fill one position or a large company looking to hire several new employees. The events are at no cost to job seekers or employers. The job fairs included targeted events for advanced manufacturing, construction, transportation, business and IT services, and healthcare. The option to schedule on demand job fairs or participate in general job fairs is also available.

In a world where Electric Vehicles (EVs) are revolutionizing transportation and energy, a collaboration between the Lincoln Trail and South Central Workforce Development Boards was developed to address the growing EV workforce needs in the two regions. The Electric Vehicle Workforce Coordinator position came into inception to assist in building, training, and enhancing the growth of the highly skilled EV workforce. With a demand for more than 9,000 new jobs within the 18 counties spanning the Lincoln Trail and South Central local workforce areas, this role is instrumental. The coordinator will work cooperatively with key stakeholders, including Blue Oval SK, Envision AESC and their industry suppliers within the regions. Together, they will orchestrate recruitment activities, craft talent pipelines, and engineer a diverse and inclusive workforce for the booming EV battery production sector.

TRANSPORTATION



The transportation network in the Lincoln Trail Region is one of its greatest assets. The region is bisected by Interstate 65, the Bluegrass Parkway, and the Western Kentucky Parkway. The region also has other major routes such as US 31W, US 31E, US 60, US 62, US 68, and US 150; and major state routes including KY 313, KY 361, KY 79, KY 259, KY 86, KY 245, KY 61 (Lincoln Parkway), KY 55, and KY 555.

With the recent announcements of major industries locating in the LTADD region, there will be major impacts on the transportation network. While Brandenburg has adequate roadway access for Nucor via KY 313 and KY 933 and river access along the Ohio and Hardinsburg for Atlas via US 60, the Blue Oval SK site in the Glendale area is going to require major improvements to the transportation network. In preparation for the Ford plant mega-site project, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) is preparing for major infrastructure changes to

Glendale and the surrounding areas to alleviate congestion. To enhance access to the battery park and minimize impacts on the historic community of Glendale, the following projects are currently in process:

- I-65 Interchange at KY 222 Reconstruction
- KY 1136 – Reconstruction of KY 1136 from KY 1868 to US 31W
- KY 3005 – Ring Road Extension from the WK Parkway to US 31W
- KY 3005 – Ring Road Extension from US 31W to KY 61 (Lincoln Parkway)
- KY 222 Corridor Study to determine future improvements to enhance access from the battery park site to US 62 and the Western Kentucky Parkway is complete. Further conversations on implementation measures are ongoing.

Further information on proposed improvements can be found at the KY Transportation Cabinet's STIP 2019-2022: <https://transportation.ky.gov/ProgramManagement/Pages/2019-STIP-Book.aspx>

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Other major transportation projects in the region include:

- US 150 – From the Bluegrass Parkway in Bardstown to Springfield
- Extension of the William Thomason Byway (KY 3155) in Leitchfield from KY 259 to KY 54
- KY 245 – Widen from Flaget Hospital through the county line to Happy Hollow Road in Bullitt Co.
- KY 555 – Mobility improvements from US 150 to Bluegrass Parkway
- KY 79 – Improvements from Brandenburg to Irvington
- KY 86 – Improvements from US 60 in Breckinridge County to US 62 in Hardin County
- New Bypass from KY 2154 to Bradfordsville Highway
- Bardstown Western Connector - New Route between US 62 and KY 245 west of Bardstown

Each of these projects will be major enhancements to these communities and their capabilities for future economic growth. There are many more proposed highway improvements in the Lincoln Trail region. More information on these improvements can be found in the link below to the KYTC 2022 Enacted Highway Plan. Follow the link below to the KY Transportation Cabinet's 2022 Enacted Highway Plan:

<https://transportation.ky.gov/Program-Management/Pages/2022-Enacted-Highway-Plan.aspx>

INFRASTRUCTURE

Local utilities continue to examine needs and look for cost effective solutions to provision of public water and wastewater treatment. LTADD has made the improvement of water and wastewater a top priority for the region. The primary needs of the region appear to be expansion, upgrades and replacement of aging facilities, in addition to addressing the replacement of lead service lines.



In 2021, the President signed into law the Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (BIL), which includes new investments in modernizing Kentucky's outdated physical infrastructure including transportation, water and waste management, and broadband. BIL also provided dedicated funding for lead service line identification and replacement. Grayson County received \$29 million in funding for road and infrastructure projects, including system rehabilitation, repairs, and improvements. Marion County will receive \$20.3 million in funding to support major road and infrastructure projects that will replace outdated infrastructure including improving major congestion, replacing a low water structure, and extending KY-2154 Bypass. Under the Round 1 & Round 2 Cleaner Water Program, Washington County

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has been awarded \$1.2M to replace a water line, upgrade/replace pump stations, and repaint water storage tanks in order to ensure access to clean drinking water. Nelson County was awarded \$4.5 million in funds to go toward improvements to supply water for the growing demands within the County. LaRue was awarded \$1.4M for tank improvements and water main upgrades. Breckinridge County was awarded \$3.9M targeting lift station rehabilitation & replacement, water line extensions, and wastewater treatment plant upgrades. Hardin County was awarded \$11.5M for line upgrades, extensions, & improvements, tank and wastewater treatment plant improvements. Including projects for the BOSK. Meade County was awarded \$3.1M for line extensions & improvements, technology upgrades, water treatment plant upgrades, and pipe replacement.

The Area Development District has been able to assist several communities in packaging financing (grants and loans) to tackle major infrastructure projects. The City of Bradfordsville performed a major upgrade to its wastewater treatment plant and is tackling difficult sidewalks and stormwater improvements. The city utilized CDBG and USDA Rural Development funds for the wastewater project and FHA TAPP funds for the sidewalks and stormwater work. The City of Caneyville utilized CDBG and USDA Rural Development funding in the replacement of a significant portion of their downtown water main distribution system. The existing lines were composed of asbestos cement materials that caused problems with breaks and difficult repairs. The City of Lebanon is continuing a major water rehabilitation project using SRF monies (EPA) that will provide reliable service far into the future. All of the



regional utilities will be formalizing their capital project priority listings again in December 2022. A list of past and current prioritized water and wastewater needs can be located at the following website: <http://wris.ky.gov/portal/Reports.aspx> under the AWMPC Project Ranking Menu.

The Area Development Districts and the State continue to review opportunities to improve broadband availability, especially in relationship to job development. Off-site work opportunities for rural residents connecting through a broadband line may be viable in some rural areas. Wireless service coverage is fairly good in the region with isolated areas of poor reception.

Hazard Mitigation

No significant changes have occurred in the region's physical environment. While the Lincoln Trail region experiences severe weather (risk primarily from tornados & flooding) from time to time, no major natural disasters have occurred in the region during the past year. However, as we have seen from major disasters around the country and in the state of Kentucky (a historic long-track tornado in Western Kentucky and catastrophic flooding in Eastern Kentucky), planning and preparedness for potential disasters are significant factors in the ability of communities to come back from devastating emergencies.



The Area Development District has completed a new Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan to meet FEMA's current requirements for communities to be

eligible for disaster assistance; this document is currently awaiting approval from FEMA. This document helps to: ensure the region and its communities have examined potential hazards, identified mitigation actions to reduce effects, and outlined response policies. FEMA counts on these documents to assist communities before and after disasters. (See www.ltadd.org under the downloads section for a copy of the current Plan).

HMGP projects that have recently been submitted to FEMA include projects under DR-4497 funding as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and DR-4428 as a result of Kentucky Severe Storms:

- LaRue County Blanton Road Elevation
- LaRue County Water District #1 Water Pumps and Generators
- Nelson County Property Elevation
- Upton Community Center Generator
- Bardstown Generator
- West Point Flood Mitigation Scoping Project

In September 2022, Kentucky Emergency Management (KYEM) announced the availability of HMGP funding as a result of DR-4663 Severe Storms, Flooding, Landslides, and Mudslides during the summer months. LTADD anticipates more projects related to these newly available funds.

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In the spring of 2023, the Lincoln Trail Area Development District received grant funding through the CARES Act to purchase seven (7) aerial drones for each county in the Lincoln Trail region. These counties included Breckinridge, Grayson, LaRue, Marion, Meade, Nelson, and Washington. Hardin County received equipment to update its drone: additional batteries and a P1 camera. The aerial drones will benefit county emergency management, assisting with search and rescue during disasters and mapping disaster-prone areas to determine mediation procedures allowing communities to be proactive in meeting objectives and goals highlighted in the LTADD Disaster Resiliency Plan and Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Through the CARES Act, the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) received a supplemental appropriation to “prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19.” As part of EDA’s CARES Act funding, Kentucky, through its Joint Funding Administration (JFA) program, was invited to apply for a supplemental award to help respond. As a result of JFA’s established and continued partnership with EDA, it was determined by EDA to be in the public’s best interest to make an award through JFA on a non-competitive basis through the KY JFA EDA COVID-19 Response grant, which included the 15-Area Development Districts throughout the state.

The aerial drones have thermal and mapping capabilities equipping communities in multiple ways, from recovery efforts during a disaster to assisting in other government needs. The thermal imaging can assist with locating methane leaks in landfills, assist law

enforcement with searches, and mapping damaged areas.



Figure 9 Aerial Drone presentation in Lebanon, Marion County.

In 2023, LTADD began working in coordination with the KY Energy & Environment Cabinet on the FEMA-Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program. This initiative aims to identify and analyze the region’s critical facilities with the objective to enhance energy resilience and security in the Lincoln Trail Region and across the Commonwealth.

INNOVATION INDEX

The Innovation Index is an index developed by StatsAmerica that attempts to reflect the underlying business and innovation potential for a given area. It is included in this report because it provides a useful way to compare data between counties and gives a general sense of the business environment and innovation potential of the LTADD area. Used here is the Headline Index, a combination of various categories that produce one number. The five categories included are: Human Capital and Knowledge Creation Index, Business Dynamics Index, Business Profile Index, Employment and Productivity Index, and an Economic Well-Being Index. All of this information can be found at the following link:

<http://www.statsamerica.org/ii2/about.aspx>

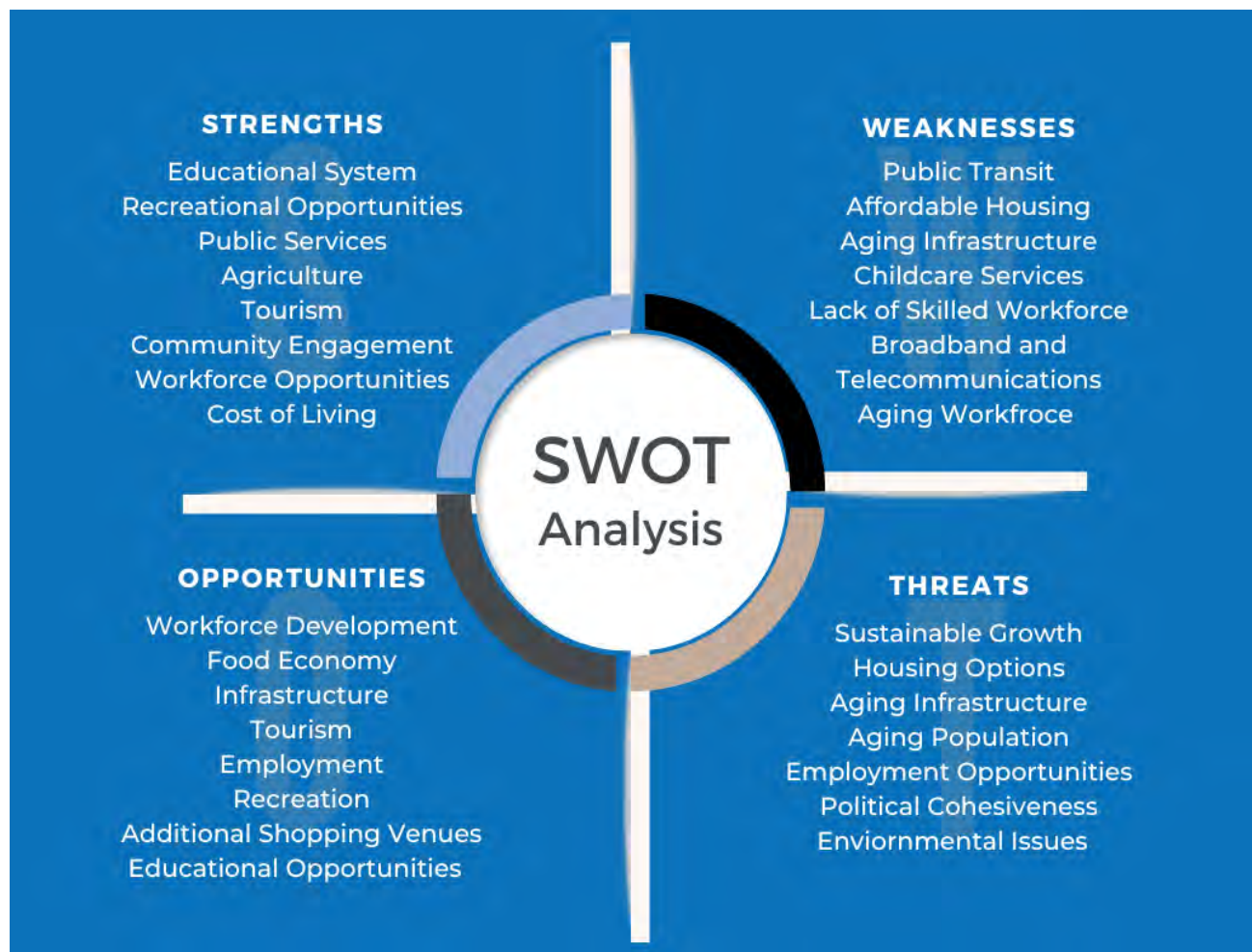
HEADLINE INNOVATION INDEX SCORE LTADD SCORE = 101 (RANKED 269TH OUT OF ALL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS)	
BRECKINRIDGE	103.8
GRAYSON	104.1
HARDIN	125.9
LARUE	109.4
MARION	111.1
MEADE	109.9
NELSON	118.1
WASHINGTON	108.9

This could be an area that the Region focuses on to improve its overall economic condition and strengthen its resiliency in dealing with economic ups and downs.

S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats to the Region

LTADD conducted an analysis of the region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats or challenges, known as the S.W.O.T. analysis. A survey was conducted in the region to identify priority areas for each of these categories. The survey had respondents from eight counties - Breckinridge, Grayson, Hardin, LaRue, Marion, Meade, Nelson, and Washington counties. Respondents also prioritized regional services, economic development, and capital improvements that should be considered. The findings from the LTADD CEDS survey are illustrated below.



Regional Services, Economic Development, and Capital Improvement Priorities

Respondents identified several priority areas for regional services, economic development, and capital improvements. Categorized below are the areas survey respondents felt most important for the LTADD region.



Strategic Projects Highlighted

The following presents a list of important projects to the LTADD region, including projects from Transportation, Water Management, Planning and Economic Development, Workforce Development, and the Area Agency on Aging. Some of these projects are in the initial stages of planning and some have been partially funded and/or partially completed.

Blue Oval SK Battery Park

As previously mentioned, the Ford Blue Oval SK Battery Park \$5.8 billion investment project will create 5,000 full time jobs for the LTADD region. This historical project is a collaboration between LTADD councils, Ford, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, local leaders and planners, and the community. The Workforce Development team has been working with and will continue to work with Ford's Human Resources department to develop training and curriculum for future plant employees. Transportation teams have been meeting regularly to develop plans that will improve roadway geometrics in and around Glendale which will improve safety, mobility, and capacity along with creating access to the plant's entrance from the highway. Construction has begun on the 1,500-acre construction site, and the Battery Park is set to be completed in 2025. To receive up-to-date information on the Park's progress, visit the Elizabethtown Hardin County Industrial Foundation at <https://eifky.org/blueoval-sk-battery-park/>

Fort Knox Compatible Use Plan

Addressed in the preceding sections, Fort Knox is a true regional economic engine. Somewhat misunderstood and hidden behind the gates, Fort Knox would be the 16th largest "city" in the state. It has an annual economic output of \$2.6 billion and an annual payroll of \$750 million to over 20,000 workers. These factors drove the need to research and evaluate elements that could impact its continued mission success. These included such things as land use, infrastructure, spectrum frequency, environmental, workforce, and other limiting factors. LTADD, using a grant from DoD's Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC), worked with officials and personnel from both Fort Knox, the surrounding region, and state-wide in addition to the general public to conduct this study. The resulting plan outlines the current state of socio-economic factors, infrastructure, and governmental policies that exist in the area. It reviewed success stories that demonstrated compatible use and also outlined recommendations to be considered going forward to mitigate encroachment and assist in mission retention. The need for the implementation of these recommendations has prompted an additional grant from OLDCC to LTADD to promote further efforts towards this goal. For more information on the study and the implementation process please see the website at: <https://missionknox.org/>

Bradfordsville Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements and I&I Rehabilitation

Bradfordsville utilized over \$700,000 in federal CDBG funds to perform much needed work on the Bradfordsville sewer system. Repair, replacements, and upgrades were performed at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. In addition, much work was done rehabilitating sewer lines, including installing lining to reduce inflow and infiltration. This work will help ensure Bradfordsville can operate its sewer system in the future.

Lebanon Senior Center

Lebanon received CDBG funding to assist in the construction of a new senior center, replacing the previous 25-year old center. Including local funding, the total project cost was over \$1.1 million. The new senior center includes computer access, modern, updated facilities, exercise equipment, and a more accessible entrance. This project ensures that the seniors of Lebanon have access to a well-deserved, updated facility.

Aging Services

LTADD's Area Agency on Aging served 152,433 meals in 2022. The demand for meals continues to increase, 141,923 meals were served in 2021. Staff assisted over 500 seniors save more than \$980,000 through the State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) during the 2022 Medicare Open Enrollment. Further, over 300 participants received services through the Medicaid Waiver Program which allows medically, intellectually, or developmentally disabled participants to stay in their homes.

Action Plan: Goals and Objectives

The development of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy helped identify the various strategies that can guide regional goals and objectives. The goals and objectives listed below include major, long-term goals as well as objectives that are achievable in shorter time frames. The Lincoln Trail Area Development District (LTADD) will continue to utilize all available resources as a means of prioritizing and accomplishing local and regional strategies. LTADD will continually evaluate and review the goals, objectives, strategies, and pertinent performance measures. Based upon monitoring feedback, any necessary changes will be implemented, especially in cases where critical needs unexpectedly arise.

Organization and Governance

Goal: To assist local governments in providing responsible governance and optimum service to citizens, particularly through strengthening public management and administration capabilities.

Objectives:

- Provide technical assistance to local units of government in financial administration and related areas.
- Inform local units of government about innovative ideas and concepts that, when implemented, improve their operating capabilities.
- Ensure a balanced urban and rural development pattern within the Lincoln Trail District through adoption and use of comprehensive planning.
- Encourage public and private development patterns around Fort Knox and surrounding communities that are compatible and sustainable.

Transportation

Goal: Ensure a balanced urban and rural development pattern within the Lincoln Trail District through adoption and use of comprehensive planning.

Objectives:

- Improve the overall safety of the LTADD regional transportation system.
- Promote greater connectivity and accessibility of a multi-modal and diverse transportation system.
- Preserve, maintain, and enhance the existing transportation system to ensure reliable, efficient and effective mobility.
- Stimulate sustainable economic growth and development by implementing sound planning techniques.

Natural Resources and Physical Environment

Goal: Encourage and promote the utilization of area natural resources in an environmentally and fiscally responsible manner, balancing current needs with future needs.

Objectives:

- Encourage adoption of sound land use principles and practices to minimize and mitigate negative impacts, both to the physical and fiscal environment.
- Encourage establishment of flood control measures for the protection or reclamation of property in flood prone or flood affected areas.
- Support programs and projects that ensure conservation of land and wildlife resources.
- Encourage the responsible preservation and restoration of historic structures, districts, sites, and resources within the Lincoln Trail Area Development District.



Human Resources

Goal: Improve the social environment of the Lincoln Trail Area Development District through the enhancement of educational, supportive and health services.

Objectives:

- Play a vital role in the continued development and improvement of a community-based system of service for older persons, that contributes to independence and quality of life.
- Assist youth and adults in the Lincoln Trail Workforce Investment Area in overcoming barriers in reaching self-sufficiency through various programs of education, technical training, support services and job placement.
- Develop a network of technical skills training and financial support in the region to ensure that all individuals have competitive skills and the region has a well-trained workforce prepared for a global economy.
- Assist in the coordination, development, and implementation of an emergency disaster plan for all situations affecting citizens of the eight-county district.

Economy

Goal: Encourage economic vitality and diversity in the region through the support of programs and projects that develop living wage employment in the region.

Objectives:

- Maintain, operate, and coordinate a regional program for continued growth, development, expansion, and retention of business and industrial activities.
- Develop diversified employment opportunities and a more diversified employment base through expanded efforts in business development including nonmanufacturing business development.
- Promote and encourage expansion of the tourism industry within the district to create a more diverse base of economic opportunity.
- Support the development, expansion, and compatibility of agriculture businesses and industries in the regions' economy.



Infrastructure

Goal: Support the development and maintenance of efficient infrastructure systems.

Objectives:

- Encourage development and maintenance of a clean, high quality water supply system and efficient, environmentally sustainable wastewater system to serve residents and businesses in the region through thoughtful project planning and prioritization in the LTADD Water Management Planning Council.
- Aid with the development of efficient solid waste disposal facilities teamed with implementation of programs designed to reduce the solid waste stream in the region.
- Support the development of telecommunication infrastructure throughout the Lincoln Trail region and foster coordination among the public and private sectors to promote new and required technology.



Important Links

Lincoln Trail Area Development District

<http://www.ltadd.org>

US Economic Development Administration

<http://www.eda.gov/>

2021 Lincoln Trail Workforce Development Board 3-Year Strategic Plan

[LTWDB 3YR PLAN.pdf](#)

KY Transportation Cabinet Long Range Transportation Plan 2014-2035

<https://transportation.ky.gov/Planning/Documents/2014-2035%20LRSTP.pdf>

LTADD Metropolitan Transportation Plan

<http://radcliff-elizabethtown-mpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/MPOMetropolitanTransportationPlan.pdf>

Lincoln Trail Regional 2020 Hazard Mitigation Plan Draft

<https://ltadd.org/services/hazards/>

KY Economic Development Cabinet

<https://ced.ky.gov/>

KY One Stop Business Portal

<http://onestop.ky.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

LTADD Career Center

<http://ltcareercenter.org>

Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board

<https://kwib.ky.gov/Pages/index.aspx>

Economic Development Administration

<http://www.eda.gov/>

Stats America

<http://www.statsamerica.org/>

Kentucky State Data Center (official Census figures)

<http://www.ksdc.louisville.edu/>

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Kentucky Department for Local Government

<http://kydlgweb.ky.gov>

Kentucky Water Resource Information System Portal

<https://kia.ky.gov/WRIS/Pages/WRIS-Portal.aspx>

KY Transportation Cabinet District 4

<https://transportation.ky.gov/DistrictFour/Pages/default.aspx>

KY Department for Aging and Independent Living

<https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dail/Pages/default.aspx>

National Association of Development Districts

<http://www.nado.org/>

U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD)

<http://www.hud.gov/>

KY Food & Beverage Manufacturing Industry

https://ced.ky.gov/Existing_Industries/Food_Beverage.aspx

KY Automotive Manufacturing Industry

https://ced.ky.gov/Existing_Industries/Automotive.aspx

KY Motor Vehicle Related Manufacturing Facilities

https://ced.ky.gov/kyedc/kpdf/Motor_Vehicle_Related_Facilities.pdf

KY Center for Statistics

<https://kystats.ky.gov/KYLM/Index/>

Bureau of Economic Analysis

<https://www.bea.gov/data/income-saving/personal-income-county-metro-and-other-areas>

Source for some 2019 Census Data

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest/data/tables.2019.html>

New Ford Plant

<https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/politics/2021/09/27/gov-beshear-kentucky-incentivizes-ford-south-korea-battery-park/5851302001/>

Job Announcement News Releases

https://ced.ky.gov/Newsroom/News_Releases

Endnotes

i Kyle Rempfer, *Army resurrects V Corps after seven years to bolster Europe*, *Army Times*, [https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2020/02/12/army-resurrects-v-corps-after-seven-years-to-bolster-europe/], (accessed 10 September 2020).

ii Eric Pilgrim, *Fort Knox official: Digital Air-Ground Integration Range construction on track for 2023 completion*, *Fort Knox News*, 11 May 2021, [https://www.army.mil/article/246226/fort_knox_official_digital_air_ground_integrat