

# REMPO PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Presented by the Radcliff/Elizabethtown Metropolitan Planning Organization

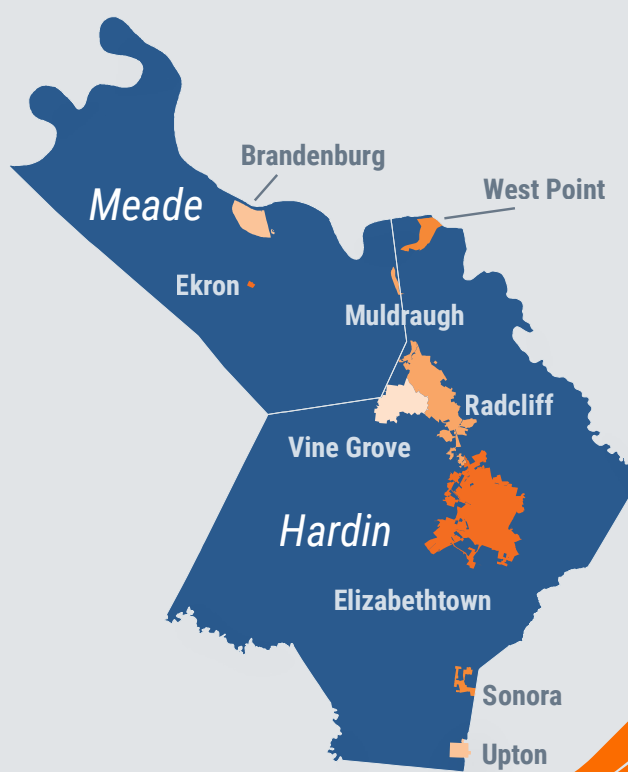
Prepared by **2024** Michael Baker International

## 1 Purpose of this Study

The Radcliff/Elizabethtown Metropolitan Planning Organization (REMPO) works to meet the transportation needs in Hardin and Meade Counties. The region is diversifying and growing, which provides both a unique challenge and opportunity for REMPO to create an adaptive and inclusive plan for their future transportation needs.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the need for and feasibility of implementing a fixed-route public transportation system within the Radcliff/Elizabethtown MPO urbanized area (Elizabethtown, Fort Knox, Glendale, Radcliff, & Vine Grove), including:

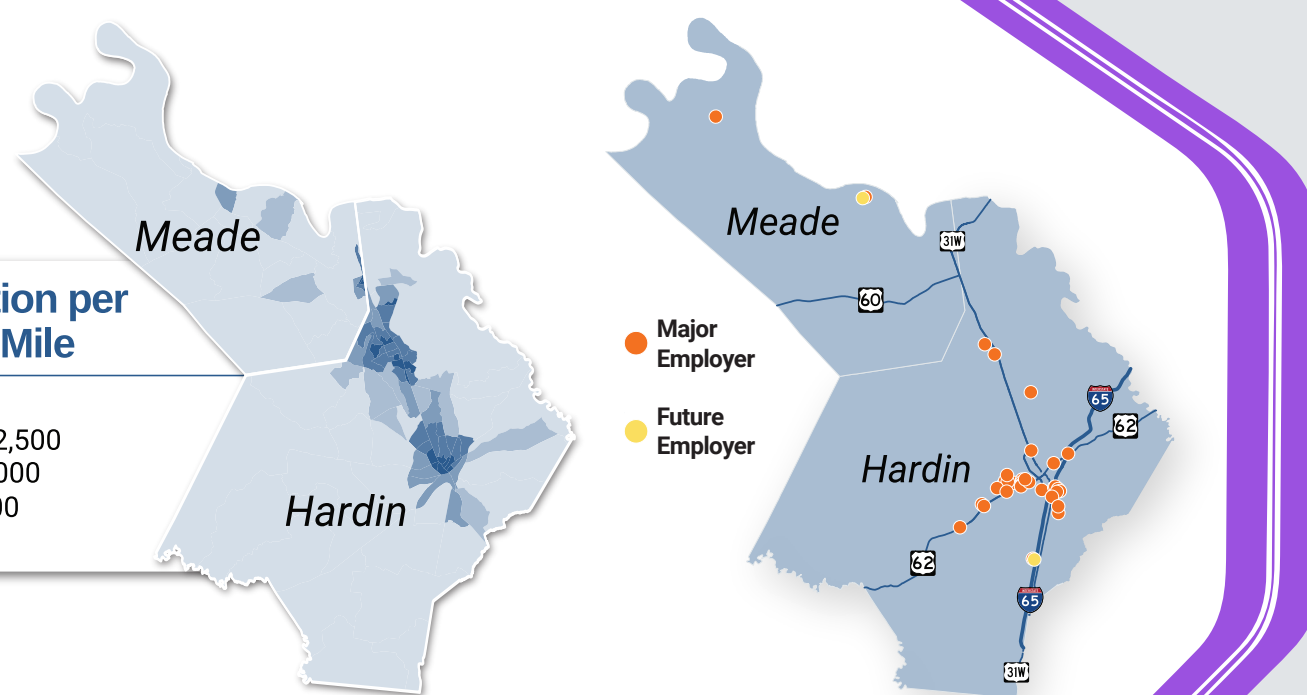
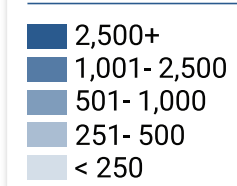
- Identifying possible locations for new bus routes and bus stops
- Calculating potential capital and operating costs necessary for a public transportation system
- Preparing funding scenarios to meet the local match requirement for federal funding



## 2 Existing Conditions

Both residents and employers in the region are centered around the City of Elizabethtown, the City of Radcliff, and the Fort Knox Army Base, with other major employers located in the City of Brandenburg (Meade County) and the community of Glendale (Hardin County).

### Population per Square Mile



## 3 Community Engagement

Between February and April 2024, input about public transportation needs in Hardin and Meade Counties was collected in the form of public surveys and stakeholder interviews from residents, employers, and public officials.

### Stakeholder Interviews

Representatives from the MPO met with 13 stakeholders, including major employers, public transportation providers, local officials, schools, the Chamber of Commerce, and medical providers. Some key themes recurred across multiple stakeholder interviews, and the project team learned several lessons from stakeholders that inform potential service developments.

#### Interest in Carpooling

Many commuters and students are open to carpooling or vanpooling, and some employers already have programs to facilitate carpools. Carpooling and vanpooling can originate at either private residences or at regional park-and-ride locations.

#### Existing Transportation Options Leave Significant Gaps

Major destinations are decentralized across a wide area, making mileage-based fees prohibitive for many students, medical patients, and commuters.

A lack of transportation options is significantly impacting residents' abilities to seek or complete the kind of education and training that would help fill much-needed jobs in industrial and healthcare positions. These transportation barriers are also impacting potential tax revenues.

Longer service hours are needed for students, medical patients, and employees working second and third shifts.

#### Broad Support for Expanding Public Transportation

With new industries and large employers moving into the region, the time is right to invest in public transportation.

TACK is willing to partner with REMPO and stakeholders to take the next steps for expanding and enhancing public transportation services to Hardin and Meade Counties.

Local government officials are open to providing assistance with signage, benches, talking with business owners, coordinating with KYTC about park-and-ride facilities, and potentially addressing funding needs.

### Public Survey

A public survey was conducted from March 5 to April 5, 2024, through an online survey platform as well as paper copies. Over 1,400 members of the public responded to the survey, which was offered in both English and Spanish. The survey results showed support for increased public transportation options:

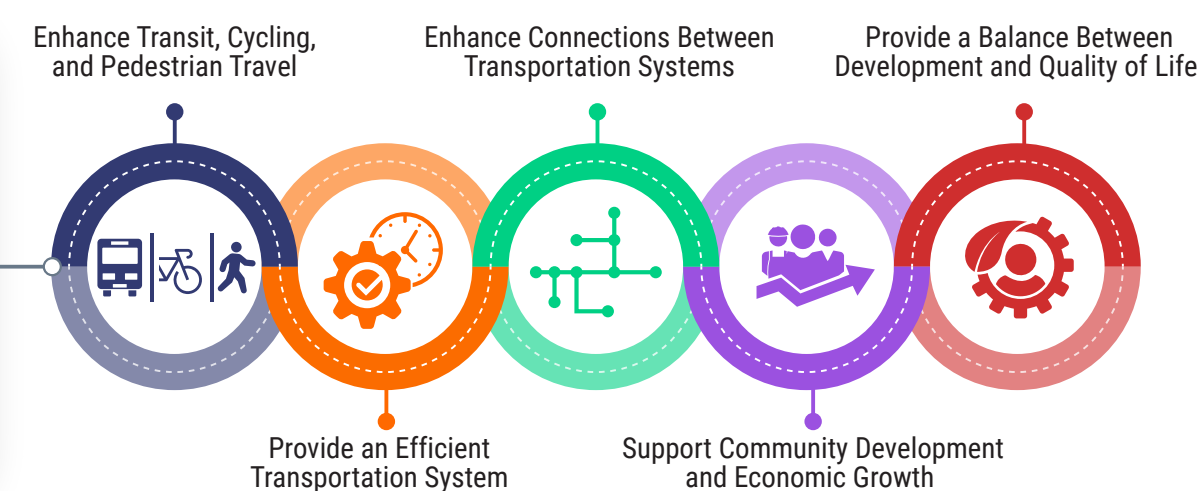
- 1/6 of respondents don't own a personal vehicle
- Only half of respondents usually drive themselves to the majority of their destinations
- More than 1/3 of respondents said they valued having a reliable alternative if other transportation was unavailable
- 1/4 of respondents said that they don't use shared mobility options (taxi, Uber, Lyft, etc.) because they're too expensive

### "What types of trips would you consider making if public transportation were more readily available?"



## REMPO Regional Transportation Goals

This Public Transportation Study has been guided by the MPO's nine transportation goals for the region, developed in 2019. In particular, the study advances REMPO's goals to:



## REMPO Study Area by the Numbers

	Hardin County	Meade County	Fort Knox
Total Population	111,607	29,735	8,888
Population per Square Mile	179.1	97.5	428.8
% Population 65+	15.2%	15.3%	1.3%
% Households Below Poverty	13.3%	13.25%	3.9%
% Households without a Car	9.6%	7.7%	21.4%

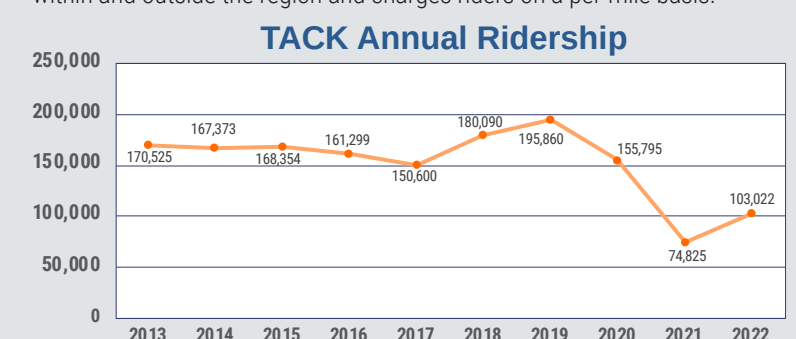
## Every Commute Counts (ECC)

Although there are currently no public transportation services that operate within the Fort Knox Military installation, all Army employees can take advantage of the Mass Transportation Benefits Program (MTBP) to offset up to \$315 of transit costs per month.

At Fort Knox, this allows Army personnel to use vanpool services offered by Every Commute Counts (ECC), a program for the greater Louisville Metro Area administered by the Kentuckiana Regional Planning and Development Agency (KRPDA). There are currently 11 daily ECC vanpools that stop at different locations inside the base.

## Transportation Authority of Central Kentucky (TACK)

TACK is the primary provider of public transportation services in Hardin and Meade Counties. It provides on-demand, shared-ride services to destinations within and outside the region and charges riders on a per-mile basis.



## 4 Strategies for Public Transportation

### PHASE 1 (2025) Coordinate Vanpools

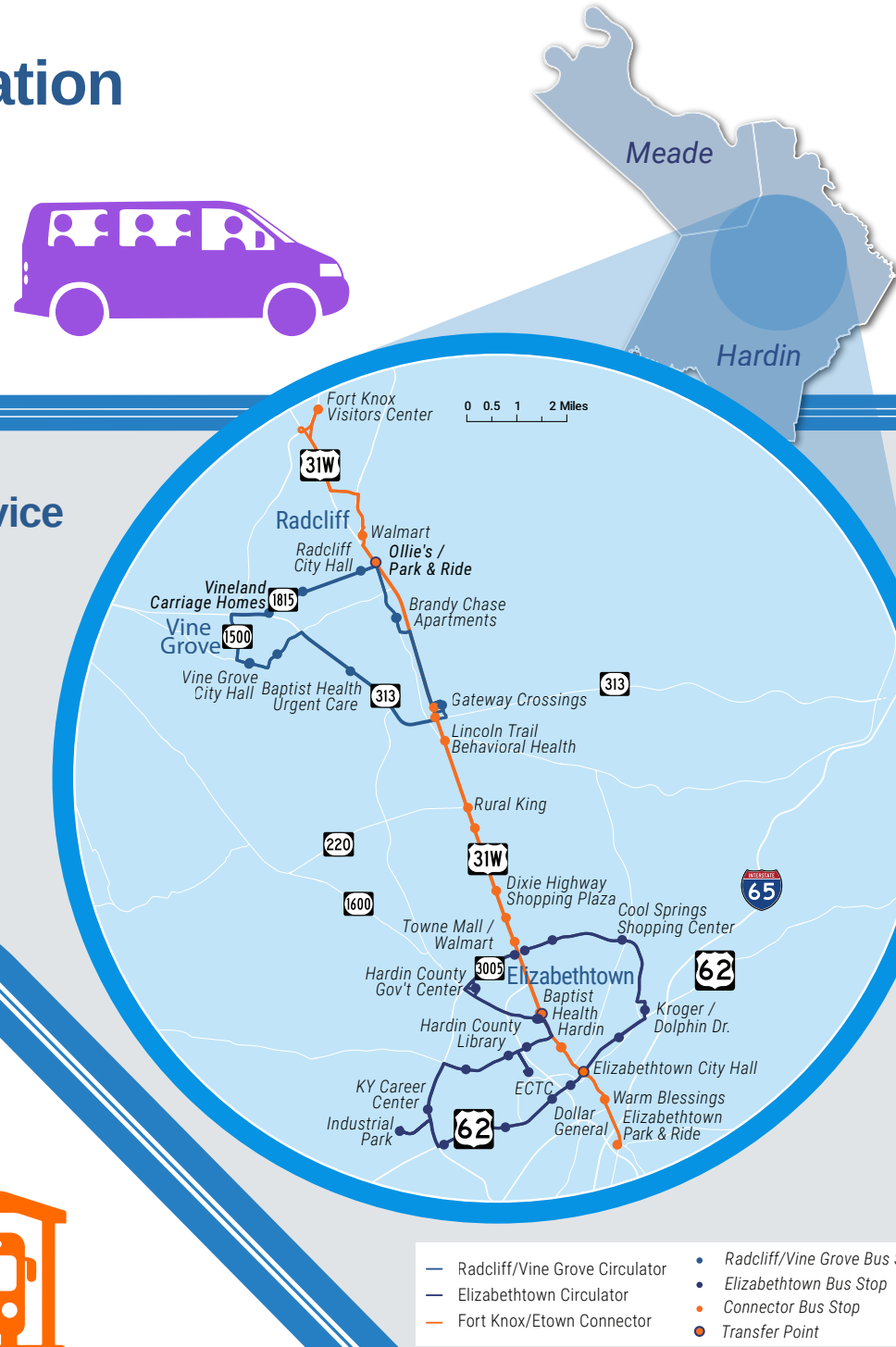
- Coordinate with industries such as Baptist Health, Elizabethtown Community and Technical College, BlueOval SK, and Fort Knox to organize vanpools with TACK's existing vanpool fleet
- Advertise commuter options to employees
- Consider replicating the Every Commute Counts program to create incentives for employees and students to use the vanpool

### PHASE 2 (2026-2028) Implement Fixed-Route Service

- Purchase between six and nine 14-seater cutaway buses
- Coordinate with stakeholders to identify annual operating funds
- Implement fare-free bus routes with the new cutaway buses
- Elizabethtown Circulator
- Radcliff/Vine Grove Circulator
- Fort Knox/Elizabethtown Connector
- Extend TACK's paratransit service coverage to include evening and weekend hours for the 1/2-mile areas around the fixed routes
- Install signs at all new bus stops
- Install bus shelters and benches at key bus stops

### PHASE 3 (2030+) Expand Service

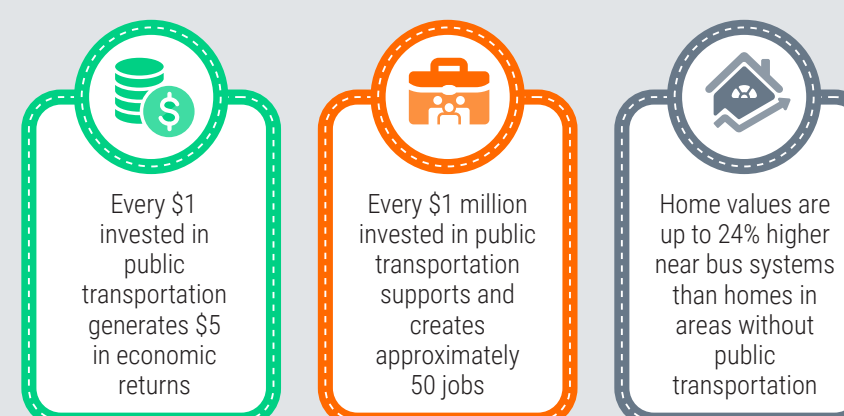
- Purchase or build a new vehicle storage and maintenance facility
- Invest in pedestrian infrastructure, such as sidewalks and signalized cross walks
- As funding and demand allow, extend the Fort Knox Connector south to Glendale and north to West Point, incorporating BlueOval SK and the Glendale industrial park
- Consider adding a Brandenburg Connector to connect locations in Brandenburg with Fort Knox or Radcliff



## 5 Financial Analysis

TACK can offset the annual operating costs of new fixed-route bus service by using previously untapped federal grants. These grants supply 80% of the necessary funds for capital expenses (new vehicles, bus stops, etc.) and operating expenses (driver wages, vehicle maintenance, fuel, etc.). This leaves only 20% of the total costs to be supplied from local sources or other federal programs like Medicaid.

### Investing in Public Transportation



### Available Funding Sources

- Federal Grant for New Vehicles (\$339(a) Program)
- Federal Grant for Operating Funds (\$307 Program)
- Funds from Local Governments
- Funds from Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation
- Revenue from Advertisements
- Service Agreements with Major Employers

## 6 Next Steps



### Public Engagement & Equity Requirements

Any new public transportation service that REMPO or TACK undertakes is subject to public engagement and equity requirements laid out in REMPO's Public Participation Plan and the Lincoln Trail Area Development Districts' (LTADD) Title VI Implementation Plan:

- Equity analysis of all residents within the boundaries of public transportation projects
- Strategies to address any adverse impacts on underrepresented or historically disenfranchised communities
- Program of Projects published on websites and social media with a 15-day comment period
- Optional public meetings about new or changing service