



Lincoln Trail

Area Development District
~ established 1968 ~

2025

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

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Lincoln Trail ADD RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION FOR THE 2025 UPDATE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS)

The Lincoln Trail Area Development District (LTADD), a quasi-governmental agency, meeting in Executive Committee session on **October 15, 2025**, motion made by Judge Timothy Graves, seconded by Kyle Souleyrette, that the following resolution be adopted:

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 2025 Lincoln Trail Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

LINCOLN TRAIL AREA DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT:

Judge David Daugherty, Chair, Board of Directors

Daniel London, Executive Director, LTADD

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.



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) Regional Transportation & Highway Safety Committee
- 2) Water Management Planning Council
- 3) Hazard Mitigation Council
- 4) Radcliff/Elizabethtown Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
- 5) Workforce Development Board
- 6) 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.



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.

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>.

The Hazard Mitigation Council was recently established in the spring of 2024 to further collaboration and coordination efforts among the region's emergency responders. LTADD in tandem with the Council will continue to update and maintain the required five (5) year update of the LTADD Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Council will work in conjunction with city officials, county officials, Kentucky Emergency Management, and the Department of Homeland Security through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, pursuant to the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 and 44 CFR Parts 201 and 206, to have the plan adopted by all city and county jurisdictions and the LTADD Board of Directors.

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

In the spring of 2024, the Radcliff/Elizabethtown MPO initiated a Public Transportation Study to evaluate a potential fixed-route public transportation system across the Radcliff/Elizabethtown urbanized area with possible connections to the BlueOvalSK development in Glendale as well as potential transit improvements in the Brandenburg/Meade County area.

The study's ultimate goal was to identify possible locations for new public transportation routes and stops, calculate potential capital and operating costs necessary for a public transportation system, and prepare funding scenarios to meet local match requirements for federal funding.

The study developed recommendations for a fixed route system running between Elizabethtown and Radcliff that would be economically feasible. It also outlined what the potential costs, barriers, and needs moving forward would be to execute upon those recommendations.

The study proposed a three-phase implementation plan based on its findings. Phase one involves the expansion of the existing vanpool program operated by TACK. Phase two includes the acquisition of buses and the development of a fixed-route transit system. Phase three entails the purchase of a larger facility for TACK to accommodate additional buses and support the extension of the fixed-route service between Radcliff and Elizabethtown. At present, phase one is well underway, with TACK having hired a new vanpool coordinator and actively working to expand vanpool services.

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.

Compatible Use Implementation Plan is the second phase to the completed 2022 Compatible Use Plan Study (CUP) for Fort Knox Military Reservation. 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 concerns surrounding compatible land use and encroachment. Reviewing the data, gaps 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 in the development of the Fort Knox Compatible Use Implementation Plan that was completed in January 2025.

The LTADD Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Program was created through a grant from the Economic Development Administration to further job creation and investment in the Lincoln Trail region. The primary objective is private sector job creation and expansion in industrial, commercial, service, and tourism ventures. LTADD staff, under the guidance and oversight of the LTADD RLF Loan Review Committee and Board of Directors, administers all facets of the program. The program offers gap financing to small businesses seeking to expand in the region and the Commonwealth. This unique RLF program supplements traditional financing by collaborating with regional bankers and lenders.



LTADD Local Government Revolving Loan Fund Recipient, Washington County, purchased a Sheriff's Vehicle.

In the fall of 2023, LTADD established a new and additional RLF program with the Local Government Revolving Loan Fund utilizing the net sale proceeds from the former LTADD building property and \$350,000 from savings. Local governments continue to be in need of low-interest financing to continue or initiate operations that provide safety, protection or additional services to local citizens and economies. The innovative program has provided assistance to two counties to address the public safety needs in their communities.

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/>.

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 a high quality of life. 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 nutritional 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. Aging, 244 Tribal organizations, and 2 Native Hawaiian organizations.

LTADD's Area Agency on Aging served 201,756 meals in 2024. The demand for meals continues to increase, 195,930 meals were served in 2023. Staff assisted over 127 seniors, saving more than \$438,936 through the State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) during the 2024 Medicare Open Enrollment. Further, over 419 participants received services through the Medicaid Waiver Program which allows medically, intellectually, or developmentally disabled participants to stay in their homes.

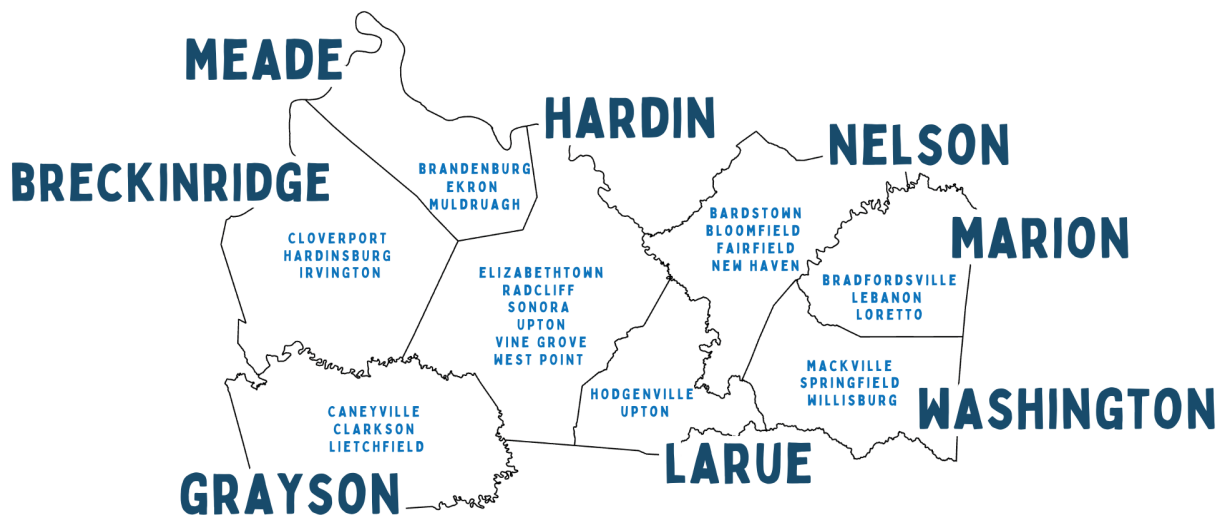
Lincoln Trail Area Development District (LTADD) Engineering Services is the first and only Area Development District in Kentucky to offer in-house engineering support. This innovative department provides cost-effective engineering and environmental services that drive economic growth across the communities LTADD serves—often at a lower cost than outsourcing to third-party firms. In August 2024, LTADD hired its first civil engineer to expand its services to include infrastructure assessments, drainage analysis, and technical assistance for small-scale projects, meeting a growing demand from local governments for timely, affordable engineering solutions. Due to the increasing need for these services, LTADD announced the creation of a dedicated engineering department by January 2025. This new department, designed to support regional initiatives and provide specialized expertise, is staffed with four full-time employees as of June 2025.

Acting as a one-stop shop, the LTADD Engineering Department includes a civil engineer, mechanical engineer, environmental specialist, and engineering technician. Their expertise has supported initiatives such as implementing pavement condition rating systems, ensuring MS4 permit compliance, and managing projects from start to finish.

The Area Development District's Board of Directors, executive leadership and its staff work with each of these Committees and Councils and collaborate with many others in the public and private sector to carry out their 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.

COUNTIES AND 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.

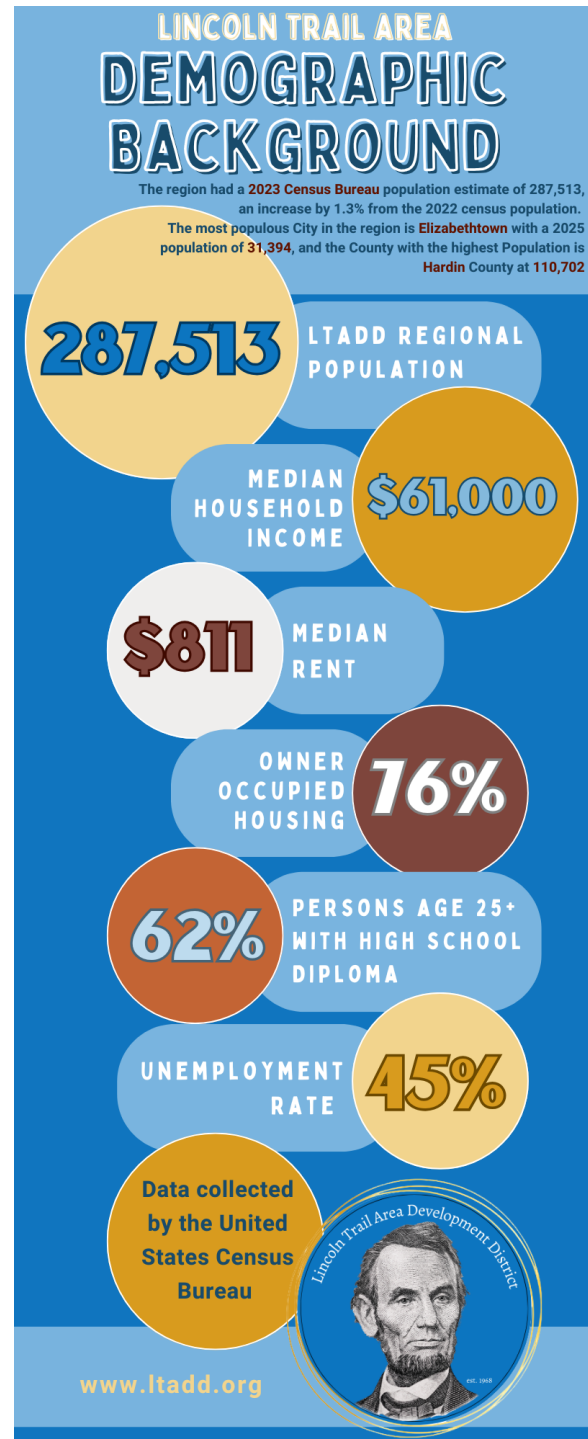
Economic Analysis

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 2.9% to 4.7%. 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. In 2024, the Lincoln Trail Region's unemployment rate increased to 5.1% from 4.9% in 2023.

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

Fort Knox in 2020 has also helped in that regard. Unemployment decreased in each county in the region.



In 2024, two of the top 10 fastest growing cities in Kentucky were in the LTADD Region, with Elizabethtown leading the way at 3.4% by being named the fastest growing large city. This trend will continue throughout the LTADD Region as we see additional jobs added as a result of BlueOval SK, Nucor Steel, continued growth within the bourbon industry, and expansions in healthcare and manufacturing sectors.

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 Estimates										
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division										
							Population Change			
	Census	Population Estimates					2020-2025		2024-2025	
Incorporated	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Kentucky	4,505,838	4,509,394	4,512,310	4,550,595	4,588,372	4,626,150	120,312	2.60%	37,778	0.82%
Bardstown	13,567	13,621	13,743	13,903	14,104	14,024	457	3.26%	-80	-0.57%
Bloomfield	961	971	971	982	994	987	26	2.63%	-7	-0.71%
Bradfordsville	270	271	271	273	273	275	5	1.82%	2	0.73%
Brandenburg	2894	2913	2940	2959	2974	2980	86	2.89%	6	0.20%
Caneyville	529	526	530	532	536	532	3	0.56%	-4	-0.75%
Clarkson	933	939	948	956	967	963	30	3.12%	-4	-0.42%
Cloverport	1119	1128	1137	1141	1144	1264	145	11.47%	120	9.49%
Ekron	175	173	170	169	169	168	-7	-4.17%	-1	-0.60%
Elizabethtown	31394	31931	31910	33061	34565	35243	3,849	10.92%	678	1.92%
Fairfield	118	122	128	130	135	137	19	13.87%	2	1.46%
Hardinsburg	2385	2397	2446	2461	2487	2490	105	4.22%	3	0.12%
Hodgenville	3235	3338	3283	3399	3428	3358	123	3.66%	-70	-2.08%
Irvington	1231	1241	1374	1384	1383	1401	170	12.13%	18	1.28%
Lebanon	6274	6355	6412	6502	6558	6669	395	5.92%	111	1.66%
Leitchfield	6404	6427	6432	6434	6463	6497	93	1.43%	34	0.52%
Loretto	723	728	714	714	714	712	-11	-1.54%	-2	-0.28%
Mackville	207	208	2024	207	208	208	1	0.48%	0	0.00%
Muldraugh	1040	1032	1021	1015	1016	998	-42	-4.21%	-18	-1.80%
New Haven	798	804	810	816	829	823	25	3.04%	-6	-0.73%
Radcliff	23042	22942	22907	22740	22706	22565	-477	-2.11%	-141	-0.62%
Sonora	565	566	585	580	566	563	-2	-0.36%	-3	-0.53%
Springfield	2846	2846	2882	2941	2970	2995	149	4.97%	25	0.83%
Upton	704	707	716	714	703	711	7	0.98%	8	1.13%
Vine Grove	6559	6700	6881	6920	6933	7108	549	7.72%	175	2.46%
West Point	952	943	945	933	909	915	-37	-4.04%	6	0.66%
Willisburg	300	264	298	301	299	302	2	0.66%	3	0.99%
Source: United States Census Bureau, World Population Review										

*Data for all years in the above charts can be found at: <http://www.ksdc.louisville.edu/>

Manufacturing

Manufacturing, particularly automotive, plays a major role in the region, which has become part of the nation's "auto alley" as the industry expands beyond Detroit. U.S. and Japanese automakers have established key facilities along the I-65 and I-75 corridors, including Ford in Louisville, Toyota in Georgetown, and the Corvette plant in Bowling Green. This has attracted numerous suppliers and tiered automotive companies to nearby areas, including the LTADD Region.

On September 27, 2021, Ford announced a \$5.8 billion investment in Hardin County to build two battery plants, creating 5,000 full-time jobs. Touted by Governor Beshear as the largest investment in Kentucky's history, the BlueOval SK (BOSK) Battery Park will produce electric vehicle batteries. In February 2022, the Governor announced an on-site training facility, also serving as a satellite campus for Elizabethtown Community and Technical College (ECTC), offering employee training and R&D labs. Additional suppliers and investments are expected. In May 2024, Governor Beshear and local officials held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the ECTC BOSK Training Center in Glendale.



Photo Courtesy of ECTC

Advanced Nano Products, a Korean supplier of carbon battery nanomaterials used in electric vehicle battery production, has invested 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. In March 2023, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen joined Kentucky leaders to celebrate the city's new clean energy plant.



Photo Courtesy of The News-Enterprise

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.



Photo Courtesy of The News-Enterprise

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 \$2 billion. As of January 2023, Nucor rolled its first steel plate and has 400 employees. Nucor welcomed Governor Andy Beshear and local officials to celebrate the grand opening.



Photo Courtesy of The News-Enterprise

In January 2024, Governor Andy Beshear toured the newly expanded Nationwide Uniform, which makes military, emergency responders, and postal worker uniforms in Hodgenville. The Company employs over 200 workers in a new 140,000 square foot distribution and service center, the largest in the company, where 1,200,000 garments from five other locations have been relocated.



Photo Courtesy of The News-Enterprise

In early 2025, Marion County broke ground on the \$63 million Grissan Renewable Energy Facility, which will create 20 full-time jobs. The UK-based company selected Marion County for its first U.S. operation, where it will convert distillery byproducts into renewable natural gas and fertilizer.

Processed Food and Beverage Production

Food and Beverage production is an integral part, unique to the Lincoln Trail region. 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 exhibits growth and continued investments, primarily within the distilled spirits companies in the region. In 2023, Log Still Distillery invested \$36 million in Nelson County, where construction is complete on a new tasting room, a bed and breakfast,

and an amphitheater. An additional investment of \$60 million was announced for the distillery that will create 146 new jobs in bottling operations, hospitality, event operations, and restaurant positions.



Washington County is encountering a surge of bourbon investments with announcements from Willett Distillery and Potter Jane Distillery. Willett Distillery's investment of nearly \$93 million includes construction of warehouses and additional production facilities, a 70,000 square-foot facility on 150 acres. The expansion will create 35 new jobs in the county. Willett Distillery is a family owned and operated distillery in neighboring Nelson County. New to the bourbon venture is Potter Jane Distilling Company, investing \$50 million encompassing 36,000 square feet spanning 153 acres with two initial warehouses. The company plans to be operational beginning in January 2025, and provide around 40 new jobs.

The founders of the Bardstown Bourbon Company are set to open a state-of-the-art whiskey experience as they open up the Whiskey House in Elizabethtown, Hardin County. This \$150 million investment over the next decade on a 176-acre campus will allow guests to enjoy the most technologically advanced distillery in the United States. Phase 1 was completed in July of 2024, creating 100 full-time jobs. This year, Governor Beshear took a tour of this technologically advanced manufacturing facility.



Photo Courtesy of The News-Enterprise, The Whiskey House in Elizabethtown

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.

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. In April 2025, Marion County announced Morris Packaging, a leading minority business enterprise, was to build a \$61 million, 100,000- square-foot facility for the flexible packaging operation, creating 276 jobs in Lebanon.

Military

Fort Knox is home to more than 30 commands and organizations with a daytime population of about 26,260 soldiers, civilian employees, and family members.¹ Having a premier military installation in the Lincoln Trail Region stimulates the region's economy. Currently, Fort Knox has an economic impact of \$5.6 billion and it continues to grow. The impact of Fort Knox on the region cannot be overstated, in sustaining the installation's current and future missions to support military readiness and national security.

Ft. Knox is home to the United States Army Human Resources Center for Excellence. The 109,000-acre military base was part of the last Department of Defense's Base Realignment and Closure plan (BRAC) that 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. This transitioned more to 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 15,000 officer candidates into the region during each year for training. The V Corps was reactivated in

February 2020 with Fort Knox serving as the headquarters location and the forward command post in Poznan, Poland serving on a rotational basis. The Corp deployed in support of NATO allies. The First Theater Sustainment Command provides logistical support and operations for all forces in the Middle East.

The new addition to Fort Knox is the Digital Air-Ground Integration Range, or DAGIR. It is only the second of its kind. This range allows training for tanks, dismounted live-fire exercises, artillery, and aircraft. It also allows for simultaneous air and ground training. Construction was completed in Spring of 2024. It involved expending approximately \$52 million to convert the existing Yano Range. Fort Knox's DAGIR is only the third digital range in the world and only one east of the Mississippi. It is the largest live fire range in the US Army, as it is utilized by not only the US Military, but forces around the world.



¹ www.army.mil

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 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.

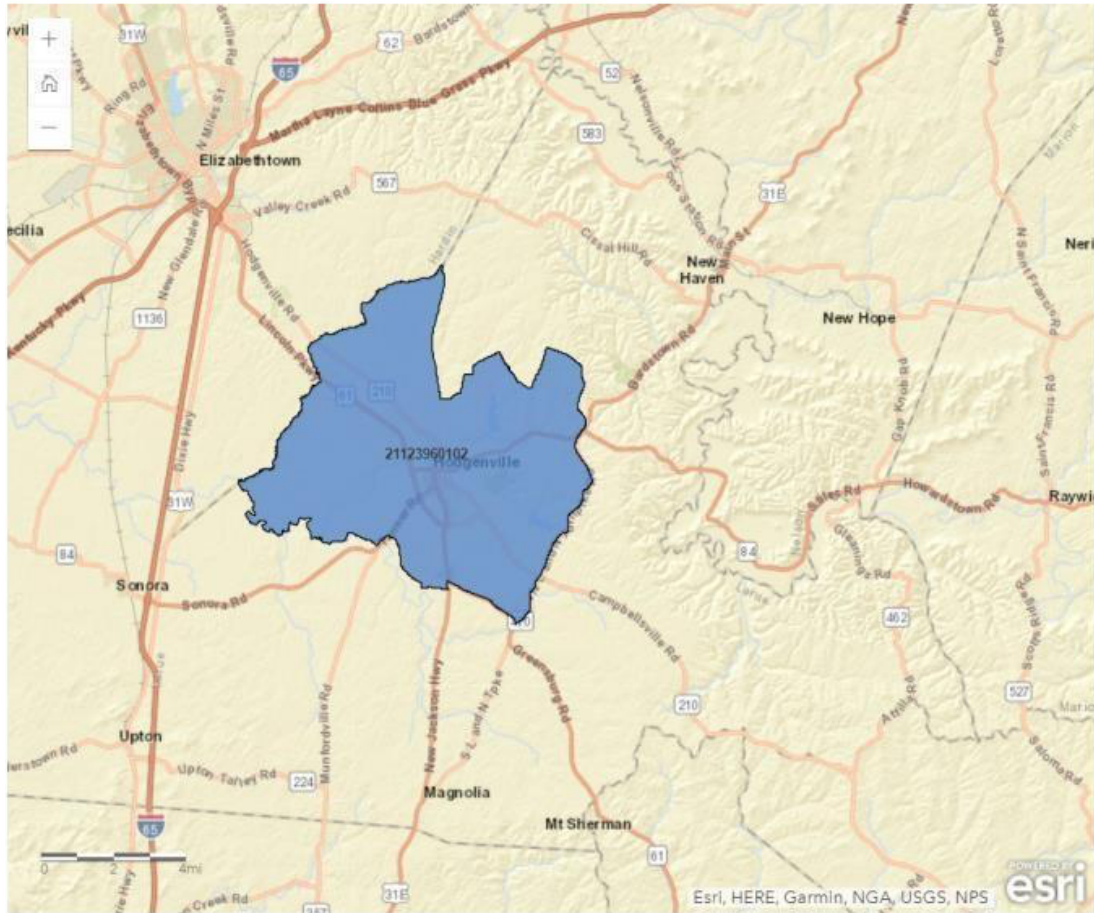
This strength is also a point of high concern as well. Outside influences can have a great impact on power and labor costs. These things are not always within the control of the local area and as such can be volatile. As has been seen in many manufacturing sectors, increasing technology has allowed

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.

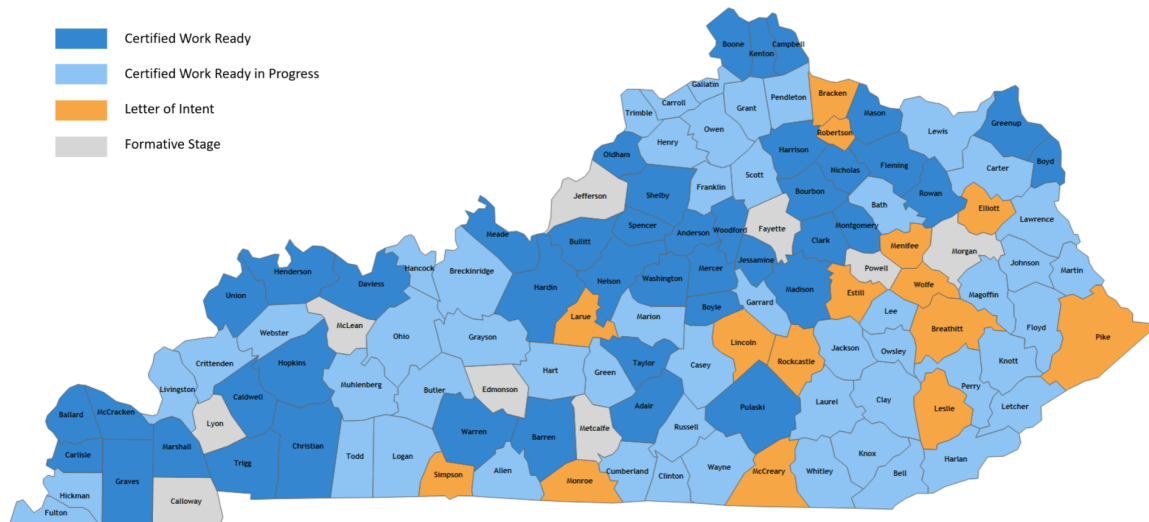
Opportunity Zones

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



Kentucky Work Ready Communities as of October 2023. <https://workready.ky.gov/Pages/Certified-Counties.aspx>

The 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.

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

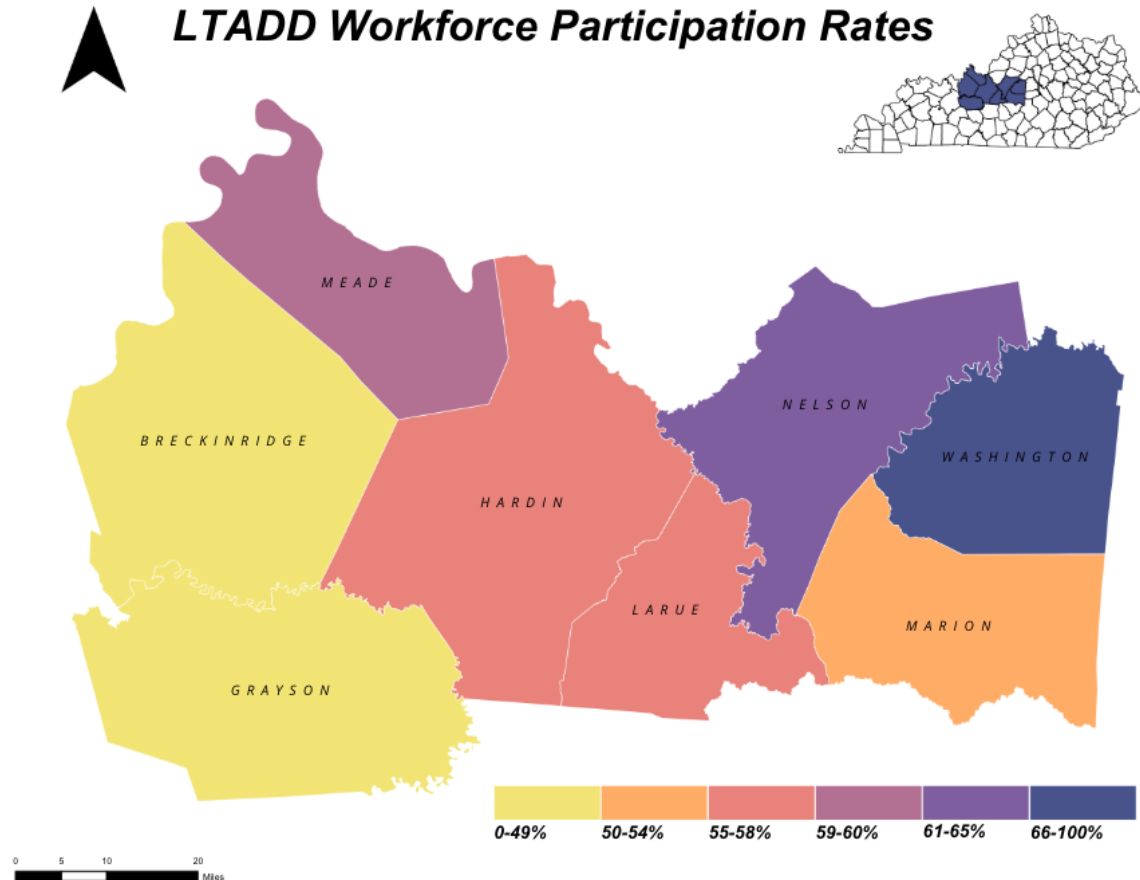
Lincoln Trail Region Labor Force Data

LOCATION	CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (%)
BRECKINRIDGE	8,635	8,155	480	5.6%
GRAYSON	10,648	10,003	643	6%
HARDIN	49,348	46,817	2,531	5.10%
LaRUE	7,073	6,736	337	4.8%
MARION	8,300	7,843	457	5.5%
MEADE	14,558	13,861	697	4.8%
NELSON	23,776	22,692	1,084	4.6%
WASHINGTON	6,425	6,157	268	4.2%
Lincoln Trail LWA	128,761	122,264	6,497	5%

Source: KT Stats (as of June 2025)



LTADD Workforce Participation Rates



Lincoln Trail LWA: Workforce Participation Rate Map, KY Stats, June 2025

As the region continues to experience a tidal wave of economic growth, training, attracting, and retaining a skilled workforce is imperative. The Lincoln Trail Workforce Area includes centers located in Bardstown, Elizabethtown, Lebanon, Leitchfield, and now, Fort Knox. In April 2024, The Kentucky Career Center - Lincoln Trail at Fort Knox presented a certification for achievement to Fort Knox's Garrison Command. Fort Knox soldiers, civilian employees and their families at Fort Knox can now access the full range of services offered at Kentucky Career Center as a new access point. Previously, soldiers, employees, or family members would have to travel to Elizabethtown to utilize services. The Career Center offers a variety of programs and services to veterans and their family members, including: Veterans- Owned Small Business, Military Spouses, and Employment Assistance.

Putting Young Kentuckians to Work

The Lincoln Trail Workforce Development Board (LTWB) launched a new program in October 2024 focused on employing youth in the region.

Funded by the Kentucky General Assembly, the Putting Kentuckians to Work initiative allowed Lincoln Trail ADD to create a Youth Service program targeting youth aged 16 - 24 years old to provide employment and skills training in high-demand job opportunities. These services are provided through the Kentucky Career Center - Lincoln Trail (KCC-LT) and include pre-employment orientation and work readiness. Career advisors at KCC-LT provide help with soft skills training, resume workshops, interview skills, and specific sector training with virtual reality career exploration. Participants in the program are put on a path to employment and have the opportunity to enroll in On-the Job Training, paid internships or work-based learning. Ultimately, the youth participants are connected to local employers in the region for reliable employment opportunities. KCC-LT and the LTWDB also follow-up with the young employees and provide post-employment support. The special funding also allows LTWDB to fund supportive services, covering the cost of job-related needs, transportation assistance, and training and education support. Career advisors also follow-up with participants to assess any further needs.



A student utilizing virtual reality career exploration, photo courtesy of KCC-LT

In March 2025, the Marion County Event Center & Sportsplex, held its grand opening in Lebanon. The center hired a majority of youth staff to run the daily operations at the facility. In partnership with KCC-LT and Marion County, the Lincoln Trail Workforce Development Board was able to provide First Aid and CPR training to the fifteen new staff members. In addition the Putting Young Kentuckians to Work initiative funding also covered the cost of work uniforms for all fifteen team members.

Hiring for the MCECS was handled completely by the Career Center in Lebanon and skilled career advisors at the center assisted the team of young adults in providing essential skills training, pre-employment readiness, and a resume building workshop. While the initiative is new and in its first year, the LTWDB and KCC-LT plan to utilize the funding and continue to ramp up the support of youth in the Lincoln Trail Region over the next several years.



Grand Opening celebration for the Marion County Event Center & Sportsplex.

Small Business Development

LTADD Legacy Revolving Loan Fund Program (RLF) Lincoln Trail Area Development District, in partnership with the Lincoln Trail Workforce Development Board offers the LTADD Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) program to assist small business development in the Lincoln Trail Region. The program, originally created by the Economic Development Administration (EDA), aims to further job creation and create investment in the region within the industrial, commercial, service and tourism sectors. The program benefits the LTADD's eight-county service region by promoting a flexible source of public funding for small business owners who cannot otherwise obtain adequate financing through private sectors.

These loans help to stimulate the local economy, create and retain jobs, and encourage private investment in the region. The RLF program also allows LTADD and the LTWDB to collaborate with local community financial institutions to provide a funding package to small business owners. Borrowers receive gap financing at a low rate for projects including the purchase of equipment, working capital, land acquisition, and building acquisition. This program has assisted over nine-area small businesses within the last five years and continues to help spur exciting growth throughout the Lincoln Trail Region.



LTADD RLF check presentation, April, 2025

LTADD EDA-CARES Business Relief Working Capital Loan Program was established to assist businesses in the industrial, manufacturing, commercial, agricultural, service transportation, or healthcare sectors that have been economically impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic. This program is designed to have an impact on the recovery and resiliency of small businesses in the region. LTADD and the LTWDB are able to provide low-interest loans up to \$40,000 to area small businesses in need.

Information about available loan offerings and application forms can be found at www.ltadd.org.

Lincoln Trail Workforce (WIOA) Impact

JULY 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2025

19,266	Clients received employment services from Kentucky Career Center
391	Hiring Events (1,098 employers)
45	High school career fairs
2,587	Students reached
55	WIOA enrollments
18	Incumbent Worker Training participants
370	Laid off workers eligible for Rapid Response assistance
9	Active Small Business Loans through Revolving Loan Fund
2,238	CareerEDGE enrollments (employment/soft skills training)

LTADD Region WIOA Impact for July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

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:

- 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 1136 – New Interchange at I-65 / KY 1136

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>

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 County
- 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 2024 Enacted Highway Plan:

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



Governor Andy Beshear joined state and local officials to mark the completion of the new interchange at Interstate 65 and Highway 222 in Hardin County with a ribbon cutting on April 12 in Glendale. Photo courtesy of Kentucky Transportation Cabinet

Infrastructure



Vine Grove Wastewater Treatment Plant Groundbreaking Ceremony, photo courtesy of the News Enterprise

Local utilities continue to examine needs and look for cost-effective solutions to the 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. Additionally, KY DOW is finalizing both guidance and a timeline to tackle the removal of PFAS from water systems, with the initial phase concentrating on water treatment facilities.

In 2021, President Biden signed into law the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, 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 received \$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 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 BlueOval SK. One project for the City of Vine Grove, as pictured above, will provide funds for the renovations at the Vine Grove Wastewater Treatment Plant. Meade County was awarded \$3.1M for line extensions & improvements, technology upgrades, water treatment plant upgrades, and pipe replacement.

The KY WWaters Funding Program, aimed at supporting disadvantaged water communities, awarded \$747,000 to the City of Bradfordsville in Marion County to address inflow and infiltration issues in the wastewater system. This funding may enable the removal of the tap-on ban currently in place by KY DOW. Additionally, the City of Cloverport in Breckinridge County was awarded a \$7,171,000 grant from KY WWaters to construct a new wastewater treatment plant, replace aging infrastructure, and resolve inflow and infiltration issues that have led to a tap-on ban imposed by the Kentucky Division of Water.

Additionally, BIL led to the creation of the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program, which provides \$42.45 billion to expand high-speed internet access in rural areas of all 50 states with limited or unavailable broadband access. Kentucky's share of federal BEAD funds is \$1,086,172,536.68, and these funds are managed by the Kentucky Office of Broadband Development. In order to determine how these funds would be split among Kentucky's 120 counties, the Kentucky Office of Broadband Development partnered with all 15 of Kentucky's Area Development Districts in an effort to find which areas have limited or unavailable broadband access and could benefit from BEAD funding. In Spring 2024, LTADD met with the local government officials and internet providers in each of the eight-county region to verify the accuracy of broadband speed data from the National Telecommunications & Information Administration (NTIA) and to get an idea of which areas would best benefit from receiving BEAD funding. By Summer 2024,

the findings of the Area Development Districts were reported to the Kentucky Office of Broadband Development, and the amount of money that will be allocated to each county for broadband infrastructure development is yet to be determined.



Local officials, internet providers, and LTADD staff discuss county broadband needs.

Hazard Mitigation

The Lincoln Trail region commenced the year with a noteworthy milestone, marked by a visit from Governor Andy Beshear, who announced the deployment of the region's drone fleet. This advanced fleet—comprising nine aerial drones and one underwater remotely operated vehicle—significantly enhances the region's capabilities in disaster preparedness and emergency response, thereby strengthening Lincoln Trail's ability to act swiftly and efficiently in times of crisis.



On display, the 8-county region's aerial drones and LTADD's underwater drone.

Through the CARES Act, The U.S. Department of Commerce and Economic Development Administration (EDA), received a supplemental appropriation to “prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19,” which included the 15- Area Development Districts. In the spring of 2023, the Lincoln Trail Area Development District received the EDA grant funding 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 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.



Aerial drone presentation in Lebanon, Marion County.

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.

Honored as TEAM KY All-Stars by Governor Andy Beshear, the Lincoln Trail Area Development District (LTADD) continues to advance the region's position as a center for economic development and a leader in disaster response initiatives across the Commonwealth.



Governor Beshear, Hardin County Sheriff John Ward, Travis Cook, LTADD's Executive Director Daniel London and LTADD's Board Chairman David Daugherty, Marion County Judge Executive

In 2025, the Lincoln Trail region experienced multiple severe weather events that resulted in widespread flooding, significant infrastructure damage, and economic disruption across several counties. These incidents underscored the critical importance of resilient infrastructure and comprehensive disaster preparedness planning.

The Lincoln Trail Area Development District (LTADD) established a Community Support Team in January 2025. This multidisciplinary team—comprising an engineer, an engineering technician/environmental specialist, a hazard mitigation specialist, and a GIS technician—was formed to deliver rapid assistance in the aftermath of natural disasters and to address critical community needs. The establishment of this team signifies a strategic initiative aimed at strengthening the region's capacity to effectively manage emergencies and to support long-term recovery and resilience efforts.

In February 2025, a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration (FEMA-4860-DR) was issued in response to a series of severe storms, flooding, landslides, and straight-line winds that affected the Commonwealth. While the initial declaration prioritized the most severely impacted counties in Eastern Kentucky, subsequent amendments extended federal assistance eligibility to additional jurisdictions, including several counties within the Lincoln Trail region.

In April 2025, a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration (FEMA-4864-DR) was issued in response to the widespread impacts of a historic, multi-day weather system that brought severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, and record-breaking rainfall to the region.

Every county within the Lincoln Trail area experienced intense rainfall, resulting in flash flooding, river overflows, and significant infrastructure damage. The Rolling Fork and Salt Rivers rose rapidly, inundating low-lying areas and triggering numerous road closures and water rescues



Flooded highways in Nelson County. April, 2025



High flood waters rush over the White Mills Bridge in Hardin County. April, 2025

Several tornadoes struck Central Kentucky, including nearby Jefferson County, straining regional emergency response and disrupting economies, utilities, and transportation. These events highlight the Lincoln Trail Region's vulnerability to natural hazards and the urgent need for strategic resilience planning.

In May 2025, a devastating tornado swept across Washington County, wreaking havoc on homes and vital infrastructure. The storm had a profound effect on the local economy, forcing many families to relocate and interrupting key services. Recovery efforts are underway, focusing not only on rebuilding but also on enhancing the community's resilience to future emergencies.



Pictured is the EF-2 tornado damage in the Pottsville area in Springfield, Washington County, in May 2025.



Also in May 2025, LTADD staff showcased their drone program at the KAMM Regional Meeting, demonstrating its role in supporting emergency management, infrastructure assessment, and disaster recovery across the region.

In June 2025, LTADD personnel provided assistance to Nelson County by deploying the agency's underwater drone to assist the Sheriff's Office in the recovery of a piece of evidence in an active case. This operation demonstrated the region's capacity to utilize advanced technology in support of public safety and emergency response initiatives.

In September 2025, at the 2025 Kentucky Emergency Services Conference, LTADD was

honored as the 2025 Catalyst Winner in recognition of its groundbreaking work in expanding drone technology across its region. This initiative provided local emergency management and planning agencies with a dedicated fleet of drones, significantly enhancing disaster recovery, emergency services, and regional planning capabilities. These drones have become vital tools in post-disaster damage assessments, allowing teams to access hazardous or inaccessible areas quickly and safely. LTADD's innovative deployment of this technology reflects a forward-thinking approach to regional preparedness and has set a new standard for collaborative emergency management in the region. Pictured below, LTADD Staff received the 2025 Kentucky Emergency Managers Association's Catalyst Award.



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)

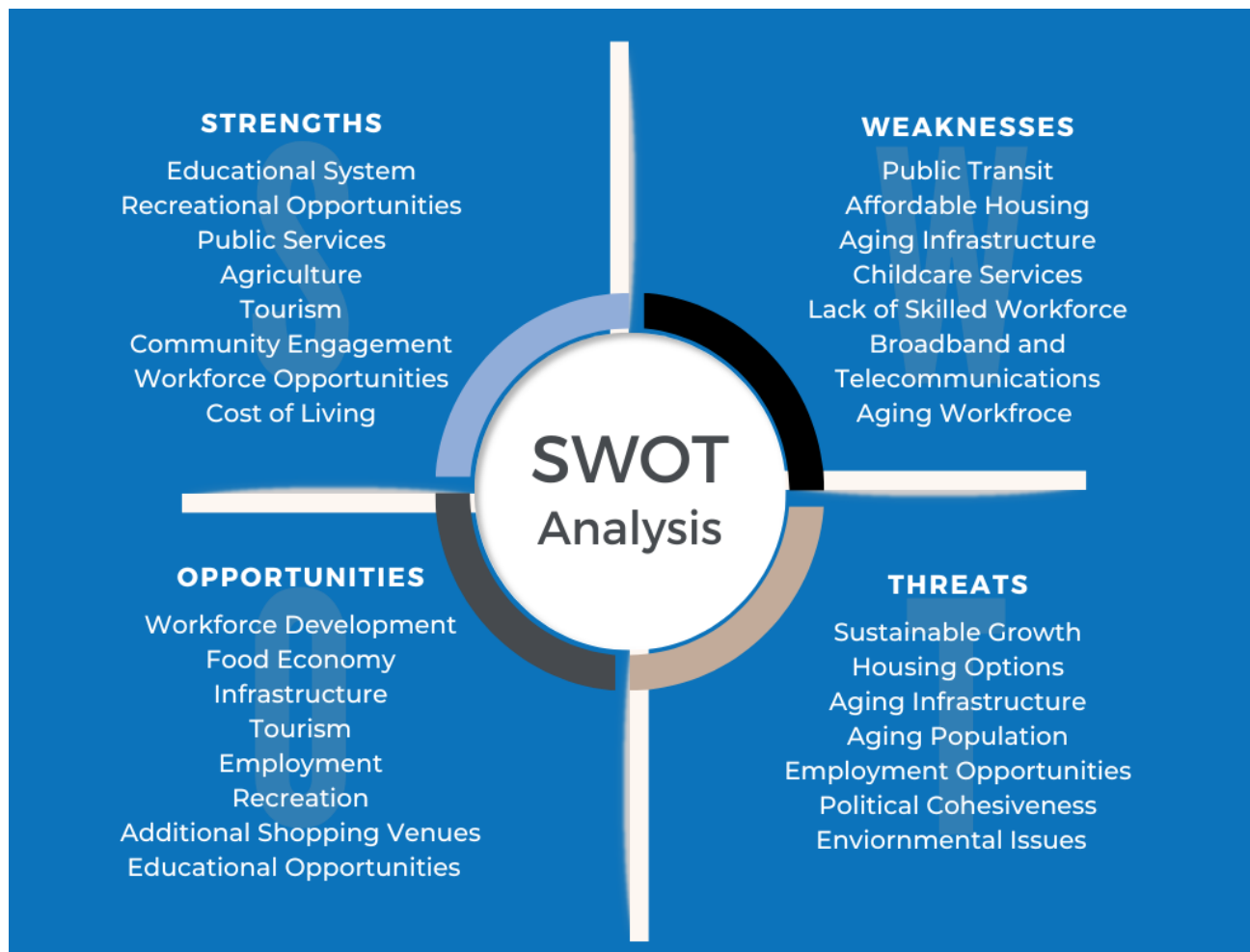
BRECKINRIDGE	103.8
GRAYSON	104.1
HARDIN	125.9
LARUE	109.4
MARION	111.1
MEADE	109.9
NELSON	118.1
WASHINGTON	108.9

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

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 area's survey respondents felt most important for the LTADD Region.



Regional Priorities

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. The battery plants represent the largest private investment in Kentucky history. BlueOval SK is a joint venture between Ford Motor Company and SK On that will produce advanced batteries for future Ford and Lincoln vehicles. LTADD's 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. The groundbreaking for the 1,500-acre site occurred in December 2022. With construction underway, the Battery Park project timeline was to complete in 2025. In October 2023, BlueOval executives announced plans to delay production at the second plant in Glendale to 2026 due to \$1.3 billion in losses in its EV start-up in the third quarter. Local officials are not alarmed by this delay and view it as an opportunity to allow additional time for needed infrastructure projects to be developed and completed. In spring 2025, BlueOval SK announced a battery supply agreement with Nissan, under which it will provide EV batteries from 2028 to 2033. All batteries will be manufactured in the U.S., with the second facility at the BlueOval SK Battery Park now designated for Nissan's battery production. In August 2025, BlueOval SK produced its first battery to be sold, these will be for the all-electric Ford F-150 Lightning Trucks. To receive up-to-date information on the Park's progress, visit the Elizabethtown Hardin County Industrial Foundation at <https://eifky.org>

Fort Knox Compatible Use Implementation Plan

Addressed in the preceding sections, Fort Knox is a true regional economic engine. It has an annual economic output of \$5.6 billion and an annual payroll of \$1.3 billion to over 22,000 workers. These factors drove the need to research and evaluate elements that could impact compatible land use and continued mission success in the Compatible Use Plan Study. The Compatible Use Plan Study was completed by LTADD in August of 2022. The Study 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. Currently, LTADD is working on the implementation of these recommendations. The Plan has been divided into three (3) main goals: Land Use Policy, Conservation, and Communication, in addition to a Housing Study. Fort Knox and LTADD are working with local jurisdictions that are surrounding communities of Fort Knox to discuss implementation within their jurisdictions. The Implementation Plan was completed in January 2025. For more information on the implementation plan please see the website at: <https://missionknox.org/>. Currently, Phase III of the Compatible Use Plan, the Fort Knox Integrated Communications, Coordination, and Risk Management Implementation Plan is underway and will be completed in the beginning of 2027.

Regional Childcare Study

In April of 2024, LTADD released a Childcare Economic Impact Report. The study was commissioned by LTADD with support of local industries and foundations. The study aimed to inform employers, key partners and elected officials about the ramifications of inadequate childcare on the regional economy's capacity to fulfill its workforce requirements. The study seeks to present the potential return-on-investment for adopting and implementing a funding model to make childcare more affordable. With the impending opening of BlueOval SK in Glendale, alongside other ancillary and emerging economic development initiatives, LTADD and its partners found it necessary to acquire this data to bolster workforce development efforts. The research explores the potential ramifications of broadening access to affordable childcare within the region, highlighting the prospective economic benefits for parents, employers, and government entities. It underscores the importance of collaborative efforts to ensure comprehensive childcare solutions, enabling all interested parties to re-enter the workforce on a full-time basis.

According to the study, the labor force participation rate in Kentucky remains below pre-pandemic levels, currently at 56.9%, down from 58.8% in December 2019, leading to a shortfall of workers regionally. This shortage hampers economic growth and results in significant revenue loss for both the state and county governments. A notable segment of the untapped workforce comprises parents unable to afford or access childcare for their young children, labeled as "work willing" throughout the analysis. By enabling these parents to rejoin the workforce full-time, estimated at 2,035 individuals in the LTADD region and Hart County, annual earnings could reach between \$99.2 million and \$126.3 million. These earnings, predominantly circulated within the region, would drive local economic activities, generating additional tax revenues for governments and boosting the Gross Regional Product (GRP) by \$164.5 to \$230.6 million, leading to further revenue gains. The study also includes a collection of recommendations for next steps, emphasizing a multi-faceted approach unique to each community, while also championing formal collaboration and coordination on goals, metrics, strategies and tactics. Stakeholders are currently working to formalize efforts to expand childcare capacity in our region.



The full report can be accessed by visiting ltadd.org/childcare.

Planning for the Future

The LTADD region is well positioned for major growth; however essential support and resources are necessary to be successful. As the prospect of significant regional expansion looms, the need for a shared and cohesive vision among regional leaders becomes increasingly vital. Over the past year, the LTADD Board of Directors and local government officials across the region came together to brainstorm, discuss, and prioritize the region's most important projects. The priorities encompass various critical areas.

Transportation is a core focus, recognizing the need to improve multi-modal movement and expand infrastructure to accommodate the influx of development. In response to the demands of BlueOval SK, top priorities include constructing new routes to connect counties and undertaking significant road widening and highway construction projects. Notable among these is the extension of Ring Road in Elizabethtown, the widening of U.S. 150 from the Bluegrass Parkway, and the construction of a new interchange with Interstate 65 at Gilead Church Road. These projects are not just about improved transportation but are about facilitating growth, connectivity, and opportunity.

Housing is another vital component to address regional growth. The vision is to increase the availability of affordable and quality housing, reduce waiting periods, and promote population growth. To better understand the housing needs of the region, LTADD is proposing a comprehensive housing study that will assess inventory and requirements for levels of housing affordability that will begin in 2026. Over the last 3 years, 2022- 2025, the City of Elizabethtown has signed off on 2,655 units, as compared to the 612 units from 2018 - 2021. (*News Enterprise*) In 2024, a study conducted by the Kentucky Housing Corporation revealed a regional need for more than 5,000 housing units.

Utilities are the lifeblood of any growing region. Top priorities include expanding water and wastewater treatment capacity, upgrading water line networks, expanding natural gas transmission and improving key infrastructure; including the Elizabethtown Regional Airport. These priorities include projects to expand the Hardinsburg water treatment plant and the City of Elizabethtown wastewater treatment plant, upgrade Bardstown's wastewater system, and extend the LG&E gas line to Hart and LaRue counties, among other essential initiatives.

Social and human capital development is also central to the vision for a prosperous and vibrant community. Actionable items include initiating a regional child care study (as mentioned in the previous section), which was completed in 2025, renovating outdated industrial/manufacturing training facilities at Elizabethtown Community and Technical College (ECTC), and expanding ECTC's Springfield campus to include welding, industrial maintenance, and nursing. Legislative priorities include funding for Phase II renovation of ECTC's Technical Building and increased funding for the Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship program.

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 uses of land.

Transportation

Goal: Safe and efficient means of multi-modal movement of people, goods, and services in and out of the region.

Objectives:

- Improve the overall safety of the LTADD regional transportation system.
- Promote greater connectivity and availability of a multi-modal and transportation system.
- Preserve, maintain, and enhance the existing transportation system to ensure reliable, efficient and effective mobility.
- Stimulate economic growth and development by implementing effective planning techniques.
- Assist in the implementation of a fixed- route in the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).
- Improve and/or build new highways to facilitate movement of people, goods, and products.

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. Ability to provide all citizens, stakeholders, and businesses with access to quality health care and a high quality of life, while fostering healthy and safe environments for families to live and thrive.

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.
- Strengthen regional specialized first responder capabilities. Expand existing first responder capabilities to meet current and future growth.

Economy

Goal: Encourage economic vitality and innovation 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 robust 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. Grow capacity to ensure all citizens, stakeholders, and businesses have access to clean and safe drinking water and sewer, gas, and electricity to facilitate job creation and small businesses opportunities.

Objectives:

- Encourage development and maintenance of a clean, high quality water supply system and efficient 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.
- Expand current water treatment plant capacities and construct additional water treatment plants to increase local and regional capacities; Expand water line networks; Expand natural gas transmission to facilitate economic growth; Create regional utility partnerships to treat water and wastewater; Expand the regional airport's passenger and cargo infrastructure.

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/>

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/>

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<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>

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

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<https://home.army.mil/knox/>

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<https://www.kyhousing.org/Pages/default.aspx>

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<https://www.wave3.com/2025/08/19/first-battery-produced-glendale-blueoval-sk-plant-rolls-off-assembly-line/>