



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

For

LaRue County, Kentucky

Prepared For

THE LAND OF LINCOLN PLANNING COMMISSION

Technical Assistance Provided by

Lincoln Trail Area Development District
Elizabethtown, Kentucky

2024

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LAND OF LINCOLN PLANNING COMMISSION
Eli Harned, Chairman

TITLE: Land of Lincoln Comprehensive Plan

AUTHOR: Land of Lincoln Planning Commission
Lincoln Trail Area Development District

SUBJECT: Statement of Goals and Objectives, Population Analysis, Housing Analysis, Economic Analysis, Environmental Conditions, Community Facilities, Transportation Plan and Land Use Plan.

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ABSTRACT: The Land of Lincoln Base Studies, consisting of a land use analysis, population analysis, housing analysis, and economic analysis, is an essential element in preparation of the Comprehensive Plan as described in the Kentucky Revised Statutes, Section 100.187 and 100.191. It includes an inventory and analysis of local land uses, population characteristics and growth trends, housing characteristics and growth trends, economic information and trends, and the physical conditions of the Land of Lincoln area. In addition, it provides population projections that serve as the base information in determining the need for community facilities, public services, and various types of land use. It provides a comprehensive overview of the economic base of the community, indicating past economic trends and potentials for the future.

This study was the first step towards completion on the Comprehensive Plan update. The Land of Lincoln Comprehensive Plan includes the Transportation Plan, Housing Plan, Community Facilities Plan, and the Land Use Plan. The elements are based upon information provided by

the Base Studies. The Statement of Goals and Objectives, as required by Kentucky Revised Statutes 100.187, has been adopted by the Planning Commission and provides the basis for many of the recommendations made in the Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan indicates the most appropriate locations for all types of land use which may be anticipated within the Land of Lincoln Planning Unit; the nature and extent of street and highway improvements which should occur during the planning period; and the nature and location of those community facilities and services which will be required to serve the population of the planning area for the next twenty years. It is a flexible guide to area development and should be reviewed periodically to ensure that it represents current conditions and policies within the planning area.

**Land of Lincoln Comprehensive Plan
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Chapter 1

Introduction

A Comprehensive Plan serves as a framework for official community land use decision-making. On a basic level, it serves as a source of information for citizens, groups, and community leaders. It enables the Land of Lincoln units of local government to assess and fulfill their roles in fostering public health, safety and welfare while managing the use of public resources. The plan utilizes citizen input and an assessment of socioeconomic conditions and physical attributes to develop a forecast of future needs, such as development and/or improvements. Based on this assessment, goals are developed in specific areas, along with objectives for achieving them, and they are presented in chronological order within the Comprehensive Plan.

The Land of Lincoln Planning Commission adopts the plan and submits it to the local governments for approval. The Planning Commission is the official planning body for LaRue County. It presides over land subdivision and makes recommendations to local government regarding planning policy, development standards, subdivision regulations, and zoning. The Land of Lincoln Planning Commission initiated the Comprehensive Plan review, update and renewal.

Purpose

The Comprehensive Plan provides the data and basic elements necessary to meet the criteria established by Chapter 100 of the Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS). It serves as a map for the development of all undeveloped areas within a specific jurisdiction. The implemented plan will provide local control over the type, timing and intensity of anticipated growth and ensure the compatibility of development with existing physical, institutional and socioeconomic conditions.

The City of Hodgenville and LaRue County have a unique atmosphere influenced by its rural location and distinction as the birthplace of the 16th President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln. These attributes give the region a unique and “small town” feel, that residents and visitor’s treasure. One purpose of this Comprehensive Plan is to help the community plan for the development of social and economic growth without compromising the culture and atmosphere of the area with congestion and encroachment. A good Comprehensive Plan helps community leaders balance growth and development with established norms and local customs.

Benefits

The most significant benefit of a good Comprehensive Plan is the ability to project the impact of future growth of land use, population, and the economy, on the region. The Planning Commission and Local Government Agencies can use these projections to plan and provide for public services and facilities and to maximize public and private investment. Private sector investors can use the information to gauge potential for private sector investment within the planning area.

Planning Period and Planning Area

This plan contains numerous twenty-year projections. Reasonable projections beyond twenty years are impossible and shorter projections fluctuate because of uncontrollable variables.

For the purpose of this study, all areas of LaRue County are included in the planning area. The area is impacted by the Lincoln Trail Area Development District Counties of Hardin, Breckinridge, Grayson, Meade, LaRue, Marion, Nelson and Washington.

Authority

Planning Commissions are enabled to prepare base studies through KRS, Sections 100.187 and 100.191. These statutes specify the criteria that must be adhered to in the preparation and revision of this document.

Legal Basis of the Comprehensive Plan

The legal basis for the Land of Lincoln Comprehensive Plan is set forth by KRS 100.183, which states:

The Planning Commission of each unit shall prepare a Comprehensive Plan, which shall serve as a guide for public and private actions and decisions to assure the development of public and private property in the most appropriate relationships. The elements of the Plan may be expressed in words, graphics, or other appropriate forms. They shall be interrelated and each element shall describe how it relates to each of the other elements.

Process

The planning process is an ongoing task that will enable LaRue County to preserve all of its positive attributes while taking advantage of its strengths and opportunities to plan for development, economic prosperity and improved quality of life for all residents.

The Commonwealth of Kentucky prescribes the planning process for local units of government within the framework of the Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS), Chapter 100. This chapter provides guidance for organized planning at the local level. It stipulates the necessary research requirements, the key components of a plan, the functional requirements, and the legitimate tools authorized to implement the plan. Chapter 100 also determines the planning body that needs to be in place to facilitate the planning process. The process is as follows:

1. Determine community needs and develop meaningful goals and measurable objectives.
2. Analyze issues and available data.
3. General plan concepts while continuing to analyze issues and data.

4. Develop plan elements and recommendations.
5. Create an action plan and implement it.
6. Review the plan and evaluate progress
7. Start the process over.

Contents of the Comprehensive Plan

KRS 100.187 mandates the minimum content requirements for comprehensive plans. The minimum elements are as follows:

1. A statement of goals and objectives, which shall serve as a guide for the physical development and economic and social well-being of the planning unit;
2. A land use element, which shall show proposals for the appropriate economic, desirable and feasible patterns for the general location, character, extent, and interrelationship of the manner in which the community should use its public and private land at specified times as far into the future as is reasonable to foresee. Such land uses may cover, without being limited to, public and private, residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural and recreational land uses;
3. A transportation plan element, which shall show proposals for the most desirable, appropriate, economic and feasible pattern for the general location, character and extent of channels, routes and terminals for transportation facilities for the circulation of persons and goods for specified times as far into the future as is reasonable to foresee. The channels, routes, and terminals may include, without being limited to all classes of highways or streets, railways, and waterways.
4. A community facilities plan element which shall show proposals for the most desirable, appropriate, economic and feasible pattern for the general location, character, and the extent of public and semipublic buildings, land, and facilities for specified times as far into the future as is reasonable to foresee. The facilities may include, without being limited to, parks and recreation, schools and other educational or cultural facilities, libraries, churches, hospitals, social welfare and medical facilities, utilities, fire stations, police stations, jails or other public office or administration facilities; and
5. Provisions for the accommodation of all military installations greater than or equal in area to three hundred (300) acres that are:
 - i. Contained wholly or partially within the planning unit's boundaries;
 - ii. Abutting the planning unit's boundaries; or
 - iii. Contained within or abutting any county that contains a planning unit.
 - a. The goal of providing for the accommodation of these military installations shall be to minimize conflicts between the relevant military installations and the planning unit's residential population. These provisions shall be made after consultation with the relevant installations' command authorities to determine the needs of the relevant military installation. These consultations shall include but not be limited to questions of installation expansion, environmental impact, issues of installation safety, and issues relating to

air space usage, to include noise pollution, air pollution, and air safety concerns.

6. The Comprehensive Plan may include any additional elements such as, without being limited to, community renewal, housing, flood control, pollution, conservation, natural resources, regional impact, historic preservation, and other programs which, in the judgment of the Planning Commission will further serve the purposes of the Comprehensive Plan.

Research Requirements for the Comprehensive Plan

KRS 100.191 defines the research, analysis, and properties that a comprehensive plan must be based upon. The basic research requirements include, but are not limited to the following;

1. An analysis of the general distribution and characteristics of past and present population and a forecast of the extent and character of future population as far into the future as is reasonable to foresee.
2. An economic survey and analysis of the major existing public and private business activities, and forecast of future economic levels, including a forecast of anticipated necessary actions by the community to increase the quality of life of its current and future population through encouragement of economic development as far into the future as is reasonable to foresee.
3. Research and analysis as to the nature, extent, adequacy and the needs of the community for existing land and building use, and transportation and community facilities in terms of their general location, character and extent.
4. Additional background information for the elements of the comprehensive plan may include, but is not limited to, any other research, analysis, and properties, which, in the judgment of the planning commission, will further serve the purposes of the comprehensive plan.

Nature of Base Studies

The base study for this Comprehensive Plan is divided into three major sections. The first section contains an analysis of the planning area population and includes the distribution and characteristics of both the present and projected population. Population statistics are analyzed to develop relevant growth and development policies. The second section of this study contains a detailed description of the area economy. Economic analysis identifies economic trends and provides another basis for preparation of the Land of Lincoln Comprehensive Plan. The third section contains LaRue County's land use analysis, which shows the extent of major land use categories within the area, including agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, public and semi-public.

The base study is used in conjunction with housing, transportation, community facilities and other studies, to prepare and adopt future development plans for LaRue County. The base study serves three primary purposes:

1. To recognize past and present trends in the overall economy and population of the area.
2. To provide a guide for determining the proper extent and location of future residential, commercial, industrial, educational and recreational land uses.
3. To provide an estimate of the area's future population to use as a determinate when making land use and facilities expansion decisions.

The base study will be valuable to the Land of Lincoln Planning Commission and all Hodgenville, Upton, and LaRue County governmental agencies responsible for development of the area. The study will also be useful to local business and professional leaders.

Statement of Goals and Objectives

By statute, the Land of Lincoln Planning Commission and local units of government are required to adopt a statement of goals and objectives. KRS 100.193 states:

The Planning Commission of each planning unit shall prepare and adopt the statement of goals and objectives to act as a guide for the preparation of the remaining elements and the aids to implementing the plans. The statement shall be presented for consideration, amendment and adoption by the legislative bodies and fiscal courts in the planning unit. During its preparation and that of the other plan elements, it shall be the duty of the Planning Commission to consult with public officials and agencies, boards of health, school boards, public and private utility companies, civic, educational, professional and other organizations and with citizens.

Community Profile

Location

LaRue County is largely a rural county of approximately 15,028 residents. Located in central Kentucky, the Rolling Fork River and Salt Lick Creek mark the northern boundary between Nelson and LaRue Counties, and Marion and LaRue Counties. Hardin County is located adjacent to LaRue on the west, and Hart, Green and Taylor counties border LaRue on the south. The County is comprised of 263.4 square miles, much of which is unincorporated. Undulating and rolling hills, as well as steep ridges and bluffs dominate the county landscape and provide a beautiful backdrop to the open farmland and dense forests. Creeks and streams form a fairly consistent pattern throughout the county creating many swales and valleys.



Hodgenville is the largest incorporated City in LaRue County and serves as the county seat. It is centrally located within the County and has a population of 3,338 residents who value

the community's "small town" atmosphere. The rolling landscape continues in Hodgenville and provides a scenic and interesting backdrop to this historic City.

History

Large herds of buffalo, deer and elk were abundant in LaRue County prior to settlement. The land was densely forested and crisscrossed with streams and creeks. The fertile land, and abundance of wood and water attracted pioneers and early settlers to the area.

Historically, Native American Indians were present in the region. Many burial mounds are scattered throughout the County and attest to early Tribal influence. The first white settlers came to the region during the early 1780's. Phillip Phillips established the first permanent white settlement in 1781. Called Phillip's Fort, it was located 1.25 miles from what is currently Hodgenville. Another early settler was John P. LaRue, who settled with his new bride at Nolin Station 1783, located at the mouth of Beech Fork, a tributary of the Rolling Fork and Salt Rivers. John P. LaRue died in 1792, at his home on a branch of the Nolin River, northeast of Hodgenville.

Another early pioneer family that settled in LaRue County was that of Thomas Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln's father settled his family on the Sinking Springs Farm where Abraham



Lincoln was born on February 12th, 1809. The site where our 16th president was born is now a National Historic Site. In 1811, the Lincoln Family moved to Knob Creek, a site that is now known as Lincoln's Boyhood Home. From there, the family continued to move westward, first locating in Indiana in 1816 when Abe was 7 years old, and then on to Illinois where his family settled.

LaRue County was founded on March 4, 1843 by the state legislature, and was formed from a portion of Hardin County. The County was named by John LaRue Helm, who was once Speaker of the House and the Governor of Kentucky, from 1850-1851 and again in 1867. The County was named in honor of his maternal grandfather, John P. LaRue.

The county seat of Hodgenville was established on land belonging to Robert Hodgen, an Englishman who moved to Kentucky from Pennsylvania. In 1789, Hodgen constructed a mill on the Nolin River, a small portion of his 10,000-acre holding. Hodgen's Mill was located near Phillip's Fort. The town of Hodgenville was created in 1818 by the Hardin County Court and was incorporated on February 18, 1839. The city became the LaRue County Seat when LaRue County was created.

During the Civil War, a skirmish broke out in Hodgenville on October 23, 1861. In 1862, the Confederate Army marched through LaRue County under the command of General Braxton Bragg, on its march north to Louisville. The County courthouse, built in 1844 was burned by Confederate Guerillas on February 21, 1865, because it had been used as a barracks for Federal troops. In 1866, a second courthouse was constructed on the foundation of the first. In 1894, a third building was built to serve the county court.

Hodgenville's physical and economic growth was dramatically slowed by the Civil War. In 1888, the Illinois Central Railroad (now Illinois Central Gulf) built a spur from Hodgenville to Elizabethtown, which opened LaRue County to additional markets in the south and west.

The Lincoln Farm Association was formed at the turn of the century. This organization raised more than \$350,000 for the creation of the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site about three miles south of Hodgenville.

During the twentieth century, LaRue County and Hodgenville experienced modest growth as a small industrial base. Local industry consisted of the manufacturing of lumber products, clothing and concrete which augmented the local economy. The expansion of industrial employment has continued today; however, the City and County still have maintained large agricultural communities with a strong economic base rooted in farming. Tobacco, wheat, soybeans, and vegetables are all produced in the County.





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Chapter 2

Statement of Goals and Objectives

Introduction

The Land of Lincoln statement of goals and objectives includes policy proposals for the overall development of the area. Regional goals consist of long-range, generalized proposals based on collective community decision making, that reflect broad social, economic or physical aspirations, that can be realized through the implementation of various, strategic actions. Objectives are more short-range, limited and specific tactics, endorsed by the community, which can be executed to accomplish a goal. The goals and objectives that follow summarize ideals and actions recommended by the Planning Commission, to effect change, address deficiencies and accommodate future growth, development and quality of life in LaRue County. The local units of government in LaRue County must adopt the statement of goals and objectives. Goals and objectives should be evaluated when developing and amending the base studies and Comprehensive Plan, since the goals and objectives are the blueprint for all of the planning elements.

Land Use

Goal

Designation of land for use in agriculture, residential development, commercial and industrial use should be planned in a manner that eliminates incompatible uses and promotes attractive, safe, healthy, effective and efficient development throughout the region.

Objectives

1. Encourage utilization of existing and proposed utility systems and services when designating areas for growth, and promote planned utility expansion.
2. Encourage growth in areas already designated for that intended purpose and discourage “strip” type commercial (the linear pattern of individual commercial uses along highways) or residential development.
3. Provide for sufficient agricultural land to protect the area’s agricultural economic base and productivity potential.
4. Protect prime agricultural land from urbanization to provide adequate resources for the future production of food and fiber.
5. Protect land from incompatible land use.
6. Conserve the unique agrarian character of LaRue County to better preserve its heritage, visual landscape, and scenic qualities in order to promote tourism and its related economic benefits if/when possible.
7. Require transitions and/or buffers such as screening between land uses of varied density or intensity.
8. Provide suitable and adequate land for industrial growth.
9. Preserve historic sites and structures in the Land of Lincoln.

10. Discourage development in areas designated as flood prone, on hillsides with more than a 15% slope, on tracts where sinkholes are in abundance and ground water preservation is difficult to mitigate, in other sensitive areas or where soil conditions are poor or unstable.
11. Require measures to reduce and contain runoff in areas under development.
12. Require measures to reduce water, air and land pollution.
13. Coordinate implementation of the Land Use, Housing, Transportation and Community Facilities plans.
14. Develop land use in a way that supports the present & future needs of the Community.

Housing

Goal

Develop residential areas and housing, for both private ownership and rental use, which provide safe, decent and affordable housing for all residents of LaRue County.

Objectives

1. Improve and preserve the quality of new and existing housing by enforcing land use controls and applicable building codes.
2. Encourage residential development in areas with sufficient, existing infrastructure.
3. Encourage a wide range of housing options to meet the needs of present and future residents.
4. Require all residential areas to be fully compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and community.

Community Facilities

Goal

Provide adequate public services and infrastructure to ensure the health, safety and well-being of the LaRue County residents.

Objectives

1. Ensure that all new public facilities development has adequate capacity for its customers.
2. Preserve adequate space for the development of future community facilities.
3. Allow for the integration of compatible community facilities into existing and proposed areas of development.
4. Evaluate the impact of proposed public facility development on existing community facilities.
5. Require that the provision of necessary community facilities be incorporated into each type of proposed development.