# KDA Operational Plan Elements



**Summary**

In October of 2021 members of leadership from the Department of Aviation (KDA) met to start an initiative of creating and implementing an operational plan for KDA and its employees. The intent of the KDA Operational Plan (KOP) is to communicate organizational vision and to provide guidance and direction to the workforce as to the priorities and values that support the KDA mission and Mission Statement. The KOP will help serve as a directional compass for the employees of KDA while performing their daily activities. The KOP will be shared with the KDA team with explanations of how the each team member fits in and supports the initiatives of the Department, the Cabinet, the Governor, the State, and ultimately the tax paying citizens of Kentucky.

Currently the Kentucky Transportation Center (KTC) has been tasked with gathering relative data on global, federal, and state trends in the aviation and aerospace industry to better understand Kentucky's positioning in the sector. KTC is also collecting data on education and training opportunities in the state, state exports, industry employment statistics and projections, workforce needs, and Kentucky airport economic data. Aviation research will be used to further the implementation of goals.

*The goals, strategies and the tactics are listed on the following pages.*

# Goals, Strategies and Tactics

*Goal 1 — Make Investments in Kentucky Airports with Safety at the Foundation*

*Strategy 1.1: Prepare a fact-based assessment of runway condition for all General Aviation (GA) airports*

1. *Utilize Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) learning technologies for continual assessment of pavement condition for GA airports in Kentucky*
2. *Using the information gathered from the assessment and considering the long-term needs of the airport (e.g., strengthen for transport category aircraft), assign each runway a pavement condition index (PCI) based on the latest engineering standards*
3. *Calculate the estimated cost for remediation to bring each runway to a minimum condition index competitive with surrounding states*
4. *Prioritize projects based upon condition assessment, measures of airport use, training programs and local support*
5. *Determine, categorize and summarize all other needed investments in runway environment including clearing approach paths, striping, lighting, taxiways and ramps, security fencing and any other safety-related needs*

*Strategy 1.2: Invest broadly in GA Airports as an economic development priority*

1. *Assess terminal buildings at each airport and develop a prioritized list of potential investments*
    a. *Consider how the use of the terminals have changed (e.g. pilots no longer use a flight planning room)*
    b. *Provide space for pilot training*
    c. *Consider providing "community rooms" for informative visits to the airport/fly-ins and events (e.g. high school science classes) and for economic development site visit meetings*
2. *Develop a financing approach for investments in parking lots, hangars, and fuel systems (e.g. partial state grant program, long-term financing)*
3. *Assess each airport for opportunities to implement "aviation tourism" and other revenue producing opportunities*
4. *Consider making other investments in local airport operations such as providing a state-wide license for VirTower or similar airport management systems, insuring the availability of crew/rental cars for tourist visits to local sites, etc.*
5. *Publish, or provide links to existing sites, a Kentucky Airport Directory and Kentucky Sectional Map on the KDA website*

*Strategy 1.3: Reestablish alignment between the Kentucky Airport Zoning Commission (KAZC) and KDA*

1. *Reestablish and hire the KAZC administrator within KDA*
2. *Establish an orientation and policy guide for the KAZC Commissioners*
3. *Establish KAR's and guidelines for airport approach obstruction clearing with coordination between ACZ and KDA*
4. *Address conflict of interest concerns related to state-owned airports*
5. *Insure the Zoning Board is addressing new issues arising from the increase in UAS operations*

*Strategy 1.4: Implement an Airport Improvement Program*

1. *Develop, publish, and maintain an Airport Pavement Maintenance program to be administered with a Master Agreement*
2. *Develop, publish, and maintain an Airport Markings Cleaning and Re-striping program to be administered with a Master Agreement*
3. *Develop, publish, and maintain a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) map on the KDA website*
4. *Develop, publish, and maintain an airport projects prioritization, projection, and funding application within the KDA website*

*Goal 2 —Increase the number of Kentuckians pursuing opportunities in aerospace and aviation*

*Strategy 2.1 Establish targets for new pilots, technicians, and other vocations/professions*

1. *Inventory existing programs for pilot and technician training available to Kentuckians*
2. *Interview leadership within existing programs at Eastern Kentucky University and Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) and key stakeholders to gather information around priorities, needed investments, ideation for attracting young people, veterans, retraining employees, etc.*
3. *Establish targets, timelines and metrics for increasing the number of Kentuckians entering the aviation workplace*

*Strategy 2.2: Coordinate efforts across Cabinets and with the Legislature in the disciplines or Workforce and Economic Development*

1. *Establish a management position within KDA with responsibility for promoting aviation within government and with the public*
2. *Continue to develop and improve communications channels with the public including popular aviation publications, social media sites, local airports, etc.*
3. *Establish a steering group to include key partners (e.g. Kentucky Aviation Association, Kentuckians for Better Transportation, Aviation Museum of Kentucky, Kentucky Business Aviation Association, Experimental Aircraft Association, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, etc.) with an objective of focusing on aviation as an economic development target and tool*

*Strategy 2.3 Assist local flight schools to build a robust network of locally available flight training.*

1. *Provide FAA-certified simulators to local flight schools/Certificated Flight Instructors (CFIs)*
2. *Develop an initial ground school discovery flight program useful to CFIs and subsidized by KDA*
3. *Use the KDA social media presence to allow for networking among CFIs*

*Strategy 2.4: Assist Aviation Maintenance Technician (AMT) Programs to build a robust network of locally available aviation maintenance training.*

1. *Work with the KCTCS provide leadership to interested airports to implement a distributed network of AMT programs*
2. *Open at least one AMT training program in eastern and western Kentucky*
3. *Coordinate/collaborate with existing programs in Somerset and Louisville*

***Goal 3 — Promote aviation as a tool, and as a target, for economic development***

***Strategy 3.1 Increase the focus on the future of Aviation***

1. **Fill the open UAS engineer (UASe) position immediately**
   a. **Establish the role and scope of the UASe position within:**
      i. **KDA**
      ii. **KYTC**
      iii. **State Agencies**
      iv. **Public**
   b. **Establish a policy manual and operating guidelines for:**
      i. **KDA**
      ii. **KYTC**
      iii. **State agencies**
      iv. **Public**
2. **Prepare an assessment of the current state of new technology development (e.g. new aircraft, UAS, Urban Air Mobility, new software and other systems, etc.)**
3. **Assess Kentucky's performance against the current state**
   a. **Use surrounding states as benchmarks**
   b. **Engage stakeholders in the assessment**
4. **Identify opportunities to bring new technologies to Kentucky**
5. **Establish targets for improvement including:**
   a. **Specific target**
   b. **Timeline**
   c. **Metrics**
   d. **Required Investment**
6. **Expand the scope of the current KDA website to become more referenced source of information and useful aids to the aviation community in Kentucky. Improvements to include:**
   a. **Interactive GIS Map with airport information that can be accessed by the flying public**
   b. **Link airport information to other relevant local services and activities**
   c. **Airport Directories that can be printed for each individual airport**

***Strategy 3.2 Raise the profile of aviation within the administrative and legislative branches of state government***

1. **Modernize the current fleet of aircraft**
2. **Encourage the use of state aircraft for travel for state business (consider providing incentives)**
   a. **Consider the total cost of travel in evaluating the cost of using the state aircraft**
   b. **Use state aircraft to promote aviation**
3. **Prioritize investments in the Capital City Airport as the state's flagship GA airport (terminal, ramp and hangars)**
4. **Better utilize the Capital City Airport and the KDA terminals to promote aviation**

***Strategy 3.3 Airport Board Development***

1. **Develop and strengthen relationships with Airport Boards and community leaders**
2. **Develop, publish, and maintain on the KDA website Airport Board materials to include:**
   a. **Airport Board Operating Guide**
      i. **Roles and responsibilities**
      ii. **Administration of FAA and State requirements and obligations**
      iii. **Role and expectations of Engineering Consultants**
      iv. **Funding – Form completion**
   b. **New Airport Board Member Orientation Training packet**

***Strategy 3.4: Aviation Communications Program***

1. **Continuance of department newsletter, The Runway**
2. **Disseminate Information regarding Airport Improvement Projects**
3. **Utilization of social networks for aviation outreach**

*Goal 4 - Optimize Performance through Regulatory Change*

*Strategy 4.1 Rationalize state funding of aviation*

1. *Revise current Jet Fuels Tax financing as follows:*
   a. *Deposit all aviation fuels taxes into the aviation economic development fund*
   b. *Reclassify Avgas sales as aviation fuels (continue rebate to local airports)*
2. *Change regulations governing the release of aviation economic development funding to allow for timely funding of projects*
   a. *Note: currently a fiscal year spending authority is limited to the amount of collections from the prior year. When receipts exceed that authorized amount, KDA has to wait until additional spending authority is received before those funds can be invested in new projects)*
3. *Revise the funding approach for the Capital City Airport division such that receipts from fuel sales, hangar rentals, etc. can be reinvested in the airport in a timely manner*

*Strategy 4.2 Implement tax law changes that would act to attract based aircraft to Kentucky airports*

1. *Eliminate tangible property tax for privately-owned aircraft to encourage relocation of Kentucky-owned aircraft from surrounding states*
2. *Exempt aircraft parts and services from sales tax*

*Strategy 4.3 Attract, develop, and retain a qualified workforce*

1. *Increase wage rates for entry-level positions (e.g. Flight Line attendants) to market competitive levels*
2. *Continuously work to ensure pay is appropriate for every position*

*Strategy 4.4 Operating Environment*

1. *Review and update out-of-date KRS and KAR's to match current  federal and state regulations*
   a. *Establish process in which all aviation related KRS and KAR's are reviewed annually*
2. *Study the impact of alternate fuels on airport operations and funding sources including consideration of the long-term viability of the use of Jet Fuels and Avgas taxes as a funding source for airports and aviation programs*