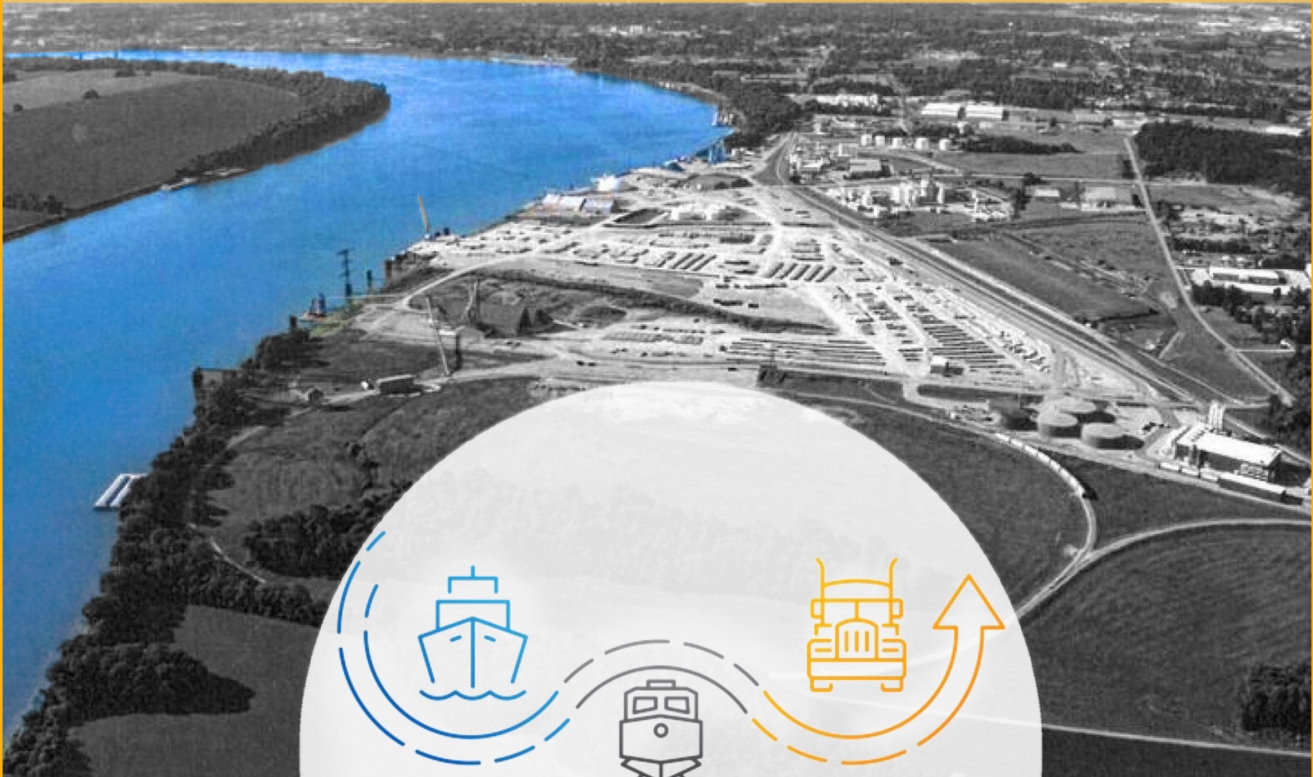


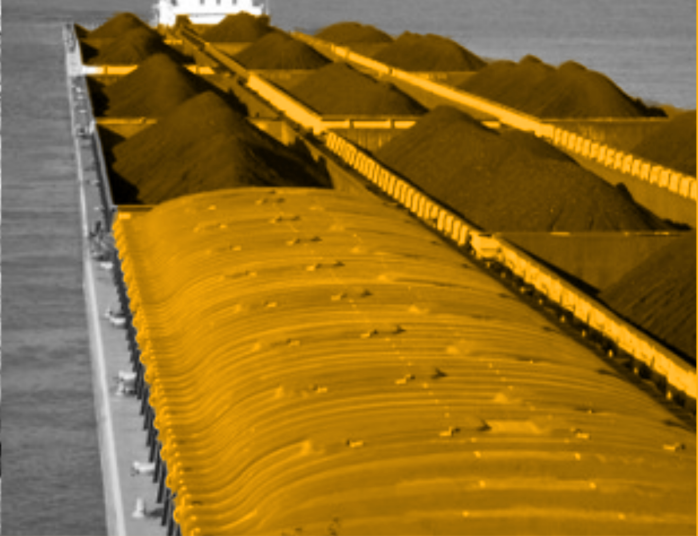
MARKETING TOOLKIT



KENTUCKY RIVERPORTS, HIGHWAY
& RAIL FREIGHT STUDY



KENTUCKY
TRANSPORTATION
CABINET



MARKETING TOOLKIT - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Introduction: This Marketing Toolkit is a resource for Kentucky’s public riverports and their partners to understand the business of public riverports and promote public riverports in Kentucky’s marine economy.

Riverport Fundamentals: Riverports are facilities that handle the movement of goods by water. They provide access connecting goods moving by water to road and rail networks, making it possible for Kentucky to trade with markets throughout the nation and the world at a lower cost than any other mode. Riverports also contribute to the economy through employment directly on the port property and nearby businesses located in the community. Businesses can use the port to get the supplies they need to make their products or ship their goods to market. Riverports often struggle when roadway access to the facility is congested or if demand for the port exceeds available space for waterfront loading or warehouse storage space. Depending on their location, they can also struggle with retaining skilled workers and the vulnerability of their markets to economic changes and challenges of funding for modernization and preserving aging infrastructure. Kentucky riverports are either privately owned by business entities or publicly owned by local units of government. Publicly owned ports may be governed by an appointed board and staffed by a director who can be supported by other staff. Public riverport authorities often have a mission and governmental authority to involve the port in wider policy objectives related to the port and can be key partners in business and economic development.

Marketing Fundamentals: A “Go-to-Market” strategy is a game-plan for identifying and pursuing customers. An effective Go-to-Market strategy involves a marketing plan that begins with a clearly defined mission statement for the port, defining a vision for the port’s unique contribution to its market and the actions by which it achieves this vision. Elements of a marketing strategy can then be articulated in a table of contents and executive summary making it easy for partners to see how the port is managing its market position and locating key information about its competitiveness and promotion. A realistic overview of the port's capabilities and its competitive strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats provides critical orientation for understanding the position from which the port can both sustain and develop its market. From this base, the port can prioritize changes in its capabilities, anticipate changes in the market it serves, and consider adapting its service mix to a dynamic economy. Consideration of the marketing mix can provide an opportunity for ports to probe more deeply into specific types of existing or potential customers to understand specific needs (including both the origins and termini of shipments to and from the port), evaluate past marketing efforts, and potentially identify changes in needed marketing resources moving forward. The culmination is specific recommendations and actionable tactics the port uses to leverage its service offerings, location, pricing, and advertising/promotional activities to achieve the best revenue position.

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KENTUCKY RIVERPORTS, HIGHWAY
& RAIL FREIGHT STUDY

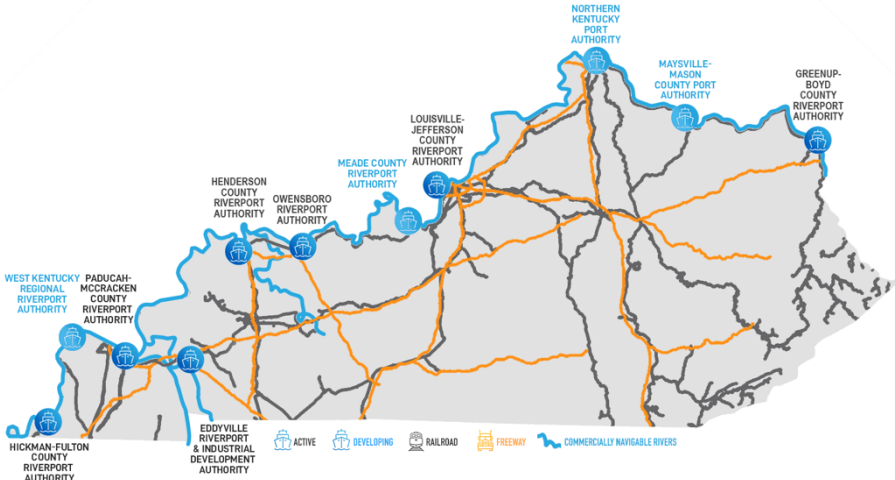
MARKETING TOOLKIT

PRIMER ON RIVERPORTS

This primer on riverports is offered for economic developers, municipal, county, state officials, and industry partners to enhance understanding and collaboration between Kentucky's riverport community and the business, economic development, and policy leadership in the Commonwealth. While waterborne transportation is a tremendous asset to any region and can create opportunities for many private firms, it can be difficult to engage in productive dialogue with port operators or leadership without a basic understanding of what ports are, how they operate, and some of the basic terms and principles that guide how they can support any given business or region. By using this primer, Kentucky's stakeholders can more easily speak the language of waterborne transportation and navigate the opportunities of utilizing, investing in, and partnering with riverports for successful business and economic pursuits. This primer is based mainly on the *United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Ports Primer for Communities* (under the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Ports Primer for Communities Initiative) and the US Maritime Administration 2009 overview of *America's Ports and Intermodal System*, which can be referenced for further reading on the topic.

UNDERSTANDING RIVERPORTS

Riverports are facilities that handle the shipment of goods by water. They can serve as transfer points between waterborne transportation and rail or highway modes. They also serve as access points for waterways that connect Kentucky to trading partners along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers and beyond. Kentucky has eleven public riverports that are local government entities that provide port related services. In addition, over 150 private riverports provide many of the same services but are entirely owned and under private control by businesses and private customers. Kentucky's riverports give the state, and its businesses access to one of the most affordable modes of transportation available. The Commonwealth of Kentucky's ability to use riverports to move goods in a changing economy is vital to Kentucky's economic competitiveness and quality of life. This chapter of the marketing toolkit provides a basic understanding of Kentucky's riverports, their operations, and their potential role in marketing both waterborne commerce and overall business activity in the Commonwealth.



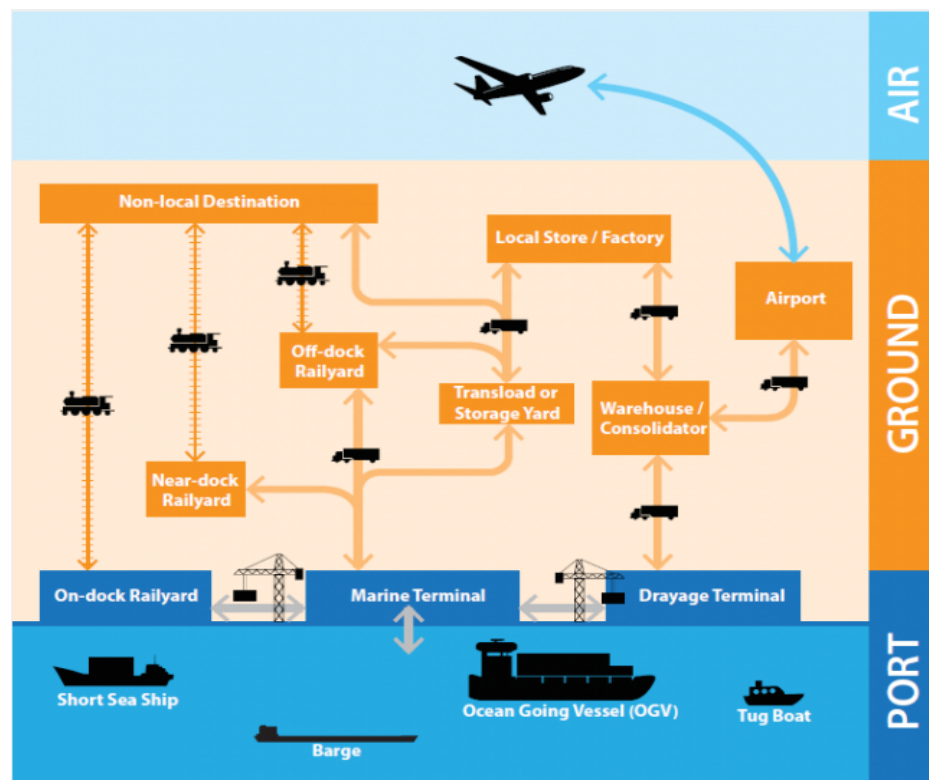
TRANSPORTATION AND ECONOMIC FUNCTIONS OF RIVERPORTS



Resources for Trade and Business: Kentucky’s ports are an important part of the Commonwealth’s economy and intermodal transportation system. Over 19% of the cargo moving on Kentucky’s transportation system moves on the waterways, including commerce involving Kentucky’s 11 public riverports.¹ The public and private ports alike serve as a significant resource for national defense and emergency preparedness.² Understanding the role of ports can help economic developers, community stakeholders, and other partners more effectively engage with decisions related to port and near-port communities. Kentucky’s riverports are gateways for domestic and international trade. The riverports connect Kentucky to the Great Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico through the Ohio and Mississippi River Systems, offering one of the most affordable transportation modes for many commodities in Kentucky’s economy. Shippers will often use riverports to move low-cost commodities that are not economical to move by rail, truck, or air. The figure demonstrates how a single barge can carry significantly more cargo tonnage than rail or truck vehicles with greater or comparable crew and operating costs. Typical waterborne commodities in Kentucky include coal, grains, plastics, and metals. **Chapter 1** of this *Kentucky Riverports Highway and Rail Freight Analysis Study* describes in detail the commodities and trading partners supported by waterborne transportation in Kentucky, including both the public and private riverport systems.

¹ TRANSEARCH, 2020
² U.S. Maritime Administration. 2009. America’s Ports and Intermodal Transportation System. pp. 43-44. Retrieved from: www.glmri.org/downloads/Ports&IntermodalTransport.pdf

Ports Support Intermodal Transportation: Another key role of ports is supporting the rail, truck, and air transportation systems. Ports are centers of activity that enable businesses to trade products locally, regionally, and globally. The figure below shows how ports connect goods to consumers through our highway system, railroads, air transit, and domestic marine highways (water transportation routes).³ Intermodal transportation is defined as the movement of cargo between different transport modes. When the economy changes, ports can enhance their contribution by expanding or modernizing to be able to handle larger volumes or a more diverse mix of products. Ports can work together with cities, counties, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, state and federal Departments of Transportation, and other agencies to expand transportation capacity outside the port to avoid bottlenecks created by limitations from other modes of transportation.⁴



Source graphic: Ports Primer: 2.1 The Role of Ports | US EPA

The intermodal function of ports makes them very active locations with many different types of equipment, activities, and business operations happening in sync together. For example, a typical day at a Kentucky riverport will find a barge loading and unloading cargo onto a dock and being transported or loaded onto rail cars or trucks for further transportation to ultimate customers. Trucks are stopping at truck scales to be weighed to certify their tonnage of freight after being loaded or unloaded. A crane may be engaged in loading or unloading bulk materials as a truck picks up cargo from a warehouse where it has been awaiting pickup, making space available for another expected shipment. Grain

³ Ports Primer: 2.1 The Role of Ports | US EPA

⁴ Ibid

handling equipment, conveyors, lift trucks, and other equipment are busy expediting the movement of goods between vessels, warehouses, rail cars, and trucks.

The images below illustrate typical activities one can expect to find occurring at Kentucky Riverports and how they are organized on a port property.







Ports Support Jobs Both On and Off the Port Property: In some communities, ports are significant sources of local employment. Ports are employers and support employment in related trucking and rail transportation sectors. In many cases, ports also service manufacturing plants that rely on the ports to deliver low-cost supplies to the region to support business operations. Understanding the jobs associated with a

riverport requires considering the port’s employees and its key tenants and customers located in the region and how much of their activity uses goods that move through the port.

RIVERPORT CHALLENGES

Ports face significant challenges associated with changing times and the unique demands of waterborne transportation. The table below summarizes many issues that typically affect a port’s competitiveness and ability to serve its customers best. These challenges can be important to a port’s customers when they affect the quality of services at the port.

Challenges Facing Ports ⁵	
	<p>Congestion: Congested roadways into and out of a port can affect the reliability of deliveries to customers even if the operations on the port property are highly efficient. Ports may also be limited in their capacity to store cargo in warehouses or service vessels if a port is landlocked or has limited frontage on the water or overall land area.</p>
	<p>Workforce Constraints: One way that ports alleviate congestion is by utilizing technologies and people to move goods through the port efficiently. However, it is increasingly difficult to acquire workers at ports available and qualified in the skills needed for port operations.⁶</p>
	<p>Reliability of National Waterways: Constraints on lock and dam systems on national waterways such as the Ohio, Cumberland, and Tennessee Rivers, as well as continued dredging along these corridors can cause unpredictable delivery times for ports making it difficult to manage capacity, multimodal connections, and staff.</p>
	<p>Economic Trends: Ports are extremely vulnerable to both global and local economic changes. Changes in international trade in a single commodity can profoundly affect the market for any given port. Local changes also can affect ports, as the relocation or closure of a single anchor client or tenant can represent a potentially devastating loss of revenue for the port.</p>

⁵ Ports Primer: 2.2 Current Port Industry Challenges | US EPA






⁶ U.S. Maritime Administration. 2009. America’s Ports and Intermodal Transportation System. p. 11. Retrieved from: www.glmri.org/downloads/Ports&IntermodalTransport.pdf

RIVERPORTS OPERATIONS

Private Riverports, Public Riverports, and Port Authorities: Kentucky has both privately owned and public riverports. **Public** riverports are owned by a local government entity or jurisdiction which manages the port and may actively work to keep the port available for the good of the local or regional economy. By contrast, **private** riverports are owned by private firms. They may operate solely to serve a specific business interest in moving a particular commodity, deriving profit from a specific market, or achieving another business objective. In the case of public riverports, it is also helpful to understand the distinction between the port itself and the port authority. A Kentucky port facility is a place along a river in Kentucky for loading and unloading cargo from vessels on the rivers. The port facility undertakes the operation of the vessels, handling cargo, intermodal operations, storing and warehousing cargo, and developing or maintaining infrastructure for these purposes. In the case of public ports, a **port authority** is the government entity that owns the port or group of ports and is responsible for its overall governance and larger role in the community.

Port Authorities and Their Role: Unlike a private riverport, a public riverport authority's mission may include taking a role leading environmental improvements and engaging constructively with the overall local community. However, a port authority would not normally control most aspects of private terminals, military operations, or industrial facilities associated with ports. Even when an active riverport facility is not yet constructed, a public port authority can also exist. In Kentucky, a port authority without an active port facility is referred to as a **developing riverport** in contrast to an **operating riverport** where there is an active port facility. **Chapter 1** of this *Kentucky Riverports Highway and Rail Freight Analysis Study* describes the location of all the public operating and developing riverports. A public port authority may be considered either an **operational port** or a **landlord port**. The port authority builds and maintains the port infrastructure and equipment in an operational port and directly hires the labor on the port property. By contrast, in a landlord port, the port authority owns and maintains the infrastructure and equipment only and leases a terminal operator (often called a stevedoring company) to operate the business and provide labor on the property.

Different Cargo Types Require Different Types of Operations: To understand the type of cargo that a port can accommodate, cargo is often classified into different categories. The categories describe the characteristics determining if and how freight must be handled at a port facility. The table below is a guide to cargo types that are often associated with different port capabilities.

Cargo Types Handled By Ports⁷	
	Breakbulk: General cargo that is not in containers but is stored in boxes, bales, pallets, or other units to be loaded onto or discharged from barges or other forms of transportation. Examples include iron, aluminum, steel, machinery, linerboard, and wood pulp.
	Bulk: Loose cargo (dry or liquid) loaded (shoveled, scooped, forked, mechanically conveyed, or pumped) directly into barges. Examples include grain, coal, and oil.
	Neo-bulk: Uniformly packaged goods, such as wood pulp bales, which stow as solidly as bulk but are handled as general cargoes.
BELOW CARGO TYPES ARE NOT CURRENTLY SEEN IN KENTUCKY	
	Container: A box made of aluminum, steel, or fiberglass used to transport cargo by ship, rail, truck, or barge. Common dimensions are 20' x 8' x 8' (called a TEU or twenty-foot equivalent unit) or 40' x 8' x 8' (called an FEU or forty-foot equivalent unit). TEUs are the most used unit of measure.
	Roll-on/Roll-off (ro/ro): Cargo that can be driven directly into the belly of the ship via ramps that are lowered to the dock rather than being lifted aboard. Examples include cars, buses, trucks, or other vehicles.

⁷ Definitions adapted from: American Association of Port Authorities. 2013. Glossary of Maritime Terms. Retrieved from: www.aapa-ports.org/advocating/content.aspx?ItemNumber=21500

GOVERNANCE OF RIVERPORTS

Port Authority Jurisdiction⁸: Kentucky's public riverport authorities exist to serve the public interest. For this reason, a collaboration involving a port authority in planning and economic development can often advance both the success of the port authority and the surrounding region. In these partnerships, the governmental powers and authorities of port authorities can enable goals to be achieved. While the powers and authorities of each port authority are somewhat different, those granted to Kentucky's port authorities may include:

- Exercise powers of eminent domain
- Conduct studies and develop plans
- Levy facility charges
- Issue bonds
- Sue and be sued
- Apply for federal grants
- Enter into contracts and agreements
- Some port authorities also have authority over transportation infrastructure, industrial parks, foreign trade zones, world trade centers, shipyards, commercial vessels, dredges, marinas, and other public recreational facilities. Many are responsible for maintaining port security and enforcing port authority ordinances. Some exercise regulatory powers, such as licensing of stevedores. Others are responsible for the management of environmental assets or enforcement of local or state environmental and land-use regulations.

Governing Boards and Commissions: Each of Kentucky's public riverports or port authorities has a unique structure for its governing body. If established by a county, appointments are by the county judge executive. If the port is chartered by a city, the mayor appoints. If the port is chartered by a city and county, the mayor and judge executive jointly appoint board members.⁹ Some port authority charters may provide specific criteria for the selection of appointees.

Port Staff: Individuals who sit on riverport authority boards and commissions usually participate on a part-time basis. Most ports have a director who reports to the riverport authority board and can be supported by clerical staff. Because staff members are responsible for implementing port policies, community residents may achieve the best results by coordinating closely with appropriate port staff.

⁸ Adapted from: Sherman, Rexford B. Seaport Governance in the United States and Canada. Retrieved from: www.aapa-ports.org/files/PDFs/governance_uscan.pdf

⁹ KRS 65.540

CONTACTS

Eddyville Riverport

978 Port Authority Road
Eddyville, KY 42038
270-388-9671

www.eddyvilleriverport.com/

Greenup-Boyd County Riverport

301 Main Street, Room 102
Greenup, KY 41144
606-473-6440

Henderson County Riverport

6200 Riverport Road
Henderson, KY 42420
270-826-1636

hendersonport.com/

Hickman-Fulton County Riverport

625 Catlett Street
PO Box 6
Hickman, KY 42050
270-236-2563

www.hickmanriverport.com/

Louisville Riverport

6900 Riverport Drive
PO Box 58010
Louisville, KY 40268
502-935-6024

www.louisvilleriverportauthority.com/

Owensboro Riverport

1771 River Road
Owensboro, KY 40304
270-926-4238

owensbororiverport.com/

Paducah-McCracken County Riverport

2000 Wayne Sullivan Drive
PO Box 2302
Paducah, KY 42002
270-442-9326

paducahriverport.org/

Developing Riverports

Maysville-Mason County Riverport

219 Stanley Reed Court Street
Maysville, KY 41056
606-654-2510

Northern Kentucky Port Authority

300 Buttermilk Pike, Suite 332
Fort Mitchell, KY 41071
859-344-0040

West Kentucky Regional Riverport

297 Kentucky Avenue
Kevil, KY 42053
270-217-6339

Additional Contacts

KYTC Division of Planning
200 Mero Street
Frankfort, KY 40622
Phone: (502) 564-7183

transportation.ky.gov/Planning/Pages/default.aspx

Kentucky Association of Riverports (KAR)

www.kentuckyriverports.com/

Maritime Administration

www.maritime.dot.gov/

Cabinet for Economic Development

300 West Broadway
Frankfort, KY 40601

800-626-2930

<https://ced.ky.gov>

econdev@ky.gov



GO-TO-MARKET GUIDE

KENTUCKY RIVERPORTS, HIGHWAY & RAIL FREIGHT STUDY

MARKETING PLANS

Marketing plans are intended to be a comprehensive approach for an organization's goals, objectives, strategies, tactics, or research efforts and are aimed at building or expanding business for its products or services.

This Go-to-Market Guide will provide the Kentucky riverports with a step-by-step process for using data and information gathered in the Kentucky Riverports, Highway & Rail Freight Study to develop and implement a marketing plan. These efforts can be robust or build gradually over time based on a riverport's capacity and ability to grow.

Bear in mind, based on the analysis conducted as part of this study, the economic landscape for waterborne freight movement is shifting significantly in Kentucky. The study reiterated that the riverport system is experiencing a fundamental restructuring, and it will require a focused pivot in marketing objectives to address the unique economic challenges in Kentucky. The continuing decline of the fossil fuel market will challenge the growth potential of capturing new customers. Thus, directed marketing efforts within each port's hinterland are essential to yield new customers, which are essential to offset the steep decline of the fossil fuel market and keep the ports operational. The ports will need to transform historical trends to attract, retain, and expand market share. It will take significant focus on prospective new industries, partnerships with private businesses within key supply chains, and potentially some repositioning value proposition of the Kentucky riverport network to appeal to new industries and attract a new customer base to eventually replace that market.

This guide is meant to provide flexibility and customization for each riverport's specific priorities and economic goals, which may evolve over time. Some initial truths about marketing plans include the following:

- Marketing plans should be considered "living" documents, which means they should be consulted regularly (at least quarterly) and updated as conditions change or warrant a change in direction or approach. It is suggested to update a marketing plan no less than annually.
- A hallmark of an effective marketing plan is that it should be riddled with short narratives. Thoughts and descriptions should not be lengthy but have sufficient explanations.
- Another hallmark of an effective marketing plan is to be visually attractive. Therefore, a plan should include charts, graphs, and maps that improve the quality of the information by making it appealing, and easy to decipher.

DEVELOPING A MARKETING PLAN

Plans will appropriately vary across riverports, given each one is unique in the services offered (e.g., Paducah Riverport’s services will differ from the developing West Kentucky Regional Riverport’s services). Further, marketing plans are not one-size-fits-all and should be customized based on the different market conditions and facilities' strengths across the riverports. A marketing plan should include the following 16 sections:

1. Mission Statement

Start with the riverport’s overall mission so customers, staff, and stakeholders understand the riverport’s purpose and goals to build economic development within the region. The riverports have tremendous opportunities to capitalize on the accessibility to inland and international waterways to recruit new businesses to Kentucky and open new markets to existing businesses.

2. Executive Summary

This is typically a one- to three-paragraph (one-page maximum) narrative, where the plan is framed and a high-level summary of the riverport is provided, including the current market environment, the marketing initiative being addressed, and the goals of the plan.

3. Table of Contents

Most marketing plans, by their nature, are lengthy documents (i.e., can range from 15 to 50 pages). Include a Table of Contents with linked sections, if possible, to allow easy navigation.

4. Port Overview

This section will include an overview of the port, including the length of time the port has been in operation (or began development) as well as current facilities, equipment, capabilities, and services. This section can generally include information about current customers served and commodities managed, as well as potential growth targets, but that will be included in more detail later.

Each of the riverports will receive a customized port profile as part of this marketing toolkit. This profile can be used within this section to outline and illustrate the port’s facilities, equipment, and markets. It also includes an aerial map, demonstrating the layout of the port, its proximity to the river, and multimodal freight facilities.

5. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis

This analysis will pull from the Kentucky Riverports, Highway & Rail Freight Study: Final Report (hereafter simplified to Final Report), which includes the riverport network’s overall strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). An example from the Henderson County Riverport is shown below. Review this chart from an internal (strengths/weaknesses) perspective and an external (opportunities/threats) perspective as it relates to the specific riverport for inclusion in this section. A SWOT analysis has been conducted for each riverport and can be found in **Chapter 3** of the Final Report. Be sure to add any adjustments deemed appropriate. Finally, the SWOT analysis should be thorough and honest, but the narrative should not be exhaustive. Stick to one to two sentences for each item.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Multimodal system with strategic location 2. Federal designations for freight routes 3. Foreign trade zone designations 4. New port development 5. Local support from development advocates 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State funding 2. Limited port personnel 3. Aging lock and dam infrastructure 4. Port space and budget limitations 5. Need for rail infrastructure improvement 6. Public understanding/perception 7. Lack of human resources to pursue funding and other opportunities on behalf of all the riverports
Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lock and dam maintenance/improvement 2. New development along Licking River 3. Availability of federal funding 4. Expansion via Kentucky legislation¹⁰ 5. Available land 6. New tenants interested in leasing 7. Existing and new markets 8. Need for more berth space 9. Container-on-barge (COB) services 10. Kentucky Strategic Highway Investment Formula for Tomorrow (SHIFT) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limited US Army Corps of Engineers lock and dam infrastructure budget 2. Riverport competition within/between states 3. Reliability of short-line rail service 4. Port equipment needs 5. Rail competition with Kansas City Southern’s acquisition 6. Seasonal/nonseasonal river conditions 7. Supply chain disruptions

6. Anticipated Changes and Priorities

Use this section to describe any changes anticipated over the next 12–24 months. This can include expansion of services; touting safety and maintenance records; new equipment investment; and new, key hires. This section should include support or funding that has already been secured and how that investment will be used. Further, anything that will change the landscape of the riverport should be captured here.

¹⁰ According to KRS 65.520, any governmental unit in Kentucky may establish a riverport authority with the KYTC Secretary’s approval. Riverport authorities provide oversight on riverport development activities as well as conduct normal business.

7. Industry/Market Overview

This section will draw from the Final Report to highlight conditions within each port's hinterland and potential opportunities for the forecasted growth of current and expected commodities. Each riverport can create subsections for its specific port as outlined below:

- *Primary service area*—what industries (e.g., paper products), zip codes, cities, states, or even other countries does the port primarily serve? Break down by commodity volumes.
- *Competitor data*—who are the port's competitors? What is known about competitors in the primary service area? What do they claim as differentiators in the market? Are there potential opportunities to collaborate with competitors or across ports with overlapping hinterlands?
- *Industry trends*—This can be pulled from data included in the Final Report to outline the changes in commodities forecasted and opportunities for diversion from truck and rail to water as well as through research using the TRANSEARCH database. The Final Report of the study used these data to provide forecast scenarios for each riverport and offer insights on key growth industries. Additional data on these growth sectors can be discussed as well.

8. Service Mix

In marketing, it is common practice to think about how each of the following aspects of a business position it for success: product, price, place, and promotion. In today's digital landscape, marketing thought leaders have suggested that this "marketing mix" has evolved to include Solutions, Access, Value, and Education (SAVE). Here is how to interpret this equation when considering how to market a riverport.

First, the thinking on moving from products to solutions is that companies today offer more than just a product; they offer solutions that solve a problem for their customers. To that end, consider how shipping freight via the riverport and the inland waterways does this for the riverport's target industries. Obviously, there are benefits from a cost savings perspective as well as shipping capacity, energy efficiency, etc. Determine who the riverport is targeting and what issues those targets have that the riverport can solve.

Next, place has evolved to access. Understanding how the riverport is connected both physically and digitally to its customers (and their customers) should be a key part of the riverport's positioning strategy. In talking with existing riverport customers in the preparation of this marketing toolkit, they expressed their thoughts on issues such as ease of access to billing and terminal documentation from electronic systems and how important it is to shave even 30 minutes off the transport of goods and materials to customers. Consider all aspects of how the riverport makes its services accessible and convenient for customers. If an

investment in a digital billing system could bring new advantages to the riverport, consider how that could be accomplished in partnership with the entire network or state agencies like KYTC or the Cabinet for Economic Development.

The third aspect of the marketing mix, **value**, is the evolution of price. Today's marketplace is increasingly sophisticated and willing to pay for the right solution if it brings it a competitive advantage in some way. Businesses that position their products and services around the value they bring to customers are less highly vulnerable to price fluctuations in the market. Instead of being one leg of a customer's freight shipment journey, consider how the riverport brings additional value to customers and their end-users.

And finally, promotion has become **education**. Today's business decision-makers are bombarded with messages and promotions. Breaking through the clutter is more about providing education about how waterborne shipping is creating value in the supply chain across a wide range of industries. Consider the riverport's specific experience and where it has been successful. What did the riverport or its customers learn along the way that would be valuable for others to hear? Lead the riverport's outreach efforts with messaging that educates and informs prospective buyers. They will be more likely to want to follow up and learn more.

9. Customer Analysis

This section takes an in-depth look at the riverport's current customer base. Although understandable that each port will have varying degrees of this information available, it is important to analyze the riverport's current portfolio of customers to ensure it continues to meet expectations and look for opportunities related to the value it offers. Riverports with declining industry sectors, such as coal, should analyze the rest of their existing customer base to determine if the port has unique expertise to offer others in these or related industries across the supply chain. This section could include the following:

- Environmental, market conditions, or seasonality that affect customer volumes; times of the year that may offer the opportunity for growth
- Demographics of key decision-makers in customer organizations (age, zip code, income, characteristics, race, etc.)
- Customer satisfaction data
- Equipment needs to better serve customers
- Preferences for services (e.g., new covered storage for dry bulk)
- Insights into additional customer acquisition opportunities based on "like" prospects

10. Origins and Destinations—Goods Movement

This section summarizes where goods move from and to, including goods that the port does or can handle, and how to analyze these data to determine new opportunities. The Final Report offers port directors or marketers the ability to understand where goods are moving to and from, the modes of transportation they currently use, and whether it would add value for the riverports to take on part of that transport.

11. Past Marketing Efforts

This section will discuss any past marketing efforts at a high level and seek to capture total spend, general tactics, and any results. If the riverports have conducted any marketing in the past, it is important to document any lessons learned in terms of what worked and what did not. Measurement is a key component of any marketing plan and will inform any future tactics.

12. Marketing Resources

This section will discuss how to assess available resources to support marketing efforts. Subsections could include the following:

- **Marketing materials:** As part of the study, each riverport will receive a unique profile that will outline its unique selling points, available facilities, equipment, industry experience, and any planned investments. In addition to this profile, each port should determine if other specific materials would be beneficial to share with potential customers, such as case studies on specific customers (the customer can remain anonymous, if necessary), a website with facility photos, and key partnerships outlined, etc.
- **Partner vendors:** In putting together the marketing plan, each riverport should consider all business partners in both the private and public sectors. Who do they reach on a regular basis, and how can they influence the port's awareness and reputation within key industries?
- **Internal resources:** Each riverport should also consider any internal unique or shared resources to support marketing efforts. Is there a web developer or graphic designer who can update the Kentucky Association of Riverports website, individual port websites, or collateral materials? Other resources to consider include access to a photographer, videographer, writer, or others who can support materials development and outreach.

13. Brand Positioning

This section is a substantial part of the plan. Study what the riverport has captured in the above sections to drive what is written in the subsections under "Brand Positioning." These subsections should include the following:

- ***How does the riverport want to be perceived by potential customers?*** Use the data and research pulled from the overall study to answer this question. This will be connected to the value the riverport provides and how it differentiates its services from competitive modes of transportation.
- ***Key messages.*** Use information collected in the audit process to write key messages to support the perception goal. Generally, three to five key messages are appropriate. Good messaging should consider both the functional and emotional benefits the riverport brings to customers. For example, if one of the messages is related to a long track record of experience within a specific industry, the message could include that customers in that industry can be confident the riverport will handle their shipments with expertise and seamless execution. Bringing into the message how the riverport makes customers feel in their interactions with it can draw more of a connection than just the overall service offerings.
- ***Plan goal.*** The plan goal should be one sentence that describes the overarching theme of the plan. It should not include tactics or strategies, which will be outlined later. The goal of the plan should provide a high-level summary of what the plan seeks to achieve. For example, "The goal of this plan is to advance the riverport as a viable alternative to shipping freight by rail or truck, offering the benefits of convenience, lower cost, and access to international markets."
- ***Marketing strategy.*** The marketing strategy is a sentence or two that summarizes how the riverport is going to accomplish the goal. For example, one strategy could be, "The program goal will be achieved by leveraging partnerships with key economic development personnel in the region to gain access to manufacturers within the targeted industries who are considering bringing operations to the region."
- ***Objectives.*** This section outlines several measurable ways the tactics will be evaluated based on research, realistic numbers, and federal/state program criteria as well as administration priorities (e.g., funding programs/equity). Examples: "Increase the outreach frequency by 50%. Gain three new customers in 2022."

14. Marketing Strategies and Recommended Tactics

This section provides details on how and in what ways marketing outreach will occur. Subsections include the following:

- **Target market demographics.** Describe the decision-makers within the industries the riverport is targeting if data are available. This could include factors like gender, age, characteristics, household income, and so forth. This is important to note in order to obtain a general understanding of their media habits and therefore potential ways to reach and influence them.
- **Geography.** Capture the geographical region being targeted. Be as specific as possible. Explain any anticipated changes in those areas.
- **Cross-promotional opportunities.** Capture any possibilities here such as, "The local municipality may offer an incentive for manufacturers that lease property to use the riverport for transfer to or from water, storage, or other services." In addition, consider multimodal partnering opportunities that leverage relationships with barge operators or railroads to promote seamless freight shipping.
- **Retail pricing strategy.** Be cognizant of pricing sensitivities with goods movement, and be prepared to offer value-added services to avoid some of the flipping back and forth. As stated previously, define the value the riverport brings to customers. Articulate how it solves problems that others cannot.
- **Advertising and direct mail.** Describe briefly how and when the riverport would use these tactics. Note that direct marketing tactics (e.g., direct mail, email marketing) are useful when it is known exactly who (or what positions) the riverport wants to reach and has the necessary contact information. Advertising is a mass media tactic, so it will reach many more people outside of the target audience and build overall market awareness. These tactics can work together effectively but should be approached strategically based on budget and available resources. Another benefit of these tactics, also called "paid media," is that the riverport controls the message and frequency of the outreach.
- **Media relations.** Describe how this tactic can be employed to support marketing goals. Media relations involve reaching out to reporters to pitch them story ideas related to the successful use of the riverport or sending press releases to a group of media outlets within a given market to announce newsworthy information about the riverport. Any coverage in the local media is referred to as "earned media," meaning the company does not have to pay for that coverage. However, the reporter is independent and will write an article that may or may not include all the information the

riverport wants to convey; so the final product, while more credible, is not within the riverport’s complete control.

- **Special events.** Describe how this tactic can be employed to support the marketing goals. Events can include participation in relevant trade shows or Chamber of Commerce activities to raise awareness of the port and its offerings for regional businesses. Often these activities can be done in partnership with vendor partners or other riverports to promote the network.
- **Community relations.** Describe any outreach or sponsorships completed or planned and how they can support the goal. This tactic can help with raising the local profile of the riverport, making towns and communities more familiar with their expertise and offerings, and generating awareness.

15. Action Plan

This is the complete list of everything that will be done over the course of one year. Think of it as a how-to guide with a time frame, anticipated budget, and responsibilities. It is important to start small and work up to more consistent, ongoing marketing. A table is the best way to create this section:

Tactic	Cost	Time Frame	Responsibility
Establish a partnership with the local chamber.	\$500	fall 2022	John

The table should be preceded by a strategy statement if there is a conclusive way to include one; for example, “The riverport will seek to develop stronger relationships with local economic development and business leaders to build awareness of its capabilities and services.”

16. Tactical Execution by Quarter

The “Tactical Execution by Quarter” breaks down all tactics in a grid to offer an at-a-glance look at all promotions happening over the course of the year.

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with chamber and join 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with local mayor/city manager; look for P3 opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Announce funds received to local media 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend roundtable discussions with manufacturers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure funds/apply for funds for new investments 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach out to statewide economic development rep 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin outreach to potential prospects 		

Consider this summary to be a tool that the person executing the tactics can quickly look at to be sure that the plan is on pace for the year and that they can refer to this at-a-glance information any time.

Measurement

Every marketing plan is measured by its ability to reach the organization’s objectives and previously established goal(s). This section will provide the riverports with a way to create a dashboard that captures relevant data over the course of a year as they implement their marketing plan. That way they can determine if they are getting closer to their objectives or need to adjust their strategies.

For example, components of a dashboard should include metrics on what is being spent in the market, the number of people being reached (as applicable), the responses from the market (requests for information or presentations scheduled), and the bottom-line impact (new leads, new customers, new revenue, etc.). It is extremely important to monitor these data points on an ongoing basis as the marketing plan is implemented to adjust spending or outreach as appropriate based on what is working and what is not.