



1.2 Transportation Planning History

For statewide planning purposes, the INDOT 2000-2025 Long Range Transportation Plan establishes a corridor hierarchy of three levels: Statewide Mobility Corridors, Regional Corridors and Local Access Corridors. Referring to Figures 1.1.2 and 1.1.4, US 31 from Indianapolis (I-465) to South Bend (US 20) is among the Statewide Mobility Corridors which consists of the highest level of highway facilities such as Interstates and most principal arterials. Such corridors have upper level design standards, high speeds, minimal travel delay, free-flowing conditions, and desirably no less than partial access control.

In the 107th Session of the Indiana General Assembly in 1991, legislation was passed directing INDOT to establish Commerce Corridors in the State of Indiana. These corridors were defined as “part of the recognized system of highways that:

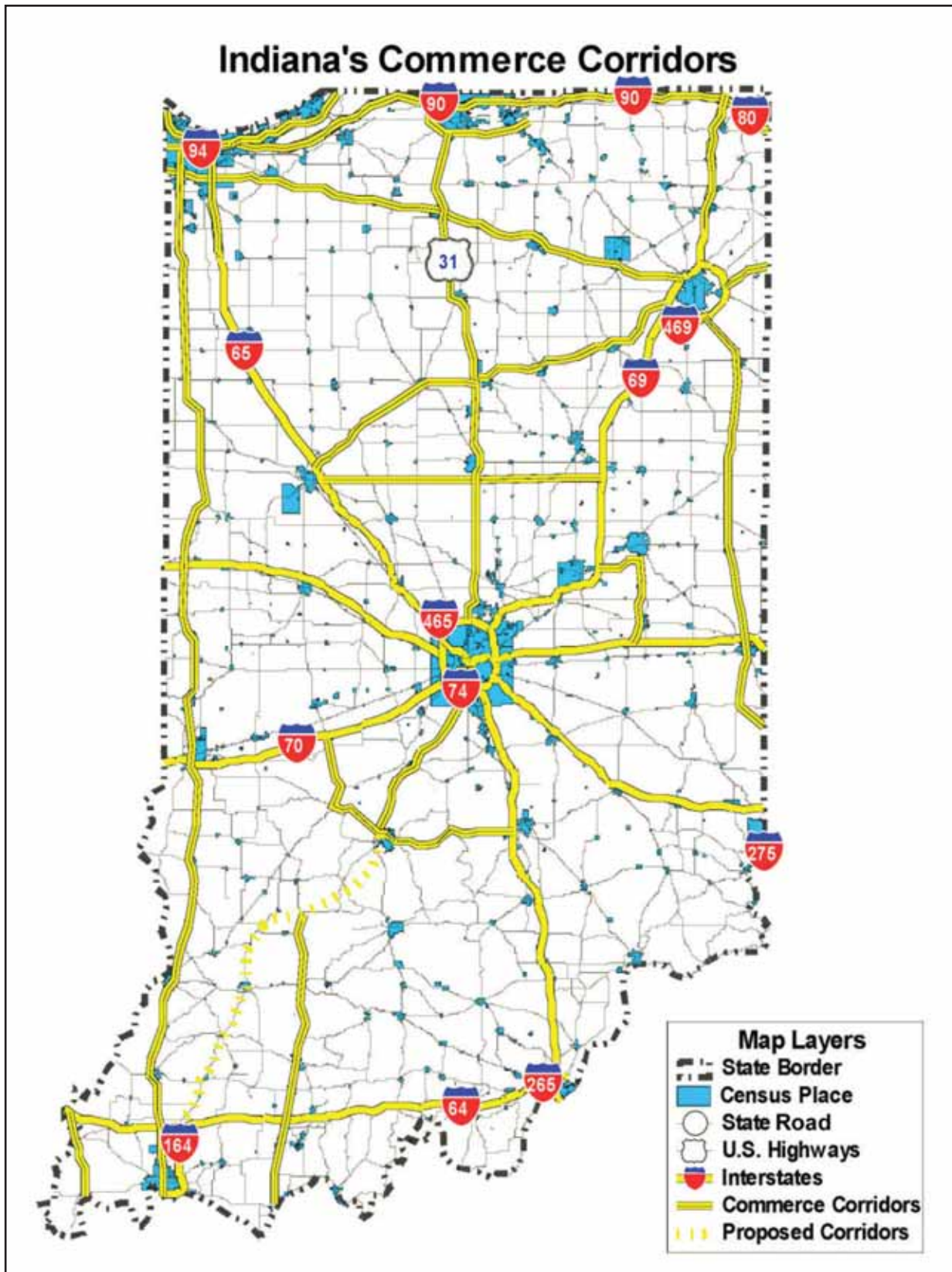
- directly facilitates intrastate, interstate or international commerce and travel;
- enhances economic vitality and international competitiveness; or
- provides service to all parts of Indiana and the United States.”

Referring to Figure 1.2.5, US 31 is also among Indiana’s Commerce Corridors which consists of the major commercial routes supporting the state’s economy. A Commerce Corridor connects major population concentrations to the NHS, and provides good connectivity to major manufacturing and trade service concentrations. It also improves access to tourism and recreation areas, economic concentrations, and those areas with demonstrated and anticipated potential growth.

The Commerce Corridor designation is more restrictive than the Statewide Mobility Corridor designation. The Commerce Corridor designation consists of Interstates plus select arterials that are identified as having significant importance to statewide and national transportation.

As a result of the statewide highway needs analysis, the INDOT 2000-2025 Long Range Transportation Plan proposes the “US 31 Freeway Upgrade from Indianapolis to South Bend.” In particular, the Plan identifies the need to improve US 31 in St. Joseph and Marshall counties, and the associated statewide Travel Demand Model (TDM) shows unacceptable congestion along portions of US 31 for the years 1998 and 2025 in these counties.

In addition to being a part of the INDOT 2000-2025 Long Range Transportation Plan, the need for improving existing US 31 has also been identified in the regional transportation plan. The transportation plan of the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG), identifies the need to improve existing US 31 south of US 20 to a new limited access road with interchanges at several locations that would continue to US 30 in Marshall County.



Source: *INDOT 2000 – 2025 Long Range Plan*

Figure 1.2.5: Indiana Commerce Corridors