



## 2.4 Consistency with Transportation Plans

US 31 is designated a Commerce Corridor and a Statewide Mobility Corridor in the INDOT 2000-2025 Long Range Transportation Plan. The Indiana General Assembly in 1991 passed legislation directing INDOT to establish Commerce Corridors. A Commerce Corridor connects major population concentrations to the National Highway System, 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. It consists of Interstates plus select arterials with full or partial access control that are identified as having significant importance to statewide and national transportation. When compared to other Commerce Corridors, US 31 lacks good connectivity without even partial access control along most of the corridor, and provides poor mobility due to congestion.

A Statewide Mobility Corridor is the highest tier of INDOT's three-tiered planning-level corridors. Such corridors have upper level design standards, high speeds, minimal travel delay, free-flowing conditions, and no less than partial access control. Attainment of these minimum characteristics for US 31 requires reduced congestion, increased speeds, reduced travel times, and establishment of at least partial access control. Other characteristics typically associated with a Statewide Mobility Corridor include: serves long-distance trips, large through traffic volumes of traffic, and heavy commercial vehicle flows; carries longer distance commuter traffic; is generally multi-lane divided, full access control desirable, railroad and highway grade separation desirable, and desirable to bypass congested areas; has no non-motorized/pedestrian interaction; and has major river crossings.<sup>3</sup>

The Michiana Area Council of Government's (MACOG) Transportation Plan identified the need to improve existing US 31. The 2025 Transportation Plan published by MACOG for the South Bend Metropolitan Area also called specifically for the improvement of US 31 as a result of traffic operational failures identified in the Level-of-Service analysis of the plan. Failures were identified along segments of US 31 from US 20 to Kern Road and New Road to Pierce Road in years 2005 through 2025. Therefore, the MPO's plan proposed that US 31 should be improved to "a new limited access road with interchanges at several locations and would continue south from US 20 in St. Joseph County to US 30 in Marshall County."<sup>4</sup> This recommendation to improve US 31 from US 20 to US 30 was reiterated in March of 2002, in MACOG's 2025 Transportation Plan Update.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, it is desirable that alternatives to improve US 31 be consistent with the improvements called for in MACOG's 2025 Transportation Plan for the South Bend Metropolitan Area.

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<sup>3</sup> INDOT *Statewide 2000-2025 Long Range Transportation Plan (2001 Update)*, pages 82 and 83.

<sup>4</sup> *2025 Transportation Plan for South Bend/Elkhart/Goshen Transportation Management Area*; Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG); April 1999; pages 45-49 and 98.

<sup>5</sup> *2025 Transportation Plan Update*; Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG); March 18, 2002; page 39.