



## 4.13 Visual and Aesthetic Resources

Visual and aesthetic resources can be identified by examining the visual corridor of US 31. The visual corridor takes into account the entire landscape and, for purposes of the US 31 corridor, includes two main aspects: views to the road and views from the road. Views to the road include what is seen from an adjacent property when facing the roadway. These views are normally from a fixed vantage point, whereas the visual corridor is viewed on a repetitive basis by drivers or pedestrians. Views from the road are experienced by roadway travelers, such as commuters, haulers or tourists. As roadway travelers, these viewers have a broader exposure to the visual corridor. Such impacts are assessed to design quality, art, and architecture in the project planning. These values are particularly important for facilities in sensitive environmental settings.

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) has a policy to incorporate context sensitive solutions into the development, construction and maintenance process for improvements to the state jurisdictional transportation system (INDOT Design Memo No. 03-07). The establishment of context sensitive solutions incorporates accepted effective design practices. Context sensitive solutions allow ideas such as the preservation of historic places, scenic and natural environmental enhancement and community values to be considered with the objectives of mobility, safety and economics.

The following descriptions show the existing visual features for the area traversed by each alternative. The inventory of the visual corridor focused upon three key elements: (1) roadway; (2) land use; and (3) landscape. Information was gathered from driving each of the alternatives, their variations, and the use of GIS layers. Commentaries on each alternative begin in the south, near Plymouth, and end near US 20 in South Bend.

### 4.13.1 Existing Visual Corridor

#### Alternative Cs

Alternative Cs uses the existing US 31 corridor for approximately 4.5 miles and is on new-terrain for the remainder of the corridor. It crosses generally flat topography. The corridor passes in or near the towns/cities of Plymouth, LaPaz, Lakeville, and South Bend. The land use can be classified as a general mix of business, retail, commercial and residential.

From US 31/US 30 Interchange to LaPaz, the Cs corridor land use is generally agricultural/grazing with some residential homes (see Figure 4.13.46).

From LaPaz to Lakeville, the corridor will pass on the east side of LaPaz, near LaPaz Junction. The visual corridor consists of agricultural/grazing lands, homes and some wooded areas.

From Lakeville to South Bend, the corridor will pass on the west side of Lakeville and continue to the north. The land use is typified with many businesses along the corridor, with a mix of residential land use. The roadway will connect to US 20 with a new interchange approximately 1-mile west of the existing US 31/US 20 interchange.



Figure 4.13.46: View from the Corridor



## Alternative G-Cs

Alternative G-Cs uses the existing US 31 corridor for about 4.5 miles and is on new terrain for the remainder of the corridor. It crosses generally flat topography. The corridor land use is a mix of agriculture/grazing lands.

From US 31/US 30 Interchange to LaPaz, the G-Cs corridor land use is generally agricultural/grazing with some homes. (See Figure 4.13.46)

From LaPaz to Lakeville, the corridor will pass on the east side of LaPaz, and near LaPaz Junction. The visual corridor is a mix of agricultural/grazing lands, homes and some forested areas.

From Lakeville to South Bend, the corridor will pass on the east side of Lakeville and continue to the north. The visual corridor is a combination of land uses, such as wooded areas, agricultural/grazing fields and residential areas in the form of subdivisions. As the corridor approaches South Bend, the land use changes to that of a mix of subdivisions, industrial use and small ponds. The roadway will connect to US 20 with a new interchange approximately 1 mile west of the existing US 31/US 20 interchange.

## Alternative Es

Alternative Es uses the existing US 31 corridor for about 4.5 miles and is on new terrain for the remainder of the corridor until it terminates at the existing US 31 / US 20 interchange. It crosses flat topography.

From US 31/US 30 Interchange to LaPaz, the corridor is comprised of agricultural/grazing lands, homes, forested areas and businesses. (See Figure 4.13.46)

From LaPaz to Lakeville, the corridor will pass on the east side of LaPaz and near LaPaz Junction. At approximately Tyler Road, the roadway turns towards the northeast. The visual corridor passes through agricultural/grazing lands, homes, forested areas and wetland area.

From Lakeville to South Bend, the corridor will pass on the west side of Lakeville and continue to the north paralleling the existing US 31. The visual corridor through this region is categorized by several large residential subdivisions; agricultural/grazing lands; a cemetery; and the commercial business district that includes businesses, gas stations, small shops and a restaurant that parallel the corridor. Just north of Madison Road the corridor roadway begins to turn towards the northeast. Through this area, the land use is a mix of single-family dwellings and subdivisions, industrial activity, some small ponds and forest areas. The corridor will use the existing US 31 corridor from just north of Kern Road until the termini at US 20. (See Figure 4.13.47)



Figure 4.13.47: View of the Corridor



## Preferred Alternative G-Es

Alternative G-Es uses the existing US 31 corridor for about 4.5 miles and is on new terrain for the remainder of the corridor until it terminates at the existing US 31 / US 20 Interchange. It crosses flat topography. The corridor land use is a mix of agriculture/grazing lands. (See Figure 4.13.46)

From US 31/US 30 Interchange to LaPaz, the G-Es corridor land use is generally agricultural/grazing with some homes.

From LaPaz to Lakeville, the corridor will pass on the east side of LaPaz and near LaPaz Junction. The visual corridor is a mix of agricultural/grazing lands, homes and some forested areas.

From Lakeville to South Bend, the corridor will pass on the east side of Lakeville and continue to the north. The visual corridor is a combination of land uses, such as wooded areas, agricultural/grazing fields and residential areas in the form of subdivisions. As the corridor approaches South Bend, the land use changes to that of a mix of subdivisions, commercial and industrial use. The visual corridor through this region is categorized by residential subdivisions; agricultural/grazing lands; a cemetery; and the commercial business district that includes businesses, gas stations, small shops and a restaurant that parallel the corridor. The corridor will use the existing US 31 corridor from just north of Kern Road until the termini at US 20.