



Chapter 5

Mobility

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Introduction

Mobility in the City of Elkhart includes the local and regional motorized and non-motorized transportation network. Transportation options include roadways, public transit, rail, commercial aviation, general aviation, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and navigable waterways.

Vehicular

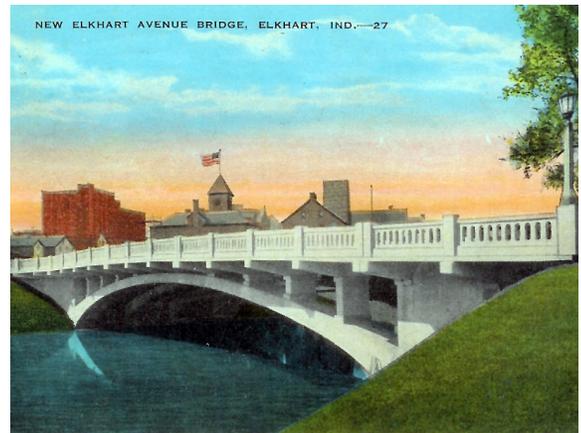
The vehicular transportation network is categorized into classifications in order to handle various levels of traffic volume. Each street has a functional classification that relates to the amount of traffic it can carry.

- Freeways are divided two multi-lane, high speed roads with limited access. They are designed to move traffic on a regional scale. The Toll Road and the US 20 Bypass are examples of freeways.
- Major Arterials connect two or more regions, urban areas, or communities. They predominantly serve “through traffic” with minimum direct service to adjacent land uses.
- Minor Arterials consist of all major streets designed and intended to move traffic quickly. Examples of minor arterials include Hively Avenue, Lusher Avenue, Indiana Avenue, Middlebury Street, Franklin Street, Lexington Avenue, Jackson Boulevard, Beardsley Avenue, Bristol Street, Oakland Avenue, Benham Avenue, Prairie Street, and Main Street.
- Collector streets link the higher volume arterial systems to the local streets and are designed to carry higher volumes than local streets.
- Local streets distribute the traffic from collectors and arterials and carry the least amount of traffic. All residential neighborhood and subdivision streets are examples of local streets.

Maintaining and expanding the City’s roadway network is a coordinated effort among the City of Elkhart, the Michiana Council of Governments (MACOG), and the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT).

City of Elkhart

The City of Elkhart’s local roadways are maintained by the Street Department. The department periodically upgrades the City’s streets, curbs, and sidewalks based on a regular maintenance



Historic postcard of Elkhart's Elkhart Avenue Bridge

schedule. Major projects are coordinated with MACOG. The department is also responsible for maintaining compliance with federal standards for street identification, regulation, and design.

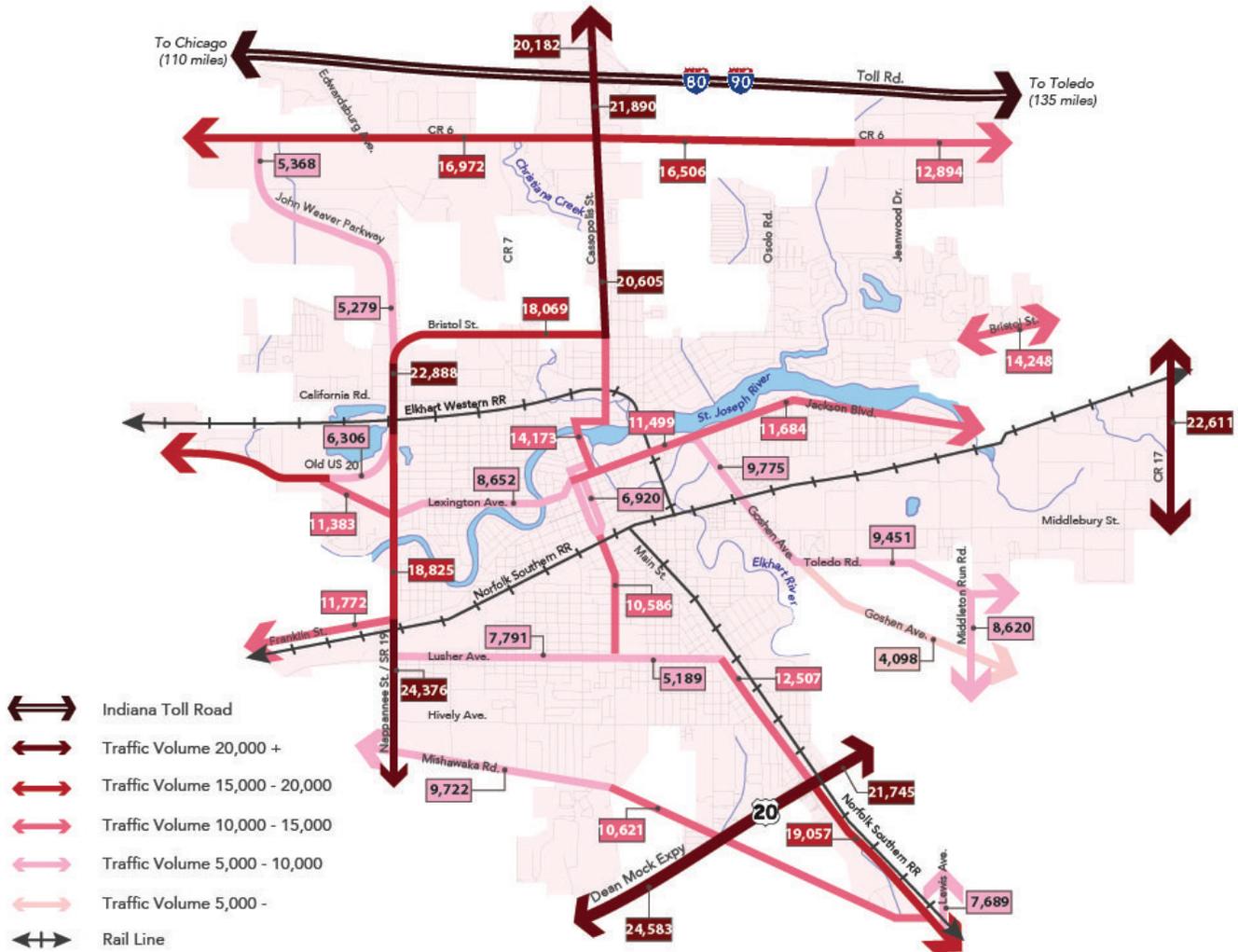
Elkhart County

Elkhart County’s Highway Department is responsible for the maintenance and repair of all non-INDOT roads outside of Elkhart’s City limits. The County periodically upgrades roadways as identified in the MACOG project schedule. These projects are often in coordination with City projects to provide enhanced levels of service for an entire roadway.

MACOG

The City of Elkhart and Elkhart County are located within the Elkhart/South Bend Metropolitan Statistical Area. Urban areas with populations greater than 50,000 are required to establish a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) in order to carry

Major Routes and Traffic Counts



out the area’s transportation planning. The MPO established for the Elkhart/South Bend MSA is the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG). MACOG facilitates coordinated transportation planning efforts for the federally designated urban areas of Elkhart and St. Joseph counties and rural planning activities in Marshall and Kosciusko counties.

MACOG’s comprehensive transportation plan for the Michiana region, the 2035 Long-Term Transportation Plan, outlines several road improvement projects planned for streets throughout the City of Elkhart. *These projects were identified through MACOG’s process and plan and not through the City of Elkhart Comprehensive Plan process.* Identified improvements and target completion years include:

MACOG Completed Projects:

- Hivley Avenue added travel lanes (2009)

MACOG Upcoming Projects as part of 20-year Plan:

- Beardsley Avenue added travel lanes (2020)
- Cassopolis Street added travel lanes (2020)
- CR 10 (Bristol Street) added travel lanes (2020)
- Goshen Avenue added travel lanes (2020)
- Hively Avenue Underpass grade separation (2020)
- Lexington Avenue center turn lane (2020)
- Oakland Avenue added travel lanes (2020)
- Prairie Street added travel lanes (2020)
- Prairie Street Underpass grade separation (2020)
- Toledo Road added travel lanes (2020)
- Benham Avenue added travel lanes (2025)
- CR 11 (Osolo Road) added travel lanes (2025)
- Main Street added travel lanes (2025)
- Main Street center turn lane (2025)
- Prairie Street added travel lanes (2025)
- Bypass Road added travel lanes (2030)
- CR 7 (Michigan Street) added travel lanes (2030)



Road improvement work in Elkhart



Elkhart's Interurban Trolley

- Indiana Avenue added travel lanes (2030)
- Lusher Avenue added travel lanes (2030)
- Oakland Avenue added travel lanes (2030)

These road projects have been deemed necessary through the use of Level of Service modeling, pictured to the right. MACOG utilizes computer modeling software that predicts how much traffic will increase along the area roadways during the upcoming years due to population changes and changes in development. The model then identifies roads that are under, at, or over capacity, which results in a level of service. The Level of Service ranges from A to F with A being a roadway that is free-flowing and F being a road that is completely stopped with congestion. Engineers typically design for a roadway to achieve level C or D. The maps on the following pages show what the levels of service are projected to be on the local roadways both with and without the previously mentioned improvements. As the maps indicate, there is more green surrounding the City of Elkhart in the map with the roadway improvements, which indicates higher levels of service.

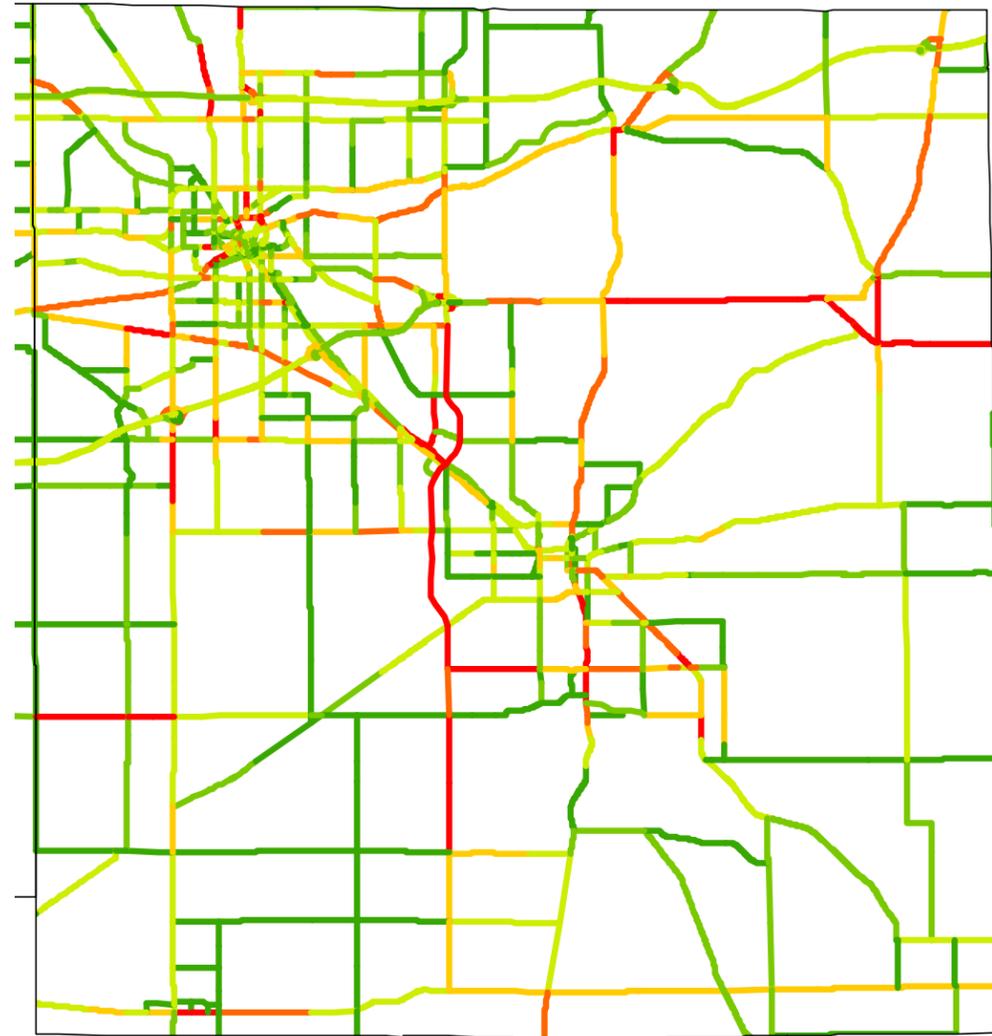
INDOT

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) is responsible for the maintenance of all State and Federal highways within Elkhart County. INDOT's 2035 Transportation Plan identifies the policies and major projects that will be implemented over the plan's lifetime, but does not specifically mention any smaller projects. Smaller projects are identified in MACOG's Long-Term Transportation Plan. Future INDOT projects located in the City of Elkhart include:

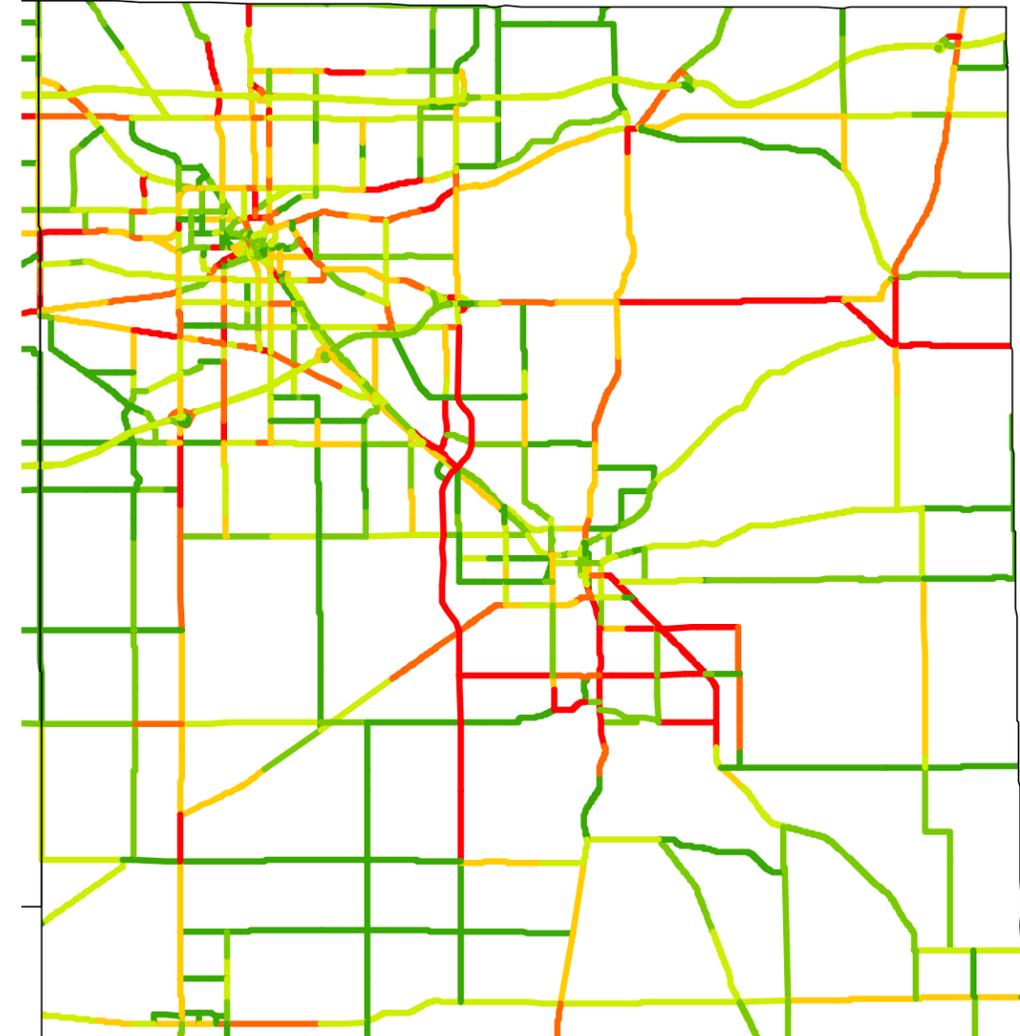
- State Road 19 center turn lanes (2015)
- US 33 center turn lanes (2015)

In addition to these projects, an interchange with Interstate 80/90 has been added at County Road 17. This interchange was not identified in the 1996 Comprehensive Land Use Plan. This interchange provides direct a direct link, via CR 17, between the Toll Road and US 20. Elkhart's Toll Road interchanges are located at CR 17, Cassopolis Street, and State Road 331 (Capital Avenue).

Nappanee Street (SR 19) was improved by INDOT in 2012. The \$14 million project reconstructs, reconfigures, and widens the roadway to align with the work previously completed north of Beardsley Avenue and south of Lusher Avenue.



2035 Level of Service Map with new projects
(2035 MACOG Transportation Plan)



2035 Level of Service Map with no new projects built
(2035 MACOG Transportation Plan)



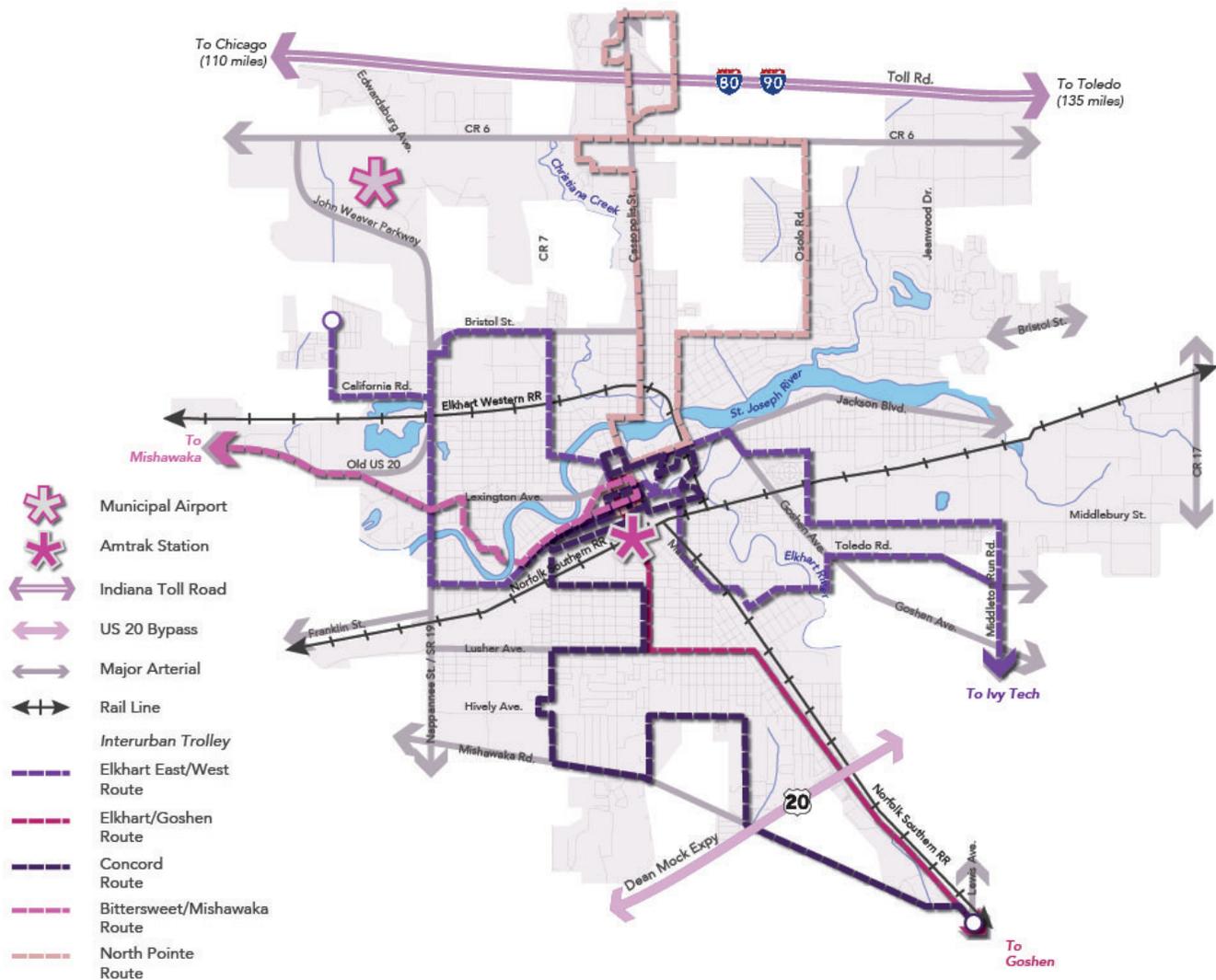
Transit

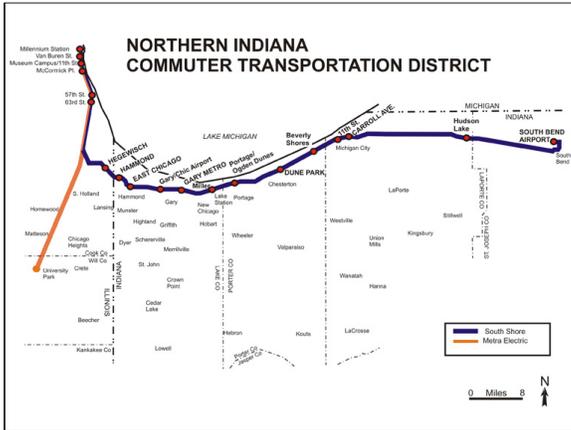
Elkhart is served by fixed route bus service and paratransit service. The City is also in close proximity to regional passenger rail service.

Bus

Bus service in Elkhart is provided by the Interurban Trolley, Heart City Rider, and Goshen Transit Service. These three systems provide fixed-route, on-demand, and paratransit services throughout the City. The Interurban Trolley is a fixed-route bus service that offers five different routes which serve all sides of Elkhart. There is also a line that provides service between Elkhart and Goshen. In addition to service to Goshen, the Interurban Trolley links with South Bend's TRANSCO system at Martin's Super Market on the City's far west side. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Interurban Trolley also offers

Functional Diagram of Major Transit Routes





Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District Routes



Amtrak Capitol Limited Route



Amtrak Lake Shore Limited Route

on-demand paratransit service throughout its service area for individuals needing additional assistance.

The interurban trolley routes are designed to serve various areas within the Community. From time to time, routes are changed to meet the needs of the community. For the most up-to-date route, please check the interurban trolley website at: <http://www.interurbantrolley.com/>.

The Heart City Rider and Goshen Transit Service are demand-response transit systems that operate in Elkhart and Goshen 24-hours a day, seven days a week. These services do not have fixed routes. They provide transportation to people who are registered with the services and call in to schedule a ride. The services are also equipped to shuttle patrons with disabilities.

Bus service is provided in South Bend by TRANSPO, which is a fixed-route bus system that serves both the City of South Bend and Notre Dame University. TRANSPO provides a link between the Interurban Trolley and both the South Shore Line and the South Bend Regional Airport.

Passenger Rail

The South Shore Line, operated by the Indiana Commuter Transportation District, provides passenger rail service between South Bend and Chicago. The line has plans to eventually extend service to Elkhart. The line extension is part of an effort to reduce the travel time from South Bend to Chicago to one hour and 54 minutes, which would be a reduction of 24 minutes from the current service.

Elkhart is also served by two Amtrak lines with the City's historic train station serving as the local Amtrak station. Amtrak's Capitol Limited line from Washington, DC to Chicago and Lake Shore Limited line from Albany to Chicago both make daily stops in Elkhart. These lines provide three trains per day bound for Chicago, one train bound for Washington, DC, and two trains bound for Albany-Rensselaer, New York.

Bicycle & Pedestrian

Sidewalks in Elkhart are maintained by the Street Department. Where sidewalks are not in the public right-of-way, they are the responsibility of the property owner to maintain. The City offers a curb and sidewalk program through the Street Department to help offset the costs of repairing, maintaining, and replacing sidewalks.

The City of Elkhart is an active bicycling community. The City has 17.5 miles of bikeways and there are plans increase this number. The Elkhart Pedal Panel, a blue-ribbon commission assembled by Mayor Dick Moore, was created to study Elkhart’s bicycling personality and evaluate the current practicality of bicycling in Elkhart. The Pedal Panel is chaired by the Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce and has leadership from the City of Elkhart, MACOG, area hospitals, local businesses, and Bike Elkhart. The Panel prepared a plan that identified potential routes for new bikeways and identified resolutions for other bike friendly issues. Potential routes recommended in the plan include Wood Street to

Bicycle and Pedestrian Network





An advertisement for Elkhart's Warbird Fly-in

American Park, Greenleaf Boulevard, Riverside Drive and Strong Avenue, and Franklin Street and McNaughton Park. The City is currently working with the Pedal Panel on signing and painting the routes below as part of these implementation efforts.

Bike Elkhart is a bicycling advocacy group for bicycling. The group meets monthly and promotes bicycling events and routes throughout the community.

Recent updates to accommodate bike lanes in existing street system.

The existing bikeways in Elkhart are:

- Greenleaf Route - 3.8 miles
- Greenway Trail - 1.6 miles
- Indiana Bike Lane - 1.7 miles
- Lusher Bike Path - 0.3 miles
- MapleHeart Trail - 0.4 miles (Trail continues to Goshen)
- Riverwalk Route - 4.1 miles
- Sterling Bike Lane - 1.1 miles
- Strong Route - 2.3 miles
- Wood Route - 2.2 miles

Sources: <http://www.elkhartindiana.org/departments/division.asp?DD=34-474>

<http://www.bikeelkhart.org/index.php>

Airports

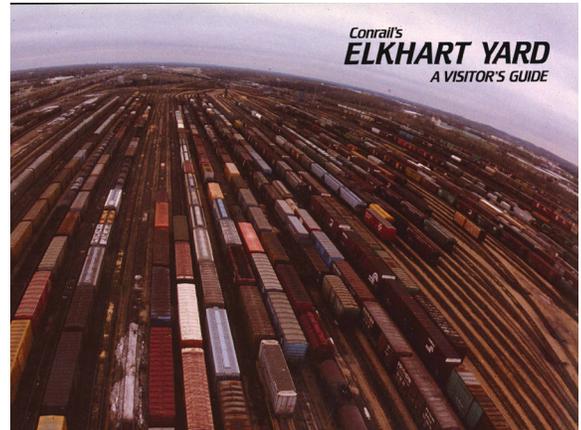
Elkhart Municipal Airport

Owned by the City of Elkhart, the Elkhart Municipal Airport was founded in 1940 as a general aviation facility and is now capable of serving jet-powered planes. The airport's land covers 640 acres in fee simple and 58 acres in aviation easements. In 2001, a new control tower was added to house new equipment. Following the new control tower, the main runway was outfitted with enhanced guidance systems to facilitate easier and safer landings for larger aircraft, especially in inclement weather. According to the FAA, Elkhart Municipal Airport had 21,426 flights per year (2008), which equates to approximately 59 flights per day on average. These statistics are subject to seasonal variations as Notre Dame home games and the annual air show significantly increase air traffic on certain weekends. As of 2012, the FAA reports that the airport

is home to 86 based aircraft, which includes 43 single-engine, 18 multi-engine, 23 jet-engine, and two military planes.

South Bend Regional Airport

Founded in 1940, the South Bend Regional Airport provides commercial service to the Michiana area. The airport covers 2,200 acres and is home to 46 aircraft, which includes 31 single-engine planes, seven multi-engine planes, seven jet-engine planes, and one helicopter. As of 2009, the FAA reported that the airport handled 40,512 annual trips for an average of 111 per day of which 44 percent were commercial flights. The airport recently constructed a 45,000-square-foot concourse expansion that features five new gates and increased passenger amenities, including retail. South Bend Regional Airport is an intermodal transportation facility that links the airport with the South Shore rail line and with South Bend's TRANSPO bus system.



Conrail's Visitor's Guide to the Elkhart Rail Yard

Rail

Elkhart has a significant amount of rail infrastructure. The City is served by two operational rail lines and a switching yard. The main line provides service between New York and Chicago carrying approximately 74 trains per day. Freight service is provided by Conrail and passenger service is provided by Amtrak. A second rail line serves the area north toward Kalamazoo and Detroit, Michigan.

The Robert Young rail yard is the second largest rail switching yard in the country. The rail yard occupies 675 acres, is four miles long, and is located on the west side of the City, south of US 33 West. The yard services east and west freight rail traffic for Conrail. It handles between 2,800 and 3,200 rail cars per day for a total of approximately 74 trains.

A second, smaller rail line serves the former Bayer (Miles) campus and the industrial property, north of downtown. Exact figures for the use of this line were not available at the time of this plan.

The amount of rail traffic in Elkhart often leads to congestion and conflicts between vehicular traffic and trains at crossings. The 1996 Comprehensive Land Use Plan identified railroad grade separation as an issue of concern of the community. The Plan noted that at-grade intersections are cause for a number of safety issues including the potential for vehicle/train conflict, potential delay in emergency services, and general disruption for residents while waiting for crossings to clear. In 1996, the points by which to bypass rail traffic were the Benham Avenue, Oakland Avenue, and Nappanee Street (SR 19) underpasses. In 2005, a new rail underpass was constructed at Indiana Avenue

City of Elkhart Comprehensive Plan Update

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and Main Street in order to relieve traffic congestion caused by rail traffic near downtown. The new underpass assists east/west traffic coming into Elkhart from the east and helps to move traffic more efficiently during peak times of rail activity. Currently in the design phase, an overpass is planned at Prairie Street which will improve north/south traffic by providing a fifth point to cross the main rail line that passes through the City.



Pedestrian amenities near Elkhart's waterways