

Chapter 9

FREIGHT

Freight Movement in Allen County

The Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC) recognizes the importance of freight transportation in contributing to the economic vitality of Allen County. Freight movement in Allen County occurs over a number of transportation modes including rail, air and truck. Figure 9-1 illustrates the transportation infrastructure and facilities located in Allen County.

The term multimodal indicates that freight is moved using a variety of modes, which may include trucks, trains, aircraft, and sea going vessels. Within the metropolitan area, roadways, railways, and air facilities support the multimodal distribution of freight. While there are no ports in the area, access to the Port of Toledo, Burns Harbor and others located in the Midwest is critical to the distribution of goods. Most freight is moved across the country and around the world using some combination of these modes. Defining strategies for improving the effectiveness of these modal interactions and evaluating and implementing these strategies to enhance the overall performance of the transportation system is essential to the process. NIRCC has identified the major modal activity centers and connectors to ensure access and mobility issues are considered as a component of the transportation planning process, see Figure 9-2.

Transportation staff works with the Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce; Pavers, Excavators, Truckers, and Suppliers (PETS); and other freight companies to identify problems, address safety concerns and issues affecting the business community with a special emphasis on trucking and freight distribution. Together, solutions are developed, and viable projects are incorporated into the planning process. Transportation facilities and major industrial sites are scrutinized to ensure access to these areas is safe and efficient. The transportation planning process continues to pursue projects conceived to improve access and connectivity. These projects will benefit travel for the distribution and mobility of goods and services throughout the region.

Rail

Allen County is served by three railroad companies. Figure 9-3 illustrates the railroad lines in Allen County. The three railroad companies are the Chicago, Fort Wayne & Eastern Railroad (CFER), the Michigan Southern Railroad (MSO), and the Norfolk Southern Railroad (NS). The Chicago, Fort Wayne & Eastern Railroad runs from Tolleston, Indiana (west of Gary, Indiana) to Crestline, Ohio (north central Ohio). CFER, which is owned by Genesee & Wyoming Railroad Services, Inc., runs 5 trains per day and 4 trains per night on this line. CFER also has a line that runs to Decatur, Indiana carrying approximately 2 trains in a 24-hour period.

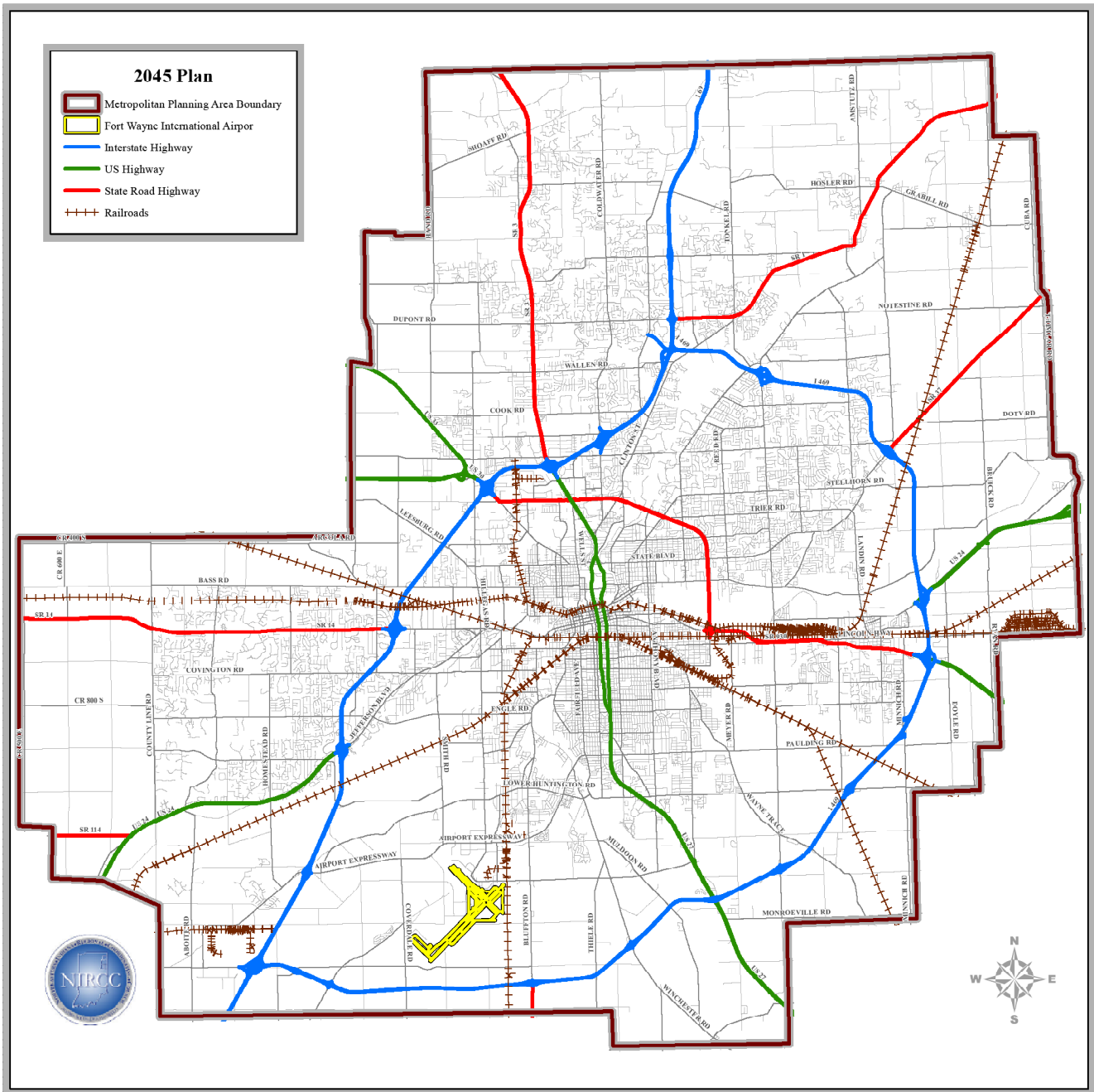


Figure 9-1
Transportation Infrastructure

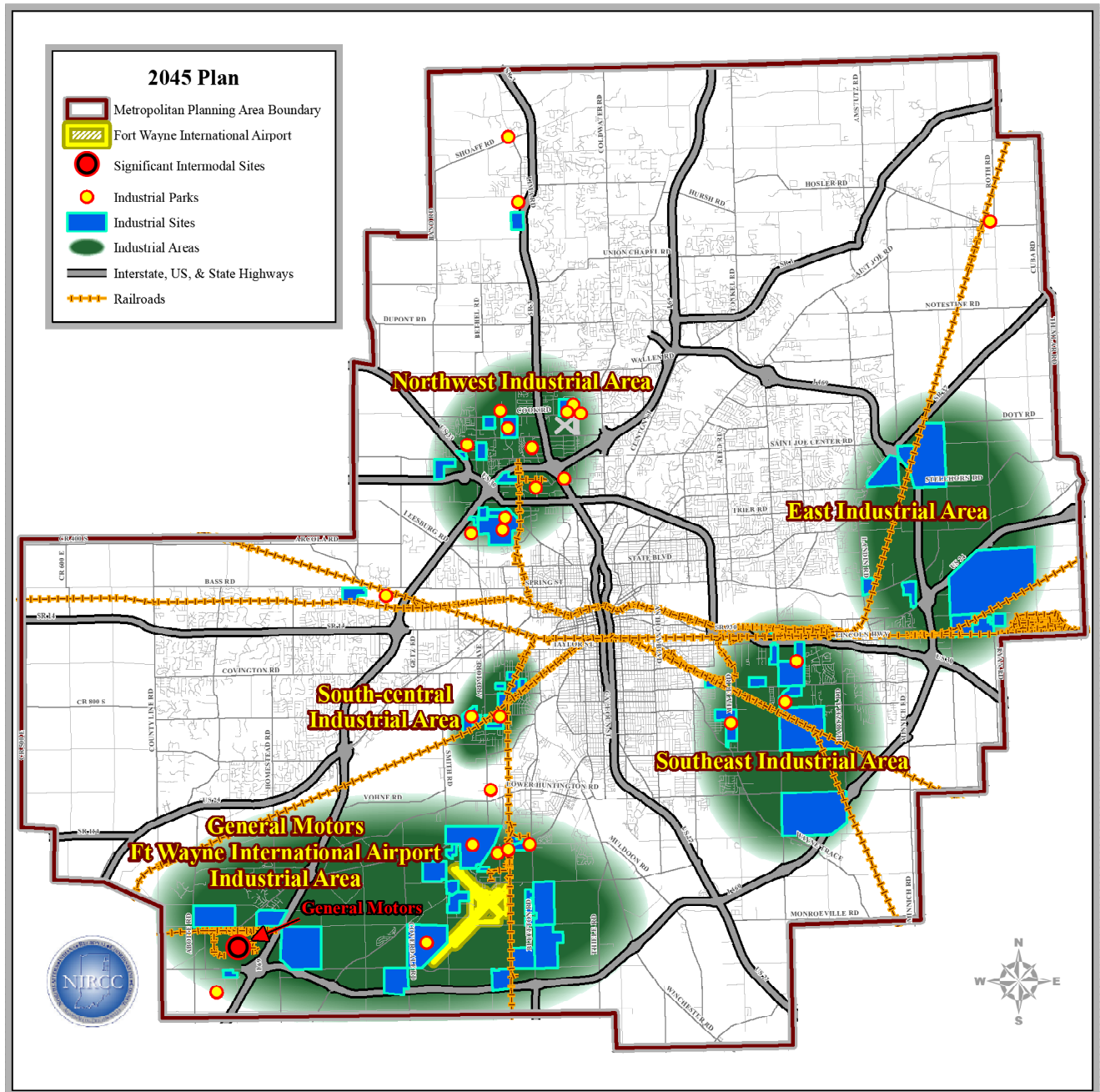


Figure 9-2
Major Modal Activity Centers

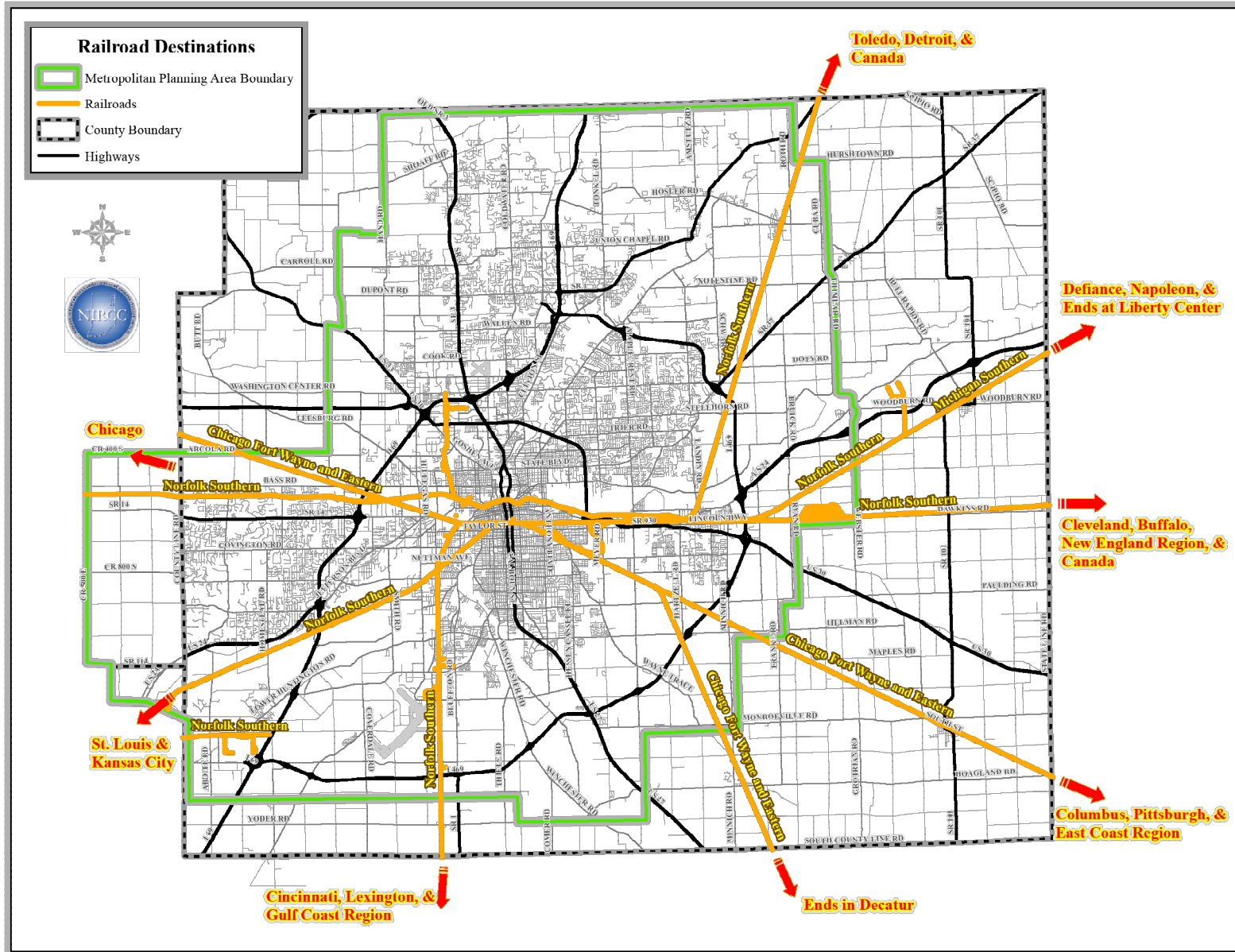


Figure 9-3
Railroad Destinations

The Michigan Southern (MSO) Railroad is a subsidiary of Pioneer Railcorp. MSO operates 51 route miles between Woodburn, Indiana, and Liberty Center, Ohio via Defiance, Ohio. MSO operates 3.1 miles within Indiana and has one train per week on this rail line. Principal products shipped include grain, aggregates and food products. MSO interchanges with Norfolk Southern at Woodburn and CSXT at Defiance, OH.

The Allen County area is also served by the Norfolk Southern Railroad. It has three lines that cross the county. The east-west line connects to Chicago and east to Ohio, this line carries 12-16 trains per day (6am to 6pm) and 11-12 per night (6am to 6pm). The line that runs northeast connecting Allen County to Toledo handles approximately 18 trains per day and 13 per night. The NS line running southwest to Central Illinois carries approximately 20 trains a day and 12 trains per night. The last line going through Muncie and then to southwest Ohio handles 15 trains a day and 10 trains per night. Norfolk Southern also operates an automotive distribution facility in Allen County at the General Motors Plant. This plant is located in the southwest part of the county adjacent to Interstate 69.

Air

Fort Wayne International Airport is owned and operated by the Fort Wayne-Allen County Airport Authority. Fort Wayne International Airport (FWA) is considered a medium sized airport. The Air Trade Center located on Coverdale Road at the end of the southwest runway of the airport offers 450 acres of industrial space. It also has ten T-hangars available to small single or light twin engine planes. In 2021, the Fort Wayne International Airport was ranked 99th in the United States for air cargo weight, handling 13,354 tons of cargo.

The construction of Airport Expressway from Dalman Road to Huntington Road in the late 1990's made the connection of FWA to Interstate 69 more accessible. With the addition of the Air Trade Center, road improvement projects have been implemented. The Coverdale Road project, which included two bridges, was completed in 2015. This road project included lane widening to 12' with 6' shoulders along with the bridge widenings. City of Fort Wayne improved Ardmore Avenue and Ferguson Road providing better access to the Terminal Area. The MTP identifies the need to construct a grade separation taking Airport Expressway over the Norfolk Southern railway to improve access and reliable travel to the airport. An improvement is being designed for the Coverdale Road, Indianapolis Road, and Winters Road intersection.

Roadways

Trucks are economically important as most consumer goods, such as food, furniture, automobiles and appliances are reliant on trucks for delivery and distribution. Allen County is strategically located within a one-day drive of approximately 80% of the U.S. population, attractive for warehousing, distribution, logistics, and e-commerce. Approximately 14% or 43.9 million of the total United States population reside within a 250-mile radius of Fort Wayne, and about 32% are within 500 miles (see Figure 9-4). In

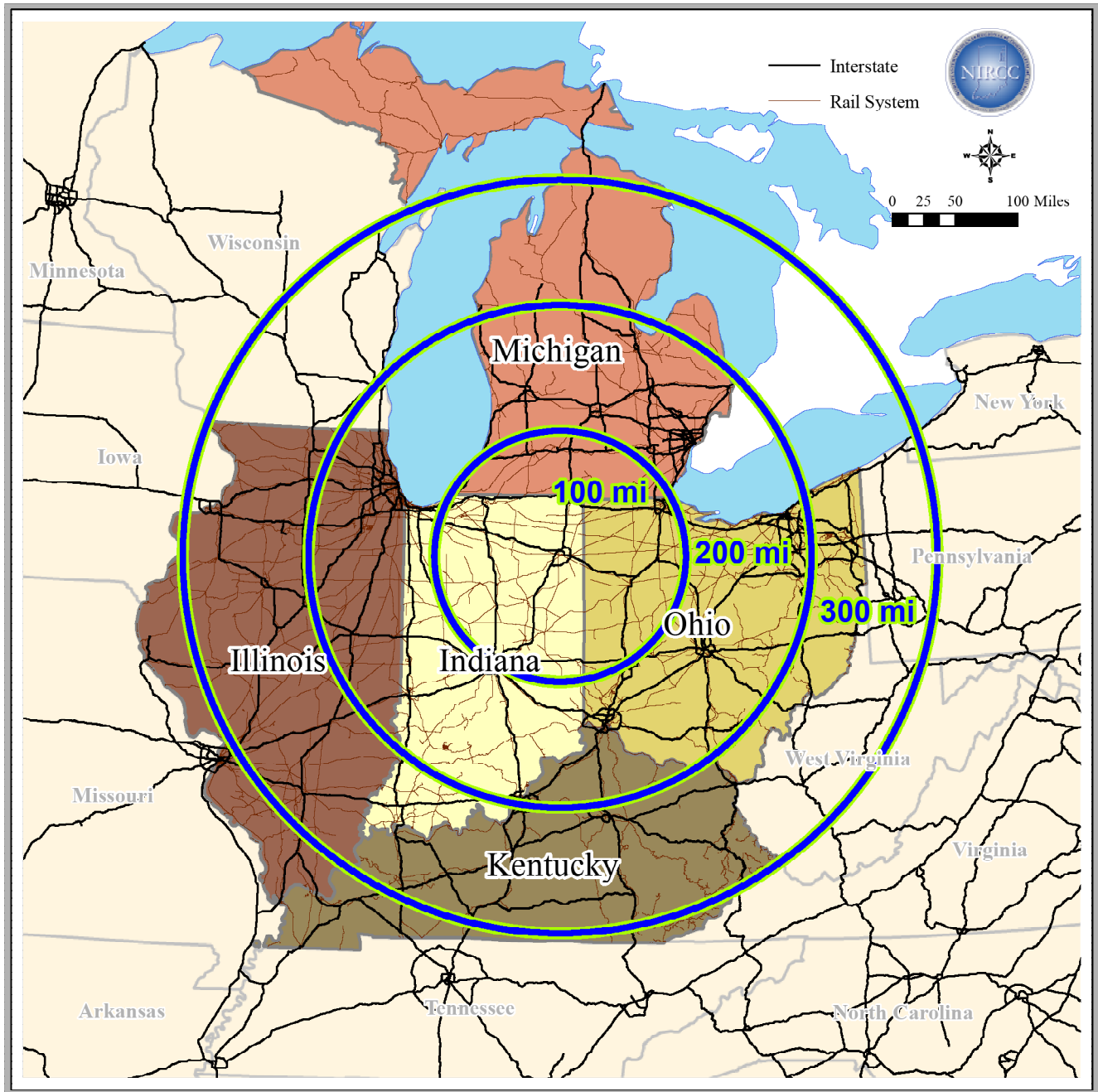


Figure 9-4
Regional Hub

addition, Allen County is centrally located and nearly equal distance to 6 major economic centers including Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Detroit, and Indianapolis.

NIRCC, as the responsible agency for transportation planning in Allen County, strives to improve the mobility and accessibility of freight movement. These planning efforts are conducted with sensitivity to safety concerns and adverse impacts to residential areas. In support of this effort a truck route system has been established within Allen County through a collaborative effort of the Cities of Fort Wayne and New Haven, and Allen County. The truck route system is displayed in Figure 9-5. The truck routes are designated into two different categories: “Local Delivery Routes” and “Through Routes”. The “Local Delivery Routes” are designated for trucks with an origin or destination within the respective jurisdiction. The “Through Truck Routes” are intended for truck traffic that must pass through the region. For local deliveries and pick-ups, truck drivers are encouraged to use the Through Truck Route system to the maximum extent possible, and then only deviate on the Local Delivery Route system to follow the shortest path available to and from their destinations. This process improves safety and reduces truck traffic near residential neighborhoods.

The intent of the transportation planning process including implementation of the “Bypass plus Arterial” concept has been two-fold: 1) improve the mobility of freight passing through the region by creating alternative routes away from the urban core; and 2) provide an efficient delivery system for goods and services within the urban area. The completion of Interstate 469 and improvements to major freight corridors such as Interstate 69 and US 24 have provided safer and more efficient routes around the urban area. The percentage of trucks using the local arterial roadway system has diminished. This serves to protect our urban area and residential neighborhoods from the adverse impacts associated with truck traffic. Recognizing that the health and economic prosperity of the urban area is dependent on truck traffic, the “Bypass plus Arterial” concept has also included improvements to the arterial system to promote safe and efficient access to locations within the urban area. Corridors that have been improved in part to facilitate local truck traffic include Lafayette Center Road / E 900 N, Airport Expressway, Hillegas Road and Ardmore Road. The plan includes additional improvements on several select corridors such as Maplecrest Road South, Adams Center Road, Ardmore Avenue, and Hillegas Road that will facilitate freight distribution.

Freight mobility is monitored and analyzed through data collection efforts that include truck volumes, identifying freight activity centers, and meeting with business groups engaged in trucking and distribution. Several tools are employed to achieve this, including corridor studies, intersection and arterial analyses and road improvement projects. The analysis of this information receives special attention to ensure mobility and accessibility needs are met for freight movement. An element that is used to help determine which corridors need improvement or should be addressed to facilitate truck freight movement are the truck volumes that are collected, see Figure 9-6. Trucks are competing with passenger vehicles for capacity on

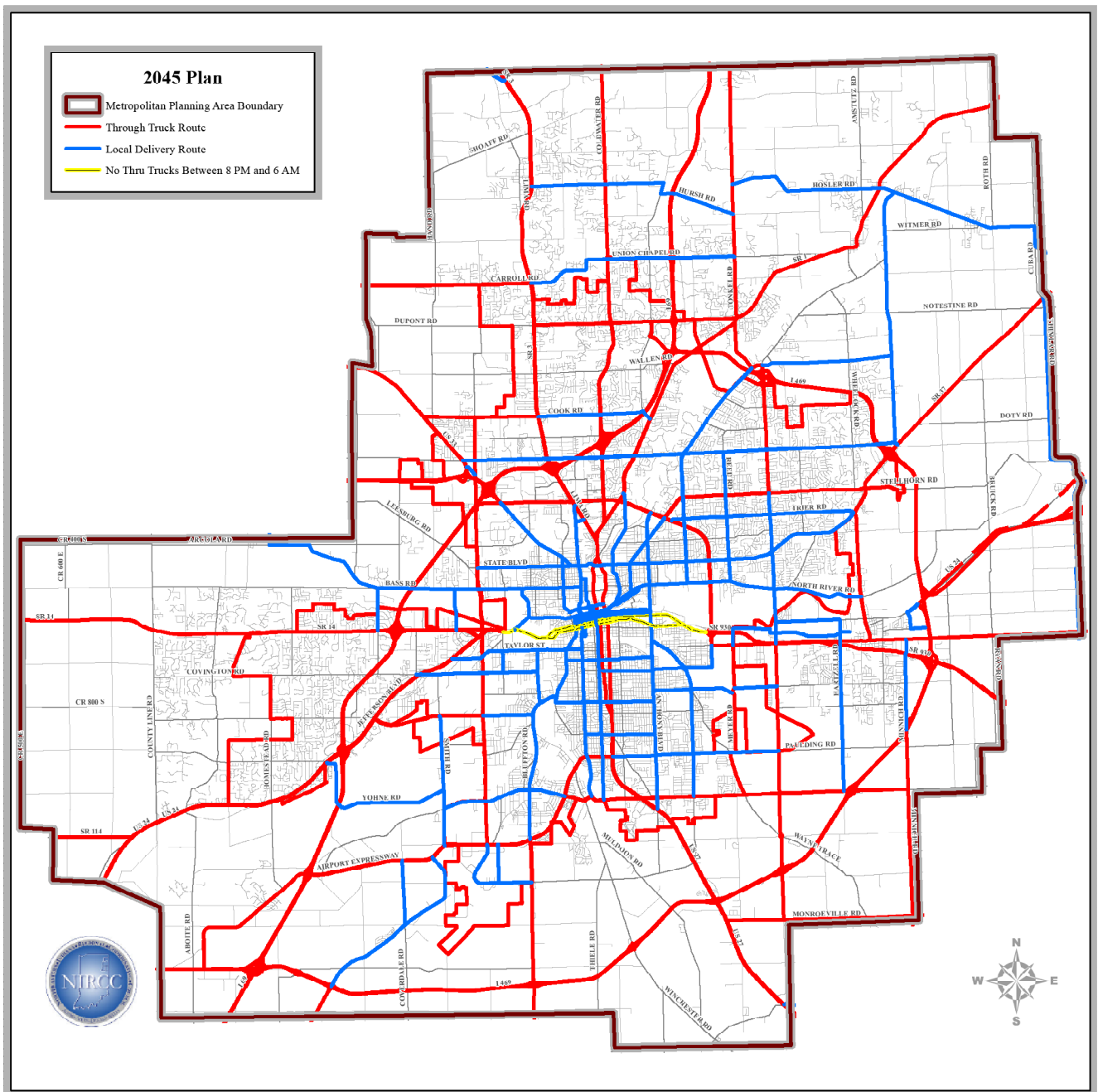


Figure 9-5
Truck Route System

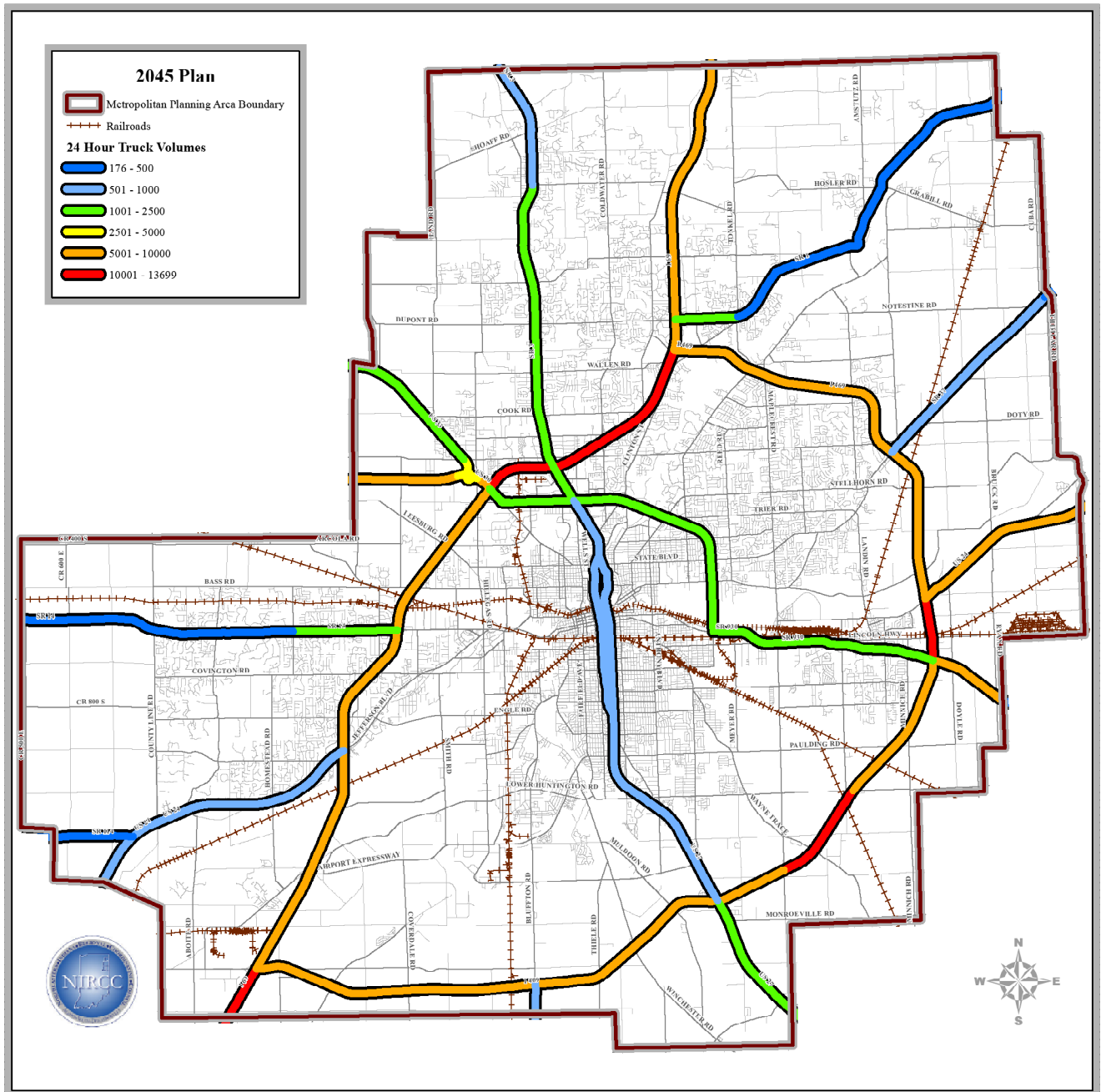


Figure 9-6
Truck Volumes

major roadways, particularly in urban areas. As displayed on the truck volumes map the interstates and some US routes have very high truck volumes. One of the reasons for constructing Interstate 469 was to divert truck traffic around Fort Wayne rather than forcing trucks through the urban core. This also alleviates congestion through Fort Wayne. Other projects that were programmed to facilitate truck freight traffic include the added travel lanes to I-69, US 24 East and I-469 interchange, Maplecrest Road extension, Diverging Diamond at Dupont Road and I-69, and construction of Airport Expressway.

The freight profile of the Allen County area provides an assessment of current freight movement practices, including highway, railway and air infrastructure, principal manufacturing facilities and industrial parks. Networks of railroads and roadways along with facilities such as the Fort Wayne International Airport, the Air Trade Center, and truck terminals support the efficient movement of raw materials and finished goods throughout the area. The NIRCC staff will continue to monitor freight movement in Allen County and seek ways to improve the overall system.

NIRCC has made investments in passively collected big data to gain a better understanding of the movements of both people and truck freight into, out of, through, and within Northeastern Indiana. Big data is collected and processed to provide trip origin and destination (OD) information. The completed report contains the selection, processing, and analysis of this data and what it reveals about travel patterns in Northeast Indiana. Passively collected big data presents a valuable and powerful new source of data for travel modeling and forecasting. Passive OD data include information from observations of millions of individual trips that can be harnessed for travel modeling and forecasting. The outcome is understanding travel patterns in Northeast Indiana. Moreover, passive data collection can provide OD data more cost effectively than traditional household travel surveys.

Daily trips between selected communities within an 11-county region were analyzed. NIRCC staff identified 12 primary communities and 8 secondary communities for analysis. Since Fort Wayne/New Haven is the main community in the region, its interactions with Hometown and Leo-Cedarville are greater than other communities which is plausible given their proximity. Flows on key facilities in the region were also analyzed to understand the origins and destinations they serve. A total of 60 gates on 9 major corridors were defined. Gates are enter/exit location on the road network. The major corridors in the region included Interstate 69, 80/90, and 469, and US 6, 20, 24, 27, 30, and 33.

Figure 9-7 shows one example of truck flows passing through a primary gate. The gate is located on US 24 west of the Indiana / Ohio State Line. The percentage of these flows are displayed to/from each community and major external stations such as I-69 north and south, I-80/I-90 east and west, US30 east and west, and US24 west. The figure shows that approximately 50% of truck trips pass through the region via Interstate 469. It also shows that 8.5 percent of truck trips passing through this gate are bound to/from the Fort

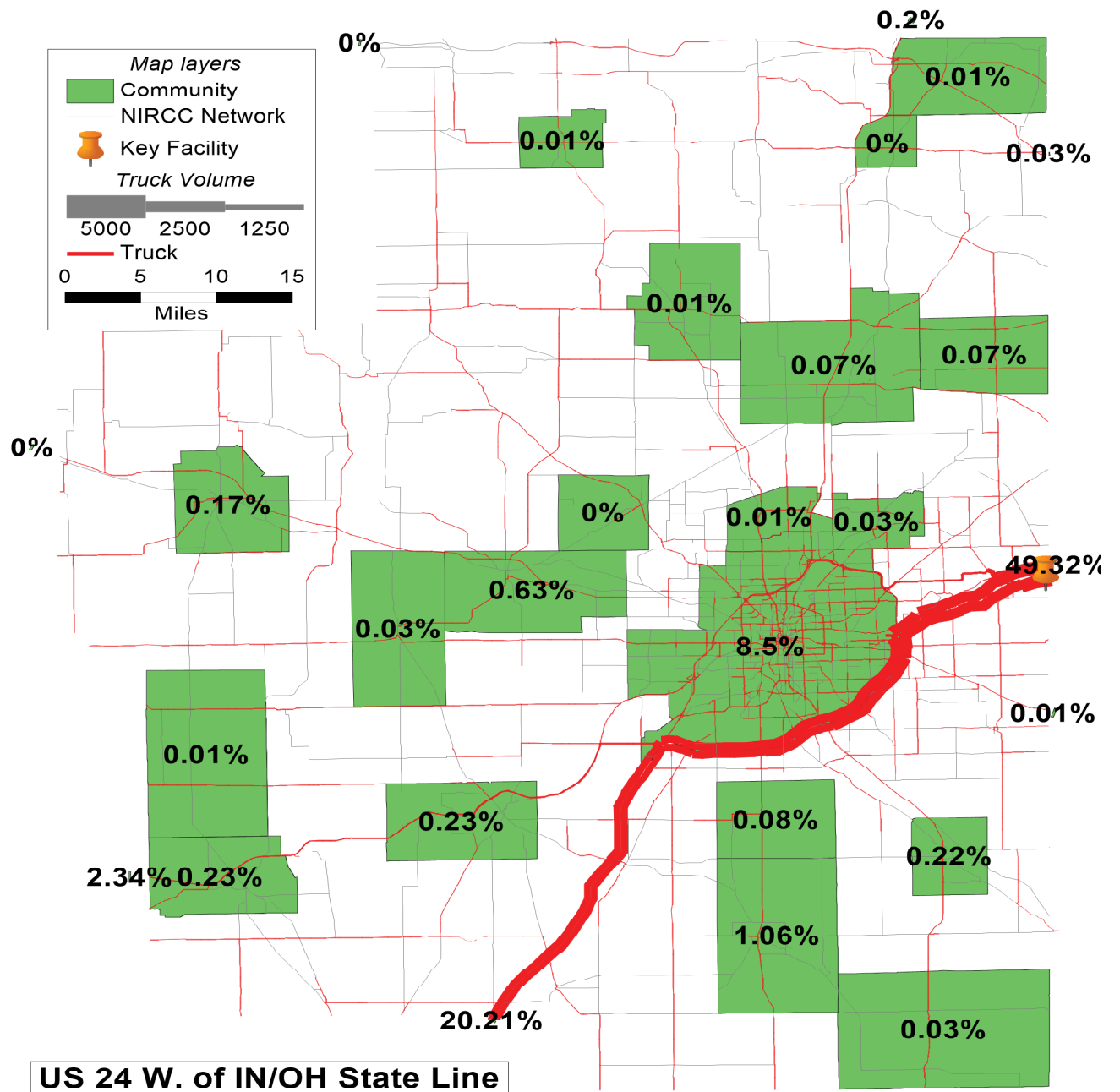


Figure 9-7
Big Data - US 24 w/o Indiana/ Ohio State Line

Wayne/New Haven area, and 20.2% are bound to/from Interstate 69 south. Fort Wayne/New Haven has the highest share of truck trips among communities in the region. It should be mentioned that rural areas are also included in the community share calculation although their shares are not shown on the map.