



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

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Bill prohibiting tolling on I-465 loop dies in committee

Indianapolis Star
Kaitlin L. Lange
1/30/18

A bill prohibiting tolling within 15 miles of Indianapolis failed to get enough support in a Senate committee Tuesday morning and will not advance. Senate Bill 69, introduced by Republican Sen. Mike Delph of Carmel, would have barred the Indiana Department of Transportation from adding tolls to I-465 and the other interstates within the I-465 loop. Gov. Eric Holcomb has said he has no plans to add tolls on loops around cities and last fall instructed INDOT to remove the I-465 corridor from any further tolling studies. However, that restriction isn't written into Indiana law. INDOT also has not ruled out studying other interstates in the Indianapolis area. "I filed this bill as a way to try to bring INDOT to the table and publicly state once and for all INDOT's intention of not wanting to toll I-465," Delph said. "This is a trust-but-verify process for me." Delph views the tolling of I-465 as double taxation on his constituents who rely on I-465 to travel north and south and are paying the increased gas tax lawmakers passed during the past legislative session. Lawmakers approved a road-funding bill that both increased the gasoline tax by 10 cents per gallon and cleared a way for tolling by asking the Holcomb administration to study the issue. The goal was to generate \$1.2 billion in revenue the state estimates is needed to maintain and repair roads each year. The bill also gave Holcomb's administration more freedom to toll roads without having to get the approval of the entire General Assembly. Only the State Budget Committee's approval would be required. During committee discussion on the road-funding plan, Senate leaders told Delph that I-465 would not be tolled. When he tried to file an amendment prohibiting the tolling of I-465, he said he was instructed not to because "it would create other issues." INDOT already is moving ahead with plans to study the remaining interstates. <https://www.indystar.com/story/news/politics/2018/01/30/bill-prohibiting-tolling-465-loop-dies-committee/1078153001/>

Munster commits to \$700K in road repairs for 2018

NWI Times
Mary Wilds
1/28/18

MUNSTER — The Town Council accepted roadway improvement funding via the Indiana Department of Transportation during its most recent regular meeting. The funding is obtained through INDOT's Community Crossings Matching Grant Program. The town received notice in September it was being awarded \$372,500 in matching state grant funds. An equal match of \$372,500 in local funds was required from the town. State and local money will fund \$745,000 in street projects. The streets chosen for repair were based on Munster's pavement asset management plan, which was approved by INDOT in August 2016. In it, the town committed to repair the worst roads first, while monitoring the remaining streets. The general scope of work to come is as follows: Four and a half miles of streets will be resurfaced, with repairs being made to the base, as well as curbs and drainage features. Curb ramps not compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines will be replaced, as will trip hazards on adjacent sidewalks, as funding allows. The funds awarded are to be used for construction purposes only. They cannot be used for engineering services or right-of-way acquisition. They also cannot be used on streets and locations not listed in the original awarded project application

description. http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/lake/munster-commits-to-k-in-road-repairs-for/article_d1b07249-a7b8-50f3-a9ee-4de518eb7a1c.html

State picks preferred firm for Indiana highway tolling study

NWI Times

Andrew Steele

1/26/18

The Indiana Department of Transportation has chosen engineering and consulting firm HNTB as its preferred candidate to create a strategic plan for tolling Indiana's free interstate highways. The company and state will enter contract negotiations, which typically take two or three weeks, an INDOT spokesman said. "Overall, our approach will enable INDOT to begin toll collections in 2021," HNTB stated in a letter of interest detailing its proposal. According to the proposal, HNTB and 10 sub-consultants will "define the how, why, when and where of tolling," perform traffic analyses and other work to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, and advise INDOT on technical and managerial issues involved in beginning tolling operations. The state is considering five interstate corridors for tolling: I-94 from Illinois to Michigan; I-65 from I-90 south to I-465 and then south from I-465 to the Ohio River; and I-70 from the Illinois state line to I-465, then from I-465 to the Ohio state line. It is also considering tolling on interstates in Indianapolis, though not on I-465 itself. A preliminary study by the engineering firm HDR suggested per-mile toll rates for most interstates, including Northwest Indiana's, of 4 cents for standard automobiles, 6 cents for medium trucks and 19 cents for heavy trucks. A car trip from Gary to Chicago on I-65 would cost \$6.12; a trip on I-94 from the Illinois to Michigan state lines would cost \$1.80. http://www.nwitimes.com/business/local/state-picks-preferred-firm-for-indiana-highway-tolling-study/article_9071784b-fced-571f-b891-92c17959325b.html

Mayor joins critics of downtown north-split interstate plan, seeks new options

Indianapolis Business Journal

1/26/18

Mayor Joe Hogsett has joined the chorus of community leaders and downtown residents expressing concern with the Indiana Department of Transportation's north-split interstate project planned for downtown. Critics say the project—which would reconstruct the I-65/I-70 interchange on the northeast edge of downtown—would be detrimental to downtown neighborhoods. They favor alternatives they consider more neighborhood-friendly. INDOT is in the early design phase of the project, which is estimated to cost \$250 million. It would add lanes on both interstates, widening some bridges and adding others, and reconfiguring the I-65 exit and entrance ramps along 11th and 12th streets. In a letter to INDOT this week, Hogsett said construction of the interstate system in the 1960s and 1970s negatively "changed the character of downtown Indianapolis and its neighborhoods." While downtown bounced back and has emerged "as a national success story for urban revitalization," the project may threaten that progress. "Many fear a traffic solution that simply widens the existing elevated system could—for a second time—devastate our city's historic core and the neighborhoods that line the right-of-way on all sides," Hogsett wrote in the letter. He added: "Peer cities such as Austin and Dallas, Texas, and Columbus, and Cincinnati, Ohio, have established national best practices, devising context-sensitive solutions to urban right-of-way challenges. I would encourage the state to consider at-grade alternatives that would sufficiently move traffic and meet INDOT's needs while reconnecting our neighborhoods and street grid." <https://www.ibj.com/articles/67266-mayor-joins-critics-of-downtown-north-split-interstate-plan-seeks-new-options>

Working on the railroad: Condition of crossings a concern after upgrades

Daily Journal

Jacob Tellers

1/25/18

If you routinely cross some of Franklin and Greenwood's busiest railroad crossings, you may have noticed your ride is a little bumpier than before upgrades were done to the tracks last year. That is due to the Louisville and Indiana Railroad Co. not using the right materials and not paving as far out from the tracks as they should have, city officials said. And now, they want the railroad to fix the problems. The question is whether the railroad company is required to make those fixes. And if not, city officials said taxpayers will have to fund those repairs. Upgrades to railroad tracks in Johnson

County, which cut through Edinburgh, Franklin, Whiteland and Greenwood, were completed last year, including improvements to 21 railroad crossings. That work was part of a multi-million dollar project by CSX, which is upgrading the Louisville and Indiana Railroad in order to run more, longer and faster trains as approved by the Federal Surface Transportation Board three years ago. Last summer, the work on the crossings resulted in delays for drivers who had to take detours and required emergency workers to create contingency plans to ensure fire trucks and ambulances could reach residents on both sides of the tracks. But now that the work is complete, Franklin Mayor Steve Barnett and Greenwood Mayor Mark Myers both say they have concerns about the quality of the work at several key crossings in their communities. Officials from the Louisville and Indiana Railroad Co. were not available Wednesday and Thursday. In Franklin, the railroad company didn't use the right quality material when rebuilding the crossings and at several locations didn't repave the road as far out from the crossings as it should have, Barnett said.
http://www.dailyjournal.net/2018/01/26/condition_of_franklin_greenwood_crossing_a_concern_after_railroad_upgrades/

Have thoughts about how to rebuild the I-65/I-70 north split? Come to this meeting

Indianapolis Star

Amy Bartner

1/25/18

A group of landscape architects, architects, urban planners and neighborhood residents are presenting ways to redo the I-65 and I-70 split on the city's north side. They said they want to prevent what they call a "destructive" Indiana Department of Transportation plan. INDOT's \$250 million preliminary plan to widen some of the highways and bridges and build concrete walls bordering the interstate at the split would hurt the eight surrounding historic neighborhoods, by further dividing Downtown and creating more noise, pollution and traffic, said architect Mark Beebe. "It's really concerning that it's happening," Beebe said. "We know there are better options and other alternatives we could be studying. We're just concerned that the schedule is being pushed without an open public dialogue." Those other alternatives, Beebe said, include moving traffic below ground to open up more land for development or removing the highways that cross through Downtown altogether, as some other cities have done. The INDOT plan also fails to recognize a future where the city likely won't be as dependent on cars, he said. "This issue is really important when we think about how we're compared to other cities," Beebe said. "What's being proposed is kind of an old mindset, that a car-centric approach is the way of the future, and we know that's just not true." The American Institute of Architects Indianapolis hosted a public event at the City Market on Thursday with a panel that includes Indiana Landmarks President Marsh Davis. "We're not saying, 'whoa, stop it,'" Davis said. "There's a mounting, rising tide of concern with this project. I would imagine that there would be a very good reason for the parties responsible for this project to be responsive." No one disputes the need to reconstruct the north split — at 50 to 60 years old, the 32 bridges in the area are deteriorating rapidly and are beginning to pose safety issues. Upwards of 200,000 cars travel the split daily.
<https://www.indystar.com/story/news/2018/01/25/have-thoughts-how-rebuild-65-70-north-split-come-meeting/1065448001/>

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