



# **BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL**

## **Infrastructure Media Summary**

### **March 13, 2018**

#### **Repeal of light rail ban might be back on track after last-minute Statehouse maneuver**

Indianapolis Star

Tony Cook and Kaitlin L. Lange

3/12/18

In a last minute maneuver, lawmakers are planning to add a repeal of the state's ban on light rail projects in Central Indiana to an otherwise unrelated transportation bill, reviving the idea after the Senate Republicans left it for dead last week. The light rail proposal would still need to be approved by a panel of four lawmakers who have been assigned to work out differences between the House and Senate versions of House Bill 1374. The measure would then need approval of the full House and Senate before the legislative session ends Wednesday. Originally, HB 1374 would have introduced additional checks on the Indiana Finance Authority, the agency responsible for overseeing a failed public-private partnership that led to two years of delays on the construction of I-69. House Transportation Committee Chairman Ed Soliday, R-Valparaiso, said Monday the compromise version of the bill would also include language authorizing — but not requiring — a light rail system in Central Indiana. The 2014 ban on light rail projects was part of a mass transit funding deal that gave Indianapolis and surrounding counties the ability to raise income taxes for public transit through a ballot initiative. This year's effort to repeal the ban stalled in the Senate last week after Sen. Mike Delph, R-Carmel, introduced an amendment that would have required Indianapolis city officials to prove public transit money isn't needed to fill potholes. It remains unclear whether the idea, coupled with the public-private partnership bill, will have enough support in the Senate. As recently as Thursday Senate President Pro Tempore David Long said there was no support for the proposal among the Republican super majority. <https://www.indystar.com/story/news/politics/2018/03/12/repeal-light-rail-ban-might-back-track-after-last-minute-statehouse-maneuver/417785002/>

#### **SHEPARD: Driveable streets or wider interstates?**

Indianapolis Business Journal

Randall T. Shepard

3/9/18

Rarely do we encounter such stark choices about public projects. At a moment when Indianapolis is experiencing streets as dreadful as anyone can remember, without enough public money to do what needs to be done, we are also moving briskly ahead on spending hundreds of millions to expand interstates 65 and 70 through the heart of the city. Is this really the best choice? First, we should all acknowledge the Trojan work by road crews from the city, the state and private contractors to combat the crisis we all experience daily. As a friend said, "I spend too much time watching the road surface instead of watching the other cars." Working 12-hour shifts when weather permits, those crews have repaired as many as 8,000 holes a day. We're grateful for their effort. And when the City-County Council meets March 12, it will take up Mayor Joe

Hogsett's request to appropriate \$14.5 million to support more repairs than current budgets can finance. These funds were received in 2016 but held in reserve to assure stability in the city's overall budget. Most of the new appropriation is aimed at relatively permanent repairs in which a stretch of decimated surface is removed and completely repaved. The documented reality, of course, is that the city's present needs for maintenance, repairs and rebuilding total at least 50 to 60 times the number in next week's ordinance. Those dollars simply aren't there. As some citizen wrote in The Star's daily Let It Out! column, we taxpayers need to pay more to get the streets we use each day into the right shape. The fiscal toolbox has a number of tools we could use to make that happen. And public reaction to last year's gas-tax increase dedicated to the state's roads and highways indicated that people accept such increases when the need and the benefit become obvious. <https://www.ibj.com/articles/67845-do-student-journalists-need-additional-free-press-protections-as-proposed-in-house-bill-1016>

### **Group calls for state leaders to 'rethink' before they rebuild the North Split**

WISH-TV

Megan Sanctorum

3/8/18

INDIANAPOLIS (WISH) — Major changes are on the way for one of the most heavily traveled interchanges in Indianapolis. The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) is planning to rebuild the North Split — where Interstates 65 and 70 meet near East 10th Street and College and Massachusetts avenues in downtown Indianapolis. Not everyone is happy with the proposal, though, and a local group is calling on state leaders to rethink it. Members of the Rethink 65/70 Coalition say they know that stretch of interstate is past its useful life and due for some major upgrades, but if upgrades are not done carefully, they could have lasting negative impacts on the city. A few dozen people gathered Thursday afternoon to spread their message and pass out yard signs. They want to see an objective and comprehensive study done before a \$250 million project to revamp I-65 and I-70 moves forward. "We as a community deserve nothing less. We will live with the outcome of this project for generations. We have but one opportunity to get it right," said Marsh Davis, president of Indiana Landmarks. The group says the changes will not only stunt economic growth, but also have a negative impact on adjacent neighborhoods. "We know that if they widen it, it will repeat the mistake that was made back in the (1960s) that ran these neighborhoods down in the first place," said Marjorie Kienle, past president of Historic Urban Neighborhoods of Indianapolis (HUNI). INDOT released a statement to say there was a study of the project underway. "INDOT is still early in the environmental review process on the North Split reconstruction project. Multiple alternatives are being evaluated, including at least two alternatives put forward by community groups. No decision has been made on a preferred alternative, and we are more than a year from completing preliminary design. Final design will not occur until after completion of the environmental review process. INDOT encourages all stakeholders to continue to be engaged in the project and offer input as we move forward." <http://wishtv.com/2018/03/08/group-calls-for-state-leaders-to-rethink-north-split-construction-project/> Also, <https://www.indystar.com/story/news/2018/03/09/rebuilding-65-70-north-split/408515002/>

### **Newest Valparaiso roundabout to begin initial construction this year**

NWI Times

Joyce Russell

3/8/18

VALPARAISO — Preliminary work for the construction of the Silhavy Road/LaPorte Avenue roundabout will begin this year. However, Engineering Director Tim Burkman told the Redevelopment Commission on Thursday that major construction won't begin until 2019. The dual-lane roundabout at the city's busiest intersection will be similar to the five-points roundabout at Calumet/Vale Park/Roosevelt roads. Burkman said the Indiana Department of Transportation is

set to take bids on the project on April 11. The first work will be relocating utilities, which, he said, is significant and won't be completed by the fall. Actual construction will then begin next spring. The \$5.7 million project is being funded through federal and state dollars, with the local 20 percent match coming from the commission's bond fund. INDOT will reimburse the city \$3.9 million of the cost. The commission approved the purchase of the final two parcels of land needed for the project. The cost was \$454,200. Burkman said that wraps up land acquisition. They also approved a contract with DLZ to provide construction engineering services on the project at a cost of \$487,800. [http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/porter/newest-valparaiso-roundabout-to-begin-initial-construction-this-year/article\\_f64d60b2-74aa-581b-8c94-694cfe5fa1bb.html](http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/porter/newest-valparaiso-roundabout-to-begin-initial-construction-this-year/article_f64d60b2-74aa-581b-8c94-694cfe5fa1bb.html)

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