



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

November 1, 2016

US 30 upgrade faces long road

Fort Wayne Journal Gazette
Frank Gray
11/1/2016

Apparently, if you're a city along U.S. 30, it can be a headache. It was never meant to be that way. The highway, which runs from Atlantic City, New Jersey, to Astoria, Oregon, and dates to the early 1900s, was meant to let people get on one highway and drive across the country. But cities grow and problems develop. In Nevada, Iowa, city officials rose up when the state proposed closing several interchanges in the name of safety. In Oregon a few years ago, safety and access was an issue and prompted improvements to the road. In Valparaiso, a planning committee put together a 20-year plan to improve the function, appearance and economic potential of the highway but also protect local interests along the road. That's because U.S. 30 is maintained by the state highway department, which has a 150-foot right of way along each side. Meanwhile, in Merrillville, parts of the highway, where it intersects with Interstate 65, have been called dangerous and hostile. A planning committee wants to spend \$210 million to fix it. Now Whitley County is getting into the act, planning four meetings in the next month or so to tell the public about issues on the highway and gather public input to help with planning. It also wants potential ideas for, as a news release put it, elevating the highway to interstate status. I talked to the state Department of Transportation. Yes, people have been bringing up that topic for a few years, but there's certainly no plan on the table. A conversion like that would probably take decades and involve buying land and building bypasses, I was told. What officials in Whitley County are trying to do, it appears, is just to generate local input so officials know what the public wants and can communicate those desires when INDOT makes decisions on changes to U.S. 30. That makes sense. They're trying to do what Valparaiso did, to protect local interests in the years to come. But to suggest turning the highway into an interstate? Maybe they did that just to get people to attend the meetings.

<http://www.journalgazette.net/news/local/frank-gray/US-30-upgrade-faces-long-road-15995768>

INDOT to hold open house November 15 on state Rail Plan

Chesterton Tribune
11/1/2016

Northwest Indiana residents are being invited to participate in the development of Indiana's Rail Plan, by sharing their vision for the future of freight and passenger rail, at an open house from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 15, at the Indiana Department of Transportation's Northwest District, 315 E. Boyd Blvd. in LaPorte. The public and all rail stakeholders are encouraged to complete a brief online survey at www.in.gov/indot/3588.htm sometime prior the workshop. The workshop's presentations will be informal, and the public or rail stakeholders may speak with INDOT rail and consultant staff and complete a paper survey.

http://www.chestertontribune.com/Indiana%20News/indot_to_hold_open_house_novembe.htm

Marion County voters set to vote on mass transit referendum

WISH-TV

Jessica Smith

10/31/2016

As voters prepare for the upcoming election, 24-Hour News 8 is looking at the future of public transportation in Indianapolis. Public transit is one of the most controversial issues on the Marion County ballot. On Tuesday, voters will decide on a potential 0.25 percent tax hike to fund improvements and expansions to the mass transit system. IndyGo says the Marion County Transit Plan will increase transit service by 70 percent. If the plan moves forward, buses would run earlier in the morning, more frequently during the day and later at night. The plan also includes three bus rapid transit lines — the Red Line, Purple Line and Blue Line.

<http://wishtv.com/2016/10/31/marion-county-voters-set-to-vote-on-mass-transit-referendum/>

Indiana University study: Mileage user fees face opposition

Columbus Republic

Associated Press/The Herald Times

10/30/2016

An Indiana University study says legislators looking to address transportation funding challenges by charging drivers a fee for the number of miles they drive could face strong opposition. Federal and state governments currently use money generated by a tax on fuel to build and repair roads. But that source of revenue has become insufficient, partly because of an increase in fuel-efficient vehicles on the road. The university's School of Public and Environmental Affairs took a look at the popularity of mileage user fees as nearly half the states in the U.S. consider them, The Herald-Times reported. The study of more than 2,000 Americans found that not only do opponents of mileage user fees outnumber supporters by a ratio of four to one, but they also are more likely to take action to prevent the fees from being implemented.

<http://www.therepublic.com/2016/10/30/in-driving-tax/>

Key issues in the Indiana gubernatorial campaign

Columbus Republic/Associated Press

10/29/2016

Republican Lt. Gov. Eric Holcomb and Democrat John Gregg are facing off to succeed Indiana GOP Gov. Mike Pence. Here are some key issues in the gubernatorial race: On infrastructure, Both candidates say increasing road funding is a priority. They suggest major projects such as a new I-69 bridge over the Ohio River near Evansville, estimated to cost \$850 million, and adding a second rail line for much of northwestern Indiana's South Shore commuter railroad, which is projected at some \$200 million. Holcomb won't specify funding sources, saying "everything should remain on the table" for talks with legislators next year. He doesn't rule out increases in the gasoline and cigarette taxes that some legislative Republicans proposed this year to pay for road projects. Those funding sources were rejected by Pence. Gregg proposes borrowing up to \$3 billion for road and infrastructure projects and repaying the loans with future federal highway funding. Holcomb says he opposes additional state borrowing.

<http://www.therepublic.com/2016/10/29/in-election-indiana-governor-glance/>

Agreeing On More Money For Roads, Bridges May Be Easier Than Finding Workers

WBAA/NPR

Yuki Noguchi
10/28/2016

There aren't many things the two major presidential candidates agree on, but here's one: Both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump say they would spend more to rebuild the country's aging infrastructure. Clinton proposes spending \$275 billion over five years, and setting up a national infrastructure bank to leverage some of the funds to induce more private funding for additional projects. Trump is proposing tax credits to encourage private investment of up to \$1 trillion over a decade. Their plans are short on specifics, such as how they would fund the projects, though Clinton suggested it would come, in part, from raising taxes on wealthy individuals. Aside from funding, there is also a question about how to find the skilled labor to build all those roads and bridges — a labor pool that is already in short supply. The problem is less about meeting the labor needs of today, but planning for what might be next. About 40 percent of those workers are baby boomers aging into retirement — and Brian Turmail, a spokesman for the Associated General Contractors, says there aren't enough young people lining up to replace them. Job fair attendance is low, and although construction is a well-paying industry, it hasn't been drawing young people in.

<http://wbaa.org/post/agreeing-more-money-roads-bridges-may-be-easier-finding-workers#stream/0>

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