



# **BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL**

## **Infrastructure Media Summary**

### **January 10, 2017**

#### **Op-ed: Setting record straight on road funding**

Journal & Courier  
Brandt Hershman  
1/9/17

If all you knew about Indiana Republicans was taken from John Pickerill's Jan. 5 op-ed in the Journal & Courier ("GOP road plan a slap at fiscal conservatives"), you would be badly misinformed. In essence, Pickerill, former chairman of the Montgomery County Republican Party, claims Republicans in the General Assembly are little more than hypocritical sell-outs bent on implementing a bloated tax-and-spend vision for Indiana. However, facts are stubborn things, and in this case, the facts tell a very different story. For more than a decade, Statehouse Republicans have led the way in passing honestly balanced budgets that include healthy reserves to protect taxpayers. Under the last two governors — both Republicans — the number of state employees has fallen to the lowest level since 1982. The Republican-led legislature has reduced debt, cut taxes for individuals, homeowners, employers and farmers, and eliminated harmful regulations. The result of these Republican reforms is a nationally recognized economic climate that has led to dozens of companies relocating to our state and record employment levels for Hoosier workers. It's true that Indiana is currently facing a tough challenge in finding new ways to pay for the road infrastructure that supports our growing economy. Studies estimate Indiana is facing a \$1 billion annual shortfall for its roads over the next 20 years. When government officials start to talk about raising revenue, it's good to have some healthy skepticism — otherwise we could easily end up in the same financial and economic mess that Illinois has created for itself. So in that sense, I understand Mr. Pickerill's concern.

<http://www.jconline.com/story/opinion/readers/2017/01/09/op-ed-setting-record-straight-road-funding/96339972/>

#### **Wabash Valley legislators not all sold on gas tax increase**

Tribune-Star  
Sue Loughlin  
1/7/16

While Republican legislative leaders are calling for increased funding for Indiana roads and bridges during the 2017 General Assembly, some Wabash Valley legislators say they need to be convinced of the need for increased gasoline taxes. A long-term funding plan to improve and maintain roads is expected to be a major issue this session, local legislators agree. Where they disagree is whether they can support such a plan, at least what's been proposed. A legislative task force led by key Republican budget-makers recommended late last year that the state make big moves to increase road funding by \$1 billion a year. House Bill 1002 calls for a 10-cent per gallon increase in the gas tax, boosting it to 28 cents from the current 18 cents per gallon. It includes an additional \$15 in license plate fees, other vehicle-related fees and the possibility of

interstate tolls. The gas tax has not been increased since 2003. The proposal also calls for indexing the gas tax for the future – which means adjusting the rate each year based on inflation and other factors. Funding for roads “will definitely be a big part of” the legislative agenda this session, said State Sen. Jon Ford, R-Terre Haute. He said he’s “not a big fan of an increase in the gas tax.” Last year, a proposed gas tax increase did not pass in the Indiana senate. The increase being proposed “seems like a lot — so fast,” he said.

[http://www.tribstar.com/news/local\\_news/wabash-valley-legislators-not-all-sold-on-gas-tax-increase/article\\_5c9341ff-16fd-5076-bba5-f02635de81dc.html](http://www.tribstar.com/news/local_news/wabash-valley-legislators-not-all-sold-on-gas-tax-increase/article_5c9341ff-16fd-5076-bba5-f02635de81dc.html)

### **Bosma: Gas tax increase necessary for Indiana’s future**

Indianapolis Star

Brian Bosma

1/6/17

As legislators return to the Indiana Statehouse, passing an honestly balanced budget which responsibly funds critical priorities like education and public safety will be our top goal. But there is another priority this year that is critical for every Hoosier: adopting a long-term, sustainable funding plan for Indiana’s road infrastructure. Few government policies touch so many aspects of Hoosiers’ daily lives. Indiana’s roads and bridges connect our homes, schools, offices, factories and farms, and are indispensable arteries for our manufacturing and logistics based economy. If transportation infrastructure is not placed on a fiscally sustainable path, Indiana’s current long-term economic competitiveness will be undermined. We can’t honestly call ourselves the Crossroads of America with infrastructure inadequate to meet Indiana’s 21st-century economic realities. Indiana ranks among the top manufacturing states in the nation and 80 percent of our manufactured goods are transported to worldwide markets across Hoosier highways. Four-fifths of Indiana’s communities are supplied solely by roads. In short, our manufacturing, agriculture, bioscience, pharmaceutical and logistics industries rely heavily on long-term investment in Hoosier roads and bridges for their economic success, and for ours. And, the projected need is significant. <http://www.indystar.com/story/opinion/readers/2017/01/06/bosma-gas-tax-increase-necessary-indianas-future/96258802/>

### **Locals hoping for share of road money**

Daily News

Maureen Hayden

1/6/17

INDIANAPOLIS - As lawmakers search for more money for highways, local officials are hoping for an infusion, too. An ambitious plan to hike gas taxes and other vehicle-related fees, including highway tolls, could mean millions of dollars more for cities, towns and counties that have fallen behind in fixing aging roads. Divvying up the dollars could help make the gas-tax plan more palatable to the public, since about 80 percent of the state’s roads are maintained locally. “People want to know, ‘Is this going to fix my street, or the road I drive on to get to work, or the road the bus that my child takes to get to school?’” said Brian Gould, government affairs director for the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns. The answer is maybe. On Wednesday, House Republicans unveiled a plan to raise big revenue needed to fix, maintain and expand highways and interstates. Those state roads and bridges need about \$1.2 billion a year for the next 20 years. But communities that maintain more than 66,000 miles of streets and roads need an additional \$700 million a year to repair their own infrastructure, according to study released last month by Purdue University’s road engineering experts. Some of that local money could come from the increase in the gas tax, which Republicans are proposing to hike from 18 cents a gallon to 28 cents. [http://www.greensburgdailynews.com/news/locals-hoping-for-share-of-road-money/article\\_c58b89e0-18de-540b-95a8-e6c2254538e6.html](http://www.greensburgdailynews.com/news/locals-hoping-for-share-of-road-money/article_c58b89e0-18de-540b-95a8-e6c2254538e6.html)

## **Transit push continues despite Red Line speed bump**

Indianapolis Recorder

Kelly Patrick Slone

1/5/17

Despite a snag in securing an anticipated \$75 million federal grant for construction of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Red Line, work toward mass transit upgrades in Indianapolis continues. Congress failed to approve the 2017 transportation budget before the 2016 year-end deadline, stalling the grant funds for the first phase of the Red Line project and 30 other transit-related projects nationwide, but IndyGo Director of Public Affairs Bryan Luellen said the pre-construction preparations for the Red Line are still underway. "Construction is scheduled to begin in June, but if Congress does not act by March, the project could begin to realize some delays," Luellen said in a media statement. Luellen said IndyGo would not enter into any contracts without the necessary funding in place, reiterating what he told the Recorder in an October 2016 interview: "We're not going out and buying 13 60-foot electric vehicles on a hope and a dream, and we're not hiring construction firms just hoping that this grant is going to come through."

In Washington, Congressman Andre Carson (D-IN), who sits on the House Transportation Committee, is fighting to secure the Red Line funding for his hometown.

[http://www.indianapolisrecorder.com/news/article\\_76883714-d359-11e6-9609-3b5e7bca217b.html](http://www.indianapolisrecorder.com/news/article_76883714-d359-11e6-9609-3b5e7bca217b.html)

## **Gas tax hike, new fees for roads**

The Journal Gazette

Niki Kelly

1/5/17

INDIANAPOLIS – House Republicans laid out a road funding plan Wednesday that provides just a fraction of the money needed initially while relying heavily on tolling interstates in the future. The initial new revenue would be about \$300 million in fiscal year 2018 and would come from an increase in the state gas tax. In fiscal year 2019, the new infrastructure revenue would rise to between \$480 million and \$541 million, according to fiscal estimates. Separately, new fees on all vehicles in the state would be funneled to local roads. House Speaker Brian Bosma said Republicans have given billions of dollars in tax savings to average Hoosiers – "not just the rich" – in the last decade. "The next step is comprehensive road funding for the next generation," he said. Lawmakers in recent years have cut individual income, corporate and inheritance taxes, which has cost the state coffers hundreds of millions a year in revenue. Some of those cuts are still being phased in. Sen. Karen Tallian, D-Portage, said that at the very least, the state should stop further reductions from taking effect before asking Hoosiers to pony up new dollars. "The whole thing doesn't make sense," she said. But Bosma denied that they are now asking the middle class to foot the bill for tax cuts for the wealthy, saying legislators have created a good tax climate for employers. "This benefits every Hoosier who uses the roads," he said. "It makes a great deal of sense moving towards that user-fee concept."

<http://www.journalgazette.net/news/local/indiana/Gas-tax-hike--new-fees-for-roads-17115573>