



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

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SHABAZZ: Indiana needs more than a pothole solution for roads

Indianapolis Business Journal

Abdul-Hakim Shabazz

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As I sit down and write this IBJ Forefront column, I am enjoying a Davidoff cigar and glass of scotch. My total bill for both these items will be about \$25. Or, to look at it another way, the cost of an increase in the gas and motor fuel tax to fix Indiana's roads and infrastructure. Indiana lawmakers are debating various proposals to deal with the state's transportation needs. Gov. Mike Pence has offered more than \$1 billion over four years for state roads and bridges. Senate Republicans have offered more than \$400 million for local governments. And House Republicans have put nearly \$500 million in new funding through an increase (or index, if you prefer) in the gas tax and motor fuel tax. They would also dedicate all the dollars of the state sales tax on gasoline to roads and replace that revenue by increasing cigarette taxes, which will free up dollars currently going to Medicaid. While I can appreciate the governor's \$1 billion plan, as well as what the Senate Republicans are doing for local roads, Indiana needs a long-term fix for its roads and bridges. The House Republican plan, with its tax increases, does that. I know some people balk at any idea of "tax increases" to pay for anything. I am a fiscal conservative and I am not a big fan of taxes, either. But being conservative also means that certain things need to be paid for, and roads are definitely among them. <http://www.ibj.com/articles/57018-shabazz-indiana-needs-more-than-a-pothole-solution-for-roads>

Editorial: House road plan offers path forward

Indianapolis Star

2/5/16

The lessons taught by a weeks-long shutdown of northbound I-65 last summer near Lafayette must not be forgotten inside the Statehouse this winter. Lesson No. 1: The lack of adequate investment in Indiana's transportation network will eventually catch up with the state, its residents and visitors. The emergency closure of I-65 deeply frustrated hundreds of thousands of motorists who were stuck in traffic and forced to follow inconvenient detours. It also hurt many businesses, not only those in the immediate area but also regional and statewide operations that rely on the efficient delivery of goods and services. Even worse, the shutdown was a factor in a string of accidents, including fatal crashes. Although not caused by neglect of the interstate — the bridge actually was being upgraded when a part of the span sank — the incident did spark an ongoing conversation about Indiana's deep infrastructure needs. State leaders have long known that the current highway funding formula isn't sufficient to meet Indiana's needs, and legislators have studied ideas for a long-term fix for years. But they failed to act. Now, after a painful reminder of the need, lawmakers must approve a bill that includes a sustainable means of paying for roads and bridges. Lesson No. 2: The state's transportation network is complex and massive. Yet, a

single breakdown at a key point — one interstate bridge out of hundreds in Indiana — can create immeasurable havoc. The need for constant monitoring and repair is essential and expensive. Thankfully, members of the Indiana House have learned both of those lessons. The House last week passed, on a 61-36 vote, a transportation funding bill that for the first time in years would address long-term needs. <http://www.indystar.com/story/opinion/2016/02/05/editorial-house-road-plan-offers-path-forward/79910842/>

Bus Rapid Transit open houses set

Indianapolis Star

John Touhy

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Transportation officials will host a series of informational meetings to update the public on its Bus Rapid Transit plan, including the Red Line on Indianapolis' north and south sides. The first open house is from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. Friday in the Knoll Meeting Room at the Central Library, 40 E. St. Clair St. Officials from IndyGo will give a short presentation at 12:30 p.m. The BRT system is part of the IndyConnect plan to improve mass transit in Central Indiana, with five all-electric bus lines with limited stops and dedicated lanes across the city. The first phase is the Red Line, traveling 37 miles from Westfield to Greenwood with buses running as frequently as every 10 minutes. IndyGo is expecting a \$75 million federal transportation grant to build the first section of the Red Line, 13.6 miles from Broad Ripple to the University of Indianapolis on the south side. Construction could begin in the spring of 2017, with the line opening in 2018. The Red Line will follow College, Meridian, Capitol and Shelby streets, with stops at platforms spaced from one-third to one mile apart, in reserved lanes. IndyConnect is supported by the Metropolitan Planning Organization and Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority.

<http://www.indystar.com/story/news/2016/02/04/bus-rapid-transit-open-houses-set/79822006/>

State to transfer 933 to South Bend, pay city \$4.43 million

South Bend Tribune

Erin Blasko

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SOUTH BEND — The Indiana Department of Transportation has agreed to transfer a portion of Indiana 933 to the city of South Bend, and to compensate the city \$4.43 million for future maintenance of the former state highway. The Board of Public works approved the deal, involving a 1.2-mile section of Michigan/St. Joseph streets, on Thursday. The deal does not include Main Street, which will remain part of Indiana 933 north of Sample Street. Michigan Street will no longer carry the Indiana 933 designation. The city had been negotiating with INDOT for control of 933 from Sample to Marion streets for the better part of three years as part of the Smart Streets project. The deal includes \$330,000 for future maintenance of the highway over 10 years, plus \$4.1 million to repave the highway from Angela Boulevard to Sample Street. INDOT will give the city another \$300,000 for signal improvements on other state roads in the city. The \$4.1 million will help offset the cost of the Smart Streets project, which includes the two-way conversion of both Main and Michigan/St. Joseph streets from Chippewa Avenue to Marion Street, plus bike lanes and streetscape improvements downtown. Financed, in part, with \$25 million in tax increment finance bonds, the project is expected to get underway later this spring, with a completion date of November. According to executive director of Community Investment Scott Ford, transfer of the road is consistent with INDOT's overall strategy of divesting in local streets and roads. http://www.southbendtribune.com/news/state-to-transfer-to-south-bend-pay-city-million/article_22f5f31e-cb64-11e5-95ed-a3565a327f22.html

Goshen to consider ways to improve entryways between downtown and the city's north side

The Elkhart Truth
Sharon Hernandez
2/4/16

GOSHEN — A \$10,000 state grant that the city received after closing a railroad crossing that some community members saw as a major entryway between downtown Goshen and the north side may help ease their concerns. The Goshen Board of Works voted to close the Fifth Street railroad crossing in July 2015, after holding two public forums. Residents, many of whom live north of the crossing, expressed concern about their access to downtown. Now, some city officials want to look for ways to alleviate problems for residents as a result of the closure, suggesting that a \$10,000 grant from the Indiana Department of Transportation, applied for after closing the North Fifth Street railroad crossing, could help. City officials decided to close the crossing city Civil Engineer Mary Cripe said there were safety concerns with the construction of the new U.S. 33 Northern Connector route. The safety issues arise as the intersection of North Fifth Street and the new U.S. 33 route will not have traffic lights, so incoming traffic will not be able to easily slow down. The new route also will have a median, making it impossible for drivers on Fifth Street to cross U.S. 33. The safest option, Cripe told the board in 2015, was to close down the crossing. When the Goshen City Council voted to accept the INDOT grant Tuesday, Councilwoman Julia King asked if that money could be used to help the Chamberlain Neighborhood, which would be mostly affected by the crossing closure.

<http://www.elkharttruth.com/hometown/goshen/2016/02/04/Goshen-to-consider-ways-to-improve-entryways-between-downtown-and-the-city-s-north-side.html>

Two Indiana road funding plans could cost millions -- but how?

WSBT
Patrick Roth
2/4/16

SOUTH BEND - Indiana has two plans to consider for road funding this year. Both plans would cost hundreds of millions of dollars, but big difference is in how they do that. The plan out of the House would raise more than a billion dollars for road repairs by raising some taxes. The plan that just moved out of the Senate says it could raise about the same amount of money by dipping into the budget surplus. That wouldn't require any tax increase and would last about four years. The bill's author, Senator Carlin Yoder, says it's a good short term solution and buys time for the legislature to figure out a long term plan. It also has the backing of Governor Mike Pence. The house plan would increase cigarette tax by a dollar and the gas tax by four cents, but Yoder and some Senate Republicans say they're reluctant to raise any taxes. "I think there is going to have to be some compromise on all sides, but I do know that I'm hearing a lot from Hoosiers who really don't want their taxes raised right now so I will fight that concept pretty hard," said Sen. Yoder. When the legislature meets again in March both the House and Senate will consider each other's plans. It's important to note that both of these plans are short term solutions. Even so, legislators say it's important that something gets done, because the longer they wait on this, the more expensive it will be to make repairs. <http://www.wsbt.com/news/local/two-indiana-road-funding-plans-could-cost-millions-but-how/37829810>