



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

February 28, 2017

Purdue helping lead quest to build better roads

Indianapolis Business Journal

Sam Stall

2/25/17

Casual motorists zipping past highway work zones at 70 mph might think road construction methods haven't evolved much since President Dwight D. Eisenhower started building the interstate highway system back in 1956. But experts say looks are deceiving. "What you can't see when you're driving down the highway is the different types of modern technology incorporated into our roadways," said Will Wingfield, spokesman for the Indiana Department of Transportation. While roads are still made from time-tested 20th-century staples such as concrete and asphalt, the formulas used to mix them and the techniques used to lay them down are very 21st century. Some of those new approaches are being pioneered by the Joint Transportation Research Program, or JTRP, a sort of bridge-and-highway think tank based at Purdue University that pools the talents of academics from around the state, plus INDOT staffers and private industry. That "cheaper, better, faster and safer" mantra could soon be put to the test. According to INDOT, the state will need to raise \$1.2 billion more annually over the next 20 years for maintenance and improvements—a daunting need that leaders of the GOP-controlled General Assembly plan to address with a stew of tax increases this session. That could mean expensive changes to the 28,868 "lane miles" of numbered U.S. highways, interstates and state roads over which INDOT holds sway. Much of that domain isn't exactly in top condition. About 45 percent of INDOT's bridges will need major overhauls in the next 10 years. And while 89 percent of INDOT-maintained roadways boast pavement that's in "fair or better" condition, if funding remains flat, that number will drop in the coming years to 84 percent, with about 500 miles of roadway falling into poor condition. <http://www.ibj.com/articles/62675-purdue-helping-lead-quest-to-build-better-roads>

Indy Council to Vote on Transit Expansion Proposal

Inside Indiana Business

Dan McGowan

2/24/17

INDIANAPOLIS - Funding for expanded mass transit in Indianapolis is set to go before the City-County Council Monday for a final vote. The proposal calls for an up to 0.25 percent income tax increase. The funding would go toward initiatives including additional routes and extended service hours. Organizations including the Indy Chamber have supported the expansion, calling more and improved access to public transportation a work force and talent attraction issue. Last week, Proposal 3 was approved by the council's Rules and Public Policy Committee. The measure was put before the council following a November referendum where nearly 60 percent of voters approved an income tax increase to fund the expansion. A recently-approved state law

cleared the way for individual counties to initiate a public referendum on expanded public transportation without prior approval from the General Assembly.

<http://www.insideindianabusiness.com/story/34600398/indy-council-to-vote-on-transit-expansion-proposal>

Lawmakers give updates on road funding, South Shore improvements during South Bend visit

WSBT

Danielle Kennedy

2/24/17

SOUTH BEND — New details on plans to fund improvements to the South Shore railroad. Some local lawmakers are pushing that agenda in the General Assembly right now. They talked about those plans at a South Bend Regional Chamber of Commerce meeting Friday. South Shore officials have asked for \$145-million from the state's budget to help fund a double-tracking project. Local communities in Northwest Indiana would also have to help pick up the tab. Officials say the improvements could cut down travel time down to Chicago. To do that, a bill passed in the House Thursday would allow the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority to invest in areas along the South Shore. Sales and property taxes generated by that development would help fund the project. "Since we are so reliant on residential property taxes to fund local government, we have to find a way to either increase our housing stock or make what's here more valuable," said Sen. Mike Bohacek in LaPorte County. "The way you do that is you provide the easy access to the biggest pool of people around and that's the Chicago Metro area."

<http://wsbt.com/news/local/lawmakers-give-updates-on-road-funding-south-shore-improvements-during-south-bend-visit>

Democrats propose plan to pay for roads without taxing Hoosiers

WTHI-TV

Kiley Thomas

2/24/17

TERRE HAUTE, Ind. (WTHI) – Hoosier drivers are one step closer to seeing gas prices rise. That comes after the Indiana house approved a roads plan that would increase gas prices by 10 cents. It's a bill backed by the Republican Party. "I think it's the most important bill that will go through the legislature in this session," said Representative Clyde Kersey (D – Terre Haute). House Bill 1002 passed the Indiana house last week 61 to 36. This road plan would increase the price at the pump and registration for cars. It also proposes toll roads on Interstate 70 and Interstate 65. The bill is a 20-year plan to come up with \$1 billion to fix roads long term. "There is an alternative plan that is out there using existing funds to pay for highway construction rather than increasing taxes," said Kersey. Democrats are proposing a plan that would take the burden off Indiana taxpayers. Kersey says they can create the necessary \$1 billion by freezing wealthy tax breaks, using the entire sales tax on roads and borrowing from other funds like the surplus. "How fair is it to tax the working people and cut taxes on corporations and banks?" said Kersey. Republican Senator Jon Ford questions whether lawmakers should tap into other state accounts. "I know there's a lot of talk about the surplus but again if I look at my survey of constituents they do not want us to touch the surplus," said Ford. <http://wthitv.com/2017/02/24/democrats-propose-plan-to-pay-for-roads-without-taxing-hoosier/>