



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

March 10, 2016

Lawmakers, governor reach compromise on \$1B road funding plan

Indianapolis Star

Tony Cook

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Republican lawmakers and Gov. Mike Pence reached a compromise Wednesday that would boost road spending, fund teacher scholarships and add money to the governor's Regional Cities Initiative economic development program. The plan would add about \$1 billion to maintain state and local bridges and highways over the next two years without increasing taxes, though it would provide more tax options for local government. To fund the improvements, lawmakers would draw down some of the state's \$2 billion in reserves, redirect a penny-and-a-half of the state's 7 percent sales tax on gasoline to roads, and release funds that the state now holds in trust for local governments. Republican legislative leaders, who were briefing their members Wednesday afternoon, said precise language was still being worked out and declined to provide fuller details. A final vote in the House and Senate is expected Thursday, when lawmakers hope to finish up their work for the 2016 legislative session. As part of the compromise, Pence would also get \$42 million to fund a third regional economic development plan through his Regional Cities grant program. Lawmakers gave the program \$84 million last year, enough to fund two cities. But Pence announced plans to fund three cities in December — a move that rankled some lawmakers. If the compromise reached Wednesday becomes law, regional economic groups in Fort Wayne, Evansville and South Bend would each receive \$42 million.

<http://www.indystar.com/story/news/politics/2016/03/09/lawmakers-governor-reach-compromise-1b-road-funding-plan/81536334/>

County official proposes bridge property tax

Journal & Courier

Matthew Kent

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Tippecanoe County officials are proposing a 1 cent property tax that would provide dedicated funding for improvements on nearly 30 large bridges in the area. Opal Kuhl, executive director of the Tippecanoe County Highway Department, said the county currently has a cumulative bridge fund in place that brings in about \$2.5 million annually and is used for the maintenance and reconstruction of bridges. The county has 209 bridges. "That's well and good for the maintenance and rehab and everything, but we have 27 bridges that are over 200 feet long, and that puts them in the category of major bridges," Kuhl said. When a county has those types of bridges, Kuhl said officials are permitted to establish what's known as a major bridge fund so money can be built up when repairs or reconstruction efforts need to be made. Five other Indiana counties — Allen, Elkhart, Hamilton, LaPorte and St. Joseph — already have major bridge funds, according to Kuhl. "We're proposing to follow suit and pass that," she said. The Tippecanoe County Council

has the final authority on establishing a tax rate. Kuhl said although that figure hasn't been determined yet, she noted it would likely be between 1 cent and 1.5 cents.

<http://www.jconline.com/story/news/local/2016/03/09/county-official-proposes-bridge-property-tax/81529556/>

1-time fix advancing for roads

The Journal Gazette

Niki Kelly

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INDIANAPOLIS – Lawmakers appear to be closing in on a road funding solution that provides only one-time monies to aid state highways. With three days left in the session, House Republicans seem to be moving away from raising cigarette and gas taxes this year, which Gov. Mike Pence and Senate Republicans never supported. Rep. Ed Soliday, R-Valparaiso, said the question on tax increases was always the timing. “One possibility ... is we take an intermediate-to long-term approach for locals and a more short-term approach to the state,” he said. “That is a compromise possibility.” Sen. Luke Kenley, R-Noblesville, said his caucus isn’t convinced that a 4-cent increase in the gas tax meets the needs of the state highway department. Pence said discussions are still underway among the leadership but is “confident we could meet the needs before us to take care of our roads and bridges without raising taxes.” On the state side of the equation, money from the tax increases would have allowed the state to shift money from sales tax on gasoline to roads. But if those are off the table, the proposals to aid state funding are slim. All agree on releasing surplus dollars to Pence this year for maintenance and preservation. That would likely fall between \$400 million and 500 million for fiscal 2017.

<http://www.journalgazette.net/news/local/indiana/1-time-fix-advancing-for-roads-11901298>

Congressman Rokita addresses long-term road funding

WLF1

Alexis Moberger

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WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. (WLF1) – A \$5 billion law aims to help fund Indiana’s roads over the next five years. U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita calls the bill FAST Act, an acronym for Fixing America’s Surface Transportation. Rokita said the crossroads of America is at a crossroads. “The next generation will one day wake up to crumbling roads, bridges, airports that are dysfunctional, locks that have failed,” said Rokita. He said without having long-term road funding in place, future generations will have crumbling roads and substantial debt. That’s what inspired Rokita to help write a long-term funding law. He said the FAST Act is the first long-term highway reauthorization bill to pass in over a decade. “For the last 11 years, they had to plan in one-year time increments because no one knew when the next funding stream was going to come,” Rokita said. Indiana will have \$5 billion to spend on roads and bridges over the next five years. The money will come from a general Highway Trust Fund and other revenue outlets. “This is truly a fully funded five-year plan that doesn’t add to our national debt,” Rokita said. Although a five-year plan is in place, he wants an even longer term plan figured out. He said the state’s infrastructure needs to be fixed with a bridge not a Band-Aid, and moving away from a Highway Trust Fund eventually is the first step. “We have go to figure out how to make that trust fund solvent in an era where we are driving further on a gallon of gas and some cars aren’t even using gas anymore,” said Rokita. Part of his FAST Act includes Critical Commerce Corridors, which would create a barrier between trucks and cars to help improve safety on highways. <http://wlf1.com/2016/03/08/congressman-addresses-long-term-road-funding/>

INDOT Calls for Rural Road Projects

Inside INdiana Business

Alex Brown
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WEST LAFAYETTE - The Indiana Department of Transportation will be accepting applications from rural cities, towns and counties for \$80 to \$100 million in federal road funding. The agency made the announcement Tuesday at the Purdue Road School conference. INDOT Commissioner Brandye Hendrickson said the communities can begin submitting their applications late this month. The communities would design, develop and purchase land for projects that would be bid during the fiscal year, beginning in June 2020. "INDOT sets aside a quarter of its federal-highway funds each year for local transportation projects," said Hendrickson. "Keeping the project pipeline full puts this funding to work in improving quality of life because roads mean jobs." Hendrickson added that \$5 million in federal funding would be made available for sidewalk improvements in rural areas. An additional \$2.5 million will be invested each year to improve crosswalks and other sidewalk infrastructure along state highways in rural and urban communities, according to INDOT. The sidewalk program is part of INDOT's new Common Paths program, which is designed to unify and implement INDOT's transportation programs and policies regarding planning and design. <http://www.insideindianabusiness.com/story/31418862/indot-calls-for-rural-road-projects>

www.buildindianacouncil.org