



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

May 20, 2014

Donnelly applauds moves to cut red tape on infrastructure projects

Dearborn County Register

5/19/14

After introducing the bipartisan Federal Permitting Improvement Act last year to cut down on burdensome regulations to allow infrastructure, development, and energy projects to be constructed more quickly, U.S. Senators Joe Donnelly, D-Indiana, Claire McCaskill, D-Missouri, and Rob Portman, R-Ohio, are applauding the announcement by the White House to implement a fast-tracking plan for new projects and urging the Administration to work with them to pass the bill and implement a permanent solution to cut red tape on infrastructure projects. The White House plan is in large part based on the Donnelly, McCaskill, Portman, bill—endorsed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, numerous labor unions, and the Business Roundtable—including the assignment of a lead agency, institutionalizing new and improved coordination practices among agencies and with state and local partners, increasing project transparency, and implementing clear schedules for the permitting process. Donnelly said, "We need to encourage private sector investment in big infrastructure projects that will help create jobs. Our bill would improve the federal permitting process for major infrastructure projects by requiring better coordination among permitting agencies and increase transparency by requiring the government to track progress online. I am pleased to see that the Obama Administration's plan to fast-track infrastructure project permitting includes some of these concepts. This is a sign of progress." Current private sector construction permitting processes are plagued by a lack of coordination, unmet deadlines, and insufficient transparency. State and local government authorities face the same obstacles when they seek federal permits for infrastructure projects.

[Donnelly applauds moves to cut red tape on infrastructure projects](#)

Indiana side of Big Four completed; could open this week

The Courier-Journal

Charlie White

5/19/14

The Big Four pedestrian and cycling ramp on the Hoosier side of the Ohio River could open as early as Tuesday now that officials with the Indiana Department of Transportation and the city of Jeffersonville have conducted final walk-through inspections. INDOT provided a written notification that the work was complete shortly after 5:30 p.m., meaning control of the ramp had transferred to the city. City attorney Les Merkley had been waiting for the letter before setting a time and date to open the ramp. "We do have control and we should have a decision this evening" over whether the contractor could remove the barricade, Merkley said just after 6 p.m. Removing the barricade would take as long as four hours, he said, adding that the city is required to notify the Waterfront Development Corp. in Louisville about the opening schedule. "It's very exciting and we're extremely happy an opening date is finally near," said David Karem, president

of the Waterfront Development Corp. Karem said he talked Friday with INDOT officials, letting them know the organization also would like a confirmation letter due to liability concerns. Karem said he asked Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer's office which date would work best for the opening with the Memorial Day weekend approaching. "The Indiana ramp and stair tower to the Big Four Bridge were completed today — not partially, but fully — and at the lowest possible cost to Jeffersonville taxpayers," said INDOT chief of staff Troy Woodruff.

<http://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/traffic/bridges/2014/05/19/big-four-ramp-completed-may-open-week/9296147/>

Busy New Albany intersection will soon be upgraded

News and Tribune

Chris Morris

5/17/14

NEW ALBANY — One of New Albany's busiest intersections will soon receive a much needed upgrade, and most of the work will be paid for by the federal government. The Indiana Department of Transportation met with New Albany city officials, engineering consultants, utility company representatives and contractors this week to coordinate implementation of a \$214,792 Beechwood Avenue-Charlestown Road intersection improvement project. The work will include adding a left-hand turning lane on Charlestown Road to Beechwood and a new LED crosswalk and stop light. "It will be a much more safe turn than it has been in the past," New Albany Mayor Jeff Gahan said. "It's overdue. It's not real glitzy, but it's one [project] that people will appreciate." The project will get underway soon, according to John Rosenbarger, New Albany public works projects supervisor, and will likely be completed sometime this summer. The Federal Highway Administration pays 90 percent of Highway Safety Improvement Program project costs. "It's a very attractive funding source," Rosenbarger said. "Right now, if a car is turning left it's just too tight to get around. It just doesn't work."

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Mass transit won't see ballot in 2014

The Indy Channel

Tanya Spencer

5/16/14

Indiana Governor Mike Pence signed a bill earlier this year that would put mass transit funding up for referendum – but it won't happen this year. The goal is a lofty one that would involve six counties and seek to alleviate commuter congestion. Ultimately, it's voters who will decide whether the plan gains legs. "Obviously each county that would be involved would work on their plan. But then the key is connecting all of the systems together to make sure they work in a regional fashion," said Marc Lotter, spokesman for Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard's office. "So, there are a lot of partners, a lot of moving parts to this. That's one of the reasons why it's just not feasible to do a vote on a referendum in 2014. The next opportunity for a vote will be in 2016, but there's a lot of work to do between now and then." Among that work is nailing down federal funding, as well as bringing in more public input and educating voters on what they're voting for and how it will be paid for. Lotter said Ballard doesn't want to rush a plan that will affect Central Indiana for decades to come. Thus, he said, a vote on mass transit in 2014 was never really the plan. "Obviously we wanted to have the ability to have the referendum. Obviously we have that now through this legislation. Now the key is to get the plans finalized, get the engineering, the paperwork, and the studies all done," Lotter said. "And then when everyone's ready we can roll out a complete package to the voters and hopefully they'll approve it."

[Mass transit won't see ballot in 2014 - TheIndyChannel.com](#)

Regional bus service sought by Everybody Counts

Post-Tribune

Carole Carlson

5/15/14

“An integrated bus system is important to us,” Dominguez said. “People with disabilities want to go to the doctor’s office, to parks, to festivals. None of that exists and you folks are the ones they look to give them some hope to make a difference in their lives.” Mary Lee Vance, of Hammond, said as an administrator at Purdue University Calumet, she’s required to attend meetings that she can’t always get to because of the lack of bus service. “We need to be able to travel locally,” she said. “We are not a bunch of people who are losers.” At the end of the meeting, NIRPC Chairman Brian Snedecor, the mayor of Hobart, said he would discuss establishing a committee to examine bus transportation with Ty Warner, NIRPC executive director. “I do understand there’s a need for mass transportation. ... Funding has always been an issue. It’s a balancing act,” said Snedecor. After the meeting, Everybody Counts director Teresa Torres criticized NIRPC for its handling of more than \$1 million from the now-defunct Northwest Indiana Regional Bus Authority. When the RBA lost its funding and shut down, the Indiana Department of Transportation gave NIRPC the authority to distribute funding the RBA had earned for 2013 and 2014, she said. NIRPC gave the 2013 allotment of \$506,267 to agencies in Porter County and south Lake County, according to Torres. She said urban communities in northern Lake County didn’t benefit, although riders there generated the funding. Since Everybody Counts complained, she said INDOT directed the 2014 funding of \$562,701 to East Chicago Transit and the Gary Public Transit Corp., which is expanding routes in Hammond.

[Regional bus service sought by Everybody Counts - Post-Tribune#.U3tYLIdOXIU](#)

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