



# **BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL**

## **Infrastructure Media Summary**

### **June 14, 2016**

#### **S'ville council won't impose wheel tax**

NWI Times

Lu Ann Franklin

6/13/16

The town will use its portion of the income tax refund from the state of Indiana to help repair some roads, making the municipality eligible for a grant from the Community Crossing program. "We have no intention to put a wheel tax on our residents," Councilman Rob Guetzloff said at last week's Town Council meeting. Three tentative projects will be submitted via a letter of intent to the Indiana Department of Transportation including patching some of Kennedy Avenue north and portions of the downtown area, Public Works Director Jeff Huet told the council. "If we get one of our projects funded, I'll be happy," said Town Manager Robert Volkmann. "It is safe to say we are ruling out a wheel tax." Huet also told the council that INDOT's road work on U.S. 41 goes from the Red Robin restaurant at 1401 U.S. 41 in Schererville to the traffic signal at West 133rd Avenue in Cedar Lake. "Currently INDOT is concentrating on the south end, but we will probably see more activity in the next two to three weeks," he said.

[http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/lake/s-ville-council-won-t-impose-wheel-tax/article\\_b09cf23e-09df-5ffb-9cbc-c33311004f19.html](http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/lake/s-ville-council-won-t-impose-wheel-tax/article_b09cf23e-09df-5ffb-9cbc-c33311004f19.html)

#### **Kokomo, Howard County road construction projects**

Kokomo Tribune

George Myers

6/12/16

It's that time of year again, the time when city and county employees focus much of their resources on road and bridge construction. This summer will be no different, as both government entities begin construction projects and continue existing development, including work on Touby Pike and street reconstructions. Most notably, both city and county officials are preparing to apply for matching grants with funds received through Senate Enrolled Act 67, a measure that provides \$435 million that can be used for transportation infrastructure maintenance for counties, cities and towns. In total, Howard County entities received \$2.4 million, with \$742,000 going to county government and \$1.43 million to city government. The remaining dollars are split between various governmental operations. A quarter of the county government's portion will be placed in the rainy day fund. Now, officials are hoping to receive 50/50 matches through House Enrolled Act 1001, which created the local road and bridge matching grant program. HEA 1001 provides \$186 million in state reserves for local road and bridge funding over the next two years and \$277 million over the next four years by redirecting 1.5 cents of the gasoline tax, according to an Indiana Department of Transportation press release. Additionally, \$100 million in funding will be available each year going forward to provide long-term funding for local road projects, according to the release. Projects that are eligible for funding through Community Crossings, the state's road and

bridge matching grant fund, include road surfacing, bridge rehabilitation, road construction, roundabouts and Americans with Disabilities Act compliance projects.  
[http://www.kokomotribune.com/news/local\\_news/kokomo-howard-county-road-construction-projects/article\\_d27fcc64-2f2e-11e6-8807-b3f8a177fd4a.html](http://www.kokomotribune.com/news/local_news/kokomo-howard-county-road-construction-projects/article_d27fcc64-2f2e-11e6-8807-b3f8a177fd4a.html)

### **HILL: Let's think differently about mass transit**

Indianapolis Business Journal

Mark Hill

6/11/16

The explosion in innovation in technology has put us in a position where we should explore a totally new way to look at mass transportation in central Indiana. I am not suggesting the answer, but rather am inviting us to explore new available options. Without this exploration, we might well commit billions of dollars over many years in an effort that will continue to produce the results we have seen in a city that does not have the density to afford traditional mass transit solutions. There is little doubt that an efficient system of moving people around our city can have a dramatic impact, but I would like to focus on two issues. First, an efficient mass transit system is an attack on poverty. Allowing those without the means to own a car to get to work at any point in the city, in a reasonable amount of time, will make a big difference both to those working and to the companies where they work. Disparity of income is the problem of our generation and this directly attacks that issue. Second, it will attract talented young people to our city. We are competing for talent with other cities. For the millennials we are trying to attract, there is a shift going on in the way they think about the places they prefer to live. They want an urban lifestyle and they want to get around without a car. Their presence in our city presents a significant revenue opportunity in our tax base. <http://www.ibj.com/articles/58934-lets-think-differently-about-mass-transit>

### **Proposed wheel tax unjustified; push instead for fair return of state tax dollars to fix roads and streets**

Herald Argus

Shaw R. Friedman

6/9/16

Want to know why the Commissioners I represent are so opposed to the imposition of new wheel and option taxes to pay for local road repair? It's because the tax is unfair and unjustified and the commissioners have proposed instead that city and county officials embark on a new bi-partisan unified lobbying effort of the Blue Ribbon Commission to fix the imbalance in road funding this fall. First off, the wheel tax is unfair and regressive. Unlike the excise tax that is pegged to age, model and make of the car and deals somewhat with ability to pay, the wheel tax is imposed across the board at the same level whether you're driving a new Lincoln or an '85 Chevette. Secondly, the County Commissioners have worked mightily over the past two years to highlight the imbalance in road and street funding coming to Northwest Indiana vs. the already prosperous suburbs around Indianapolis. It's clear that quiet diplomacy no longer works with the downstate legislators who make these decisions and that a more vocal, robust presence is needed by elected officials from our county. Had it not been for the letter writing and phone campaign waged by the County Commissioners last winter, we'd have toll booths going up on I-94 right now. That's right – powerful, downstate legislators actually proposed putting toll booths on I-94 but they only backed off when the County Commissioners encouraged constituents to call and write letters complaining about the massive unfairness of requiring tolls up here when those same legislators wouldn't dream of putting tolls on I-465 in their backyard.  
[http://www.heraldargus.com/news/proposed-wheel-tax-unjustified-push-instead-for-fair-return-of/article\\_ea3bf19d-071f-5186-97f9-3657a4dffa79.html](http://www.heraldargus.com/news/proposed-wheel-tax-unjustified-push-instead-for-fair-return-of/article_ea3bf19d-071f-5186-97f9-3657a4dffa79.html)

### **INDOT declares Indy-to-Chicago train line saved**

WRTV  
Katie Heinz  
6/9/16

Officials are calling a public-private partnership to keep the Hoosier State Train on the tracks a success – but the cost long-term, and who will pay for it, remains a question. A new, three-way contract has been in place for a little less than a year to keep the trains on the tracks. The goal is for people to be able to catch a ride more frequently between Indianapolis and Chicago. "We're declaring the service was saved, it's improved, and we're ready to invite people onto the train for summer travel season," said INDOT spokesman Will Wingfield. INDOT has signed a two-year contract with Iowa Pacific and Amtrak to keep the Indianapolis-to-Chicago service moving. INDOT is paying \$255,000 a month to keep the train running. "There were a lot of hurdles to overcome in getting that far, but customer satisfaction is tremendous, on-time performance is dramatically better, ridership has increased, but the clock is ticking on the state budget allotment, and it will have to compete with a lot of other priorities," said State Sen. Brandt Hershman. The funding is coming from the tax amnesty program – a one-time revenue stream. It will continue through next June. Beyond that, Hershman says future funding from the state is uncertain.  
<http://www.theindychannel.com/news/local-news/indot-declares-indy-to-chicago-train-line-saved>

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