



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

August 11, 2016

Editorial: Long-term infrastructure funding needed

News-Sentinel

8/11/16

In case you missed it, the two women running for lieutenant governor had their first debate, squaring off at the Indiana State Fair. Republican Suzanne Crouch, state auditor and former state lawmaker; and Democrat Christina Hale, a state representative and former Kiwanis International executive, naturally had differences on many issues, but they agreed on one problem that should be given top priority: Find a long-term funding solution to the state's deteriorating infrastructure. Both were careful not to endorse any specific recommendations, like the controversial one to raise the gas tax. But the mere fact that they agreed on a need gives us hope the issue can be tackled in a bipartisan way. "It's outrageous that a third of our bridges in Indiana are structurally deficient around the state," Hale said. "Not every community has the same issue, so we want to be flexible so we have ready dollars there so we can customize to whatever the need has to be." Crouch also brought roads into the discussion. "Let me be clear, we must not rest until we have a long-term solution to our infrastructure funding," Crouch said. "It has to involve a collaborative effort that not just benefits urban roads and bridges but also benefits rural roads and bridges." The General Assembly tried to craft a long-term plan last session, but election-year realities took hold. To his credit House Speaker Brian Bosma endorsed a plan that would have added \$1 per pack to the state tax on cigarettes and tie the current gas tax to inflation, adjusting it upward by 5 cents from the outset to make up for the lack of an increase since 2002. <http://www.news-sentinel.com/opinion/Editorial--Long-term-infrastructure-funding-needed>

Carmel prepares to close key intersection to construct \$2.3M roundabout

Indianapolis Business Journal

Lindsey Erdody

8/11/16

Carmel Mayor Jim Brainard would like a roundabout at every possible intersection in the city, and the next construction project scheduled to start Monday will convert one of the burg's most heavily traveled and congested four-way junctions. The intersection of Carmel Drive and Rangeline Road will close Sunday night and remain blocked until mid-November as it is reconstructed into a \$2.3 million, two-lane roundabout. The city received \$1.2 million in federal funding for the project, and the remainder of the cost will be paid for through the \$260 million bond package handled by the Carmel Bond Bank earlier this year for a lengthy list of infrastructure improvements. That list includes a handful of other roundabout projects, including five more on Rangeline at 116th Street, Executive Drive, Fourth Street, City Center Drive and 111th Street planned for 2017 and 2018. "We've had such good experience with our roundabouts," Brainard said. "We're really looking at every single intersection in the city to see if it can be a roundabout."

The city opted to close the intersection completely, rather than keep parts of it open to traffic, as a way to speed up construction. Carmel Engineer Jeremy Kashman estimated it could take two to three times longer to complete the project if the intersection remained open. "I've heard from businesses over and over and over that they'd rather have a short closure," Brainard said. "I just think it's better that we get in there, close it and get it done." As part of right-of-way acquisition for the project, the city purchased property on the northwest corner for \$2.5 million. The Arby's restaurant on the corner has closed as a result, and the city plans to demolish the building. "This was a successful location for us that was popular among our guests. However, we were forced to close due to the proposed roundabout road construction in that area," Arby's spokesman Jason Rollins told IBJ in an email. "We are actively seeking to relocate in Carmel and are meeting with city officials later this week to discuss." <http://www.ijb.com/articles/59878-carmel-prepares-to-close-busy-intersection-to-construct-roundabout>

County considers codifying road cost sharing projects

Times Herald

Mike Grant

8/10/16

Daviess County Commissioners are reviewing a policy that will lay out the exact criteria the county would use in a cost sharing project to upgrade a county road from gravel to pavement. The move comes because of increasing requests for roads to be converted from gravel to pavement. "We've had a lot of input from the public from people who want to cost share and get roads improved to their homes and businesses," said President of the Daviess County Commissioners Michael Taylor. "We have done them in the past and each time they have worked out differently. We need a more direct way of dealing with it with more of a formula to make it uniform." "We get questions all the time on how people can get a road to their home or business upgraded," said County Highway Supervisor Phil Cornelius. "This would lay out a way for it to get done." Currently the county is in the process of ranking its roads for future projects including those that might be converted from gravel to pavement. "We are in the process of getting traffic counts on a lot of country roads, so we're going to come up with a plan toward setting priorities for paving roads." The cost sharing plan would provide a way from people to try and move their roads up on the project list. The amount of county participation would depend on traffic counts, the number of houses that would be impacted by the improvement and whether the improved road would connect to another road or reach a dead end. If the traffic count is more than 200 vehicles per day, the county would participation would be at 80 percent of the project. A traffic count of 150 would equal 70 percent participation by the county. A traffic count above 100 would be 60 percent participation and under 100 vehicles daily would be 50 percent cost participation. The project would also add 2 percent county participation for every household or business on the road and 5 percent if the road connects to another road.

http://www.washtimesherald.com/news/local_news/county-considers-codifying-road-cost-sharing-projects/article_60eaf74d-c805-5ffc-8870-3e4d9a681b4f.html

County needs \$3.2 million in 2017 for bridge project

The Herald Bulletin

Ken de la Bastide

8/10/16

ANDERSON – By the end of 2017 the Madison County Council will be asked to appropriate \$3.2 million for the replacement of the Eisenhower Bridge over White River in downtown Anderson. After seven unsuccessful attempts at securing federal grant funds for the project, the county was awarded \$13.5 million. Charles Leser, Madison County engineer, said the estimated cost of the bridge replacement is \$18 million with the county's share expected to be \$3.5 million. Leser said the actual construction costs are estimated at \$16,270,000 of which the county's share will be \$2,770,000. "We would like the council to provide \$3.2 million for the first year," he said at Tuesday's meeting of the County Council. Leser said that between 2018 and 2020 the county will

need \$1.2 million to cover inspection fees, funds the county should be able to find in the budget. The Indiana Department of Transportation is scheduled to accept bids on the project next April with construction expected to start in December 2017. Leser said the county needs \$230,000 in 2017 to reimburse Anderson Municipal Power & Light for the relocation of power lines and \$200,000 for inspection fees. "We hope the bids will come in lower," Commissioner John Richwine said of the construction costs. Council President Fred Reese said the county is looking at a \$4.5 million obligation for the bridge replacement. A committee consisting of Reese, Council Vice President Steve Sumner and Councilman Clayton Whitson will work on determining how the council will obtain the funding. Leser said it was important that the commissioners have input on the funding stream because of other long-range projects being considered.
http://www.heraldbulletin.com/news/local_news/county-needs-million-in-for-bridge-project/article_9aeb452e-7332-504a-a13b-bf2391b1a133.html

Proposed federal rule could merge planning agencies

NWI Times
Andrew Steele
8/10/16

PORTAGE — The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission and metropolitan planning organizations like it across the country are preparing to fight a proposed federal rule that would require single transportation plans for federally defined urban areas. That includes the Chicago urban area, of which Lake and Porter County are a part. The new rule would require a single Transportation Improvement Program — the list of projects that will receive federal funding — for the entire urban area. Currently, NIRPC maintains its own Transportation Improvement Program for the Lake, Porter and LaPorte county area. "Needless to say, this is pretty substantial for MPOs across the country," NIRPC Executive Director Ty Warner said at Thursday's meeting of NIRPC's Technical Policy Committee. The new rule would also require "a jointly established set of performance targets for the entire urbanized area," according to the Federal Register. Warner said the rule would offer two options when multiple MPOs exist within one urban area. One alternative would be for the MPOs to merge. Or, they could jointly create the planning products necessary for federally funded local projects. That means NIRPC and the Chicago region's planning agency, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, would either have to merge or at the least create joint transportation plans. A full merger would require agreement of the governors of the states involved. The proposed rule was published in the Federal Register on June 27. "It came pretty much out of the blue," Warner said.
http://www.nwitimes.com/business/local/proposed-federal-rule-could-merge-planning-agencies/article_81cc5eab-1175-5985-a148-de4310f29828.html

City officials request sizable road grants

The Herald-Tribune
Debbie Blank
8/9/16

The city applied for two Indiana Department of Transportation Community Crossings grants, Mayor Mike Bettice told the Batesville Redevelopment Commission July 27. A request to upgrade Merkel Road, which leads to Batesville Commerce Center and the shell building in Batesville Industrial Park, was made for almost \$765,000. "We have to match that amount," the mayor explained, reporting \$365,000 will come from money the city received for traffic improvements due to a Senate bill and \$400,000 from Batesville's Rainy Day Fund. The estimate to widen Merkel Road and make it sturdier is about \$1.5 million with \$300,000 or \$400,000 more needed for design and right of ways. Trena Carter, Administrative Resources association, Columbus, municipal programs manager, who advises the commission, said the state wants the grant dollars spent as quickly as possible. Grants are expected to be awarded soon. Of Merkel Road, the mayor said, "We still intend to get it started this year and finish it next year." City officials

submitted another Community Crossings grant application asking for \$100,000 for local road projects. If that funding is obtained, it will be used for typical summer paving. The city will match the request with state dollars that flow into its Motor Vehicle Highway Fund. Then discussion turned to the Sherman House, in the process of being re-opened by new owners Peyton Hughes and Georg Heringer of HPH Hospitality. Hughes reached out to BRC President Andy Saner, who reported, "They're ready to start hiring some of their full-time staff." Carter added, "They did apply for a grant through the state's historic preservation program, but they won't find out (if they get the grant) until November." http://www.batesvilleheraldtribune.com/news/local_news/city-officials-request-sizable-road-grants/article_7256684b-6c18-56e0-a796-d177a833a3ac.html

Local governments await matching road funds

Journal & Courier

Jeremy Ervin

8/8/16

LAFAYETTE, Ind. — State funding could be on the way for local governments seeking to maintain their infrastructure. Last week, the Indiana Department of Transportation announced that 325 Indiana communities applied for its 50/50 matching fund program, Community Crossings. Those communities filed 1,592 applications for local infrastructure projects. The funding comes from HEA1001, signed by Gov. Mike Pence on March 23. Tippecanoe County requested about \$721,000 for a \$1.44 million project on East Old County Road 350 South. The road will be widened and repaved in sections between South County Road 460 East and Newcastle Road. The project was chosen in part due to its economic development potential, according to Tippecanoe County Highway Executive Director Opal Kuhl. "We've had a lot of industries go in by the east side of U.S. 52," Kuhl said. "One of the criteria (the state) looked for was projects supporting economic development in the community, so we thought this was a good fit." Lafayette, Battle Ground, West Lafayette and Shadeland also requested funds. Of these, only Lafayette requested the full \$1 million limit through the program. West Lafayette requested roughly \$797,000. Shadeland requested nearly \$150,000 and Battle Ground applied for about \$80,500, according to INDOT. West Lafayette plans to use the funds across three projects, according to West Lafayette City Engineer Ed Garrison. The projects are mostly maintenance. <http://www.jconline.com/story/news/2016/08/08/local-governments-await-matching-road-funds/88226680/>

Subsidy for mass transit doesn't add up

Indianapolis Star

8/7/16

In the July 31 article, "Mass transit roadblock," Hamilton County Commissioner and transit advocate Christine Altman cites street and bridge expenditures against skeptics' objections that subsidized transit systems don't pay for themselves. She may want to rethink her approach. Based on 5.6 miles per bus ride, the local-tax portion of the IndyGo subsidy per passenger mile will increase from \$0.54 now to \$0.84 in 2021 if IndyGo's Marion County transit plan numbers are to be believed. In contrast, the entire Department of Public Works budget — only a portion of which is actually spent on streets and bridges — barely comes to a penny and a half per local-road passenger mile. Since local-road motorists pay a little over a penny per passenger mile in gas tax, the IndyGo subsidy exceeds any gas-tax shortfall by over two orders of magnitude. There may be a gas-tax shortfall that needs to be addressed. Compared with the proposed IndyGo subsidy, though, it's a mere rounding error. <http://www.indystar.com/story/opinion/readers/2016/08/07/subsidy-mass-transit-doesnt-add-up/88359864/>

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