



# **BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL**

## **Infrastructure Media Summary**

### **August 30, 2016**

#### **State should raise gas tax**

Greenville Daily Reflector  
Kokomo Tribune  
8/28/16

Indiana's gas tax hasn't changed in more than two decades. It was last raised in 1993, when it was upped from 9 cents to 18.4 cents. This was only the second increase since 1959. It was also raised from 4 cents to 9 cents in 1990. A simple purchasing power calculator would say the relative value of 4 cents in 1959 dollars is 33 cents in 2015 dollars. We would need to double our current rate just to keep up with this figure. This shortfall is significant because, like the rest of the country, Indiana is doing quite poorly when it comes to infrastructure grading. Indiana Gov. Mike Pence's own highway commissioner said before resigning last month that the state needs more than \$1 billion in new money each year just to keep its roads in shape. Something must be done — something more than the \$800 million, stop-gap plan passed in the last legislative session that pulls money from other places to spend on roads and bridges. Our gas tax is simply not collecting as much as we once were. The old model is not going to work. Cars are more fuel efficient. People are driving more fuel efficient hybrids and electric vehicles. Perhaps the gas tax should be tied to inflation. Raising the gas tax outright is another possibility. Charging a registration fee based on the number of miles driven is another suggestion. A public information campaign would also be key. Whatever happens, we need a long-term solution, not the short-term thinking of Gov. Pence. It's not as if we can afford to let the roads we have completely deteriorate.

<http://www.reflector.com/Opinion/2016/08/28/State-should-raise-gas-tax.html>

#### **Editorial: Transit plan deserves to roll**

Indianapolis Star  
8/27/16

Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett and City-County Council President Maggie Lewis are surprisingly hesitant to ask voters to support a Nov. 8 referendum that would allow for a major expansion of mass transit in Marion County. But we're not. The IndyStar Editorial Board for many years has strongly supported efforts to improve the city's woeful bus system and eventually build a viable mass transit network in Central Indiana. Approval of the referendum is important to the city's economic future. Why? Let's focus on jobs and economic development. Those are the primary reasons why the Indy Chamber, usually not first in line in support of a tax increase, has come out strongly in favor of the referendum's passage. One obstacle for lower-income workers to move up to better-paying jobs is the inability to get to and from work. Indy's current bus system is one of the worst in the nation, largely because it is so poorly funded. It's often impractical for a person who lives on the east side to use city buses to commute to a job on the northwest side because routes and run times are so limited.

The referendum, which would raise money for bus rapid transit lines and other upgrades, would

go a long way toward fixing that, finally providing the city with enough money to build a high quality bus system. Other cities, such as Cleveland, that have invested in transit have seen new businesses and new housing pop up near bus and train stops as young professionals move into areas served by public transportation. That's an important benefit for Indy as it tries to revive faltering neighborhoods and to retain middle-income residents.

<http://www.indystar.com/story/opinion/editorials/2016/08/27/editorial-transit-plan-deserves-roll/89491712/>

### **County just glad to get extra road money; Bicknell planning its paving projects**

Sun-Commercial

Jess Cohen

8/25/16

Every cloud has a silver lining. Knox County officials learned on Tuesday they would receive far less than the \$1 million they'd applied for as part of the Indiana Department of Transportation's Community Crossings Matching Grant program. INDOT announced that Knox County would receive \$404,600, which won't be enough to fully cover even one of the projects included in its application. But instead of lamenting the news, officials are looking on the bright side. "I'm just grateful that we got what we got," said county highway department superintendent Donnie Mize. "It's free money — you take it and do what you can with it." Over the last three years, county commission president Larry Holscher said, the county has been able to do basically all of its paving with state money. While the \$404,600 wasn't quite what they'd asked for, it's still a boost nonetheless and will allow the county to do more road repairs. "It makes me feel good that we're able to do all this paving with money that's coming from outside the county coffers," Holscher said. "It takes a lot of work to even apply and do all the preliminary work, and when these dollars come in, they don't come in by accident. "I'm actually really proud and grateful to the state for giving us that amount of money." Earlier this year, the General Assembly approved a deal that gave back to cities and counties millions in unspent Local Option Income Tax dollars to use specifically for road repairs. The county received nearly \$1.4 million.

[http://www.suncommercial.com/news/article\\_66ceb4a6-6a59-11e6-8dfe-ef9fe6d4050d.html](http://www.suncommercial.com/news/article_66ceb4a6-6a59-11e6-8dfe-ef9fe6d4050d.html)

### **Millions in grants approved for road construction in southern Indiana**

Times Herald

Mike Grant

8/25/16

Millions of dollars in road and bridge construction are about to become reality for Daviess and surrounding counties, after the Indiana Department of Transportation announced grants for cities, towns and counties in southwest Indiana earlier this week. The 50-50 matching grants are part of a new effort by the Indiana General Assembly to upgrade local roads and bridges in Indiana. The program was co-sponsored by State Rep. Mike Braun (R-Jasper). "Through the Community Crossings program, many local governments are receiving the necessary funds to make immediate road and bridge improvements in their communities," said Braun. "As we look to the upcoming session, it is critical that lawmakers craft a sustainable, data-driven plan that will address state and local infrastructure needs for years to come." Many cities and counties are using Local Option Income Tax funds released earlier this year for road improvements as the local match for the projects. Daviess County is one of those counties and now after receiving a \$1 million grant is preparing to start two major improvement projects. "This is exciting stuff for Daviess County as a whole," said Daviess County Highway Supervisor Phil Smith. "We were pretty confident going in that our projects were solid and would score well. They met the needed traffic counts and the connectivity elements." Daviess County intends to spend the \$2 million on a pavement overlay on CR 650E from U.S. 50 north to CR 800N, and changing CR 550N from gravel to pavement from CR 900E to CR 1200E. "CR 550N has the highest traffic count of any gravel road in the county," said Cornelius. "Normally, when a road gets a traffic count of 300

vehicles a day you should pave it. This one has 500 a day."

[http://www.washtimesherald.com/news/local\\_news/millions-in-grants-approved-for-road-construction-in-southern-indiana/article\\_d6924435-b90d-5b74-8f9a-40dabd405d24.html](http://www.washtimesherald.com/news/local_news/millions-in-grants-approved-for-road-construction-in-southern-indiana/article_d6924435-b90d-5b74-8f9a-40dabd405d24.html)

### **Porter County creates rainy day fund for roads, avoids wheel tax**

Chesterton Tribune

Jeff Schultz

8/25/16

Still taking advantage of the Indiana General Assembly's matching road grants program, the Porter County Commissioners on Tuesday decided to create a rainy day fund that would pay for more local road projects. The Board of Commissioners voted 3-0 in favor of moving \$5.5 million of the County's Major Moves money to the new fund as well as about \$1.4 million the County received in the local option income tax distributions to local governments. That makes about \$6.9 million available for road grants, Commissioner Jeff Good, R-Center, said. Attending the meeting was State Rep. Ed Soliday, R-Valparaiso, who is chair of the Indiana House's Transportation Committee and State Sen. Ed Charbonneau, R-Valparaiso, to share the purpose of the legislation. With the crumbling state of local roads and bridges, state lawmakers wanted to give counties a way to take care of their infrastructure, Soliday said. "We'll give you the tools, but we thought there needs to be some local accountability," he said. The legislation passed earlier this year makes available \$194 million in state funds that can be matched over the next two years. This year, local governments applied for a total of \$147 million for projects, Soliday said. Each year going forward, \$100 million in state funding will be available for local roads. With the money it has available, Soliday said it appears that the County "doesn't need a wheel tax." Municipalities like Valparaiso and Portage have opted for wheel taxes, which are charged when vehicles are registered, to pay for local road projects.

[http://www.chestertontribune.com/Porter%20County/porter\\_county\\_creates\\_rainy\\_day.htm](http://www.chestertontribune.com/Porter%20County/porter_county_creates_rainy_day.htm)

### **La Porte receives \$1 million to fix roads**

Herald Argus

Jessica Campbell

8/24/16

La PORTE — For the last three days, more than 300 Indiana cities, towns and communities were awarded \$160 million for road paving projects. On Wednesday the entourage of INDOT employees and state representatives, including Lt. Gov. Eric Holcomb, arrived in Northwest Indiana and made their way to La Porte, carrying a very large check. INDOT Commissioner Brandye Hendrickson accompanied Holcomb in presenting the anticipated \$1 million check to La Porte Mayor Blair Milo at the Fire Station 1 building. "It is really a celebratory week for INDOT and the 330 plus communities around Indiana," Hendrickson said. "Today we are working our way around Northern Indiana, which is the largest in terms of numbers of applications and dollars awarded, so we saved the best for last." "I am tremendously excited," Milo said, after receiving the check. "This is a culmination of a lot of work that went into this, the bulk of this year and a lot of last year." State Rep. Ed Soliday, R-Valparaiso, made an appearance at the presentation, praising Milo on her leadership and willingness to serve her community and state. "Milo was one of the leading mayors always saying, 'How can I help?' and willing to step forward," Soliday said, referring to the many transportation discussions and meetings Milo went to in Indianapolis over the last few months. "Having mayors like her is great for the state and great for your city." He then introduced the Holcomb. Indiana will be investing millions of dollars to more than 770 projects across the state, Holcomb said, listing off projects including new pavement, rehabilitated bridges and roads, environmental issues, etc. Holcomb said Indiana has continued to invest in infrastructure every year for the last three years and the Community Crossing Grant through INDOT is one more way to continue that pattern.

[http://www.heraldargus.com/news/la-porte-receives-million-to-fix-roads/article\\_139adbe3-8a5b-](http://www.heraldargus.com/news/la-porte-receives-million-to-fix-roads/article_139adbe3-8a5b-)

[5bec-99ba-23038843925a.html](#)

---

[www.buildindianacouncil.org](http://www.buildindianacouncil.org)