



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

September 18, 2014

Anderson bridge replacement denied grant money

The News-Dispatch
9/18/14

ANDERSON, Ind. (AP) — Local officials say they're moving ahead with plans to replace a main bridge over the White River into downtown Anderson despite the project being rejected for a federal grant. The 45-year-old Eisenhower Bridge wasn't included among grants announced this week by the U.S. Department of Transportation. A total of \$584 million was awarded for 72 projects. The Herald Bulletin reports it is the third time that federal officials have denied grant money for the Anderson project. Madison County officials had hoped for a grant to pay 80 percent of the estimated \$15 million cost to replace the bridge. County Commissioner John Richwine says the county might sell bonds to finance the project in the city about 25 miles northeast of Indianapolis.

[Anderson bridge replacement denied grant money - TheNewsDispatch.com: Indiana State News](http://www.thenewsdispatch.com/indiana-state-news/anderson-bridge-replacement-denied-grant-money)

Elkhart County Highway Department doing well despite economic woes

The Elkhart Truth
Sarah Duis
9/17/14

GOSHEN — The Elkhart County Highway Department is doing more with less these days. During budget hearings Wednesday, Sept. 17, Jeff Taylor said his department has made big cuts in recent years and is running more efficiently — a feat that few other county departments have been able to pull off. One strategy has been cutting down on personnel. In 2013, the department had 77.5 positions, including those that were open. In 2015 they're budgeting for just 42.5 open positions. Ten of the department's drivers were let go in March. The cuts drew some public outcry but are expected to save the department at least \$400,000 a year. "Our employees are doing more than ever before," Taylor said. Highway workers this summer chip-sealed 75 miles of road in 10 working days, an unheard of amount of work for the number of staff on the job, Taylor said. In June, the department changed the way it receives work orders (taking care of potholes and moving trees out of the road, for example). Now, it takes staff about 24 hours to respond to a work order compared to seven days or more in 2013. And some operations have been outsourced, while others have been moved in-house — whichever saves the department money. There are also plans to ramp up paving efforts throughout the county. It's not all good news, though.

[Elkhart County Highway Department doing well despite economic woes - Elkhart Truth](http://www.elkharttruth.com/Elkhart-County-Highway-Department-doing-well-despite-economic-woes)

INDOT delays Happy Hollow Road reconstruction

Lafayette Journal & Courier

Ron Wilkins
9/17/14

The Indiana Department of Transportation stomped on the brakes for the reconstruction of Happy Hollow Road, which was scheduled to start this week. West Lafayette City Engineer Dave Buck isn't pleased. He said the project was bid in early July and that federal funds should have been set aside seven weeks before the bidding — which was fiscal year 2014. But before the work could begin this week, INDOT ran out of money for local projects in fiscal year 2015, which runs from July 1, 2014, to June 30, 2015. "Happy Hollow was supposed to have funds obligated in their fiscal year 2014," Buck said. "They're sucking that into the 2015 list." "The funds were obligated," said John Thomas, assistant director of transportation for the Tippecanoe County Area Plan Commission. "But the purchase order was not written. And now they've withheld funding." Buck explained that a portion of the state's federal gasoline tax revenue is earmarked for local projects, and INDOT is the oversight agency in charge of these federally funded projects. Local metro areas have hoops to jump through to meet INDOT's criteria, Buck said. But when local agencies — coordinated here by the Area Plan Commission — fall behind, INDOT has a wad of unspent cash that it must either spend or return to Washington, D.C. While backlogged projects catch up, other local federally funded projects continue to come on line in a timely manner, such as the Happy Hollow project, Buck said. This means that backlogged projects, as well as well-managed projects, are coming due at the same time. The money for the backlogged projects was already spent to avoid returning it to the federal government.

[INDOT delays Happy Hollow Road reconstruction](#)

Rapid transit by 2017 for Indy, Carmel? Hurdles remain

Indianapolis Star

John Tuohy and Brian Eason

9/17/14

Officials said Tuesday a \$2 million federal grant could be the key to unlocking the vault on tens of millions of dollars for a one-of-a-kind, all-electric bus rapid transit route. But building the \$100 million first leg of Central Indiana's regional transportation system will require cooperation among local governments and financial commitments from both lawmakers and taxpayers. And consensus is far from a sure thing. "This is a substantial investment," said Sean Northrup, assistant executive director of the Metropolitan Planning Organization. Mayor Greg Ballard and mayors from three suburbs expressed confidence the project could get started as early as 2017, though. "This will put us on the map, give us a leg up," Ballard said at a news conference to announce the grant to study the first of five routes in a larger \$1.2 billion transportation plan, known as IndyConnect. "Not long ago people questioned the government wisdom of the cultural trail, but now we are seeing it pay off." The grant requires a \$1 million match from the participating cities and will be used for environmental and engineering studies on a 28-mile route from Westfield to Greenwood. That report will be used to apply for a larger federal grant to build the route, said Ann Gremling, executive director of the MPO. U.S. Rep. Andre Carson, D-Indianapolis, who helped secure the \$2 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Growth (TIGER) grant, said he did not know how much federal money the city could snag for construction. That would depend on the cost estimate in the study, he said.

[Rapid transit by 2017 for Indy, Carmel? Hurdles remain](#)