



# **BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL**

## **Infrastructure Media Summary**

### **November 5, 2013**

#### **Ind. 49 bridge to be rebuilt in 2014**

NWI Times  
Phil Wieland  
11/3/13

PLEASANT TOWNSHIP | The historic bridge on Ind. 49 over the Kankakee River, which has been restricted to one lane for almost two years, is slated to be rebuilt in 2014. Matt Deitchley, spokesman for the Indiana Department of Transportation LaPorte District, said the bridge at the Jasper/Porter county line was closed after engineers determined in early 2012 it needed a full deck replacement. A signal at each end allows only one direction of traffic through at a time, and it has a weight limit. The long time to start the repair spawned rumors the money was being spent on other projects for more politically connected areas, but Deitchley said that is not the case. He said INDOT had a plan, but when the local communities were approached about it, they wanted a higher weight limit because of the truck traffic. The latest design for a 36-ton limit was presented at a public hearing in September. Deitchley said the department also wants to preserve the historic truss design of the bridge, so it will not be completely torn down. The deck will be replaced while the original look will be maintained. The project is on the department's schedule to open bids and award the contract early in 2014 and have the project completed during one construction season, he said.

[Ind. 49 bridge to be rebuilt in 2014](#)

#### **Illiana Expressway meeting in Gary draws few takers**

NWI Times  
Keith Benman  
11/1/13

The first of four public comment meetings on the Illiana Expressway to be conducted by the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission drew only a few people to Indiana University Northwest on Saturday. The meetings are being held to take public comment on the state's request to include the expressway in NIRPC's transportation plans. The full NIRPC board will vote on including the expressway in those plans on Dec. 12. Without an affirmative vote by the board, the expressway cannot go forward. A second public comment meeting scheduled for 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Lowell Middle School on Tuesday is expected to draw a crowd because of the community's proximity to the proposed route for the 47-mile toll road. It would run from Interstate 65 in Indiana to Interstate 55 in Illinois. The public can ask questions of NIRPC staff and Indiana Department of Transportation officials at the meetings. People can comment in writing. The meetings are not open-microphone hearings. People can also comment by e-mailing or writing to NIRPC. Former truck driver and avid conservationist Mike Echterling, of Highland, came to Saturday's meeting to tell why he is opposed to the proposed expressway. "It's basically everything about it," he said. "It's hard to separate the issues. It's a wildlife barrier. It's a

watershed issue. And it's a business issue."

[Illiana Expressway meeting in Gary draws few takers : Gary News](#)

### **Light Rail proposal appears dead**

WISH TV

Jim Sheila

10/31/13

INDIANAPOLIS (WISH) - The ongoing mass transit debate at the Statehouse will lead to a new proposal that will concentrate on improved bus service. Visions of light rail service to Hamilton County are evaporating quickly. A video on the Indy Connect website spells out the hopes of transportation planners in Central Indiana. They would still like to seek a light rail line from downtown Indianapolis to Noblesville. But there's a different message being delivered in a study committee formed by the General Assembly and transportation planner Ron Gifford of the Central Indiana Corporate Partnership gets it. When asked if light rail is out of the question, he responded quickly by saying simply, "Sounds like it." At least one committee member is still a fan of high speed trains. "One of the great advantages of a light rail, which we're all trying to downplay," said Rep. Ed DeLaney (D-Indianapolis,) "is experience shows if you put in a rail line you're not likely to move it next week." But the \$1.3 billion price tag for light rail service is hard to sell. "Part of our job," said Sen. Luke Kenley (R-Noblesville,) "is to say what can we afford in this arena?" The alternative is already there on the website. It's a concept known as bus rapid transit, buses that resemble trains operating on designated lines. "We're going to see that bus rapid transit is the most economical option for that corridor," says Gifford, "and that will be the recommendation at the local level anyway." The good news for transportation planners is that there is a consensus that improvement is a must. "The mass transit system, unfortunately, in Indianapolis does not serve the people," said Sen. Brent Waltz (R-Greenwood,) "in the way I think we would all like it to." The mass transit study committee will develop recommendations in November or December. The goal is to have the General Assembly approve the recommendations next year, even though it has rejected a mass transit plan in each of the last three years.

[Light Rail proposal appears dead](#)

### **WLCC to consider funding Amtrak portion**

WLFI

Dan Klein

10/31/13

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. (WLFI) - West Lafayette City Council is scheduled to vote to put their money where their mouth is when it comes to providing Amtrak service. It's one of the final pieces to a story that News 18 has been covering since late last year. The Indiana Department of Transportation, along with several communities including West Lafayette, has agreed to pick up some of the funding for the Hoosier State Line which would otherwise have been discontinued by Amtrak earlier this month. West Lafayette's portion of the total is \$200,000, or about \$16,000 a month in 2014. "It was made abundantly clear to us that folks want to keep Amtrak in our community. It's an essential service that could be improved, but it's one that we have grown dependent upon. In West Lafayette, we're a little more dependent upon it because of our international population," said Mayor John Dennis. Dennis adds an average of 60 people from the area ride the Hoosier State Line each of the four times a week the train runs, most from West Lafayette and Purdue. Council is slated to vote on the funding Monday, Nov. 4. On Thursday, Nov. 7, Council will vote for a second time on the annexation proposal near the new U.S. 231.

[WLCC to consider funding Amtrak portion | WLFI - West Lafayette, Indiana](#)