



# **BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL**

## **Infrastructure Media Summary**

**November 25, 2014**

### **Fuel Tax Changes Recommended To Help INDOT Funding Needs**

Indiana Public Media  
Brandon Smith  
11/24/14

The Indiana Department of Transportation is in the middle of a comprehensive two-year study to determine its future infrastructure funding needs. But Chamber of Commerce CEO Kevin Brinegar says there are some changes the legislature can make right away that will help move the state in the right direction. He says that includes some sort of assessment on alternative-fuel vehicles, whose drivers don't pay as much in fuel taxes as most people. "Like North Carolina does – North Carolina imposes a \$50 fee on hybrid vehicles and a \$100 fee on electric vehicles for the privilege of using the roads and to pay their fair share for the damage done," Brinegar said. Brinegar says the state should also link gas tax increases to inflation. Speaker Brian Bosma says he wishes the legislature had done that 15 years ago when his caucus proposed the idea. "The gas tax is difficult," Bosma said. "It's a difficult animal to deal with because gas prices remain high, even though we had this little anti-spike here in the last week. So we have to find a solution on that." Bosma says lawmakers will also consider diverting more money from the sales tax on gasoline directly to road funding.

[Fuel Tax Changes Recommended To Help INDOT Funding Needs | News - Indiana Public Media](#) Also, [Raise gas tax Chamber says | The Journal Gazette](#)

### **As deadline looms, crews prepare to reopen U.S. 31**

Indianapolis Business Journal  
Andrea Muirragui Davis  
11/24/14

Crews are scrambling to reopen U.S. 31 in Carmel by Thursday—giving beleaguered business owners in the construction zone another reason to be thankful this week. But whether they meet the deadline is up to Mother Nature: The remaining work includes striping the new travel lanes, which requires dry, non-frigid conditions, said Nathan Riggs, a spokesman for the Indiana Department of Transportation. "We're confident we will have windows of opportunity to get the work done before Thanksgiving," he said Friday. "That's what we promised, and we intend to keep our promise." INDOT closed more than a mile of the highway in April to accelerate construction of overpasses and interchanges that are part of a \$1.2 billion plan to upgrade U.S. 31 from Indianapolis to South Bend. The Hamilton County portion of the project is expected to be complete by the end of next year, Riggs said. The roadwork diverted more than 50,000 vehicles from that stretch of U.S. 31 daily, straining businesses that depend on drive-by traffic. In July, the city of Carmel rolled out a social media campaign dubbed #31bites to help local shops and restaurants attract customers. Even when the barricades come down, they'll have to endure the new normal: Motorists no longer will have U.S. 31 access at 126th Street/Carmel Drive, a largely

commercial area. Instead, they'll have to exit at 116th Street or 136th Street/Main Street.  
[With deadline looming, crews prepare to reopen U.S. 31 | 2014-11-24 | Indianapolis Business Journal | IBJ.com](#)

### **Financing strategy for roads hits bump**

Indianapolis Business Journal  
Kathleen McLaughlin  
11/22/14

A standard-bearer of public-private partnerships since former Gov. Mitch Daniels' toll road lease, Indiana might be turning away from at least one form of the P3s. Indiana Department of Transportation Commissioner Karl Browning doesn't think the state should commit to any more so-called availability payments, which financed Indiana's share of the Ohio River Bridges project and section five of Interstate 69. "It's a lot like borrowing," Browning said in a recent conference call with the Indiana Chamber of Commerce. "I would be more than cautious about the notion of doing public-private partnerships of the nature of some of them that we've done." Browning's remarks might come as a surprise, considering the way Daniels, his former boss, embraced P3s. Appointed to his second stint as INDOT chief by Gov. Mike Pence, Browning is concerned about debt payments consuming too much of a limited budget, which is needed to tackle a mountain of road and bridge work. The term "availability payment" is P3 industry lingo for annual payments that come from available budgeted revenue sources. A developer can use a government's long-term commitment of annual payments to finance a project.

[Financing strategy for roads hits bump | 2014-11-22 | Indianapolis Business Journal | IBJ.com](#)

### **Five years later, no Cline Ave. bridge in sight**

NWI Times  
Keith Benman  
11/22/14

EAST CHICAGO | Five years after the closure of the Cline Avenue Bridge only chilly breezes and the empty promises of state officials hang in the air over the Indiana Harbor and Ship Canal. There have been no visible signs of progress on building a private toll bridge there, but the company that owns the right-of-way continues to claim a new bridge is just around the corner. "United Bridge Partners is excited about the new Cline Avenue Bridge," wrote FIGG Bridge Companies CEO Linda Figg in a Tuesday email in response to a question on when construction would start. "We are obtaining permits for construction and anticipate having these soon in order to begin construction as soon as possible." In answer to a subsequent inquiry, Figg said the permits needed are from the Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Coast Guard, which have jurisdiction over the canal as a navigable waterway. According to an agreement Figg signed in August 2012, her company must use "commercially reasonable efforts" to open the new bridge within four years of obtaining all permits. In February 2013, East Chicago Mayor Anthony Copeland said a new bridge could be going up by April. In October of that year, Figg told a Times reporter construction of a new Cline Avenue Bridge should start in the first half of 2014.

[Five years later, no Cline Ave. bridge in sight](#)