



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

November 4, 2014

Ridership drop another blow for Indiana rail line

WISH-TV
11/2/14

LAFAYETTE, Ind. (AP) — Indiana's struggling Amtrak service faces more challenges in its quest to operate beyond January with news that revenue and ridership are falling at a time when train travel nationwide has risen. Amtrak announced Monday that ridership and revenue were up across the country during the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30. But the Hoosier State line that runs from Indianapolis to Chicago saw a 10 percent decline in revenue and a nearly 8 percent drop in ridership, the Journal & Courier reported. The figures further cloud the future of the troubled Indiana line. Congress passed legislation in 2008 that took effect last fall, ending funding for passenger rail routes less than 750 miles long, including the Hoosier State line. Amtrak's long-distance Cardinal service that operates three days a week between Cincinnati and Chicago, via Indianapolis, was not affected by the loss of federal funding. The Indiana Department of Transportation and seven local partners, including Indianapolis, Lafayette and Crawfordsville, agreed to pay Amtrak a \$2.7 million subsidy to keep the Hoosier State line running for one year last October. INDOT and those communities are funding the line through Jan. 31 under a four-month extension. After that, Chicago-based private contractor Corridor Capital LLC is supposed to take over management under an agreement with the Indiana Department of Transportation that has yet to be finalized. State officials have been working to improve the amenities on the Hoosier State line in hopes of attracting more riders. Amtrak CEO Joseph Boardman rode the line in late September, stopping along the way to announce free on-board Wi-Fi, snack and drink service and business-class seating. But he noted then that additional improvements, including more than one daily departure from Indianapolis, would take "a capital investment for the future."

[Ridership drop another blow for Indiana rail line | WISH-TV](#)

Soil issue raises road cost

The Journal Gazette
Dave Gong
11/1/14

Unforeseen challenges to part of an ongoing construction project to widen and pave Flutter Road will cost the county more than expected. During their meeting Friday, the Allen County commissioners approved a \$682,655 increase to the project, raising the cost to about \$7.5 million. The engineer's estimate for the project was \$6.8 million, and the project was originally bid at \$6.75 million. However, Commissioner Linda Bloom said that since the county is splitting the cost of the work with the Indiana Department of Transportation, the county will have to pay only 20 percent of the increase, or \$136,531. The state will pay the remaining 80 percent, she said. That means the county's share of the project cost is now about \$1.5 million. Two miles of a 3-mile

stretch of the project – from Maplecrest Road to Schwartz Road – is where construction ran into problems, said Bill Hartman, director of the Allen County Highway Department. Subpar soil conditions – the soil beneath the roadway was too unstable to support the weight of the vehicles going over it – under that stretch of the road is the reason for the increased costs, Hartman said. “There were some mitigation items put into the contract for soils that seemed to be subpar, but it just wasn’t near enough to take care of the problem,” Hartman said. The typical process used to mitigate problems with bad soil includes treating it with lime or cement for stability, Hartman said. Geogrid material is then laid down, with stone on top of that, followed by asphalt. Geogrid is a plastic grid used to reinforce soil beneath roads or structures. Often, Hartman said, that’s enough to stabilize a road. “We’ve had great success with that in a lot of other locations, but in this location, it just didn’t work,” he said. “We’ve had a very unusual situation with this project.” [Soil issue raises road cost | The Journal Gazette](#)

Indiana: Final path of I-69 could be 3 years away

The Elkhart Truth
11/1/14

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. (AP) — Indiana transportation officials say it could be three years before the state determines the exact route of Interstate 69 from Martinsville to Indianapolis. The state says no decision can be made until a Tier 2 environmental impact statement is completed. That process is expected to take two to three years, The Herald-Times reported. A study of the 142-mile interstate expansion from Evansville to Indianapolis in 2004 recommended that the stretch from Martinsville to Indianapolis follow the path of Ind. 37 to I-465. But legislation passed in 2006 upended those plans by including language intended to prevent I-69 from passing through Perry Township in Marion County. Ind. 37 goes through Perry Township. Indiana Department of Transportation spokesman Will Wingfield was not willing to speculate where the interstate could go if it doesn’t follow Ind. 37. “That’s for the analysis to tell us,” he said. The state used money from a 2006 deal to lease the Indiana Toll Road to pay the 67-mile stretch of I-69 that opened in 2012 from near Evansville to the Crane Naval Surface Warfare Center southwest of Bloomington. Construction is underway on a 27-mile section between Bloomington and Crane that is expected to open by the end of 2015. Construction on the fifth section of the highway, from Evansville to Martinsville, is expected to ramp up later this fall, with the section open to traffic by the end of 2016. Work will begin in the Bloomington area and continue north to Martinsville, the Evansville Courier & Press reported.

[Indiana: Final path of I-69 could be 3 years away - Elkhart Truth](#)

High-speed rail plans mean Gary jobs, supporter says

NWI Times
Keith Benman
10/30/14

Region residents Thursday heard about an ambitious passenger rail plan that could cut Amtrak’s travel time between Chicago and Detroit by two hours and could affect Northwest Indiana communities for better and for worse. The Federal Railroad Administration’s hearing at Gary’s Genesis Convention Center also gave residents a chance to voice their views on the \$2.4 billion to \$3 billion rail project. “There is a lot of work that has to be done, and with that there would be a lot of jobs,” said the Rev. Asher Harris, of the Northwest Indiana Federation of Interfaith Organizations. “And hopefully there would be some economic development around those routes. And we want those in the cities.” In fact, all four routes under consideration in a Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac Corridor Tier I environmental impact study would pass through Gary and other Lake County cities. Three of those routes would pass just north of the Gary/Chicago International Airport, where there have long been plans to directly connect the airport with high-speed passenger rail. A new station is contemplated for Northwest Indiana in the Tier I study, although no specific location is given. The study contemplates many of the route improvements being

completed by 2025, with full build-out scheduled for 2035. Some projects could start as early as next year. Residents also wanted to know about any downsides to the project, such as the addition of more or larger rail crossings. "We have four tracks already at the entrance to our town, and if high-speed rail comes in, we'll have two more," Ogden Dunes Town Councilman Tom Clouser said. The Indiana Department of Transportation has contributed \$200,000 toward the \$4 million Tier I study, according to INDOT spokesman Will Wingfield. No further funds have yet been secured for the Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac Corridor project.

http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/lake/gary/high-speed-rail-plans-mean-gary-jobs-supporter-says/article_f8e92b26-0124-5a79-bd6b-b54b140f1388.html

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