



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

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\$100 million rail upgrade could mean more trains, more delays

WISH-TV
Bennett Haeberle
12/15/14

INDIANAPOLIS (WISH) — Thousands of Hoosiers could see more trains – and longer wait times – if two rails companies earn the federal government’s approval to upgrade a 106-mile stretch of track that runs between Indianapolis and Louisville. That blessing could come in the next month or two. And it could mean some areas of Indiana would see up to 15 trains per day. Supporters argue the long-term effects will lead to jobs and improved economic development in central and southern Indiana. But opponents – both residents and at least one elected leader – worry the increased number of trains could lead to bigger inconveniences and even threaten public safety. Under the project that still needs the approval of the Surface Transportation Board, railroad giant CSX wants to spend up to \$100 million to upgrade the tracks – replacing shorter sections with longer, fused rail. Currently, the trains along the Louisville-Indiana Railroad have weight restrictions of less than 263,000 pounds and are limited to traveling no faster than 25 miles per hour – figures that are well under industry standards, according to John Goldman, President of the Louisville-Indiana railroad. The rail improvements would mean CSX could share the line with the L&I Railroad. It would also mean trains would be able to travel as fast as 49 miles per hour in certain areas and cars could carry loads closer to 286,000 pounds, Goldman said.

[\\$100 million rail upgrade could mean more trains, more delays | WISH-TV](#)

Funding for road repairs expected to fall short

The Indy Channel
Katie Heinz
12/15/14

INDIANAPOLIS - State officials said they do not have enough money over the next 10 years to make desperately needed repairs to roads and bridges. The demand for maintenance and repair is only expected to grow as Indiana’s roads and bridges continue to age. More than half of the bridges controlled by the state are at least 50 years old. The average life expectancy is 75 years. "Looking over the long term, we’re concerned about the ability to continue to maintain our roads and bridges at a level that taxpayers have come to expect," Indiana Department of Transportation spokesman Will Wingfield said. INDOT officials said that at the current funding levels, the condition of the state’s infrastructure will deteriorate enough for any driver to notice within five years. One of eight roads and bridges will be in poor condition in a decade. "Safety isn't really the primary issue -- we have a term for unsafe bridges -- that's closed. So if there is a safety issue, we'll certainly go in and address it once we're aware of it. Really, it's just potholes and what kinds of wear and tear that will have on vehicles," Wingfield said.

[Funding for road repairs expected to fall short - TheIndyChannel.com](#)

INDOT Holding Steady On Road Funding

Indiana Public Media

Brandon Smith

12/12/14

The Indiana Department of Transportation says the cost of maintaining Indiana's roads is substantial and growing, while the revenue streams used to pay for those repairs are decreasing. INDOT estimates the state will need at least \$150 million more a year in the next 10 years to adequately maintain its roads and bridges. Lawmakers expect a study that's being conducted to help answer its questions about future funding sources, but that study won't be ready until later next year, well after a new budget is passed. Senate Appropriations Chair Luke Kenley, R-Noblesville, says the study should answer other questions, too. "One of the reasons that we're waiting is to get the information on what we think these major projects that we have on the table are in the mix and I'm comfortable that we can wait until we see what that is," Kenley says. House Transportation Committee Chair Ed Soliday, R-Valparaiso, says because the study will potentially answer so many questions, it will be important for the upcoming budget to simply maintain the status quo in road funding and not go much further. "I would hate to see us do something...throw something on the wall, see if it sticks and say, 'That answers it,'" Soliday says. The General Assembly will begin writing the state budget in January.

[INDOT Holding Steady On Road Funding | News - Indiana Public Media](#)

Mayors want NIRPC to take lead on bus transit

NWI Times

Keith Benman

12/11/14

The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission may be ready to pick up the mantle of regional bus champion, following a call from Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. on Thursday. "We are talking about spending \$600 million on the South Shore extension, but we are not talking about buses at all," McDermott said. "For \$600 million you could run buses all over the region for 50 years." McDermott said it is common practice on Illinois's Metra commuter rail system to always plan bus service in conjunction with expansions, and the same should be done here. Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson supported McDermott's call for a special NIRPC committee to promote regional bus service and said that in her mind, the South Shore extension is definitely about bus service as well. Hobart Mayor and NIRPC Chairman Brian Snedecor said bus transit is something everyone has to get serious about, as the need for it increases as the region's population ages. McDermott said he expects incoming NIRPC Chairwoman Blair Milo, who is mayor of LaPorte, to take up consideration of the committee idea in January.

[Mayors want NIRPC to take lead on bus transit](#)

Faulty traffic projections, 'overaggressive' financing plan might have doomed Indiana Toll Road deal

The Elkhart Truth

Tim Vandenack

12/11/14

The deal privatizing operation of the Indiana Toll Road had its flaws. It might have put too much risk on the private investors financing the 2006 arrangement. It might have relied on faulty traffic projections. It seems to have relied on a financing scheme that left investors, though not the state of Indiana, with an unexpectedly high debt load. Transportation writers, experts and financial analysts across the country have zeroed in on the \$3.8 billion Indiana plan in the wake of the September bankruptcy filing by the roadway's operator, the Indiana Toll Road Concession Co. It's become a case study, a cautionary tale, even, in the national debate over the wisdom of privatizing operation of public roads. The upshot of it all? Public-private arrangements in public

roadway operation might have a place. But the Indiana Toll Road model — which, in the aftermath of the bankruptcy, state officials have lauded as leaving the government unscathed — might be a relic of the past, in favor of alternatives that put increased risk on governmental entities. Another takeaway — overly optimistic traffic projections seem to be a common factor among numerous public-private road projects.

[Faulty traffic projections, 'overaggressive' financing plan might have doomed Indiana Toll Road deal - Elkhart Truth](#)

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