



# **BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL**

## **Infrastructure Media Summary**

### **December 2, 2014**

#### **County bridge problems are growing, but the same can't be said for the money to pay for repairs**

The News-Sentinel  
Kevin Leininger  
12/2/14

When the Allen County Commissioners imposed weight limits on seven bridges last month -- they're expected to do the same with two others this week -- it seemed unremarkable enough. And, in a way, it was: Like almost everything else, bridges wear out, and weight limits prolong their life while protecting the public. But the limits are deceptively ominous, and not just because they double the number of bridges off-limits to heavy vehicles. Although the cost of repairs has not been determined, county officials do know this much: Unless something changes, the money may not be there because more than one chicken is coming home to roost. "It takes about \$6 million a year" to maintain Allen County's nearly 400 non-federal bridge, said Highway Director Bill Hartman, who noted that the last major bridge-building boom came in the 1970s -- meaning their expected life of 50 years is nearing an end and could produce higher-than-usual repair bills at the same time sufficient revenues are in doubt because of past decisions. One of those, as I first reported in May, involves economic development along the \$40 million Maplecrest Road extension. Or, rather, the lack of it. When the extension from Lake Avenue south to Indiana 930 opened two years ago, it was touted as such a potential job-creator that construction bonds were to be paid in large part by companies moving to the area.

[County bridge problems are growing, but the same can't be said for the money to pay for repairs - News-Sentinel.com](http://www.news-sentinel.com)

#### **INDOT chief urges new look at road project funding**

WANE  
11/29/14

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Concerns about rising debt payments are prompting Indiana's top transportation official to seek new ways to finance road projects. Department of Transportation Commissioner Karl Browning told the Indianapolis Business Journal he doesn't think the state should commit to any more "availability payments," a type of public-private partnership used to finance section five of the Interstate 69 project and Indiana's share of the Ohio River bridges project. "It's a lot like borrowing," Browning told the Indiana Chamber of Commerce recently. "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." Availability payments are 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. The funding mechanism is gaining popularity as governments look to finance projects that can't be tied to a dedicated funding stream, such as tolls. Indianapolis, for example, plans to use availability payments to finance a criminal justice

complex that could cost as much as \$600 million. While Indiana isn't carrying the debt from the Ohio River Bridges project or I-69 on its books, the deals still mean INDOT has to set aside money for 35 years.

[INDOT chief urges new look at road project funding | WANE](#)

### **Raise gas tax, Chamber says**

Niki Kelly

The Journal Gazette

11/25/14

INDIANAPOLIS – Every year the state of Indiana loses ground on road funding. And every year lawmakers resist big changes. But the Indiana Chamber of Commerce isn't giving up yet. It is pushing for more state sales tax dollars to be dedicated to roads. Even bigger, the Chamber wants to index the state gas tax to inflation, meaning it would rise gradually on its own in the future. But the latter would no doubt be seen as a tax increase. “We have a national crisis on transportation funding,” said Senate President Pro Tem David Long, R-Fort Wayne. “I think we will continue to talk about it but there does not seem to be a lot of support for a gas tax increase.” Indiana currently brings in about \$800 million a year in gasoline and fuel use taxes. But as cars become more efficient the gas tax yields fewer dollars to maintain the roads. And the Indiana Department of Transportation is always juggling how to allocate available funds between maintenance and new construction. Lawmakers this year changed how the gas tax was collected and calculated. It now fluctuates monthly based on the price of gas. In recent months the highest price was 22.9 cents per gallon and the December rate of 17 cents per gallon is the lowest.

[The Journal Gazette](#)

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