



# **BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL**

## **Infrastructure Media Summary**

**December 15, 2016**

### **A STEP CLOSER: Silver Creek railroad bridge in Clarksville to be replaced in vital Ohio River Greenway project link**

News and Tribune  
Elizabeth Beilman  
12/15/16

CLARKSVILLE — A portion of the Ohio River Greenway that's been in the works for a decade is finally coming to fruition soon. The 1.5-mile section that includes the old railroad bridge over Silver Creek is close to construction after bids showing promising numbers were opened Wednesday. It will connect portions already completed or under construction in Clark and Floyd counties, serving as the missing link in between. "When this project is finished, we're going to basically be going to the full 7.5 miles from downtown Jeffersonville to downtown New Albany," Clarksville Parks and Recreation Superintendent Brian Kaluzny said. Although the bridge can't be saved for cost reasons, Kaluzny said its replacement will be an attractive feature of the greenway. Clarksville officials traveled to Indianapolis on Wednesday for the bid opening conducted by the Indiana Department of Transportation, which is overseeing the project. Eighty percent of the project will be funded by the Federal Highway Administration, with Clarksville footing the remaining 20 percent of the bill. All four construction proposals cited cost under the \$5.25 million budget. As INDOT will be contracting one of the companies, it's up to state leaders to choose a construction firm for the job. [http://www.newsandtribune.com/news/a-step-closer-silver-creek-railroad-bridge-in-clarksville-to/article\\_83925256-c246-11e6-ac25-e3ead2e20459.html](http://www.newsandtribune.com/news/a-step-closer-silver-creek-railroad-bridge-in-clarksville-to/article_83925256-c246-11e6-ac25-e3ead2e20459.html)

### **Editorial: Let's raise the gas tax**

Kokomo Tribune  
12/14/16

As we reported in July 2015, Indiana's gas tax hasn't changed in more than two decades. The last time it was raised was in 1993, when it was upped from 9 cents to 18.4 cents. This was only the second increase since 1959, as it was also raised from 4 cents to 9 cents in 1990. This rate has not kept up with inflation. We did some simple math with the help of the website Measuring Worth, and here's what we found: A simple purchasing power calculator would say the relative value of 4 cents in 1959 dollars is 33 cents in 2014 dollars. (This answer is obtained by multiplying 4 cents by the percentage increase in the consumer price index from 1959 to 2014.) We would need to double our current rate just to keep with this figure. This shortfall is significant because, like the rest of the country, Indiana is doing quite poorly when it comes to infrastructure grading. In 2013, the American Society of Civil Engineers gave the United States a "D" grade for its infrastructure, while Indiana received a slightly better grade, receiving a "D-plus." What's more, the state may be facing a half-a-billion-dollar funding gap for upkeep on bridges and highways already in existence. And that's not counting future endeavors of the Indiana Department of Transportation. Something must be done, and fast. Our gas tax is simply not collecting as much

as we once were. The old model is not going to work. Cars are more fuel efficient. People are driving more fuel efficient hybrids and electric vehicles. Fewer people are driving at all.

[http://www.kokomotribune.com/opinion/editorials/editorial-let-s-raise-the-gas-tax/article\\_4b638a28-c203-11e6-881e-7fac6aae82e4.html](http://www.kokomotribune.com/opinion/editorials/editorial-let-s-raise-the-gas-tax/article_4b638a28-c203-11e6-881e-7fac6aae82e4.html)

### **GOP leaders says tax hike needed for Indiana roads**

The Republic

Brian Slodysko

12/14/16

INDIANAPOLIS — Key Republican leaders said Wednesday that Indiana lawmakers must increase taxes if they're going to move forward on plans to improve the state's infrastructure. Indiana's roads and bridges have been rated in the bottom third of U.S. states, officials say. Lawmakers have batted around ideas, hired consultants and studied the issue for several years. But many in the Legislature's Republican majority have been squeamish when it comes to acting because the consistent takeaway from those efforts has been that taxes or fees need to be raised to pay for the improvements. Now even those who have resisted the idea are signaling that they are ready to move forward with an increase during the session that begins in January. Republican state Sen. Luke Kenley, the Senate's chief budget writer, says lawmakers need to "face up to the fact" that more money is needed. Last session he opposed a tax increase. "I think we all recognize that we don't have enough revenue to even sustain our maintenance program," said Kenley who suggested a gasoline tax increase or adding tolls on the state's highways. GOP House Speaker Brian Bosma says he's looking to the gas, excise and cigarette taxes. Other Republicans, including Senate leader David Long, have concurred with the general proposition. Last session, Bosma and House Republicans put forward a roads funding plan that would have raised Indiana's cigarette tax by \$1 a pack and tacked 4 cents onto the state's 18 cents-a-gallon gas tax, which hasn't been increased since 2002. But GOP Senate leaders and Republican Gov. Mike Pence opposed the plan and didn't want to vote on a tax increase in an election year.

<http://www.therepublic.com/2016/12/14/in-indiana-legislature-roads/>

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