



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

December 10, 2013

New bridge dedicated, old Nine Span remembered

NWI Times
Lauri Harvey Keagle
12/9/13

HAMMOND | Local and state officials gathered in bone-chilling winds Monday to open the new bridge on Indianapolis Boulevard while remembering the former Nine-Span structure that once stood in its place. "This is the glue that binds the two cities together," said East Chicago Mayor Anthony Copeland of the bridge in Hammond that leads north into East Chicago. Indiana Lt. Gov. Sue Ellspermann; Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr.; state Rep. Ed Soliday, R-Valparaiso; and Indiana Department of Transportation LaPorte District Deputy Commissioner Robert Alderman were among the officials on hand for Monday's ribbon-cutting ceremony. The old Nine-Span Bridge, which carried cars over the Gibson Yard rail facility on Indianapolis Boulevard, was rated in poor condition by the Federal Highway Administration before being closed for demolition. That bridge underwent major repairs in 2005 and in more recent years, heavy trucks were banned. Demolition began in January. McDermott thanked the Indiana Department of Transportation for completing the project quickly, saying businesses in the area were concerned the bridge closure would harm their bottom line. "We made great things happen in a short amount of time," McDermott said. McDermott, a proponent of bike paths in his city and the region, said the sidewalks on either side of the bridge may be used for bike traffic as well. The bridge with nine steel trusses was a landmark in North Hammond and at one time was one of the busiest routes in the region, taking riders to the East Chicago South Shore commuter rail station. The \$18 million bridge was completed earlier than anticipated by Dunnet Bay Construction of Hammond. Dunnet Bay also held the demolition contract.

[New bridge dedicated, old Nine Span remembered](#)

GUEST COMMENTARY: Road would be good for Illinois, not Indiana

NWI Times
Rick Niemeyer
12/8/13

I have represented the proposed Illiana Corridor area for the past 27 years at all levels of government, including local, county and now state. The Times has referred to south county residents as "NIMBYs" (not in my backyard), which is insulting to say the least. The major concerns have always been the purpose, need and benefit this project will have for Northwest Indiana's economic development plan. The purpose and need for this project in Illinois is obvious, because of bad industrial and traffic planning. Illinois now needs Indiana as its escape route. The need and purpose in Indiana is very limited because of the highway being proposed as a tollway, where traffic moves through the area as fast as possible with limited possibility for economic growth. Extending this proposed highway to I-65 will only shift the congestion to a stretch of

interstate which data shows is already one of the most dangerous. I-65 is only two lanes in both directions. And the proposed third lane will not extend south of Ind. 231. This will make a critical situation only worse. The goals of the Northwestern Indiana Regional Plan Commission's 2040 vision statement are to address a safe and secure transportation system, adequate transportation funding, efficient use of resources, and a transportation system that supports the health of all people and places. The Illiana Corridor plan does not fit the criteria of this plan. The NIRPC 2040 vision plan should focus on leveraging federal money for public transportation and infrastructure needs for Northwest Indiana, which would create permanent jobs as opposed to temporary jobs. Another major concern is the inflated projections brought forward by the Illiana Corridor Planning Group in their 2010-2040 growth totals showing the employment figures of the bistate study area with a 225 percent increase.

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Senators from Illinois, Indiana promote benefits of Illiana Expressway before decisive vote

The Republic

12/7/13

CHICAGO — U.S. Sens. Mark Kirk of Illinois and Dan Coats of Indiana are talking up the benefits of the proposed Illiana Expressway. The 47-mile tollway would connect Interstate 65 in northwest Indiana with I-55 south of Chicago. Kirk says the plan to build and run it in partnership with private investors should be a model for faster infrastructure development. Coats says it would increase opportunities to ship goods made in Indiana. Skeptics, including some Chicago metropolitan planners, say the road would have minimal impact on economic development and that toll revenue would fall short, leaving taxpayers on the hook. The Illinois Department of Transportation estimates construction costs at \$1.3 billion, with Illinois responsible for about \$1 billion. It's been approved in Illinois. An Indiana planning agency will vote Dec. 12.

[Senators from Illinois, Indiana promote benefits of Illiana Expressway before decisive vote \(12/7/13 4:06 am\)](#)

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