



# **BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL**

## **Infrastructure Media Summary**

### **December 11, 2014**

#### **Illiana Expressway gets federal approval**

The Herald-News  
Lauren Leone-Cross  
12/11/14

The Federal Highway Administration has given its stamp of approval to the Illiana Expressway. The action, taken Wednesday, provides federal authorization for state transportation departments in Illinois and Indiana to move forward with the highway. The Illiana Expressway would stretch from Interstate 55 in Wilmington to Interstate 65 in Lowell, Indiana. Both states can now move to an implementation phase, which lays the foundation for the continued exploration of public-private partnership opportunities for construction, maintenance and operation, according to a news release from the Illinois Department of Transportation. Critics have called the \$1.5 billion project a “boondoggle” that could leave taxpayers with the short end of the stick if revenue projections fall short. Supporters say the planned tollway would relieve congestion on local roads and promote economic growth. Throughout the Illiana planning process, the states and the Federal Highway Administration considered the benefits, impacts, and costs of many alternatives, as well as a host of federal policies, procedures, and regulations that guide transportation projects, according to the IDOT news release.

[Illiana Expressway gets federal approval | The Herald-News](#)

#### **Hobart plans downtown infrastructure improvements**

NWI Times  
Chas Reilly  
12/11/14

HOBART | Major infrastructure enhancements are expected to get underway in 2015 in Hobart’s downtown area. Several Hobart panels met in a joint informational meeting Wednesday to learn about the work that will include sanitary sewer improvements, the creation of a parking lot and gateway projects. City Engineer Phil Gralik said Hobart has encountered two to four sewer line breaks each year in the downtown area. The average cost of completing the repairs is \$25,000, Gralik said. It has been determined many sewer lines in the downtown area must be dug up and replaced because of their declining condition, Gralik said. There are some pipes that can be improved by lining them. That work will not require digging, Gralik said. Mayor Brian Snedecor said the sewer work will require roads to be closed, but the city will complete the improvements in phases to minimize traffic issues that could hurt businesses. “They will still be able to go about conducting business reasonably,” Snedecor said. The city is expected to meet with business owners prior to starting the work to give them adequate time to prepare for the project. Gralik said there are other infrastructure projects being planned for Hobart that will be funded in other ways. The Indiana Department of Transportation is in the midst of designing a project to resurface Ind. 51 from U.S. 30 to U.S. 20. That roadwork is expected to begin in 2017. Gralik said federal

funding will be used to complete work to rebuild Center and 3rd streets in Hobart.  
[Hobart plans downtown infrastructure improvements](#)

### **More NWI communities want to expand public transit**

NWI Times  
Keith Benman  
12/9/14

Two years after the collapse of the Regional Bus Authority, region communities are pushing forward with public transit. A new "Triangle Service" is ready to start up in mid-January among Michigan City, LaPorte and Purdue University North Central, LaPorte TransPorte's Tom MacLennan told a meeting of the Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission's Transportation Policy Committee on Tuesday. The demonstration bus service is being funded for three years mainly with federal funds. Michigan City, LaPorte, LaPorte County and Purdue North Central are contributing local funds. In another sign of the growing interest in public transit, Hobart and Portage are both ready to embark on feasibility studies of instituting public transit, said NIRPC transit planner Belinda Petroskey. Both Portage Mayor James Snyder and Hobart Mayor Brian Snedecor have requested consideration for a NIRPC-backed feasibility study, which should get underway next year if federal grants are approved. "Portage is very excited about this opportunity to enhance our community with easily available public transit," Mayor Snyder wrote in a letter to NIRPC in late November. The public transit feasibility studies would be the first undertaken since Valparaiso conducted a similar study eight years ago and subsequently established its V-Line bus service. They also come two years after the collapse of the Regional Bus Authority left the city of Hammond without regularly scheduled, fixed-route bus service. Gary Public Transportation Corp. has since established some bus service there.

[More NWI communities want to expand public transit](#)

### **ARTBA Forecasts Modest 2015 Growth for U.S. Transportation Infrastructure Market**

Construction Equipment Guide  
12/5/14

The U.S. transportation construction market will grow 3.1 percent from \$185.9 billion in 2014 to \$191.7 billion in 2015, according to a forecast released December 3 by American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) Chief Economist Dr. Alison Premo Black. This is slightly above anticipated growth in the overall economy—U.S. Gross Domestic Product is expected to grow between 2.6 and three percent, according to the U.S. Federal Reserve. The ARTBA forecast for the largest segment of this market—highway, street and related work—is tempered by two key factors: uncertainty over long-term federal funding, which represents 52 percent of state department of transportation (DOT) capital outlays; and still recovering state and local budgets. Outside of construction, state and local governments are expected to spend an additional \$38.5 billion for maintenance work; \$13.2 billion for in-house and consultant planning and design services; and \$7 billion for right-of-way purchases as part of their highway and bridge programs.

<http://www.constructionequipmentguide.com/ARTBA-Forecasts-Modest-2015-Growth-for-US-Transportation-Infrastructure-Market/24075/>