



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

September 13, 2016

Grants to Fund Railroad Improvements

Inside INdiana Business

Alex Brown

9/12/16

The Federal Railroad Administration has awarded nearly \$3.5 million to three Indiana agencies in an effort to boost railroad safety. The Indiana Rail Road Co., Indiana Department of Transportation and Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District will use the funds to make improvements throughout the state. The Indiana Rail Road Co. has received nearly \$130,000 to make improvements at 321 railroad crossings in 10 counties in Indiana and Illinois. Work will include clearing trees and brush from 201 highway grade railroad crossings and installing warning signs at 120 private road crossings that intersect with the Indiana Railroad. INDOT has received \$640,000 to upgrade four crossings that are considered "at-risk." The improvements will include the installation of flashing signals, automatic gates and warning bells, among others, at crossings in Oakland City, Muncie, Wheatfield and Shelburn. The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District has received \$2.69 million to add two platform access points at the East Chicago Train Station. The FRA says the additions will reduce congestion, enhance safety and operational efficiencies, decrease passenger delays and reduce the probability of derailments. "It is vitally important that we invest in safety as rail continues to play an increasingly larger role in this country, transporting tons of freight and millions of passengers each day," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. "These grants will help address some of the improvements that are crucial to ensuring safe, reliable, and efficient railroad networks." Indiana's grants are part of \$25 million awarded to agencies in 14 states and the District of Columbia. <http://www.insideindianabusiness.com/story/33073129/grants-to-fund-railroad-improvements>

Transit referendum spawns efforts to educate, influence

Indianapolis Business Journal

Susan Orr

9/10/16

The pitch might come in the form of a phone call or a knock on your door or just a few words whispered at church. But it's coming. Advocates and opponents of a Nov. 8 referendum that would let the City-County Council increase taxes to pay for a mass transit plan are gearing up to vie for your vote. On the "pro" side stand a number of business groups and not-for-profits willing to spend money to deliver this message: Local transit needs improvement and voting "yes" on the transit referendum is the way to make it happen. On the "anti" side are community activists who question whether the tax would really accomplish what supporters claim, and who plan some grass-roots politicking to spread the word. Then there are the public entities—the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization and others—who say their goal is to educate voters without advocating for either side. Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett has placed himself in that camp. "He is

going to advocate for voters to educate themselves on the Marion County Transit Plan and let their voices be heard on Nov. 8," said Taylor Schaffer, the mayor's spokeswoman. Whatever the message of public voices, their appeal to voters is heating up as Election Day draws near. If the transit referendum passes, it would give the council permission to raise the IndyGo tax rate 0.25 percentage point. That's 25 cents per \$100 of annual income, or \$125 a year for a resident with taxable income of \$50,000. The money would fund the Marion County Transit Plan, which aims to provide more frequent bus service and extend hours of operation. IndyGo says it would also fund operational costs for three bus rapid-transit lines, which feature buses that run more often and make fewer stops. But a tax increase would be no slam-dunk; the council might not pass one. <http://www.ibj.com/articles/60291-transit-referendum-spawns-efforts-to-educate-influence>

Muncie mayor explains why city did not seek grant

The Star Press

Dennis Tyler

9/10/16

In recent articles in The Star Press, it was accurately reported that the city of Muncie did not seek road funding made available to cities and towns throughout the state. What is not accurate is any contention that this was due to irresponsibility on anyone's part. I would like to clarify herein that the city did not apply for Indiana's Community Crossroads grant because we were informed by the Indiana Department of Transportation that, at that time, the city was not eligible to receive these funds. The Community Crossroads grant funding had many restrictions and requirements that had to be met in order to qualify as an eligible applicant for these funds. Perhaps the most formidable requirement was the existence of a formal asset management plan for all of its roads and streets. This plan was to include a comprehensive and systematic inventory and rating of all of the roads and streets within the city's corporate limits. Muncie, and many other communities throughout Indiana, were precluded from seeking these road funds due to this requirement alone. The city, in collaboration with Delaware County and the town of Yorktown, have been working on an asset management plan for the past six months. When completed, this will also include a comprehensive needs inventory. The availability of this information and data will allow the city of Muncie to prioritize allocations for future development and, quite possibly, receive a larger allocation based on the data-driven nature of the plan. In the face of this, and knowing that this funding will be available over the next two years, the city elected to concentrate its focus now on developing the asset management plan as a precursor to pursuit of related funding. Indeed, the city plans to submit a funding request that includes an asset management plan in 2017. This due diligence and more thoughtful, deliberate and data-driven approach will produce a highly-competitive grant proposal and, in the long run, a much better product in service to the citizens of our community. <http://www.thestarpress.com/story/opinion/contributors/2016/09/10/muncie-mayor-explains-why-city-did-not-seek-grant/90140970/>

Opponents of transit tax fear expanded bus line will bankrupt taxpayers

WTTV-TV

Russ McQuaid

9/8/16

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind.-- If Marion County voters turn down a proposed income tax hike in November to finance expanded bus service in Indianapolis, taxpayers might still be on the hook to pay for the Red Line mass transit service. Should Congress approve, as is expected, a \$75 million grant to Indygo to build the Red Line service and its infrastructure from Broad Ripple to downtown Indianapolis to the University of Indianapolis, but voters turn down a \$56 million income tax hike to pay for the actual operation of the new system, a request to raise Indygo's share of property tax levies may face city county councilors in 2017. Bart Brown, Chief Financial Officer of the council, told CBS4 News that it is his understanding that the federal grant can only be used for infrastructure construction and not the procurement of non-Red Line buses or hiring

of drivers to operate them. A critic of the Red Line proposal disagrees. Brown said Indygo officials have indicated they would ask the council to boost property tax levies to raise revenues to operate the Red Line, essentially locking voters and property owners into higher taxes to pay for the system even if the November referendum is defeated. Under the referendum, only the income taxes of private individuals would be raised, not the taxes of businesses that have endorsed the Red Line project and would presumably benefit from access to their workforce or spin off route development opportunities. Should the referendum fail, and property taxes be raised, businesses would pay their share, too, of the Red Line costs. The tax referendum facing Marion County voters in November, and the tens of millions of dollars it would raise to finance expanded and updated bus service and technology throughout portions of Indianapolis, has an impressive list of supporters. <http://cbs4indy.com/2016/09/08/opponents-of-transit-tax-fear-expanded-bus-line-will-bankrupt-taxpayers/>

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