



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

April 25, 2017

The high road

The Journal Gazette
4/25/17

To no one's surprise, the Indiana legislature this session dallied with alcohol and abortion and other perennially insoluble social issues, continued its baffling assaults on home rule, whiffed on redistricting reform and even lashed out against the solar power industry. But in the end, lawmakers overcame all those distractions to meet the session's biggest challenge - passing a measure that finally provides adequate funding to repair the state's crumbling roads and bridges. Something had to give, of course. The state's gas tax hadn't been increased in 12 years, and during that time, revenue has dropped as vehicles became more fuel-efficient. As new road projects commanded the bulk of the state's attention, maintenance on state and local roads deteriorated. The costs to individual drivers for the extra wear and tear on their vehicles alone more than justified action. But there was also a growing realization that as Indiana continued to compete for jobs and businesses, its title as "The Crossroads of America" was in danger of becoming a joke. And there was the risk of mega-disaster on an Indiana bridge or highway. A month-long shutdown of a stretch of Interstate 65 near Lafayette in fall 2015 became a symbol of how disruptive and dangerous the situation could become. A consensus arose that the state would need at least \$1 billion a year to catch up on its infrastructure needs. Passing new taxes and fees to accomplish that was hardly a given for a Republican-dominated legislature, though. The idea of adding a dollar or \$1.50 to the tax on tobacco products went down in flames, even though that proposal would also have helped reduce the state's high smoking rate and thus provide some relief on health care costs. <http://www.journalgazette.net/opinion/editorials/20170425/the-high-road>

Street and road repairs need funding

Greenfield Daily Reporter
Letter to the Editor
4/25/17

On behalf of the McCordsville Town Council, we are appealing to our state legislators to approve a road funding bill that provides adequate and long-term revenue to our local roads and streets. The differences between the House version of HB 1002 and the Senate version of HB 1002 are being worked out through the legislative conference committee process. We are hopeful that at the end of the General Assembly the legislation will look more like the originally introduced House version. The top concern is addressing the differences in funding provided by the House and the Senate to meet the local need. The original House plan provided \$315 million for locals. However, the local share was cut to \$165 million in the Senate. According to a Purdue report, more than 25 percent of Indiana's local roads are rated poor. Purdue's Local Technical Assistance Program found that it would take \$775 million annually for the next 10 years to bring Indiana's local roads and streets into fair or better condition. Hoosiers should feel confident after this session is over that funds were supplied to help repair Indiana's failing infrastructure. In McCordsville, like other areas of Hancock County, we benefited from the General Assembly's enactment of the Community Crossings 50/50 grant program. We were able to repair some streets in town that were in the worst condition. But there is so much more to be done. The House version of HB 1002 included an 80/20 match for the continuation of the Community Crossings grant program, while the Senate version reduced that amount back to the 50/50. The overall amount of the grant funding was also reduced. http://www.greenfieldreporter.com/2017/04/25/street_and_road_repairs_need_funding/

Lawmakers Pass Budget, Road Funding, Gas Tax Increase As Session Comes To A Close

Eagle 99.3 FM WSCH

Mike Perleberg

4/24/17

Indianapolis, Ind.) - The Indiana legislative session has come to a close. The 2017 Indiana General Assembly adjourned early Saturday morning after passing a \$32 billion, two-year state budget. Lawmakers headed home about a week earlier than the April 29 deadline to approve the budget. House Speaker Brian Bosma (R-Indianapolis) says he's very satisfied after completing what he calls an historic session in which, at least in Republicans' minds, most goals were accomplished. "This session's historic, transforming achievements include the passage of the largest state and local infrastructure investment in Indiana's history and a structurally balanced state budget," Bosma said. "Fiscal responsibility was the cornerstone of our legislative agenda as we supported commonsense, pro-growth policies that will fuel our state's top-ranked economic engine." Governor Eric Holcomb has indicated he will sign the budget bill. "The budget funds key provisions in our Next Level agenda, including increased direct flights at Hoosier airports, funds to encourage and nurture entrepreneurship, and continued support for regional economic development efforts. It also ensures we take strong steps to develop a skilled and ready workforce by investing in pre-kindergarten and credentials in high-need industries for working adults," Holcomb said in a statement. Establishing a long-term source of adequate road and bridge funding was also on lawmakers' to-do list. They checked that off their list in the 11th hour Friday, passing a plan that will pump an average of \$1.2 billion in new money annually into road infrastructure beginning in 2024. About \$850 million of that yearly amount would be designated by state highways while local roads would receive about \$350 million. State Senator Chip Perfect (R-Lawrenceburg) praised the passage of the next state budget and road funding plan. <http://eaglecountryonline.com/local-article/lawmakers-pass-budget-road-funding-gas-tax-increase-as-session-comes-to-a-close/>

Holcomb: Session Continues 'Path of Prosperity'

Inside INdiana Business

Andy Ober

4/23/17

INDIANAPOLIS - Governor Eric Holcomb says the legislative session that ended Saturday resulted in a budget that will help maintain the state's strong business and tax climates. In a statement after adjournment, Holcomb said the spending plan "invests in roads and bridges, prepares a 21st Century work force, attacks the drug epidemic, and delivers great government service." Holcomb says the budget addresses key provisions of his administration's "Next Level" agenda, including funding for increased direct flights at Indiana airports, entrepreneurship programs and regional economic development efforts. From the beginning, House and Senate leaders said the session would focus on infrastructure. Ultimately, lawmakers approved a measure providing nearly \$900 million in new annual funding for state roads and bridges by 2024. House Speaker Brian Bosma (R-88) says the plan is expected to generate \$1.2 billion in new annual revenue for state and local roads and bridges beginning in 2024. The money will come from increased fuel taxes, registration fee increases and the shift of sales tax on gasoline to road funding.

<http://www.insideindianabusiness.com/story/35220507/holcomb-session-continues-path-of-prosperity>

Long-term plans for Lowell Road, other transportation projects in the works

The Republic

Mark Webber

4/23/17

Extensive and expensive improvements along Lowell Road are being planned by the Columbus Area Metropolitan Planning Organization over the next several years. CAMPO has two phases of renovations for the increasingly busy road northwest of Columbus in the first draft of its proposed four-year Transportation Improvement Program. The \$2.39 million phase-one renovation involves improvements from County Road 325W to Interstate 65. Federal funds of about \$1.9 million will be used to pay most costs. About \$478,000 in matching local funds will be invested. But the second and final phase, estimated to have a \$3.57 million pricetag, isn't scheduled to get underway for another six years. Although phase two involves improvements from Interstate 65 east to Indianapolis Road, most of the funding won't become available until at least 2024,

the preliminary plan states. The first draft of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) was revealed during CAMPO's March 27 Policy Board meeting. While a new TIP plan is created every four years, priorities are revised every two years, and funding amounts - which often change, due to a variety of factors - have to be updated about six times annually, city-county planner Jeff Bergman said. "Everyone needs to keep in mind this is a living document," Bergman said. "Timelines may shift up or shift back." http://www.therepublic.com/2017/04/23/longterm_plans_for_lowell_road_other_transportation_projects_in_the_works/

Democrats Warn Bigger Road Funding Fight Lies Ahead

WIBC

Eric Berman

4/22/17

Republican legislative leaders are celebrating the end of a session they say accomplished all their goals for the year. Democrats see more of a mixed bag. All but nine of the 30 House Democrats voted against Republicans' 20-year road funding plan -- Senate Democrats split down the middle. Democrats repeatedly argued the tax and fee increases will hit ordinary Hoosiers. Senate Minority Leader Tim Lanane (D-Anderson) says Republicans could have raised money and spread out the burden by revoking some planned corporate tax cuts. House Speaker Brian Bosma (R-Indianapolis) and Senate President Pro Tem David Long (R-Fort Wayne) argue Hoosiers have benefited from more than a billion dollars in tax cuts of their own. And Bosma says the burden of a 10-cents-a-gallon gas tax hike will fall disproportionately on business, especially the trucking industry -- yet trucking organizations supported the bill because of the benefits in efficiency and maintenance costs from driving on better roads. Like Lanane, House Minority Leader Scott Pelath (D-Michigan City) voted against the bill, but is subdued in discussing the gas tax hike -- he's said previously the idea of gas taxes as a funding source is less of a problem than the size of the increase. And he says he's happy to see Republicans earmark gasoline sales taxes for roads -- House Democrats proposed that two years ago, though the parties disagree on how quickly to make the shift. But Pelath warns there's a tougher battle looming in the next decade, when legislators talk about tolls. He says that's a cost that stirs stronger emotions because drivers feel its impact instantly.

<http://www.wibc.com/news/local-news/democrats-warn-bigger-road-funding-fight-lies-ahead>

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