



# **BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL**

## **Infrastructure Media Summary**

### **November 14, 2017**

#### **City keeps pushing for Business 50 project**

Washington Times Herald

Mike Grant

11/13/17

The Washington City Council and Board of Public Works have approved contracts and grant applications to hopefully get the city and state off of square one to update and eventually turn National Highway or Business 50 through Washington over to the city. "As everyone knows it is in terrible, terrible shape and they have always wanted the city to take it over," said Mayor Joe Wellman. "We've been reluctant to do that." About three weeks ago, Indiana Department of Transportation made its latest offer to the city. The offer is one the city couldn't accept but could make a counter offer on. "The last offer, the taxpayers would have had to pick up a huge portion of the cost," said Wellman. "We are preparing a counter that includes the council authorizing me to continue negotiations with the state and allow me to apply for federal funding to pay for the biggest chunk to do that." The city intends to seek a federal highway grant to rebuild the section of National Highway that stretches from State Street to Southeast Third. The project cost would be around \$21 million that would be spread over four or five years. The city's part of that project would be about 20 percent of the total. "That is the biggest, most expensive piece," said Wellman. "The entire offer with the state would be for all of the road from city limit to city limit. The far east end would be some milling and paving. The same with the far west end." The middle section though, would require a lot of work. [http://www.washtimesherald.com/news/local\\_news/city-keeps-pushing-for-business-project/article\\_ab07fe1-f687-5afa-9c03-bab48667a5b3.html](http://www.washtimesherald.com/news/local_news/city-keeps-pushing-for-business-project/article_ab07fe1-f687-5afa-9c03-bab48667a5b3.html)

#### **The toll of driving**

The Journal Gazette

11/12/17

Take Interstate 65 south across the Ohio River and you might not notice you've just spent \$4. No toll booth stands between the Indiana border and Louisville. Motorists who frequently travel the route likely have a transponder device, with the cost charged automatically to their account. For those without a transponder, a camera captures a license plate photo and the tolling system operator, with access to motor vehicle records, sends a bill to the vehicle's registered owner. As technological advances make highway and bridge tolling easier and more efficient, technology also is delivering more fuel-efficient cars and trucks. The gasoline-tax revenue Indiana and other states depend on is steadily declining as fuel efficiency improves, prompting the need for other sources of transportation funding. But wait - didn't the gasoline-tax rate increase last summer? Why is the state looking to toll interstates? Yes, taxes at the pump jumped July 1 from 18 cents a gallon to 28 cents a gallon - the result of legislation to pay for a long-term transportation program. Motorists also will pay more at the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles, where registration fees for most vehicles will increase by \$15 beginning next year. And to capture some revenue from motorists with the most fuel-efficient cars, there's a \$50 fee on hybrids and a \$150 fee on

electric cars. House Enrolled Act 1002 also included a directive for the Indiana Department of Transportation to study the feasibility of tolling the state's interstates, with a report due by Nov. 1. Don't expect to see toll booths or transponder equipment anytime soon, however. "We put it in there for them to study it and - if it's appropriate - to implement it," said Indiana Senate President Pro Tem David Long, R-Fort Wayne. "I don't think that's going to happen for a long time in Indiana. Our transportation bill put us in good fiscal shape. It does recognize that someday gasoline-powered engines are going to go by the wayside, or at least they are going to be severely diminished." Relying on gasoline taxes will become a thing of the past, Long said, and experts are increasingly saying tolling is the future. "That's why we put it in there - to get ahead of it." <http://www.journalgazette.net/opinion/sunday-centerpiece/20171112/the-toll-of-driving>

### **Editorial: Interstate tolls well worth consideration**

The Herald Bulletin

11/10/17

Generally speaking, user fees make more sense than general taxes that draw money from people who don't necessarily use the resources the revenue supports. Property taxes are a classic example of a general tax. Toll charges on roadways are a good example of a user fee. The state of Indiana is moving toward a dramatic expansion of tolling on interstates within its borders. In the sense that it would place a larger share of the funding burden on users of the interstates, it's a good idea. Last week, the results of a feasibility study were released to Gov. Eric Holcomb for review. The study was commissioned by the Indiana General Assembly, which is taking a long, hard look at adding tolls to interstates across the Hoosier state. The Indiana Department of Transportation has been charged with delivering a strategic plan for implementation to the General Assembly's budget committee by Dec. 1, 2018. The feasibility study indicates interstate tolling could reap a bonanza of revenue for the state, somewhere from \$39 billion to \$53 billion during a 30-year stretch beginning in 2021. The money could be used for road maintenance and infrastructure building projects. It would be a safeguard against an anticipated decline in gasoline tax revenue over the next few decades. Still, many Hoosiers are opposed to road tolling. A recent poll question at [heraldbulletin.com](http://heraldbulletin.com) asked: Based on a toll ranging from 4 cents to 6.5 cents per mile, would you be willing to pay anywhere from \$1.40 to \$2.20 to drive from Anderson to I-465 via I-69? Of 133 respondents, 111 answered "no."

[http://www.heraldbulletin.com/opinion/editorials/editorial-interstate-tolls-well-worth-consideration/article\\_901a37ab-d676-5a9e-9517-7c4443a9b716.html](http://www.heraldbulletin.com/opinion/editorials/editorial-interstate-tolls-well-worth-consideration/article_901a37ab-d676-5a9e-9517-7c4443a9b716.html)

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