



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

May 16, 2017

Railroad crossings a rough go in the Region

NWI Times
Rob Earnshaw
5/14/17

When Times' readers were asked to come up with the worst railroad crossings in the Region, one person on Facebook said it probably would be easier just to name the best railroad crossings. But we went with the bad, and there was none badder than the crossing just south of 61st Avenue and Taft Street in Merrillville. "These tracks are so bad - I'm confident that one day there will be accidents, if there haven't been, already," said Christine Reiser, of Merrillville. "People who aren't from this area aren't going to understand how bad these tracks are and not realize people actually move to the right or left and slow down to practically a halt as they cross over the tracks." Reiser said she recently took her car in for an oil change and was told her car needed to be aligned. "I told them not until the tracks are fixed, because it's just going to go back to needing another alignment soon," she said. Merrillville Town Manager Bruce Spires called the tracks "a mess." "We get calls about it all the time," he said. Merrillville has no control over the crossing. It's up to the railroad to fix the crossing, and that would be Canadian National. Taft also is a state road, so that falls under the Indiana Department of Transportation, which, along with Merrillville, can try to get CN to make repairs. "It's terrible, but we can't get anybody to respond," he said. http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/railroad-crossings-a-rough-go-in-the-region/article_d4fd84df-41eb-5b58-b2f0-f5b06e20a82b.html

KENLEY: Improve I-65, I-70 to six lanes and toll

Indianapolis Business Journal
Luke Kenley
5/13/17

The Legislature just finished a very successful session with a good, balanced budget and passed a needed road funding bill designed to secure Indiana's road infrastructure needs for local and state government. In spite of this significant achievement, one more element regarding road infrastructure is needed to make Indiana a successful state with appropriate road infrastructure. Interstate 65, from Louisville to Chicago, and Interstate 70, from Richmond to Terre Haute, are the two roads most in need of expanded capacity for the safety of our traveling public and to enhance the state's business needs. We need to expand these two roads to six full lanes all across the state. In order to pay for this, we need to toll these roads. No other roads are in as poor a condition as these two, nor carry as much traffic. Tolling is not a viable concept beyond these two, but it is the best solution for these two roads. This follows our "user pays" philosophy. The capital cost of improving these roads to six lanes is estimated to be \$4.6 billion. About 38 percent of those who drive these roads are from out of state and don't contribute to the current maintenance cost, which is more than \$100 million per year. Under current federal law, adding

one lane each way and improving every bridge to six-lane capacity provides authority for tolling. The state could enter a public-private partnership with private industry and financial institutions with the following steps: 1) Build the roads. 2) Contract to maintain the roads for 30 years using tolling revenue. 3) Build an electronic tolling system that does not slow traffic. 4) Privately contract the tolling operation. Estimates place the tolling costs at about 5 cents per mile for cars and 15 cents per mile for trucks. Discount credits for Indiana commuters could be given on Indiana income tax returns, and special rules would be developed for local traffic situations around metropolitan areas. <https://www.ibj.com/articles/63788-kenley-improve-i-65-i-70-to-six-lanes-and-toll>

Street work and how to fund it fuels Council discussion

Banner Graphic

Eric Bernsee

5/12/17

Street resurfacing, sidewalk replacement and major projects to both Indianapolis Road and U.S. 231 are in the City of Greencastle's future. And so possibly is a new means of funding roadwork. City residents could be looking at a new \$25-per-vehicle excise and wheel tax in the not-too-distant future. In a nearly two-hour meeting Thursday night, the Greencastle City Council heard plans for 15 resurfacing projects, scheduled sidewalk upgrades, 2018 plans for upgrading the section of Indianapolis Road from Kroger to McDonald's and an Indiana Department of Transportation promise to redo U.S. 231 through Greencastle next year. Some of that work will be funded by the city's Motor Vehicle Highway Fund, some through EDIT (Economic Development Income Tax) money, another via Community Crossings dollars from the state and the last by INDOT itself. But what all that discussion really did was make Council members painfully aware of how expensive roadwork can be. "Money doesn't go very far when you're talking about roads," Mayor Bill Dory assured. The city has been spending \$385,000 annually in recent years on street resurfacing, Clerk-Treasurer Lynda Dunbar advised, adding that it also allocates \$100,000 annually to sidewalk additions and restoration. That pales in comparison to the real costs of street and roadwork as city officials take care of 48 miles of pavement within the friendly confines of Greencastle. For real cost figures the Council turned to engineer Jessica Hartman of Civil Engineering Consultants in Greencastle -- on hand to give a report on planned street and sidewalk projects -- who said it typically costs a half-million dollars per mile for street work that includes curb and gutter repairs. Meanwhile, crack and seal --- just a "band-aid" approach for asphalt as Councilman Dave Murray called it -- is approximately an \$80,000-per-mile stopgap. "We need to do about five miles (of street repairs) a year," Councilman Gary Lemon offered, "so that's what, \$2.5 million? That's frightening." <http://www.bannergraphic.com/story/2411789.html>

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