



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

January 29, 2013

Senate leader warming up to expanding mass transit

Indianapolis Star

1/24/13

Plans to upgrade mass transit in Central Indiana have stalled in the state legislature for years, but now the way ahead seems clearer than ever. Some lawmakers acknowledged Thursday that Indianapolis' underfunded bus system needs help, and said they are open to a plan that would expand IndyGo both in Marion County and into Hamilton County. "I think it's pretty clear Marion County has a desperate need to fix its mass transit problems," Senate President Pro Tempore David Long said during a news conference. "It's not where it needs to be for a major city, and I think it has an impact on the economy here. I have no doubt about that." He expressed doubts about plans for a light rail line. "I think that needs to be sold as something that is really absolutely needed," Long said. "It's very expensive." Transit advocates want lawmakers to authorize a referendum to let voters decide whether to pay for a \$1.3 billion expansion. The plan includes \$625.4 million to build rail along a 22-mile government-owned corridor from Noblesville to Downtown, and \$667.8 million to expand IndyGo in Marion County and into Hamilton County. Thursday, transit advocates weighed Long's words. They aren't declaring his stance on light rail a showstopper, but they also aren't agreeing to drop rail. [Senate leader warming up to expanding mass transit | Indianapolis Star | indystar.com](#)

Top Indiana senators eye sales tax for road needs

Fort Wayne News-Sentinel

1/24/13

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana lawmakers looking to plug a hole in state transportation spending are considering diverting the state's sales tax on gasoline to transportation. Senate Appropriations Chairman Luke Kenley says dedicating the roughly \$500 million generated from the tax should be considered as one option to pay for pressing transportation needs. The state is facing a sharp decline in transportation revenues with most of the money from the 75-year lease of the Indiana Toll Road already spent or allocated and a roughly \$100 million decline in gas tax collections. Democratic Senate Minority Leader Tim Lanane said Thursday that the state's counties and localities also urgently need more road money. Kenley and Lanane said they were glad Gov. Mike Pence included more transportation money in his first state budget. [Top Indiana senators eye sales tax for road needs - News-Sentinel.com](#) Also, [Indiana Senate leaders eye sales tax on gas for road and highway needs](#)

Aaron Renn: Indy + mass transit = a good fit

Indianapolis Star

1/25/13

Andrea Neal in her Jan. 16 column, "Mass transit just isn't a good fit for Indy," argues that because Indianapolis is low density, transit won't work there. Let me first say that I agree Indy is low density. And while transit will provide real transportation benefits even to Indy, it's not urgently needed to address a serious, near-term transport problem. For a place like Indianapolis, the real case for transit is strategic. In a nutshell, the urban core of Indianapolis is collapsing because it offers an "urban lite" environment that is almost entirely automobile oriented and thus in direct competition with suburbs that are newer, of higher quality contemporary designs that meet the market demands of today, and which have better public services and lower taxes to boot. That's not a winning combination, and I made the argument a few years ago that if something was not done to change this, Indianapolis might simply implode. Let's take a look at the stark reality. Indianapolis has long boasted of having one of the best downtowns for a city its size in America -- and with justification. From nothing, Downtown Indy has been successfully revitalized as a world-class center for events and entertainment, something all Hoosiers can be immensely proud of. [Aaron Renn: Indy + mass transit = a good fit | Indianapolis Star | indystar.com](#)

U.S. says Indiana is lax on drunken driving, can't spend \$40m on roads

The Courier Journal
1/26/13

WASHINGTON — Federal officials are telling Indiana it can't spend \$40.4 million of highway funding to build or repair roads and bridges this year because the state has failed to comply with U.S. mandates to combat drunken driving. The money, which represents 5 percent of \$807 million dollars Indiana receives from Washington for highway and surface transportation programs this year, would instead have to be spent on anti-drunk driving programs or highway safety improvements because Indiana's open container law and its penalty for repeat drunken driving offenders don't pass muster. But Indiana's open container law hasn't changed since the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration certified Indiana was in compliance in 2005. "The issue here is that we were told we were in compliance," said Indiana Department of Transportation spokesman Will Wingfield. "I think it's reasonable that, since we were previously found to be in compliance, that we be given the opportunity to rectify this before there are any repercussions." Indiana is one of fourteen states recently found to fall short of federal requirements to reduce drunken driving, after Congress updated federal highway spending programs last year. Nineteen states had previously been told their laws weren't sufficient, potentially bringing the total of noncompliant states to 33 once final determinations are made on the 14 states. If upheld for all the states, a combined \$539 million would be diverted from states' construction funds to drunken driving programs or highway safety improvement projects. [U.S. says Indiana is lax on drunken driving, can't spend \\$40m on roads | The Courier-Journal | courier-journal.com](#)

Gas tax boost may be the ticket

Journal and Courier
1/26/13

County and city leaders across Indiana have been pestering state leaders for more money to shore up deteriorating roads and bridges. It seems the message is getting through. Indiana legislators have filed roughly 30 bills that address various aspects of state and local transportation funding. That's good news for Tom Murtaugh, a Tippecanoe County commissioner and vice president of the Indiana Association of County Commissioners. "Road funding is by far one of the biggest issues for counties," Murtaugh said. "I'm thrilled it's getting as much discussion as it is." Several bills would end the use of gas tax revenue to fund portions of the budgets for the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, Indiana State Police and Department of Revenue. The change would free up more money for road work. "The local road and street fund was originally designed to be just that, for local roads and streets," Murtaugh said. "We'd like to take it back to its original

intent." The question is — where will the state find replacement money to fund those agencies? A key player in the discussion is State Rep. Tim Brown, R-Crawfordsville, who is the House Ways and Means Committee chairman. "Right now... we're looking at road and bridge funding and how that fits into the budget in terms of priority," he said. "I don't know exactly where it will come from, but I expect there will be more funding." [Gas tax boost may be the ticket | Journal and Courier | jconline.com](#)

Indiana legislature bills focus on funding roads, bridges, mass transit

Indianapolis Star

1/28/13

County and city leaders across Indiana have been pestering state leaders for more money to shore up deteriorating roads and bridges. It seems the message is getting through. Indiana legislators have filed roughly 30 bills that address various aspects of state and local transportation funding. That's good news for Tom Murtaugh, a Tippecanoe County commissioner and vice president of the Indiana Association of County Commissioners. "Road funding is by far one of the biggest issues for counties," he said. "I'm thrilled it's getting as much discussion as it is." Several bills would end the use of gas tax revenue to partially fund the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, Indiana State Police and Department of Revenue budgets. The change would free up more money for road work. "The local road and street fund was originally designed to be just that: for local roads and streets," Murtaugh said. "We'd like to take it back to its original intent." The question is -- where will the state find replacement money to fund those agencies?

A key player in the discussion is state Rep. Tim Brown, R-Crawfordsville, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. [Indiana legislature bills focus on funding roads, bridges, mass transit | Indianapolis Star | indystar.com](#)

Bill Would Give County Residents Vote On Mass Transit Plan

Indiana Public Media

1/29/13

A mass-transit tax referendum faces its first vote in the Indiana House on Wednesday. The House Roads and Transportation Committee will vote on whether to allow Marion and Hamilton County voters to decide whether to raise local income taxes to pay for an upgraded bus system and a light-rail line between downtown Indianapolis and Noblesville. Legislators normally follow the wishes of local representatives on local taxes, and the bill has the support of Speaker Brian Bosma, who says voters deserve the chance to decide for themselves. "The question is whether it's appropriate to allow the citizens of central Indiana to speak on the issue," Bosma says. "I'm not certain if a majority of the members of the House will feel the same way, and I've told the advocates it's their job to make the case." But Senate President Pro Tem David Long says the usual local courtesy may not apply in this case. Long says it is beyond dispute that Indianapolis needs to upgrade its bus system. But Long says some Indianapolis legislators are balking at voting for a potential tax hike that they are not convinced would benefit their constituents because the rail line would not come near them. "It's going to be a very expensive component of this discussion, and so you can't just separate the 'give the voters the chance to vote and we'll see,' because you've got two counties voting on this, and that changes the equation," Long says. "It's only two counties, but they're very different counties." Long says he is not yet persuaded that light rail is worth the high cost.

[Bill Would Give County Residents Vote On Mass Transit Plan | News - Indiana Public Media](#)

Mass Transit Bill Could Derail at Any of Several Stops

WIBC

1/29/13

The 13-member House Roads and Transportation Committee will vote on whether to allow Marion and Hamilton County voters to decide whether to raise local income taxes to pay for an upgraded bus system and a light-rail line between downtown Indy and Noblesville. Legislators normally follow the wishes of local representatives on local taxes, and the bill has the support of Speaker Brian Bosma, who says voters deserve the chance to decide for themselves. But Senate President Pro Tem David Long (R-Fort Wayne) says the usual local courtesy may not apply in this case. Long says it's beyond dispute that Indy needs to upgrade the IndyGo bus system, and says doing so would be an economic boost to the whole county. But Long says the light-rail component is more expensive, and would only benefit part of Marion County. He says that has some Indianapolis legislators balking at voting for a potential tax hike that they aren't convinced would benefit their constituents. And Long says he's not yet persuaded that light rail is the right approach even in the areas it serves. Bosma, whose district covers parts of both counties, says it's unclear whether the referendum has the votes in the full House to pass, and says he's warned supporters they need to make their case. If the bill clears the Transportation Committee, it would have to make it through the Ways and Means Committee before coming to the floor, then face at least one committee hearing in the Senate. Last year, a similar bill started its journey in Ways and Means, and died there when Republican foes joined forces with Democrats opposed to anti-union language added to the bill. Bosma notes Democrats have raised the possibility of withholding support this year as leverage against a bill to abolish Marion County's four at-large City-County Council seats. Those seats made the difference in swinging the council majority from Republicans to Democrats in 2011. The council bill hasn't been scheduled for a hearing yet, but Bosma says he hopes Democrats will uncouple the two proposals.

<http://www.wibc.com/news/story.aspx?ID=1873685>

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