



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

February 12, 2013

Highway funding would shrink if laws aimed at curbing DUIs don't change
Indiana Daily Student
2/7/13

Indiana is struggling to maintain \$40.4 million in federal highway funding after the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration deemed Indiana's drunken driving laws insufficient. Indiana Department of Transportation spokesperson Will Wingfiel said no federal or state policies regarding drunk driving have changed since 2005. NHTSA officials reevaluated state laws in December. "Following this review, they found a majority of states not to be in compliance," Wingfiel said. "That means that a majority of states are potentially unable to take advantage of federal funds that were previously available." The discrepancies between Indiana laws and the NHTSA requirements are very specific, Wingfiel said. They refer to open container policies and community service for repeat offenders. "Federal law requires a certain number of days of community service, but for it be enforceable at the state and local level it needs to be converted to hours," he said. "The point of contention there is converting days to hours. The second item is if the driver of a limousine or a bus driver should be able to possess...an open container. It only applies to drivers of those types of vehicles." [Highway funding would shrink if laws aimed at curbing DUIs don't change | Region | Indiana Daily Student](#)

Lake County looks for ways to fund road repairs
Post-Tribune
2/7/13

CROWN POINT — A wheel tax is on the table again as county officials look for ways to fund badly needed services such as road improvements in an environment where state and federal funding for such projects continues to shrink. Lake County Council President Ted Bilski, D-Hobart, in a work session Thursday said council members need to begin the discussion about implementing a wheel tax that could generate more than \$10 million countywide to be used for capital investment in roads. He plans to open the matter for discussion when the council meets Tuesday. "This is discussion. We are just getting the ball rolling," Bilski said. As proposed, any revenues collected would be distributed among the county's cities and towns and would be divided according to the formula established by state statute. Communities now use motor vehicle highway tax funds for road work. While the original intention of the law creating the state motor vehicle highway tax funds was to funnel that money into road construction and maintenance, state officials continue to chip away at what is distributed for that purpose. Currently, about 70 percent of those revenues go toward the Indiana State Police budget. "When you see how the state distributes this money your jaw would drop," Bilski said. The local tax would be able to be used only for brick-and-mortar projects and not for costs such as consulting fees. Ray Szarmach, council attorney, said the tax has two components, a flat "wheel" tax, and an excise surtax that could be a flat rate or a percentage. Both components must be approved. According to a study using 2005 statistics conducted when the county last considered implementing a wheel tax, the

tax could generate an estimated \$2.969 million annually if the minimum tax were implemented or as much as \$10.127 million if the maximum tax were imposed. [Lake County looks for ways to fund road repairs - Post-Tribune](#)

Editorial: Can we afford mass transit? Planners have conservative budget

Indianapolis Star

2/8/13

Critics of a proposed mass transit system in Central Indiana have described it as a potential boondoggle and a white elephant. Advocates use another description: fiscally conservative. How could a \$1.3 billion expenditure be considered conservative? Have we suddenly landed in the monetarily unreal world of Washington, D.C.? Granted, at first pass the price tag to build a regional transit system in our metro area certainly does appear steep. But a closer look gives credence to the idea that transit planners, local political and business leaders, and a growing group of state lawmakers have crafted a fiscally responsible proposal that purposefully shoots high on projected expenses and low on expected revenues. Don't believe it? Well, let's break down the plan. To start, unlike with other major projects such as construction of Lucas Oil Stadium or the Indiana Convention Center expansion, the proposal would not require new debt. The \$1.3 billion in projected capital costs would be paid out over 10 years as bus rapid transit routes come on line in Marion and Hamilton counties, existing bus services is vastly improved, and a light rail or BRT line is built from Noblesville to Downtown. The Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority has adopted a pay-as-you-go model to construction of the transit lines so that planners could delay the rollout of later lines if revenues fall short or costs unexpectedly rise.

[Editorial: Can we afford mass transit? Planners have conservative budget | Indianapolis Star | indystar.com](#)

Editorial: Why we need mass transit

Indianapolis Star

2/8/13

But the city has two major shortcomings that frustrate Savage. The first is that, because of the bus system's patchy service, it takes her an hour to commute to work each morning from her home on the Northside to her office at Keystone at the Crossing. By car, the drive would take about 15 minutes. The commute back home takes another hour each evening. Savage's second frustration is that because many bus stops are out in the open she has to wait in the cold, wind and rain for her ride to come. And because so many places in our city lack sidewalks, Savage sometimes has to stand in and wade through mud to get to the bus. "Some of the bus stops are essentially in ditches," she said. So why does she ride? Savage didn't need a driver's license living in New York City, and she's chosen not to buy a car or get a license here. No car in Indy? How is that possible? For Savage, it's a lifestyle choice, but one that Central Indiana, trying to bolster its economy with talented professionals, ignores at its own peril. For many others, life without a car is an option forced on them because of low incomes or disabilities. [Editorial: Why we need mass transit | Indianapolis Star | indystar.com](#)

Feds review land deals

The Journal Gazette

2/11/13

INDIANAPOLIS – The Federal Highway Administration is reviewing the prices Indiana paid to acquire land for the Interstate 69 extension to Evansville and other highway projects across the state. Such reviews can result in the forfeiture of federal funds, The Indianapolis Star reported Sunday. In a 2009 Nebraska case, the highway administration pulled back \$6.9 million from an \$11.4 million project.

A portion of the federal investigation conducted at the Indiana Department of Transportation's Indianapolis office concluded last week. "We are still analyzing the findings and have no report yet," the FHA said in a statement. INDOT spokesman Will Wingfield issued a statement Sunday saying the agency follows state and federal land acquisition laws. He also said three sections of the I-69 extension that opened to traffic in November came in about \$300 million below early cost estimates. "Our partners at (the FHA) routinely review INDOT's performance, and we are currently working with them to review our land acquisition performance over the past few years," Wingfield said. The Star recently reported Indiana offered \$7 million for 32 properties that its appraisers had valued at \$3.34 million. State Sen. Brent Waltz, R-Greenwood, said the federal review couldn't have come at a worse time. [Feds review land deals | The Journal Gazette](#) Also, [Federal Highway Administration...](#)

Ind. mass transit advocates to host Transit Day in Statehouse after House committee hearing

The Republic
2/11/13

INDIANAPOLIS — More than 200 people are expected to attend a Statehouse meeting to show their support for a public referendum on mass transit funding. The bill is on the schedule for Wednesday's Ways and Means Committee hearing. The legislation would create a nine-county transit district and allow ballot questions in Marion and Hamilton counties on whether to raise local income taxes to help fund mass transit projects. Supporters have proposed projects that include doubling bus service in the Indianapolis area and a commuter rail line. Their Transit Day exhibition will follow Wednesday's House hearing. The program will include speakers in the Statehouse north atrium. Kim Irwin of the Indiana Citizens' Alliance for Transit says individuals and groups from all corners of Indiana have registered for the event. [Ind. mass transit advocates to host Transit Day in Statehouse after House committee hearing](#)

Completing U.S. 31 a priority

Kokomo Tribune
2/11/13

The U.S. 31 Coalition which has been striving to make U.S. 31 a limited access highway from Indianapolis to South Bend are encouraged that Gov. Mike Pence is making it one of the priorities for future funding. Portions of the work are scheduled to be completed around Kokomo this year, near South Bend in 2014 and through Hamilton County by the end of 2015. That leaves the stretch of U.S. 31 from the Hamilton County line through Tipton to Kokomo and from Kokomo north through Miami County to South Bend to be completed. Dennis Faulkenberg, director of the U.S. 31 Coalition, said the group is encouraged by the fact that Pence has declared finishing U.S. 31 a priority. Pence has named the U.S. 31 corridor, the Ohio River bridge and the completion of Interstate 69 from Indianapolis to Evansville as priorities for his administration over the next four years. "We're promoting it as a package," Faulkenberg said of the two stretches that have not been put out for bid. "Tipton County is more urgent. We don't want to see development along the unfinished portion of the highway." Funding to complete the project is a concern since the Major Moves money from the lease of the Indiana Toll Road has been exhausted, Faulkenberg said. "The Indiana Department of Transportation is looking for innovative financing to complete I-69," he said. "We're working to see how we can secure the funding for U.S. 31, we're exploring all possibilities." Faulkenberg said how soon the work is completed will depend on the funding. He said the Indiana General Assembly is considering 17 pieces of legislation to provide funding for the state and local units of government. [Completing U.S. 31 a priority » Local News » Kokomo Tribune; Kokomo, Indiana](#)

Woodruff I-69 Land Sale Controversy Will Not Go Away

WBIW
2/12/13

(WASHINGTON) - The scandal surrounding INDOT chief of staff Troy Woodruff will not go away. The Associated Press reports that Governor Mike Pence has directed the inspector general's office "to make certain that the latest allegations are being thoroughly investigated." At question is INDOT's purchase of land owned Woodruff and his family as part of the expansion of Interstate 69 for more than market value. According to data provided by INDOT, Woodruff and family members sold land to INDOT for 43 percent more than the average per-acre payout to other Daviess County landowners for the I-69 project. In 2010, Inspector General David Thomas had investigated Woodruff's sale of land in Daviess County to the state and found Woodruff didn't profit from the deal. But legal experts say the legal opinions Thomas cited in clearing Woodruff were "flat-out wrong," "inappropriate" and "odd." Joel M. Schumm, professor criminal law at Indiana University is quoted saying: "Any lawyer or member of the public that looks at this report would be concerned. If you read the report, it doesn't dispel this idea that something wrong happened here." Woodruff continues to claim nothing inappropriate took place. He says he didn't think he needed to seek an opinion from the state's Ethics Commission. The Associated Press quoted Woodruff saying, "I wasn't in violation of any ethics laws - or any other laws, for that matter. Governor Pence has weighed into the controversy swirling around former Daviess County resident and Knox County State Representative Woodruff. Monday, Governor Pence's office says the Governor supports the public's right to know" and is willing to discuss whether the State should open records on appraisals and prices paid for land to build I-69. WBIW.com - 1340 AM, Bedford, Indiana

County considers road relinquishment project

Journal Review
2/12/13

Montgomery County Commissioners are considering a proposal to take over the maintenance of 4.2 miles of State Road 25 between U.S. 136 and State Road 32. Commission President Phil Bane said Monday during the board's regular meeting that he has been in contact with Indiana Department of Transportation officials about the possible road relinquishment project. Bane said there is a possibility, if the county proceeds with the plan, that it might be able to capitalize on funds from the Major Moves transportation plan. Those funds in turn could help fund the Memorial Drive project. Commissioners are prepared to work with Structurepoint, an engineering and planning firm, on a financial assessment. A Structurepoint representative said it is important for the county to have a number in mind going into negotiations with INDOT. Commissioners will likely shift up to \$22,560 in land acquisition funds for the Memorial Drive project to pay for the Structurepoint study. Once completed, money received from the state from would then be shifted back into the Memorial Drive project. Highway superintendent Rod Jenkins said county crews could easily absorb the maintenance of the 4 miles of roadway on S.R. 25. [County considers road relinquishment project - journalreview.com: News](http://journalreview.com)

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