



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

February 19, 2013

INDOT confirms agency favors north connector route for U.S. 33

Goshen News
2/14/13

GOSHEN — Indiana Department of Transportation officials have confirmed they are favoring the “north connector” route for U.S. 33 through Goshen. According to INDOT spokeswoman Toni Mayo and Mary Foster, INDOT’s manager for the highway relocation said both INDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are favoring the route after they reviewed a required environmental impact study. The north connector route would move the existing U.S. 33 route off of Madison and Main streets to a new, elevated roadway that would parallel the Norfolk-Southern railroad through the city from Monroe Street to Pike Street. The road would be a dedicated two-lane structure with a bridge over the railroad, Ninth Street, Lincoln Avenue and Cottage Avenue. INDOT officials say they have \$25 million budgeted for the project. In an article published Sunday the estimated cost of \$35 million was attributed to city engineer Mary Cripe. The article should have stated that amount was for the original project from C.R. 40 to Main Street, not just the north connector route. “The project alternatives considered have included improvements along the existing U.S. 33 alignment, including sub-alternatives with a median and grade separation at the Norfolk Southern Marion Branch rail spur, and new alignment options for a north connector — at grade alternative and a north connector — overpass alternative. FHWA and INDOT have committed to the NC alternative based on review of a Draft 4(f) evaluation,” INDOT officials said in an email response to questions from The Goshen News.

<http://goshennews.com/local/x2056614618/INDOT-confirms-agency-favors-north-connector-route-for-U-S-33>

Locals watching Indy-area transit bill closely

Shelby News
2/15/13

A bill calling for public referendums in central Indiana to help fund mass transit projects was approved by the Indiana House Ways and Means Committee on Wednesday by a 20-2 vote. Its next stop is discussion on the House floor. The bill would let voters in Marion and Hamilton counties decide whether to raise local income taxes through a referendum by .3 percent to pay their share of a mass transit district in Indianapolis and nine surrounding counties, including Shelby County. The new transit system, known as Indy Connect, proposes four bus rapid transit corridors along north-south and east-west alignments, five express bus routes between major commercial centers and construction of central Indiana's first rail transit line from downtown Indianapolis to Noblesville at a cost of \$1.3 billion over the next 10 years. State and federal funding, increased local funding and fare revenue will support the new system. According to the American Public Transportation Association, transit projects strengthen economies, save energy and improves the quality of life by reducing air pollution coming from motor vehicles. The bill, filed by State Rep. Jerry Torr, R-Carmel, was approved 11-1 by the House Roads and Transportation

Committee on Jan. 30. State Rep. Sean Eberhart, R-Shelbyville, is taking a wait-and-see approach. Before casting his vote, he wants to know if the majority of those who would be impacted by it support paying for it." [The Shelbyville News > Archives > News > Locals watching Indy-area transit bill closely](#)

Indiana House drops Pence tax cut; budgets more for schools, roads

The Journal Gazette

2/15/13

INDIANAPOLIS – House Republicans tossed out Gov. Mike Pence's call for a tax cut Friday, unveiling a \$30 billion biennial budget that instead relies on Indiana's roughly \$500 million annual surplus to restore education cuts and pay for road and bridge repairs. "We're continuing fiscal integrity, we will have a balanced budget, we're making priority investments in education and priority investments in transportation," House Ways and Means Chairman Tim Brown, R-Crawfordsville, said. The House plan does not include the roughly \$770 million Pence had budgeted for to phase in a 10 percent personal income tax cut over the next two years, but Brown argued that doesn't mean House Republicans have ruled it out. "We've not eliminated it, we're continuing to talk about priorities as we go forward and have more information and more debate," he said. Pence responded to the budget proposal in a statement Friday, saying he was "very disappointed." "Despite having the largest budget surplus in history, this House budget increases spending without giving hardworking Hoosiers one cent of new tax relief. As our administration's budget clearly showed, we can afford to do both," he wrote. Education funding was boosted by \$130 million in the first year and \$195 million in the second – almost \$200 million more than Pence sought in traditional school funding. They ran with his plan to pay high-performing schools more money, but cut much of the \$64 million he had sought for it. [Indiana House drops Pence tax cut; budgets more for schools, roads | The Journal Gazette](#)

Norfolk Southern crossings statewide will get safety upgrade

NWI Times

2/15/13

In a rail crossing improvement program targeting mainly rural communities, Norfolk Southern railroad and the Indiana Department of Transportation are teaming up to improve 550 rail crossings across the state. The largest impact locally will be at rail crossroads in Schneider and Shelby, but Dyer, Schererville, Wheeler, Kingsbury and Hanna also will get crossings with better warnings for motorists, according to INDOT. The crossings targeted by the program are so-called "passive crossings," where the main warning to motorists of upcoming railroad tracks is a cross-buck sign at the tracks. The program being undertaken will not put lights or gates at those crossings, but will instead add yield signs where they are lacking and special reflective stripes on all signs. "Some of these passive crossings don't get touched up very often," said Gary Evers, transportation project manager at the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission. "It's a good safety project." The plan is now working its way through local metropolitan planning organizations such as NIRPC and work could start this year, INDOT spokesman Will Wingfield said. INDOT will be expending \$390,000 in federal rail safety funds for the Norfolk Southern crossing improvements with the railroad putting up a similar amount. Last year CSX railroad and the state started a similar program for 600 crossings with a combined INDOT/railroad price tag of \$1 million. [Norfolk Southern crossings statewide will get safety upgrade](#)

"Green" car owners could pay gas tax

WTHI TV

2/16/13

TERRE HAUTE, Ind. (WTHI) - Some people who are saving on gas with hybrid cars may need to pay up in a new way. A new proposal is heading toward the Indiana House and would tax hybrid vehicle owners. Some state lawmakers say there's a necessity to create a new tax in order to pay for good roads. Hoosier hybrid or electric car owners might save pennies at the pump, but now, you could be taxed each year. Each time you fill your gas tank, 16 cents of it pays for road repairs and improvements. This new proposal would require owners of clean energy vehicles to pay a road use tax in PLACE of gas tax. If the bill passes, will owning a green vehicle even be worth it? "It defeats the purpose in my mind as well...Getting the consumer to bite on that kind of vehicle and then taking their money away from them on what they considered a gas savings and helping the economy in some regards, but more importantly, the environment," said Brian Dorsett, president of Dorsett Automotive. Dorsett said there are more upfront costs to buy that type of vehicle. You're going to save gas in the long run, but you'll have to own it at least five years to get your money back. Last year, the average American spent almost \$3,000 a year on gas. And gas prices are even higher now. ["Green" car owners could pay gas tax | WTHITV.com Terre Haute, Indiana](#)

Resident input helps shape INDOT transportation projects

NWI Times

2/17/13

The Indiana Department of Transportation takes its mission to plan, build, maintain and operate a superior transportation system seriously. That mission includes enhancing safety and mobility and being a key component in promoting economic growth. Since 2006, when former Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels launched his Major Moves initiative, INDOT has invested nearly \$600 million dollars in Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties. Much of this investment was designed to relieve congestion on area highways. In 2012, INDOT completed many large infrastructure improvement projects. A new interchange was constructed on Ind. 49 at Vale Park Road in Valparaiso, eliminating an at-grade intersection and traffic signal that had been the scene of many serious accidents. Additional travel lanes have eased congestion on Ind. 2 at I-65, east of Lowell. The Martin Luther King Bridge in Gary was replaced, restoring a north-south link for the community over the Borman Expressway, and major improvements continue along 4th and 5th Avenues (U.S. 12/20) in Gary. Investment like this has a ripple effect through the community. When people can safely get to their destination without sitting in a traffic jam, they're more likely to visit regional businesses, and those businesses invest in the local communities. Air quality is improved because people are not sitting in idling cars. As we move forward this year, our investment in local communities will continue. INDOT has more than \$45.5 million in projects planned for the Lake, Porter and LaPorte County areas – projects that will continue to create local construction jobs and improve the way we travel through the region. [Resident input helps shape INDOT transportation projects](#)

Jesse Wilkerson: Mass transit would be good for county

The Herald Bulletin

2/17/13

Imagine, if you will, boarding a commuter shuttle from downtown Anderson straight to the airport in Indianapolis or Fort Wayne or Sunday's shuttle straight to Lucas Oil Stadium. When I lived in Washington D.C. during my college years one of the things I enjoyed most was the transit system. During my years at Howard University I was able to walk a few blocks from my apartment and hop the Metro to Maryland to visit family on the weekend or simply get around town. I used to ride the metro to Virginia to work at the Pentagon City mall, for various class assignments within the metro Washington DC area, and with friends to events and dinner from time to time. Last week I was excited to hear the news of Indiana's House Ways and Means Committee's vote in Favor of Central Indiana Mass Transit Plan. Some people may not understand the opportunity that this development can potentially have on central Indiana. Being connected is a vital part of

community. There is always a debate over where to spend public dollars. Without question mass transit opens up another world of commerce for communities that have something to offer. There are cities that have capitalized on mass transit around the country. Though we are not these cities it is refreshing to see someone thinking ahead of the curve instead of waiting until we need something to then begin to plan for it. City planners have come up with a financial plan that works, in theory, and with some fine tuning could become a reality. [Jesse Wilkerson: Mass transit would be good for county » Local Business » The Herald Bulletin](#)

HEC Backing Mass Transit Moves

WIBC

2/18/13

The Hoosier Environmental Council says mass transit will help push Indiana into a healthy environmental and economic future. HEC Senior Policy Director Tim Maloney and Executive Director Jesse Kharbanda held a conference call Monday. Maloney says Indiana House Bill 1011 - the mass transit bill - promises energy savings, air quality improvement and a boost in economic development for Indiana. Kharbanda says young people seeking jobs across the nation now consider mass transit and "green communities" top priorities. Maloney says they want to see mass transit improved and expanded to help attract high paying jobs to the state. Maloney says they'd also like to see state lawmakers maintain the Indiana Department of Natural Resources \$164 million annual budget. He says the budget supports voluntary conservation practices that aid water quality. Maloney adds that conservation lands add \$9 billion a year to Indiana's economy. Kharbanda says they would also like Indiana Department Emergency Management funding maintained at \$25 million per fiscal year. Kharbanda says one million Hoosiers get their water from wells. He says well water remains vulnerable to contamination. For that reason, he says constant inspection and management remain crucial. In short, HEC says initiatives aimed at keeping Indiana "clean and green" benefit the state economically. [HEC Backing Mass Transit Moves | Indy's News Center - 93.1 WIBC Indianapolis - Live, Local, First.](#)

www.buildindianacouncil.org