



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

February 28, 2012

House GOP leaders weigh scaling back highway bill, dropping transit plan

Greenfield Daily Reporter

2/23/12

WASHINGTON — Facing a revolt in their ranks, House Republicans leaders are considering significantly downsizing a bill that was supposed to provide a long-term blueprint for federal highway, transit and other transportation programs. GOP leaders are weighing three key changes: reducing the lengthen of the bill to something less than its current 4½ years, cutting annual transportation spending below current levels and postponing a controversial proposal to change the way mass transit programs are funded, a Republican leadership aide said. The aide asked not to be identified because any changes need to be discussed further with GOP committee chairmen and rank-and-file Republicans. [House GOP leaders weigh scaling back highway bill, dropping transit plan](#)

Valpo takes over Lincolnway from state

Post-Tribune

2/23/12

VALPARAISO — By winter's end, Lincolnway will officially be the city's responsibility, and the Indiana Department of Transportation will pay Valparaiso \$2 million to take over its maintenance. INDOT has also agreed to fund \$18 million in improvements along U.S. 30 within city limits. Under the agreement, Valparaiso will be responsible for Indiana 130's maintenance from U.S. 30 — where it begins as Washington Street — to Howe Street outside western city limits. Valparaiso would control traffic and operations and not have to ask INDOT's approval for changes and improvements. The city will also take control of the part of Indiana 130 from Howe to Indiana 149 as Valparaiso annexes land that way.

Summers said the city will acquire about a third of that 12 miles every four years. The \$2 million will go into Valparaiso's Rainy Day fund "in case something unexpected does come up with that road," Costas said. INDOT's \$18 million to U.S. 30 will come from federal highway funds and will help with the city's plan to improve U.S. 30 between Indiana 49 and Hayes-Leonard Road. [Valpo takes over Lincolnway from state - Post-Tribune](#)

County funding northern Indiana rail research

WANE

2/24/12

FORT WAYNE, Ind. (WANE) - The Allen County Commissioners have approved \$20,000 to research a passenger rail system. For years, many people in the area have hoped for the Fort Wayne to Chicago passage. At Friday morning's meeting, the commissioners approved funding the Northeast Indiana Passenger Rail Association's plan to assess how much a passenger rail

from Fort Wayne to Chicago will cost. The plan would be to use an existing line, with the old Baker Street station in Fort Wayne being a train stop. "In some ways, this is like going back to the future," said Richard Davis with the Northeast Indiana Passenger Rail Association. "It's reinstating something that made sense. There were always riders here and people that needed to ride that train." The train ride from Fort Wayne to Chicago would take about two hours, traveling at a maximum 110 miles per hour. It's estimated the railroad itself would cost a minimum of one million dollars for every mile of rail. The total rail system would go 145 miles.

[Research approved for passenger rail system from Fort Wayne to Chicago](#)

Rail Summit Aims to Boost Support

Inside Indiana Business

2/24/12

The Rail Summit is planned for Chesterton next month in hopes of gaining support for rail initiatives in northern Indiana. Organizers say the event will include business and community leaders from throughout the region. 1. What is the Rail Summit? 2. How will Indiana benefit from support for and participation in the Rail Summit? 3. What is the plan for the next Rail Summit? 4. Why participate in this event? [Rail Summit Aims to Boost Support - Newsroom - Inside Indiana Business with Gerry Dick](#)

Parkview puts I-69 ramps in overdrive

The Journal Gazette

2/25/12

Work will start next month on a new Interstate 69 interchange that will cost far less than expected. The project will include exit and entrance ramps to the interstate and roundabouts on Union Chapel at each end of the new bridge over the interstate. The work was expected to cost \$17.5 million, but a competitive marketplace allowed the state to save millions on the project. Brooks Construction of Fort Wayne will do the work. Even with the lower price, the \$10 million commitment from Parkview Health will not shrink. Will Wingfield, spokesman for the state, said the non-profit health care provider will pay the full amount regardless of the project's cost.

[Parkview puts I-69 ramps in overdrive | The Journal Gazette](#)

MLK bridge demolition begins Monday night

Post-Tribune

2/26/12

GARY — It's been nearly two years since the state shut down the Martin Luther King Drive bridge. Since then, the state has sued the bridge builder after an inspection found cracking on the bridge's deck and support beams necessitating the closure in May 2010. On Monday night, an Illinois company will begin demolishing the bridge built by the Superior Construction Co., of Gary, over the widened Borman Expressway in 2004. Once demolition of the existing bridge is completed, work will begin to construct the replacement bridge. The entire project is expected to be completed in July, said INDOT spokesman Jim Pinkerton. Dunnet Bay Construction Co., of Glendale Heights, Ill., is the contractor for the \$3.1 million bridge replacement project. [MLK bridge demolition begins Monday night - Post-Tribune](#)

Johnson County to weigh pros, cons of keeping wheel tax that helps pay for road repairs

The Republic

2/28/12

FRANKLIN, Ind. — A tax you pay when you renew your license plates will be up for renewal this year.

After five years, members of the Johnson County Council will need to decide whether to keep the wheel tax in place. The fee has collected more than \$13.8 million total for local governments, with money distributed to the county, cities and towns for road work. The money has paid to pave streets, patch potholes and repair sidewalks and for larger projects, such as realigning intersections in the Center Grove area. When the fee was approved in 2007, county officials said they wanted to review the tax in five years to see if it still was needed, with the hope that the state may have offered by now a new funding option for road work. That review is this year; to continue charging the fee, the county council would need to approve keeping the tax in place. [Johnson County to weigh pros, cons of keeping wheel tax that helps pay for road repairs | The Republic](#)

A highway bill that everyone can hate

South Bend Tribune

2/28/12

House Speaker John Boehner recently noted, "In the past, highways bills represented what was wrong with Washington: earmarks, endless layers of bureaucracy, wasted tax dollars and misplaced priorities."

He is correct that past highway bills have epitomized Washington's corrupt, unserious and inept standard operating procedure. Unfortunately, that same characterization also applies to the current highway bill now moving its way through the House. The American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act has the distinction of being the first highway bill to be hated by almost everybody. Fiscal conservatives, progressives, budget hawks, transit advocates and environmental activists have all called for its defeat.

The bill does have some positive elements. It would halt the harmful decades-long practice of diverting up to 20 percent of federal fuel tax revenue to mass transit, effectively ending the driver-to-transit-rider transfer. While transit may be important to urban residents and commuters in a handful of large cities, it has nothing to do with a national transportation program, which should presumably focus on promoting interstate commerce. [A highway bill that everyone can hate - southbendtribune.com](#)

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