



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

February 28, 2013

Erika D. Smith: Like in House, Senate should give voters a chance to decide fate of transit
Indianapolis Star
2/26/13

Now that the transit bill has made it out of the House, the real political theater is about to begin. That's because the bill is headed to the Senate, where most of the local delegation is skeptical of letting voters in Marion and Hamilton counties decide whether they want to raise their own taxes to add buses and rail. If this issue wasn't so essential to the future of Central Indiana, I'd say go grab a comfortable chair and some popcorn. Because there will be drama. The sad thing is it doesn't have to be this way. It shouldn't be this way. Most of the arguments I've heard from the senators who oppose the transit bill generally follow the same theme: We need to protect voters from themselves. Their assumption, it seems, is that the residents who elected them aren't smart enough or well-informed enough to make their own decisions about their own money. On top of that, the senators have come to this conclusion in spite of the chorus of mayors and commissioners in Marion and Hamilton counties who want the bill to pass. Why this is I have no idea. Carmel Republican Rep. Jerry Torr had it right Monday night when he said: "The great thing is taxpayers get to vote to impose this tax on themselves." [Erika D. Smith: Like in House, Senate should give voters a chance to decide fate of transit | Indianapolis Star | indystar.com](#)

Plan for mass transit system moves to new phase
FOX 59 News
2/26/13

The Indiana House passed a bill on to the Senate that would allow Marion and Hamilton counties to vote on a tax increase to help pay for a proposed mass transit plan. Now, developers are moving on to a more serious planning phase, involving exact routes and station stops. "This starts a series of discussions where we're really starting specific routes. What streets are we going to run through? Where are the stops going to be? What are the environmental impacts? What are the neighborhood impacts?" said Ehren Bingaman, executive director of the Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority. The \$1.3 billion Indy Connect project would include a downtown hub for connections and transfers, as well as double local bus service and add five rapid transit lines. Organizers are turning their attention to three of those five lines in this next stage of the process. The Red Line would run from Greenwood through downtown north to Carmel. The Blue Line would run east to west with a stop at Indianapolis International Airport. The Green Line would take passengers from downtown up to Noblesville with a series of stops along the way. One of those stops could be along the old railroad tracks near Graham Road and 71st Street in the area of the Binford Redevelopment and Growth (BRAG) organization. "We are always looking to the future. What will this area look like in 20, 30 years? How do we make old suburbia viable? How do we make it grow? How do we increase property values? Much of that is

reflected in the idea of having better transit,” said Kas Vargo, BRAG Board president. Indy Connect is hosting a series of public meetings for communities to weigh in on where the routes and station stops should be. The first is Tuesday, February 26 at the Fishers Train Station to discuss plans for the Green Line. [Plan for mass transit system moves to new phase | Fox 59 News – fox59.com](#)

Mass Transit Bill Moves Through House

Inside INdiana Business

2/26/13

A plan to allow counties to hold a referendum on funding for mass transit in central Indiana has moved on at the Statehouse. The House has passed the bill, which now heads to the Senate. Indy Connect Now Executive Director Ron Gifford calls the House vote "a critical milestone" in the effort to improve the central Indiana transit system. The Indiana House voted 56-39 today in favor of House Bill 1011, which would give local communities the tools to create better mass transit options in central Indiana if approved by the voters. "Today marks a critical milestone. After talking about the merits of a better transit system for decades, we've taken the first tangible step toward making that vision a reality," said Ron Gifford, executive director of Indy Connect Now. "We're grateful for the strong leadership of our legislative champions on both sides of the aisle in getting us to this important place in the process." HB1011 was filed by Representative Jerry Torr (R-Carmel) and co-authored by several Democrat and Republican legislators from Marion and Hamilton counties. The bill had received strong bipartisan support from the House Roads and Transportation Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee earlier this session. The bill would give local communities the flexibility to dedicate new local funds to support a transit system, if first approved by local voters at a public referendum. "We appreciate the bipartisan vote of confidence from the House, supporting the idea that local communities should be given the tools they need to make critical investments," said John Weingardt, president of the Fishers Town Council. "This is a great step forward, but we have a long journey ahead of us," said Scott Miller, president of the Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, which has been a major partner in the transit initiative since its inception. "While we are pleased with the House passage, we must now turn our focus to the Senate where we will work hard to explain the benefits of a robust transit system in central Indiana." The transit coalition has already met with several key senators, Gifford said, and will begin meeting with all senators as early as next week. The Senate could hold its initial hearings on the bill in early to mid-March.

[Mass Transit Bill Moves Through House - Newsroom - Inside INdiana Business with Gerry Dick](#)

Editorial: House approval shows merit of transit, home rule

Indianapolis Star

2/27/13

Cost is an issue and so is the design of the proposed system; but the Indiana House has sent a clear message that expanded mass transit in Central Indiana has merit — and that Central Indiana residents ought to be trusted to decide whether to tax themselves to pay for it. Monday's bipartisan 56-39 vote to allow a 10-county referendum in 2014 on a 0.3 percent local income tax should not have been earthshaking in a legislature that claims to honor home rule. But it follows two years of frustrating obstructionism and it contrasts sharply with the expressed attitude of the other chamber's leadership. Senate President Pro Tempore David Long and Appropriations Committee Chairman Luke Kenley say they worry about the cost of the expansion, with Long citing the rail component linking Noblesville and Downtown Indianapolis as a large expense with a relatively small ridership. Yet both men agree the region needs better mass transit, a theme sounded by local elected officials, CEOs, social service providers, clergy and House members across the political spectrum. The rail segment, it should be noted, is not locked into the plans. Transit advocates are reviewing that aspect as they pursue a proposal that calls for doubling the size of IndyGo and installing bus rapid transit routes. The estimated cost of the 10-year project is

\$1.3 billion, with \$600 million coming from the federal government. The tax for the local share would amount to \$10 a month for a family of four earning \$50,000 a year. [Editorial: House approval shows merit of transit, home rule | Indianapolis Star | indystar.com](#)

Environmental groups lob new suit at I-69 work

Indiana Business Journal

2/27/13

An Indiana environmental group once again is attempting to stop construction of the Interstate 69 extension between Evansville and Indianapolis by filing suit in federal court. The Hoosier Environmental Council and Citizens for Appropriate Rural Roads brought their complaint Tuesday in U.S. District Court in Indianapolis seeking to overturn a permit the Army Corps of Engineers issued for the \$3 billion project. The groups say the agency failed to comply with a section of the Clean Water Act because it approved a permit to discharge about 225,000 cubic yards of fill material into wetlands and streams in Greene and Monroe counties without considering less-damaging alternatives. "In its own rules, the Corps has determined that 'most wetlands constitute a productive and valuable resource, the unnecessary alteration or destruction of which should be discouraged as contrary to the public interest,'" the environmental groups argue in their suit. A spokeswoman for the Louisville division of the Army Corps of Engineers said the agency is aware of the lawsuit but cannot comment on pending litigation. The complaint targets what's known as Section 4 of I-69, which extends 26 miles from the Crane Naval Surface Warfare Center to Bloomington. Construction on the stretch is under way and should be finished by the end of 2014 at an estimated cost of at least \$532 million. The portion of roadway will cross 18 waterways, affecting about 88,000 linear feet of water and filling more than 9 acres of wetlands, the groups argue. [Environmental groups lob new suit at I-69 work | 2013-02-27 | Indianapolis Business Journal | IBJ.com](#)

Which crossroads stay open key question for Illiana Expressway planning

Post-Tribune

2/28/13

CROWN POINT — Impact of the proposed Illiana Expressway on north-south access roads continues to be a key concern for Lake County officials as the Tier II study on the project moves forward. At this stage of the study, seven of the county's 12 north-south roads are slated to be cut off by the expressway, though that number is fluid as input is gathered from officials as the study moves forward, said Jim Earl, Illiana project manager for the Indiana Department of Transportation. Earl and members from his team Wednesday appeared before county department heads and some elected officials including State Rep. Rick Niemeyer to begin the process of gathering that input and learning how the B-3 route would impact services and development as they move forward with narrowing the 2,000-foot corridor to the actual 400-foot path of the expressway. "We oppose any road closings," said Dan Murchek, Lake County Sheriff's Department deputy chief. Murchek said the department would prefer all access roads remain open, but said he understands that is not likely. Murchek said the department wants to make sure emergency services are impacted as little as possible. Impact on emergency services from response time to staffing and equipment for Tri-Creek EMS, which has four employees and only two ambulances, were among key concerns. [Which crossroads stay open key question for Illiana Expressway planning - Post-Tribune](#)

Counties Could Receive More Money To Repair Roadways

WBIW

2/28/13

Indiana counties could receive up to \$68.15 million for the next two years to repair and improve

county roadways, according to a press release issued by the by the Association of Indiana Counties. The 2013 Indiana House Ways and Means committee recently passed the 2013 state budget. The new budget will change the way sales and use taxes are distributed, but revenue should stay the same. According to the press release, all gas taxes will be directed to funding for roads, instead of dividing the money between multiple organizations like the Indiana State Police and the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. 1.5 percent of sales tax revenue will also go toward roads. The Indiana Department of Transportation is expected to receive \$56.7 million more in fiscal year 2014 and \$59 million more in fiscal year 2015. Lawrence County Highway Superintendent Dave Holmes says counties have been lacking money for years to pave roadways. "We have 690 miles of roadways in the county and we pave 620 miles," Holmes says. "That cost big bucks to do that." Currently the county is using cold patch to repair roadways and only have limited funds each year to pave roadways. WBIW.com - 1340 AM, Bedford, Indiana

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