



# **BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL**

## **Infrastructure Media Summary**

**April 30, 2013**

### **Another reason for mass transit: Better air quality**

Indianapolis Star  
4/25/13

As a transportation planner and a public health professional, we couldn't help but shake our heads at the ironic juxtaposition of two headlines in the April 24 Indianapolis Star. "Mass transit supporters may have to wait at the station" read one headline; immediately to the right, another one stated, "Air quality worsening in Marion County." With the Environmental Protection Agency estimating that, in urban areas like metropolitan Indianapolis, automotive emissions are responsible for anywhere between 50 and 90 percent of air pollution, it seems we could suggest a cause-and-effect relationship between those headlines: Less mass transit means more air pollution. No, enhanced mass transit won't suddenly cure Central Indiana's long-running air quality problems (which, by the way, affect the region's ability to attract new jobs), but no single thing will. As a result, it seems we should be taking every step we can to improve the air that we and our children breathe each day. We believe mass transit will bring a lot of benefits to Central Indiana, from jobs and neighborhood development to better access to public services and, yes, a healthier environment – and we think most area residents would agree. That's why we want our elected officials to let us have a say. If they would allow voters to address the mass transit funding question as a referendum next year, we believe Central Indiana will choose to invest in a better, cleaner future. [Another reason for mass transit: Better air quality | Indianapolis Star | indystar.com](#)

### **Wayne Co. likely gaining road funding**

Palladium-Item  
4/25/13

Wayne County will get a share of the extra highway funding in the state's proposed two-year budget. The budget is expected to be adopted by the General Assembly on Friday. The House version of the bill included money for all counties, even if they hadn't adopted local user taxes known as "wheel" taxes. That's the version that's in the budget bill, State Rep. Tom Saunders, R-Lewisville said. The Senate's version of the highway bill would have meant no extra road revenues for Wayne and about half the counties in the state because they haven't adopted a wheel tax or adopted rates at less than 50 percent of the maximum. The final version of the budget to be voted on Friday was to be online by 8 p.m., State Rep. Dick Hamm, R-Richmond said. Because legislators must have at least 24 hours to review the budget, the document won't get a vote until at least 8 p.m. Friday, Hamm said. Saunders said he's confident there won't be any last-minute changes to the budget bill on highway funding. "There are no strings attached to the House version," Saunders said. "Everyone will get more money for the roads. I'm satisfied with the results." "The House prevailed on this issue," Hamm said. "A lot of counties would have been left out by the Senate bill." [Wayne Co. likely gaining road funding | Palladium-Item | pal-](#)

[item.com](#)

### **Make better use of road taxes**

The Star Press

4/25/13

There is a highway funding bill moving through the Indiana Senate that will penalize counties that haven't adopted a local wheel tax. My home county, Wayne, stands to miss out on getting a little more than half a million dollars a year from the state, which would be used to supplement its \$3.5 million road budget. It makes you think about where the money really comes from, and where it really goes. I'd guess that there are about 68,000 people in Wayne County. I'm guessing that about 41,300 of them drive. I'm also guessing that each driver probably uses about 15 gallons of gasoline a week. If those guesses are close, that means Wayne County drivers buy about 32,214,000 gallons of gasoline each year. We pay 56 cents in road use taxes for every gallon. That totals up to about \$18,039,840 per year. That doesn't include the 28 cents in sales tax on every gallon. It doesn't include the diesel fuel that brings in 74 cents per gallon. The state and federal government gets the lion's share of our road use taxes, and before they send a small portion of it back to the counties, they spend a big portion of it on projects that don't involve roads. [Make better use of road taxes | The Star Press | thestarpress.com](#)

### **Closed New Harmony Bridge stays on list of state's top 10 endangered sites**

Evansville Courier & Press

4/25/13

NEW HARMONY, Ind. —The New Harmony Bridge, which has been closed to traffic since last May because of structural deficiencies, is once again listed among the 10 most endangered landmarks in Indiana by Indiana Landmarks. The nonprofit group released its annual compilation on Thursday. The bridge, which opened in 1931 and spans the Wabash River linking New Harmony, Ind., and White County, Ill., was also included on last year's list. Another Southwestern Indiana site, the Pantheon Theatre in Vincennes, is also included on the 2013 Indiana Landmarks list. Sites on the list are "significant and irreplaceable," according to the group. But replacing the bridge is just what Jim Clark, the chairman of the three-member White County Bridge Commission that owns the bridge, wants to do. Clark on Thursday acknowledged the two other commissioners, Mike Egbert and David Rice, are against tearing it down and building a new one. However, Clark — citing safety concerns — said he believes the current bridge will never reopen to traffic. That's the same opinion he expressed at a town hall meeting in September at New Harmony. "I'm a firm believer the bridge will never open again," Clark said. He explained several engineers have also told him that the structure should be closed for good. During that September meeting, an Indiana Department of Transportation official also said that he believed the bridge had "passed its useful life." Clark predicted that the bridge would be torn down within three years, but acknowledged there were no current discussions on engaging in such a project. [Closed New Harmony Bridge stays on list of state's top 10 endangered sites » Evansville Courier & Press](#)

### **Jeffersonville officials say Indiana being slighted by bridges aesthetics**

News and Tribune

4/26/13

JEFFERSONVILLE — Hoosiers are getting the raw end of the deal again. That, at least, is the perception from local officials who have had a chance to view the aesthetics related to the Ohio River Bridges Project. Jeffersonville Redevelopment Director Rob Waiz gave a presentation to the Redevelopment Commission Wednesday night that showed a disparity in the aesthetic plans for the Indiana side of both the downtown and east-end corridors of the bridges project when compared to Kentucky's side of the project. "It's too huge for our area to ignore this on the east-end, or our downtown," Waiz said of the look of the project. "We just have one shot to do this, and

to do it right.” As designs have been presented and work has begun on the project to construct a new downtown Interstate 65 bridge, new approaches on each side of the Ohio River and rebuild Spaghetti Junction, as well as building a new bridge and approaches on the east-end corridor, time is at a premium. “We definitely see a lopsided approach,” said Jeffersonville Mayor Mike Moore. “I expect the Indiana side to be treated in the same fashion [as Kentucky]. Hopefully, the state recognizes this is a project that will be welcoming people into the state.” [Jeffersonville officials say Indiana being slighted by bridges aesthetics » Recent Local News » News and Tribune](#)

### **Mass transit expansion paused for at least a year**

Indianapolis Star

4/26/13

The plan to expand mass transit in central Indiana will have to wait another year. Lawmakers in the Indiana House on Friday signed off on the Senate’s decision to gut transit legislation and turn it into a summer study committee. “The Senate decided that 40 years of studying the issue isn’t quite enough,” said Jerry Torr, R-Carmel, the bill’s author. “They wanted to study it at least one more year. They also put in a provision just to be absolutely certain that nobody in local government did anything without their permission, they put in a prohibition about entering into any interlocal agreements to set up anything on their own.” Torr, though, said he reluctantly agreed to the study committee in hopes the Senate would consider the transit expansion next year. Mayor Greg Ballard led a coalition of locally elected officials, business leaders and community activists who wanted to expand transit. They point toward increased economic development and eased traffic congestion. Opponents worry about any increase in taxes, even if authorized through a public vote. House Bill 1011 would have allowed residents to decide through a referendum whether to raise their income taxes by 0.3 percent to pay for most of the local portion of a 10-year, \$1.3 billion transit expansion. Marion and Hamilton counties are ready to offer the referendum in 2014. Other Central Indiana counties can opt in over time. [Mass transit expansion paused for at least a year | Indianapolis Star | indystar.com](#)

### **Deal reached; Pence tax cut sliced in half**

The Journal Gazette

4/26/13

INDIANAPOLIS – Gov. Mike Pence procured half of his desired tax cut – over twice the time – in a budget deal unveiled Thursday and expected to be approved by House and Senate Republicans today. Bosma said the bill also provides about \$200 million more in annual transportation funding, including some to local government and some to the Indiana Department of Transportation. Local governments do not have to adopt a wheel tax to receive new funding. Kenley said the bill contains a two-prong transportation approach – ongoing needs and future needs. The latter are addressed by a \$400 million transportation savings account for INDOT. [Deal reached; Pence tax cut sliced in half | The Journal Gazette](#)

### **Future of Indiana Amtrak service remains murky under state budget plan**

Indianapolis Star

4/26/13

The future of Amtrak service in Indiana remains hazy. The state budget expected to be approved Friday gives transportation officials the go-ahead to fund the rail service, but it provides no specific funding source for the endangered Chicago-to-Indianapolis rail line. Instead, the \$30 billion state budget plan gives state officials discretion on whether to fund the rail service out of the Indiana Department of Transportation’s budget. “The future is not yet clear,” Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari said Friday. “But it’s certainly not a rainy day either.” To cut costs,

Congress voted in 2008 to stop subsidizing Amtrak routes shorter than 750 miles. That includes the Hoosier State line connecting Chicago and Indianapolis, which federal officials say they will stop funding on Oct. 1. Hoosier taxpayers will have to pick up the \$4-million-a-year tab to keep the silver passenger cars moving along the tracks. INDOT does have a little extra money to play with under the Republican-authored state budget, which increases INDOT's discretionary funding by \$113 million per fiscal year. Plus, the budget sets aside \$200 million the following two years for a reserve fund for future highway projects. But Gov. Mike Pence isn't yet offering any opinions on how much money, if any, INDOT should spend on the Amtrak rail service. [Future of Indiana Amtrak service remains murky under state budget plan | Indianapolis Star | indystar.com](#)

### **Bump in road funds approved**

The Goshen News  
4/27/13

INDIANAPOLIS — After begging for more infrastructure funding for years, local governments in Indiana are finally getting their wish: Millions of more dollars from the state to repair the crumbling roads and bridges in their communities. The \$30 billion budget deal reached by House and Senate leaders with Gov. Mike Pence earmarks more than \$215 million in new road funding annually for the next two fiscal years, with about \$100 million of that projected for counties, cities and towns. It marks the first increase in road funding for local communities in more than a decade. "It's something cities and towns have been asking for, for many years," Groeller said. "It's desperately needed for economic development. Without good roads, communities suffer, schools suffer, the local economy suffers. We don't have anything if we don't have good roads." Officials with the Indiana Association of Counties were just as celebratory. The final budget deal reached late Thursday makes all counties eligible for the extra road money as soon as July 1. It deletes language added by the Senate that required counties to have an excise surtax or wheel tax to tap into the new road funding. "This was our number one priority this year," said association head David Bortoff. "There was nothing more important." The additional road funding is significant, given a decade of decline: Between 2000 and 2010, the major sources of road repair money collected by the state and doled out to local governments dropped by about \$100 million. [Bump in road funds approved » Breaking News » Goshen News, Goshen, IN](#)

### **Madison County Bridge contract awarded**

The Herald Bulletin  
4/27/13

ANDERSON, Ind. — The Indiana Department of Transportation has confirmed the award of an \$1,149,500 contract to re-deck and refurbish a Madison County bridge west of Anderson. Schutt-Lookabill Company of Indianapolis submitted the lowest of five bids. This Local Public Agency (LPA) project at C.R. 600 West over White River is sponsored by Madison County—with 80 percent funding coming from the Federal Highway Administration. INDOT administers the FHWA funds. Schutt-Lookabill crews will remove and replace the bridge deck, install new bridge rails and perform other repairs—including replacement of several steel beams within the superstructure. The contract allows a 120-day closure of County Road 600W. The bridge and roadway should reopen by the end of September. [Madison County Bridge contract awarded » Local Business » The Herald Bulletin](#)

### **18th Street project resurfaces with changes**

Pharos-Tribune  
4/28/13

LOGANSPORT — Logansport and Cass County officials are hammering out the details of an improvement project along 18th Street that was planned during the city's previous administration

and has since undergone changes. The city's previous administration, under Mayor Mike Fincher, had originally planned an improvement project on 18th Street starting from Broadway and heading south that included a roundabout at the intersection of 18th Street and Main Street. Logansport Mayor Ted Franklin and the current city council have since decided to scale down the project, nixing the roundabout and deciding to improve 18th Street south of the bridge by widening the road, redesigning the intersection at Main Street, adding turn lanes at intersections and improving drainage by repairing culverts. The project is designed to improve traffic through there," Franklin said. "With the completion of the Hoosier Heartland, we believe it could be utilized more." The Hoosier Heartland, a new four-lane highway that will connect Lafayette to Fort Wayne, runs south of the city and is expected to be completed in November. The project is estimated to cost about \$1.5 million, with 80 percent of it being funded by a grant from the Indiana Department of Transportation. Franklin said INDOT has estimated the city's contribution will be about \$260,000. [18th Street project resurfaces with changes » Local News » Pharos-Tribune](#)

### **New plan might bridge gap**

Palladium-Item

4/28/13

Wayne County commissioners are taking a new look at replacing a bridge in western Wayne County that's been closed for three years. A daily traffic count of just 14 cars a day and a \$470,000 price tag made replacing the Weaver Road bridge a low priority for the Wayne County commissioners, despite repeated pleas by residents for a new bridge. The commissioners are now looking at some lower-cost options and voted unanimously this month to hear proposals from American StructurePoint Inc. of Indianapolis. Commissioners expect to hear from the company's engineers in the next few weeks. Commission President Denny Burns said the options are estimated to be about half the cost of the replacement presented by Wayne County engineer A.J. Wortkoetter. "Commissioner (Mary Anne) Butters and I want to get a bridge in there," Burns said. "It may not be a 30-foot (wide) bridge. It may be 24 feet. We're not hearing very often from the residents out there, but they are still reminding us that they need a bridge." Wortkoetter wrote a lengthy recommendation on why he thinks the county needs a full-size bridge in the rural location, Butters said. A substandard bridge is not county policy and Wortkoetter said he wouldn't place his engineering stamp on plans for such a bridge, according to the commissioners' meeting minutes posted online. Wortkoetter said this week he's no longer part of the Weaver Road bridge discussion. [New plan might bridge gap | Palladium-Item | pal-item.com](#)