



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

August 21, 2012

May the transit force be with us

Indianapolis Star
8/16/12

Yet, traffic congestion and parking also could be substantial challenges if the anticipated crowds show up. Which points to one of the city's big missing pieces -- mass transit. Yes, we have IndyGo, but it's one of the most underfunded and least functional bus systems in the nation. On any practical level, a person who on Saturday wants to go from the bike races or a restaurant in Fountain Square to a theater performance or shopping on Mass Ave has almost no other option but to pile into a vehicle to drive from one spot to the other. Central Indiana residents have multiple reasons to invest in transit -- including economic development, neighborhood redevelopment, traffic reduction and pollution control -- but the basic convenience of a useful bus system in getting from one point to another shouldn't be overlooked.

[May the transit force be with us | Indianapolis Star | indystar.com](#)

State scrambles to spend excess highway cash

Indianapolis Star
8/17/12

WASHINGTON -- The Obama administration is giving Indiana and other states until October to decide how to quickly spend millions in unused highway dollars or forfeit the money. The money initially was awarded for local projects requested by lawmakers that were never completed or that didn't need all of the allotted funds. Indiana has \$4.8 million left over from nine projects requested by the delegation in previous financing bills. The state can spend the money on the original projects or redirect it to other projects, but the money has to get out the door by the end of the year. "They need to be shovel-ready (projects)," Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said. "We want people to go to work now. And we want states to spend the money as quickly as they can."

Funds not spent by the end of the year will be redistributed to states that met the deadline. [State scrambles to spend excess highway cash | Indianapolis Star | indystar.com](#)

Cline Bridge turnover deadline looms

NWI Times
8/19/12

Despite a May announcement of a deal to build a new Cline Avenue Bridge, documents obtained by The Times show the state has yet to conclude a critical land-swap agreement with the bridge's private developer. Under that agreement, still in draft form, the Indiana Department of Transportation will cede the right of way for the bridge to private developer United Bridge Partners in exchange for land the bridge company owns. State officials have until Sept. 4 to conclude that agreement, according to a letter of intent obtained by The Times from the city of East Chicago under a public access records request. Without the land swap, no bridge can be built. INDOT plans to finalize its land-exchange agreement with the bridge developer by

September, according to INDOT spokesman Will Wingfield. The actual exchange of property will not take place until demolition of the current bridge is complete later this year. "At this point, we are hoping to meet that time frame," Wingfield said. [Cline Bridge turnover deadline looms : East Chicago Community News](#)

Other bridge actions seem to open Cline divide wider

NWI Times
8/19/12

Bridge and ramp projects in Northwest Indiana and elsewhere are getting a careful look as local industry and others consider the fairness of putting a private toll bridge on Cline Avenue. One of the biggest controversies has been generated by the state's November 2011 decision to call off the Dickey Road ramp project in pursuit of a deal with a private company to replace the condemned Cline Avenue Bridge. Steelmaker ArcelorMittal, in unusually strong and unequivocal statements in March, said that canceling the ramp project endangered employees, vendors, contractors and residents of Northwest Indiana. The Dickey Road ramp at Cline Avenue was proposed by INDOT as part of a permanent detour plan announced in April 2010. It would have taken trucks and cars over a Dickey Road rail crossing where traffic can back up for more than an hour because of stopped or slow-moving trains. In a statement provided in response to a Times inquiry last week, an ArcelorMittal representative made it clear the steelmaker continues to believe a ramp at Dickey Road would best serve the community. "ArcelorMittal still believes that a ramp system over the railroad tracks at Dickey Road should be an integral part of the solution as it would address a major commercial disruption and, even more ominously, a critical safety matter," the statement read in part. [Other bridge actions seem to open Cline divide wider : Inbusiness](#)

Land swap deadline looms for new Cline Avenue span

WISH TV
8/19/12

EAST CHICAGO, Ind. (AP) - The state of Indiana has just over two weeks left to conclude a critical land-swap agreement with the developer of a private Lake County toll bridge to replace a high-traffic span shut down in 2009, a report Sunday said. The Indiana Department of Transportation has until Sept. 4 to finish the deal, under which it will cede the right of way to private developer United Bridge Partners in exchange for land the company owns, The Times of Munster reported Sunday, citing a letter of intent that it obtained from the city of East Chicago under a public access records request. The deal was first announced in May. Without the land swap, the bridge cannot be built, the report said. INDOT plans to complete the land-exchange agreement with the developer by September, INDOT spokesman Will Wingfield said. The actual exchange of property will not occur until the bridge is demolished later this year. "At this point, we are hoping to meet that time frame," Wingfield said. [Land swap deadline looms for new Cline Avenue span](#)

Privatizing infrastructure, like Cline, brews a political battle

NWI Times
8/20/12

INDIANAPOLIS | If the response from local and state officials to the apparent resolution of the Cline Avenue Bridge quandary is any indication, the issue of replacing free roads and bridges with tolled infrastructure is likely to divide Hoosiers for years to come. Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. said he understands why East Chicago Mayor Anthony Copeland opted for a Cline Avenue toll bridge; ultimately it was the only way to get a new bridge and relieve congestion on local roads in East Chicago, Hammond and Whiting. But McDermott said the Indiana Department

of Transportation should never have forced Copeland to make that choice. "It's not consistent with INDOT's approach in other areas. They build bridges all over the state of Indiana but not in Northwest Indiana? ... It's an insult," McDermott said. "It should have been a freeway just like it was before." McDermott vowed to "never, ever, ever use that toll bridge" and said, "For the rest of my life I will drive around it. I'll be 80 years old, and I'll drive around it." Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson also believes Cline Avenue should have been rebuilt as a free bridge but said a toll bridge is better than nothing. [Privatizing infrastructure, like Cline, brews a political battle : Elections](#)

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