



# **BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL**

## **Infrastructure Media Summary**

### **December 20, 2011**

#### **Why trains are important (even for car guys)**

Mother Nature Network  
12/16/11

I was reminded of the importance of trains last week, when I went to Indianapolis to be the keynote speaker for the Hoosier Environmental Council (HEC). It's safe to say that, despite the best efforts of HEC and other activists, Indianapolis — indeed, the whole state of Indiana — is transit-challenged. The DOT was known as the "Department of Highways" until 1989, and to this day spends only 3 percent of its budget on public transportation. Even the IndyGo bus service (below), which charged me only \$3.50 for a ride downtown from the airport, is on life support thanks to budget cuts. The state is highway-happy, with the sixth-highest density of roads in the U.S. Indianapolis is the 12th largest city in the U.S., but it ranks 100th in transit usage. Per capita spending on transit in the state's metro areas lags similar cities by 30 percent, and the state has been cool to Midwestern high-speed rail plans. According to HEC's Tim Maloney, "Our public transit system has been left behind. Even as demand for transit services grows — as demonstrated by continuing ridership increases — and rising gas costs put additional strains on the state's 67 transit agencies, major moves have not contributed a cent to support transit." He says that for every \$1 invested in transit, \$4 comes back in economic value. [Why trains are important \(even for car guys\) | MNN - Mother Nature Network](#)

#### **Hobart completes latest upgrade to 61st Avenue**

Post-Tribune  
12/16/11

HOBART — Local officials gathered near 61st Avenue and Colorado Street Friday to mark the completion of the second phase of the 61st Avenue road improvement project with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. "Today is one great leap to getting to the finish line," Mayor Brian Snedecor said of the three-phase project. "This was something the city sought to do for 15 years or better, and we're making strides to get that done," Snedecor said. City engineer Pete Kohut, of Butler, Fairman & Seufert, called the \$2 million second phase a continued investment by the city of Hobart for an important corridor into the city. "It takes a long time and costs a lot of money," Kohut said of all the work, including utility relocation, that had gone into the project. Mitch Barloga, with Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, said 61st Avenue has long been a gateway to the city from Interstate 65. He's happy to see the improvements include sidewalks, landscaping and a future roundabout, all of which he said will make it easier for cars, bike riders and pedestrians to travel along the road. Assistant city engineer Jake Dammarell said the second phase extended from Colorado to Arizona streets. The road reconstruction and expansion project included a center turn lane, new curbs, gutters, storm drainage, extension of the water main and new sidewalks and lighting. [Hobart completes latest upgrade to 61st Avenue - Post-Tribune](#)

## **SR1 Big Problem: Officials Trying To Stop Trucks**

Eagle Country 99.3 FM  
12/16/11

Indiana Department of Transportation officials met with Dearborn County Commissioners and State Rep. Jud McMillin (R-Brookville) Thursday in Lawrenceburg to discuss what steps can be taken. The 15 miles of hills and twisting turns from St. Leon to Greendale is not ideal for trucks as McMillin can attest. "I've heard from a lot of constituents, but driving State Road 1 myself I've seen it a lot," McMillin said. "While I fully respect the need for commerce in the area and trucks to travel, I also understand at some point we outweigh commerce by providing dangerous situations for travelers on the road." Dearborn County Engineer Todd Listerman said trucking companies tell their drivers to use State Road 1 as a time and distance shortcut between Interstate 74 and Interstate 275 bypassing Cincinnati. One course of action would be for INDOT to pay the county – a figure of around \$10 million was discussed – up front to take responsibility for the highway. INDOT will develop a proposal for county commissioners to review and decide whether to accept the offer. Following the meeting, Listerman told Eagle 99.3 the \$10 million figure would be "a drop in the bucket" to assess the needed improvements on State Road 1. INDOT provided estimates of \$3 million to create a third climbing lane on Dover Hill, about \$5 million to improve various intersections, and more money needed to correct slips where hillsides along the road are sinking into the Tanners Creek bed. "It would cost the county a lot of money to maintain that road," said Commissioner Tom Orschell. Listerman said the county could seek federal funding to help address needs in the event of a county takeover, but there is no guarantee the county would get the amount it needs. [Eagle Country 99.3 FM | Lawrenceburg, IN](#)

## **Final say for Kentucky: First of two public input hearings held**

News and Tribune  
12/20/11

LOUISVILLE — Once again planners for the Ohio River Bridges Project are seeking the public's comments on its plan to build an east-end bridge, downtown bridge and reconstruct Spaghetti Junction. As a part of the Federal Highway Administration planning requirements the bridges project planners held the first of two public hearings on the scaled down version of their plan, also known as the modified alternative. The modified alternative cuts \$1.9 billion out of the project — originally billed as a \$4.1 billion plan in 2003 — by removing lanes on the east-end bridge and its approaches, reducing it from six to four lanes; removing a pedestrian walkway on the downtown I-65 bridge; reconfiguring Spaghetti Junction in its current location rather than moving the interchange south; and reducing the number of flyover exit and entrance ramps on the Indiana I-65 approach. The plan was originally presented by Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels, Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear and Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer. The public hearing is part of the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement, which once the public involvement process has been completed, will be sent in its final version, along with the public comments, to the Federal Highway Administration for approval. [Final say for Kentucky: First of two public input hearings held » Clark County » News and Tribune](#)