



Indiana Citizens' Alliance for Transit: Background

A series of public forums held throughout central Indiana in the spring of 2008 catalyzed discussion about creating a statewide transit advocacy organization. Public comment during these forums (hosted by the ACLU, the Urban Land Institute and the Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority [CIRTA], among others) brought to light the fact that there existed no effective body or mechanism for organizing transit advocates from different sectors, or for reaching out to the general public – voters, taxpayers, transit riders – about plans for transit expansion in central Indiana. Furthermore, there were citizens eager to “do something” to make expanded transit a reality, but no organizing body to accommodate them.

It became evident to transit advocates that some type of body, independent of CIRTA, had to be established to focus advocacy efforts in order to secure dedicated transit funding. Participants in the ensuing discussion, although representative primarily of central Indiana, reached consensus early on that this body needed to be comprised of statewide members, advocating for a statewide solution.

An interim steering committee held its first meeting in Indianapolis on October 10, 2008. Representatives of the Health by Design coalition (HbD), the Hoosier Environmental Council (HEC), CIRTA, the Metropolitan Indianapolis Board of Realtors (MIBOR), the Marion County Commission on Youth (MCCOY), IndyGo and several private citizens gathered to discuss mission and operating principles. The now official steering committee and subcommittees continue to meet regularly to pursue their objectives.

ICAT's primary objective at present is to secure dedicated funding for transit expansion (including IndyGo and the light rail proposal for the northeast corridor in central Indiana) both at the state level and at the local level, as authorized by the Indiana General Assembly in the 2009 legislative session. We continue to meet with legislators to request their support, offer technical assistance and testify in committee hearings and before the General Assembly.

We are also busily recruiting members from around the state here on our website and through other networks, and are exploring a new web interface and outreach campaign that would allow us to disseminate information about the benefits of transit and organize letter writing on a mass scale.

A statewide organizational meeting, to be held in the spring and currently in the early stages of planning, will allow us to concentrate our efforts towards achieving our short-term objectives and to formulate actionable mid- to long-term objectives.