



Central Indiana MOVE Roundtable Executive Summary

Context/Focus

Rail~Volution worked with the AARP Indiana State Office staff (Addison Pollock, Ambre Marr, and Jason Tomcsi) to identify the following context and focus for this Roundtable:

Current challenges:

- o Transit funding power dynamic: a city issue controlled by the General Assembly, made up of mostly legislators from rural areas
- o Many legislators do not see relevance to themselves and their constituencies around transit in Indianapolis – but there is relevance and we want/need to show them that
- o Limited number of activated groups who are ready to pick up the phone and influence legislators to support transit – want to rebuild the bench of influencers at the ready

Focus:

The Indianapolis MOVE Roundtable will focus on the question: *Why should people (e.g. state legislators) who never (have to) think about transit care about transit? How might we convince them to care more?* Through our conversation series, we'll explore myths and realities about transit, consider the regional impact of transit systems in determining quality of life and access to opportunity, and better understand the connections (both on the ground and at a systems level) that transit provides to both riders and overall communities.

Purpose/format

Three AARP Indiana MOVE Roundtable hosts engaged with 15 local leaders and elected officials from Central Indiana in a learning and discussion series focused on the importance of a well-functioning transit system for the state. The Roundtable members were encouraged to “leave their hats at the door” and approach the conversation as a group of caring individuals discussing a shared priority. During six sessions in August-October 2022, the Roundtable addressed the big picture of transit, methods to engage the business community, keys to effective transit advocacy and messaging, and the power of activating a new narrative about transit. During the final session, Roundtable members worked in small groups to begin building out two focus areas: messaging/communications and a broader, more regional approach.

Initial Outcomes

At the conclusion of the Roundtable, participants walked away with a shared sense about the necessity of ongoing, coordinated, collective, and consistent transit advocacy and awareness efforts. The Roundtable also acknowledged that the Indianapolis Public Transportation Corporation (IndyGo) can't and shouldn't do this alone: this needs to become more about the larger regional picture and involve additional stakeholders, including leadership in the donut counties. It seems that Roundtable members are ready to take action by participating in an ongoing collective transit communications and awareness campaign, and what is most needed is someone to serve in convening and coordinating roles.



Suggested next steps:

Based on the Roundtable and our experience in the transit/land use/community development space, Rail~Volution would like to suggest the following:

- Maintain momentum of the group. People seem ready and willing, but it will take ongoing convening and collective planning and accountability for this effort to move forward.
- Build the plug-and-play communications menu. This could include things such as an op-ed template, sample social media posts, basic suggestions for elevating transit such as including transit directions to your organization on your website. You don't have to complete it, you can begin with a few things and add more over time.
- Identify new voices and strategic messengers to engage them. This includes leaders in the donut counties as well as riders.
- Strengthen relationship with IndyGo. Maintain communication and be an active listener. Explore ways in which transparency and trust can be increased all around.
- Strengthen relationships with the business community so that they can plug in meaningfully and powerfully in both acute (specific and time-bound) and chronic (ongoing) situations.
- Work with partners to forge a new narrative about transit in Central Indiana and work to perpetuate and activate that narrative.