



## Complete Streets Ordinance – Indianapolis



### Problem and Background

*Indianapolis, similar to many large cities in the U.S., faces numerous challenges in planning, designing, and maintaining streets that will accommodate all users. Local and regional stakeholders decided to address these issues by promoting the adoption of a Complete Streets ordinance. Complete streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users—pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, those who use wheelchairs—and public transportation users of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across a complete street.*

### Successful Solution in Indianapolis

Indianapolis' Complete Streets ordinance passed with a unanimous vote of the Indianapolis-Marion County City-County Council on August 13, 2012, and Mayor Greg Ballard signed the ordinance into law just 10 days later.

The road to passing Indianapolis' Complete Streets ordinance began in June 2009, with a 1.5-day statewide workshop co-sponsored by National Complete Streets Coalition members, AARP Indiana, and Health by Design (a regional active living coalition). Later that year, members of the City-County Council began discussions about formulating a Complete Streets ordinance with input from this diverse coalition of stakeholders. In January 2010, AARP Indiana and Health by Design launched the Indiana Complete Streets Campaign, which now includes more than 75 organizations and 250 individuals.

During this time, AARP Indiana began conducting walkability assessments in various locations around Indiana, including the Indianapolis/Marion

County area. These assessments began to engage neighborhoods and local residents. At the same time, the assessments enhanced City-County Council members' awareness of the need for improved transportation infrastructure and, ultimately, helped enlist their support for the ordinance.

From September 2011 until the spring of 2012, a full schedule of partner meetings, education, and advocacy activities occurred. The Mayor's Office, Department of Public Works, the Office of Sustainability, and other organizations came together to draft language and garner support for the ordinance.

The advocacy continued in spring of 2012 with letters to the editor, meetings with editorial boards of major Indianapolis newspapers, reaching out to neighborhood associations, circulating an online petition that gathered more than 1,000 signatures, and 30-second radio spots run by AARP Indiana.

### Importance of Partnerships

The successful passage of the Complete Streets ordinance would not have been possible without the coordinated efforts of a diverse group of partners. Health by Design is a coalition working to ensure that neighborhoods, public spaces, and transportation infrastructure promote physical activity and healthy living. AARP's Initiative of Livable Communities directly links to Complete Streets by working to significantly increase the mobility of older adults and increase driver and pedestrian safety. Other partners involved in the Complete Streets Campaign include the Indiana Chapter of the American Planning Association, the Indiana Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, and the Indiana State Department of Health, among others.

### Future Direction

The Indiana Complete Streets Campaign continues to meet regularly as it monitors and supports the activities of communities across Indiana in promoting policy change supporting Complete Streets. The group also provided assistance in drafting statewide Complete Streets legislation in the 2013 session of the Indiana General Assembly.

Health by Design is providing full-time dedicated staff support to the Complete Streets Campaign in 2013. They will also facilitate up to six Complete Streets workshops for communities in Indiana that are considering enacting policies.

### Lessons Learned

The Complete Streets Coalition in Indiana has learned that a transformative movement in the state can begin with outreach activities to individual communities, building support from the ground up. The group has had its greatest success working with local communities and regional planning agencies to address policy change with local leaders. State-level policy change has been more challenging due to entrenched state agencies and complex procedures for adoption of new statewide policies.

### Tips for Success

"As Indianapolis continues to grow, it is essential we plan for the safe and mixed use of our streets and sidewalks," City-County Council President Maggie Lewis said in a prepared statement.

### For More Information

Please contact:  
Kim Irwin at [kirwin@acsm.org](mailto:kirwin@acsm.org)

### Or visit:

Indiana Complete Streets Campaign:  
[www.healthbydesignonline.org/IndianaCompleteStreetsCampaign.html](http://www.healthbydesignonline.org/IndianaCompleteStreetsCampaign.html)

Indiana Healthy Weight Initiative:  
[www.inhealthyweight.org](http://www.inhealthyweight.org)



Indiana State  
Department of Health