



**LOCAL
MOTIVE
TOUR 2023**

Starting the Strong Towns Conversation with Elected Officials

Use this collection of questions to prepare yourself to start ongoing discussions with leaders in your community.

General Principles:

1. **“You will always catch more flies with honey.”**
2. **Advocacy is a marathon, not a sprint.**
3. **Early engagement matters; public comment is not enough.**
4. **Assume good intentions in public officials.**
5. **Strive for authenticity.**

Starting Out

Add your notes in the empty boxes below.

What are you “for?”

Some projects or policies need your support and it's straightforward to communicate that to elected officials. But many times you'll need to articulate what a better alternative looks like to the things being proposed or done. You don't have to have all of the technical details sorted out—but you have the ability to describe what you want your place to feel like and what outcomes you want to see.

Who is most likely to talk with you?

You want your first effort to be met with success and you can improve your odds by discerning whom to approach first. Who is your local representative? Have you reached out to them already? Who is the most vocal on the issues you care about? Does your mayor make a point of saying that they love to hear from residents?



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Stepping Forward

Add your notes in the empty boxes below.

What's your angle?

Busy people need to perceive the value to them in responding to you or meeting with you. Describe the common problem you and they are facing. Describe how you (and others like you) are being impacted by this problem. Showcase how the answer to this problem is contained in the views you're sharing with them.

Can you double your value by adding participants?

A busy elected official can only meet with so many constituents in a day. Meeting with a pair of residents (or more) is twice as valuable as meeting with a single individual. Is there someone who can jump on the call or join the meeting with you? Do you have someone you can co-sign a letter with?

What can you send them or leave with them?

After sharing how a problem is impacting you, share an article or video or book recommendation (or purchase a copy as a gift) that has been helpful for you. Acknowledge their busyness and explain which part you really want them to check out (e.g., share a video that will start playing at the most climactic point).

Staying In Touch

Add your notes in the empty boxes below.

What will you do to follow up?

A thank you note or email goes a long way—it is courteous and helps to remind the elected officials about who you are. Ask them to remember you when stakeholder discussions are scheduled and signal your willingness to meet again.

What can you celebrate?

Make a point of congratulating elected officials for the things that they get right. If it's hard to think of something, just congratulate them for serving your community for x number of years or months. Good feedback is rarely received, and you (and your message) will gain credibility with sincere efforts to acknowledge that holding public office is sacrificial of one's time and opportunities to do other things.

