



Grow the Movement by Sharing the Message

Local Conversations Graphics and Print Starter Kit

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Local Conversation Leaders Agreement

(The "Don't Be a Jerk" Agreement)

Our Agreement

The Strong Towns movement is a bottom-up revolution to change the way we build our cities, towns, and neighborhoods. There are thousands of people working across the continent to make their place stronger.

With this agreement, we are inviting you to be a leader in the Strong Towns movement.

We are going to provide you and your Local Conversation with tools and resources to help you grow your Local Conversation, reach others in your community, and be an effective advocate for change in your community.

We are going to allow your Local Conversation to use our name—Strong Towns—as part of your branding and communications. You will be, for all practical purposes, representing Strong Towns in your community.

Requirements

For this to work out, we need you to agree to a few basic things.

- **First**, we need a member of your Local Conversation to be a [Strong Towns member](#) at the Movement Builder level or above (\$10/month or \$100 per year). The Local Conversations program is broadly paid for by members, donors, and sponsors, but we do ask our Local Conversations to signal their commitment in this way. We are all in this together.
- **Second**, we need you to ensure that your Local Conversation stays current on its reporting. We promise this won't be burdensome, but we need you to formally check in once a quarter, with one of those check-ins being a slightly longer census. We'll send you the email link, we just need you to take a couple minutes to respond to it
- **Third**, and perhaps most importantly, we need you to not be a jerk. Let us elaborate.

Don't Be a Jerk

When you act as a Local Leader for a Strong Towns Local Conversation, you represent not only Strong Towns, the organization, but the broader movement itself. Your approach and behavior reflect on every other Local Leader of every other Local Conversation.

We want to help you be really effective and so we are going to protect you from jerks that might ruin your credibility. To do that, we need you to agree—like every Local Leader has agreed—not to be a jerk.

At Strong Towns:

- **We stay above the partisan fray.** We don't voice support, share memes, endorse candidates, or speak in any way on issues outside of our core mission and focus. We are very disciplined about this. You need to speak locally in a way that reaches your friends and neighbors, but there is no reason for a Strong Towns Local Conversation to have a position on abortion, guns, or Israel/Palestine, for example. Keep it local. This doesn't mean you can't volunteer for a partisan political campaign, or even run for your office yourself. But within the bounds of the Local Conversation's work, we need you to stay above the partisan fray.
- **We are kind, even when it's hard.** We are working to reform systems and change minds. To the extent that we have enemies, those enemies are systems and accepted practices/approaches, not individuals. We can't use the Strong Towns platform to demonize or personally attack any individual, no matter how frustrated we are with them.
- We are polite. We don't curse. We don't use salacious imagery. Our communications will often be provocative, but it will always be safe for work.
- **We are trustworthy.** We don't lie, deceive, or conduct ourselves in a way that will undermine our credibility as a consensus builder. We are going to push boundaries and challenge deeply held beliefs, but we are known as people who say what they mean and mean what they say. Ours is a long-term strategy.

For Strong Towns to win, we need the broad culture to change. We change the broad culture by being a positive force, one that builds consensus around key insights and shared realities. By being a Local Leader, you are signing up to be part of this strategy. You are agreeing not to be a jerk.

Acknowledgement

With this agreement, we welcome you to be a Local Leader for a Strong Towns Local Conversation.

By signing the following, I am signing up to be a Local Leader for a Strong Towns Local Conversation. I agree to the following:

- **I will ensure our group has at least one member of Strong Towns at the Movement Builder level.**
- **I will make sure that my Local Conversation is current on their check-ins.**
- **I will not be a jerk.**

I acknowledge that, if I fail to do any of these things, Strong Towns may rescind my Local Leader status and/or delist my Local Conversation, at which point I will lose all the privileges and benefits thereof.

First Name*

Last Name*

Creating Your Brand

Your Local Conversation's name and logo are a chance to show local identity while staying connected to the broader Strong Towns movement. Over the years we've seen different approaches work well, and there's plenty of room to shape things in a way that feels right for your community.

Naming Approaches

LC's usually take one of three routes when it comes to naming:

- **Combo names:** Merging "Strong Towns" with your city name (for example, Strong Sactown in Sacramento).
- **Full names:** Keeping "Strong Towns" and adding your location (like Strong Towns Lexington, Virginia).
- **Unique names:** Choosing something entirely your own that still reflects the Strong Towns spirit (such as Livable Lynchburg).

Each approach has its strengths. The choice really comes down to whether you want to emphasize the shared identity, highlight your community name, or craft something more distinctive.

Visual Style

Many LC's start by creating an icon to pair with their name. An icon gives you flexibility in how the logo is arranged:

1. **Horizontal layout:** Icon to the left or right of your LC name.



2. **Vertical layout:** Icon stacked above your LC name.



3. **Mix and match:** Some LC's use both orientations, while others stick with just one orientation.



The benefit of designing an icon is that it works at any scale—it stays clear and recognizable in places where longer logos can get hard to read, like on social media or in the footer of a printed document, while still looking strong alongside your LC name in larger formats.

Other LC's keep things simple by placing their name directly into the Strong Towns logo, swapping out the words “Strong Towns” for their own LC name.



Fonts and Colors

When it comes to fonts, the Strong Towns logo and large headlines use Mixta Sharp (usually in bold or black weights). Other brand fonts include Synthese (often for titles, headers, and short-form body text) and Freight Text (best suited for long-form content like articles). All three are available through Adobe Fonts if you have an Adobe Creative Cloud subscription.

For those without an Adobe subscription, the licensed files can't be shared directly, but there are free alternatives that capture a similar feel:

- **Mixta** - DM Serif Display or Platypi Bold
- **Synthese** - Inter
- **Freight Text** - Lora or Georgia (which comes standard on most computers)

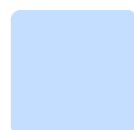
Strong Town's primary color palette falls within a scheme of Blues and yellow. LC's often use one or two of these to tie back to the larger movement, but there's no need to use all four on all materials you produce.



Yellow - #FFA800



Blue - #488BE3



Light Blue - #C4DEFF



Dark Blue - #0C2340

■ 5 Priority Campaigns

Below is a one-page document explaining each of Strong Towns' five priority campaigns (Incremental Housing, Safe and Productive Streets, Transparent Local Accounting, End Parking Mandates and Subsidies, and End Highway Expansion). Whether you're helping members understand the priorities at an internal meeting or offering a quick introduction to people outside the organization, these sheets give a clear, straightforward overview of each campaign.

You can choose to print whichever campaign documents make the most sense for your Local Conversation. They can also be edited to reflect how your group is approaching the campaign locally, so the information stays relevant and connected to your community.

In a strong town, housing emerges rapidly in response to local needs. But across the continent, our neighbors can't find homes they can afford to live in, and local builders can't help.

To address the housing crisis from the bottom-up, we must understand:

We are in a Housing Trap.



Housing is treated both as an investment and as shelter. Investments prices must go up, but when the price of shelter goes up, people experience distress.

Cities must address regulations that block bottom-up responses to housing needs.



In most cities, zoning codes and building regulations stunt local housing markets. Building anything beyond a single-family home on a large lot usually requires a variance, rezoning, or long, costly approval processes — a major barrier for small developers, homeowners, and builders who could otherwise add housing that fits the neighborhood.

A healthy housing market is built by many hands — and it works.

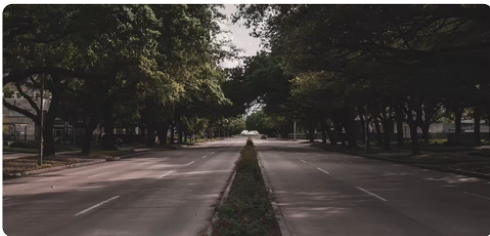


A healthy housing market isn't built by a few big developers but by homeowners, local builders, and neighborhood developers working together. Incremental growth is fast, adaptable, and rooted in the community. It helps neighborhoods mature, reduces risk, and builds local wealth. When we legalize and support it, we unlock the power of many hands to solve the housing crisis.

In a Strong Town, a street is a safe place for people to spend time and build relationships; and a perfect place to put a wealth-generating home or business. But many of us drive on dangerous roads that drain our town's economic vitality.

This is because we fundamentally misunderstand these things about streets:

Streets are a liability, not an asset.



Most cities treat streets as permanent assets that add value to the city. In reality, every street costs money to build, maintain, and police. Unless the adjacent properties generate enough wealth to cover those long-term costs, the city is actually losing money on that street.

Street design is the primary factor in crash prevention and safety.



The design of a street is the most important factor in whether people drive safely or not. It's not about how many signs you put up, how many tickets the police write, or how many public service announcements you run. If a street is designed to feel like a highway, people will drive it like a highway.

Streets should prioritize human movement, not automobile movement.



Most streets have been designed like roads, optimized to move cars quickly and efficiently. This often makes them dangerous and unpleasant for everyone else. When streets are designed for people first, they become safer, more inviting, and more economically productive.

Transparent Local Accounting

A Strong Town only builds what it can afford to maintain, and only makes promises it can afford to keep. But our streets are cracked and potholed, our water systems are aging, and the bill is coming due. And if you're not seeing it in your place... you're about to.

This is because municipal accounting is stuck in a system that hurts long-term prosperity.

Most North American cities are caught in a Growth Ponzi Scheme.



Cities build new infrastructure and see short-term revenue, but the long-term costs of maintaining that infrastructure are far greater. To cover the gap, they chase more growth on the edge of town. This cycle — what Strong Towns calls the “Growth Ponzi Scheme” — leaves cities with liabilities they can't sustain.

Cities must run a profit.



If a city consistently spends more than it brings in, it's on a path to insolvency.

That's just math.

Local accounting must serve the long-term financial needs of the community.



Local leaders should focus on investments that make their communities stronger and more livable for current residents. Outside institutions often incentivize growth and flashy projects that often don't serve people. Strong Towns argues that financial choices must reflect the values and priorities of the community, not outside incentives.

End Parking Mandates & Subsidies

A Strong Town builds wealth by creating places for people to live, do business, and congregate. But most cities have rules about parking that destroy opportunities to make these places.

Cities must end minimum parking requirements.

Parking mandates stifle the creation of homes and businesses.



It's about land and money. More land used for city-mandated parking means less land for much needed homes or wealth-generating businesses. And parking can be expensive to build, costing between \$5,000 and \$50,000 per space. When you force developers to include a minimum amount of parking, you're adding tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars to the cost of a project.

Parking mandates cost cities money.



Parking mandates don't just affect the private development side. They also cost cities a lot of money by making destinations farther and farther apart. You end up with more streets and roads per capita, more stormwater runoff to manage, and more liabilities on the city's books.

End Highway Expansion

We built highways to connect our towns. But then we never stopped building them.

This is because we fundamentally misunderstand these things about highways:

Highways don't address local transportation needs.



Highways are designed for long-distance, high-speed travel. They're great for moving freight across states or connecting cities hundreds of miles apart. But when we try to use highways to provide access to local homes and businesses, we end up driving up congestion and making travel unsafe—even deadly.

Highways are a liability.



Highways come with massive short term costs in planning and construction, and long-term financial commitments for cities that are left with the maintenance and replacement bill.

Highways destroy financial productivity.



Highways don't generate wealth for cities. In fact, they often destroy it. When a highway cuts through a city, it lowers the value of adjacent land, displaces residents and businesses, and fragments neighborhoods. That's not just a social cost, it's a financial one.

Highway development is driven by top-down priorities.



Cities often get help from state or federal sources to build highways, but once they're built, the maintenance, policing, and infrastructure around them become local responsibilities. That's a huge burden.

Introductory Printout

One-page printouts provide a simple, clear overview of key information all on a single sheet. They're easy to hand out at events, share digitally, or use as a quick reference for anyone interested in Strong Towns or your Local Conversation.

On the following pages, you'll find two examples: a sample printout already filled out, and a template printout. The top portion contains general information about Strong Towns, while the bottom portion is designed for Local Conversations to customize. It includes space for a short description, priorities, photos, and QR codes that can link directly to social media, websites, or contact information.

What is Strong Towns?

Strong Towns is a member-powered movement for change. A national nonprofit, Strong Towns tells stories and creates resources that reach millions each year, inspiring people to take the future of their neighborhoods, towns, and cities into their own hands.

The Strong Towns approach seeks to replace America's postwar pattern of development, the Suburban Experiment, with a pattern of development that is financially strong and resilient — creating cities that are safe, livable, and inviting, where local government serves as the highest level of collaboration for people working together in a place.

Through incremental housing, safe and productive streets, ending parking mandates and subsidies, ending highway expansion, and transparent local accounting, Strong Towns builds communities that last.

At the heart of the movement are more than 6,500 members and 300 Local Conversations, where neighbors come together to put Strong Towns ideas into practice.



Visit strongtowns.org to learn more



What is Livable Lynchburg?

Livable Lynchburg is the Strong Towns Local Conversation for Lynchburg, Virginia. We are building a beautiful, resilient city where walking, cycling, and transit are pleasant, competitive modes of transportation.

Our Priorities

- Streets should be safe for people walking, biking, and driving. We promote street designs that slow traffic where appropriate, support local businesses, and put people first.
- Requiring too much parking drives up housing costs and spreads out development. We're working to eliminate rules that force communities to build more parking than they actually need.

Email us with any questions at info@livablelynchburg.org



Visit livablelynchburg.org to learn more



Visit [@livablelynchburg](https://www.instagram.com/livablelynchburg) to learn more

[LC Logo]

[Local Conversation Name]

What is Strong Towns?



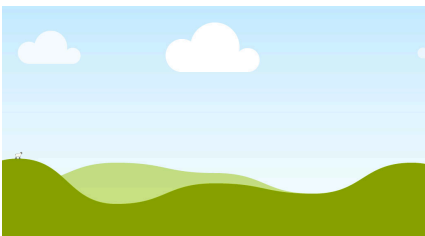
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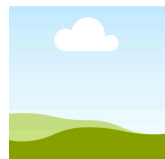
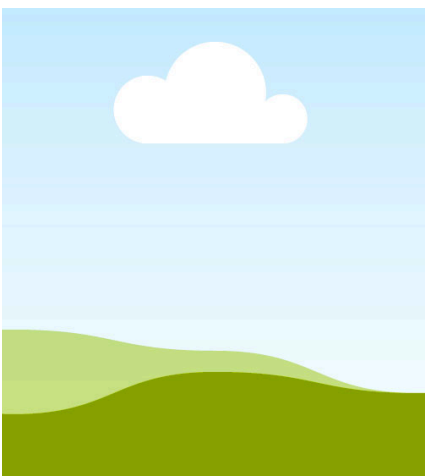
What is [LC Name]?

[LC Name] is the Strong Towns local conversation for [Place, State]. Insert mission statement Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Cras feugiat tempor odio ut lacinia. Pellentesque eu nulla sit amet mi venenatis maximus.

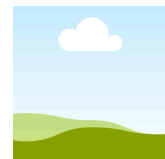
Our Priorities

- [Priority #1 Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Cras feugiat tempor odio ut lacinia. Pellentesque eu nulla sit amet mi venenatis maximus. In congue mauris diam. Vestibulum ante mi, suscipit sit amet egestas nec, maximus quis dolor.]
- [Priority #2 Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Cras feugiat tempor odio ut lacinia. Pellentesque eu nulla sit amet mi venenatis maximus. In congue mauris diam. Vestibulum ante mi, suscipit sit amet egestas nec, maximus quis dolor.]

Email us with any questions at [email]



Visit [website name] to learn more



Visit @[social handle] to learn more

Foldable Zines

Foldable zines are a quick, creative way to introduce people to Strong Towns in a format that feels approachable and fun. They're designed to be shared and passed along, making them a useful tool for generating interest and inviting participation in a Local Conversation.

Two versions are included: one finished zine that highlights Strong Towns' mission, priorities, and ways to get involved, and one blank template for Local Conversations to customize. Used together, they make it simple to introduce Strong Towns while also giving people a way to connect directly with your local effort.

How to Fold a Zine

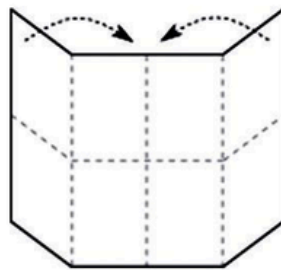
This zine is made from a single sheet of paper, and does not require any stapling or gluing. Follow the steps below to fold the zine.

For more help, see [article one](#) or [article two](#). Also, see [video one](#) or [video two](#) for help folding.

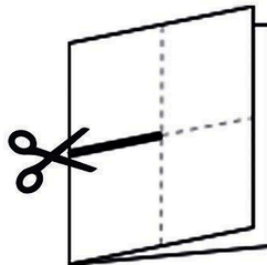
1. First Fold in half horizontally and vertically.



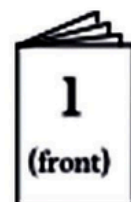
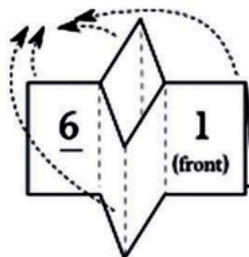
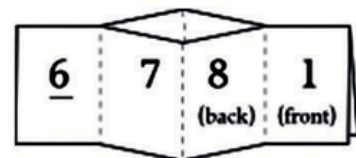
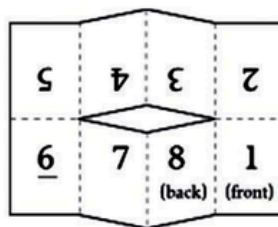
2. Unfold Step 1, then fold each side inward to meet the center crease. You'll now have 4 equal vertical panels.



3. Unfold then fold in half (horizontally again) and cut center slit.



4. Open and push into shape. Then, flatten and crease



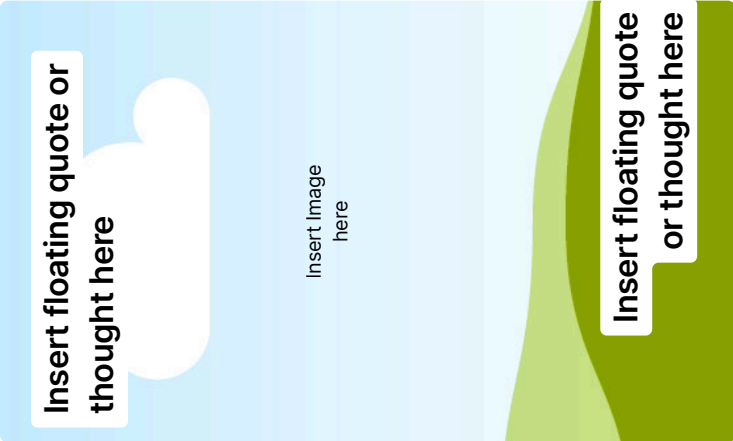
Insert guiding
quote or idea
here:
approximately
one sentence.

To fold together properly,
this half of the zine must
be upside down. You can
rotate the content right-
side up for easy editing,
but be sure to flip it back
and delete the yellow
boxes before printing. Test
print one copy to ensure
correct orientation.

Who Are We?
[LC Name]

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Now what?
Getting Involved

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anim id est laborum.

Let's stay in touch!



Reach out with questions to [LC
email] or visit [LC website]



**STRONG
TOWNS**

[LC Mission statement Lorem
ipsum dolor sit amet]

[LC Name]