

Local Conversation Leaders Agreement (The “Don’t Be a Jerk” 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.

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.

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—to not 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.

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.

Signature (Type to sign)

After signing and saving, please email to John at john@strongtowns.org. You can also print, sign, scan, and email.