

Nashua Strong Towns

An aerial night photograph of Nashua, New Hampshire. The scene is illuminated by city lights and streetlights, with a large brick building featuring a prominent green conical roof in the foreground. A river flows through the middle of the town, reflecting the lights. In the background, a large multi-story building is brightly lit, and the city extends towards rolling hills under a twilight sky. The text "Nashua Strong Towns" is overlaid in large white letters across the top half of the image.

Agenda

01 What is Nashua Strong Towns?

- David Fiore

02 Policy Objectives

- Darrien Glasser

03 Collaboration with other civic organizations

- Jonathan Vail

01

What is Nashua Strong Towns?

David Fiore

The logo for Strong Towns, featuring the words "STRONG" and "TOWNS" stacked vertically in a bold, serif font, enclosed within a double-lined rectangular border.

**STRONG
TOWNS**



We are a local conversation within the broader Strong Towns

Strong Towns

Started by Chuck Marohn

- City planner
- Realized traditional sub-divisions / car-centric design was bankrupting cities
- Realized downtown was the key to a prosperous city
 - Downtown Value Per Acre highest (Urban3 study)
 - Downtown investments have higher ROI
 - A prosperous downtown can pay for cash-draining suburbs

Nashua Strong Towns Origins

Darrien Glasser began our local conversation began in late 2021

We meet about once per month

Darrien, Jonathan and David are the current conversation leaders

In a typical meeting we typically have 10 - 15 people out of the 67 who have joined our mailing list

Strong Towns Mission

We seek to replace America's post-war pattern of development, the Suburban Experiment, with **a pattern of development that is financially strong and resilient**. We advocate for cities of all sizes to be **safe, livable, and inviting**. We work to **elevate local government** to be the highest level of collaboration for people working together in a place, not merely the lowest level in a hierarchy of governments.

Strong Towns Principles

- Strong cities, towns, and neighborhoods need strong citizens working together to improve the community.
- **Local government** is not the lowest level of government, but the **highest level of collaboration** for strong citizens working to build a prosperous place.
- For local government, **financial solvency is a prerequisite for long-term prosperity.**
- **Land is the base resource** from which community prosperity is built and sustained. It must not be squandered.
- A transportation system is one of many **means** of creating prosperity in a community, but **never an end** unto itself.
- Job creation and economic growth are the **results** of a healthy local economy, **not substitutes** for one.

Strong Towns Approach

- Relies on incremental investments ("little bets") instead of large, transformative projects.
- Favors resiliency of result over efficiency of execution.
- Is designed to adapt to feedback, to evolve over time to meet the changing needs of the community.
- Is inspired by bottom-up action ("chaotic but smart") and not top-down systems ("orderly but dumb").
- Seeks to conduct as much of life as possible at a human scale.
- Is obsessive about accounting for its revenues, expenses, assets, and long-term liabilities ("do the math").



So what makes a downtown prosperous anyway?
What sorts of policies can help drive prosperity?

02

Nashua Strong Towns Policy Objectives

Complete Streets

Via Nashua Strong Towns



Complete Streets Specifics

- Focuses primarily on changing streetscapes
 - Keywords - traffic calming, bike lanes, pedestrian/cyclist oriented
- Incremental development for low cost to taxpayer
 - Update streetscape when road needs routine re-paving
- Allows policy to grow with Nashua
- Inspired by [Howard County Maryland](#) Complete Streets plan

Benefits

According to a study from the Victoria Transit Policy Institute (page 39 - North Carolina):

- Complete Streets provide strong benefits for local economies
- Boosting retail sales by an average of 30%
- Boosting land value from 70-300%
- Can decrease traffic congestion

Main Street street type

And other dense, mixed use areas

- Speeds limited to 20mph
- Extra wide sidewalks
- Protected one way cycle lanes
- A single lane for automobile traffic on each side of the road
- Some on-street parking converted to bicycle parking



Image intended to be illustrative, not exact

Boulevard street type

Previously a stroad - e.g. Amherst Street, D.W. Highway

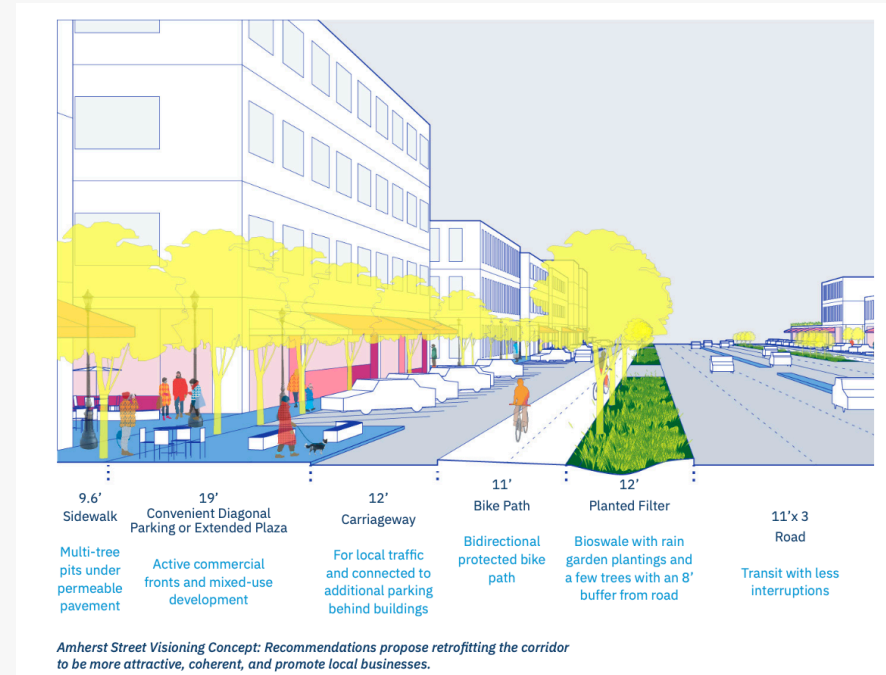
- Wide comfortable sidewalks
- Protected one way cycle lanes
- Two lanes for automobile traffic on each side of the road
- No on-street parking (unchanged)
- Significant bicycle parking provided near major businesses



Image intended to be illustrative, not exact

Paired with proper land use

- **Nashua reCODE** to potentially change zoning in Nashua
- Strong pairing with Complete Streets
- Pushes forward vision from Imagine Nashua Master Plan
- May lower parking demand



03

Collaboration

How do we relate to other civic organizations in and around Nashua?

Community Impact

Make!t Labs



Conservation
Law Foundation

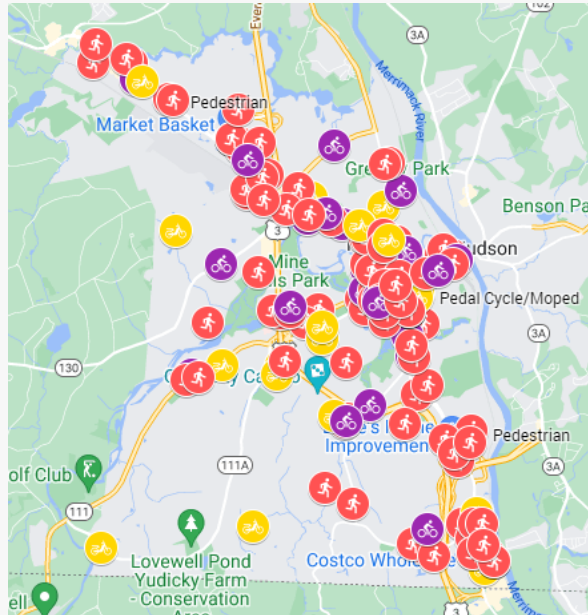


We want a town to be proud of

- Foster Community involvement while enjoying and improving our city
- Financial Sustainability
- Transportation Freedom and Equality

Transportation Freedom

Most people say they don't bike because it is dangerous. [Link to Map](#)



Strong Downtown

People often complain about lack of parking and having to walk yet a large portion of land is dedicated to parking. Lots of people also visit the Merrimack Mall and park off in a large lot to walk around in a simulacrum of a walkable city.



Next Steps

1. Adopt our Complete Streets Policy
2. Support Nashua Recode
3. Read Strong Towns, by Chuck Marohn
4. Let's work together!
 - Feel free to reach out to any of us to talk about the policy objectives we shared today and other objectives consistent with the Strong Towns approach

**Thank you for
your time and
attention!**

Useful Links

Strong Towns Homepage

<https://www.strongtowns.org>



Nashua Strong Towns Homepage

<https://www.nashuastrongtowns.org/>



Urban3 New Hampshire Report

<https://www.nhhfa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/NH-Urban3-Report-10.2020.pdf>



Strong Towns Youtube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/@strongtowns>



Strong Towns Academy

<https://academy.strongtowns.org/>



Nashua Recode

<https://www.nashuarecode.com/>



Nashua Strong Towns Complete Streets Policy

<https://www.nashuastrongtowns.org/2024/01/17/introducing-nashua-strong-towns-complete-streets-policy/>



America Needs Complete Streets - ITS Journal article

https://vtpi.org/ITE_comp_st.pdf

