



Episode 5: Stroads are Ugly, Expensive, and Dangerous (and they're everywhere)

Episode Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORzNZUeUHAM>

Running Time: 18:28

"These places are literally putting American cities on the stroad to financial ruin, and they're doing it while being dangerous, ugly, and ultimately ineffective at ultimately moving people."

Discussion Questions

- A street is a platform for building wealth. Successful streets are places where humans, and human interactions, flourish. What are some successful streets in your community?
- A road is a high-speed connection between productive places. What is an example of a successful road in your community?
- A stroad tries to be both a street and a road, and ends up failing badly at both. What is an example of a stroad in your community? Describe some of the features that make it unsafe, unproductive, and uninviting.
- "Stroad" is a word Strong Towns coined in 2013. The term has been called "an intrusive thought" (Slate's Gabfest Podcast), and 99% Invisible compared it to "magic glasses": "I cannot stop seeing [stroads] everywhere." Had you encountered the word stroad before watching this video? If so, did you have a similar experience, suddenly seeing stroads everywhere?
- There are ways to convert a stroad into a street or road. Who do you think should decide whether it is turned into a street or road? (By the way, Chuck Marohn talks about this in his book *Confessions of a Recovering Engineer*.)
- Fixing a local stroad by turning it into a street or road isn't necessarily the place Strong Towns advocates should start making their streets safer and more productive. Read Chuck Marohn's article, ["How Do You Actually Fix a Stroad?"](#) Do you agree or disagree with his assessment that the way to fix many of these stroads is to let them "die a natural death"? Why?
- In The Netherlands, every road and street has to be designated as one of three types: stroomweg (highway), gebiedsontsluitingsweg (road), or erftoegangsweg (street). Redesigning roads to fit these classifications didn't happen overnight and the work is still ongoing. Does knowing this is a long game encourage you or discourage you?
- Besides clearly classifying by type, are there other features of the Dutch road and street system that you'd like to see in your community?
- What else stood out to you from Episode 5?

Ideas for Taking Action

- Walk or bike a stroad in your city. (Be careful!) Document and describe the experience—perhaps on video—and share it on social media, with local officials, and with the broader community. Help others see what it's like to navigate these places outside of a car.
- Go on a walk with other Strong Towns advocates. Consider together [the Strong Towns 4 step process for public investment](#):

1. Humbly observe where people in the community struggle.
2. Ask the question: What is the next smallest thing we can do right now to address that struggle?
3. Do that thing. Do it right now.
4. Repeat.

Where did you see people struggle? What might be the next smallest step in making your community's neighborhoods better places to live, work, play, and conduct business?

- Share this episode with someone whom you think the content will resonate with.

Essential Strong Towns Content

- Articles
 - ["How Do You Actually Fix a Stroad?" by Charles Marohn.](#)
 - ["Engineers Should Not Design Streets," by Charles Marohn.](#)
 - ["The True Cost of a Stroad," by Rachel Quednau.](#)
 - ["The Strong Towns Approach to Public Investment," by Charles Marohn.](#)

Go Deeper

- Articles
 - ["How to Turn a Stroad into a Street \(or a Road\)," by Charles Marohn.](#)
 - ["Stroad Nation," by Charles Marohn.](#)
 - ["Seven Strods That Have Been Converted to Streets," by Robert Steuteville.](#)
 - ["4 Ways Utah is Dealing with Overly-Wide Streets," by Jamie Littlefield.](#)
 - ["Streets Are for Building Community Wealth. Here's Why That's So Important," by Charles Marohn.](#)
- Podcasts
 - [99% Invisible: "Mini-Stories Volume 16."](#)
 - [Political Gabfest: "Did You Apologize to Manchin Yet?"](#) [Timestamp: 27:15]
- Video
 - ["What Is a Stroad?" \(2018\).](#)
 - ["The Stroad" \(2013\).](#)
- Core Campaign
 - [Safe and Productive Streets](#)
- Book: [*Confessions of a Recovering Engineer: Transportation for a Strong Town*, by Charles Marohn.](#)

Got Questions?

Check out the [Strong Towns Action Lab](#). You can type in any word, phrase, or question into the search bar and be directed to core insights, top content, and case studies for your query. Try it out by typing in “Stroad.”

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