



Episode 6: The Wrong Way to Set Speed Limits

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

Running Time: 11:09

“The vast majority of drivers will drive at whatever speed feels most comfortable for the road they’re driving on.”

Discussion Questions

- In this episode, Jason explores the frequent disparities between a street’s posted speed limit and the design speed. The street may have a posted speed limit of 25 mph, but the way it is designed doesn’t introduce enough complexity to deter faster driving. Can you identify some streets where you live that exemplify this discrepancy?
- When it comes to designing streets and roads, transportation engineers often come to a project with different values than the community at large. Engineers prioritize speed and volume while the public prioritizes safety and cost. What are some ways citizens can communicate their values to traffic engineers and other city officials?
- What are some things people in your city can do to encourage slower driving speeds that don’t involve enforcement, installing street lights, or changing the posted speed limit? Consider this from both the level of city officials, and from the level of citizen advocates.
- What else stood out to you from Episode 6?

Ideas for Taking Action

- As you walk, bike, and drive through your city, start noticing areas where the built environment is sending mixed messages—i.e., where the speed limit says one thing but the street design is saying another.
- Conduct your own [speed study](#).
- Gather a group of friends and do a [tactical urbanism project](#) to slow the cars in your city. Tactical urbanism is a quick and affordable way of making small-scale changes to your city. To learn more about tactical urbanism, and to get inspired, check out our Tactical Urbanism topic in the Action Lab. Make sure to look at not only the [Top Content section](#) but also the [Case Studies & Examples section](#).
- Share this episode with someone whom you think the content will resonate with.

Essential Strong Towns Content

- Articles
 - [“Understanding the 85th Percentile Speed,” by Charles Marohn.](#)
 - [“2 Photos Reveal Why the Key to Slowing Traffic is Street Design, Not Speed Limits.”](#)
- Podcast
 - [“Design Speed is a Value Statement,” by Charles Marohn.](#)
- Video
 - [“Understanding the 85% Speed.”](#)

Go Deeper

- Articles
 - [“Texting In Your Risk Gap,” by Charles Marohn.](#)
 - [“Speed Traps Have No Long-Term Effect on Speeding,” by Seaira Sheppard.](#)
 - [“Speed kills, so why do we keep designing for it?” by Bryan Jones.](#)
 - [“Forgiving Design vs. the Forgiveness of Slow Speeds,” by Jon Larsen.](#)
 - [“How Street Design Shapes the Epidemic of Preventable Pedestrian Fatalities,” by Steve Davis.](#)
 - [“Slowing the Cars in St. Louis,” by Marielle Brown.](#)
 - [“How 3 Different Towns are Creating Safer, Slower Streets,” by Jennifer Hill.](#)
 - [“5 things you can do right now to #slowthecars in your town,” by Kea Wilson.](#)
 - [“Main Streets Designed Like State Highways: How They Work and How To Change Them,” by Nicholas Russo.](#)
- Podcast
 - [“Using Tactical Urbanism to Create Safer Streets.”](#)
- Video:
 - [“This Engineering Practice is Making Your Commute More Dangerous.”](#)
 - [“Speed Kills Your Pocketbook.”](#)
- Series: [30 Days of Confessions.](#)
- 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 “#SlowTheCars.”

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