
STRONG 200

A set of proposals for a stronger, more resilient and people-oriented 200 Street.

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In response to *200 Street 2040* request for public input on Nov 27th 2023.

<https://www.tol.ca/en/connect/200-street-2040.aspx>

Digital version of this document is available online.

<https://strongtownslangley.org/docs/strong200.pdf>

Who we are

Strong Towns Langley is a community group made up of ordinary citizens who volunteer their time, energy and ideas to promote the insights of Strong Towns with local advocacy projects in Langley, BC. We currently have 1 leader, 4 supporters and 14 additional active members, as well as over 100 followers on our facebook page. We aim to provide a voice for the growing number of people in Langley who want to see Strong Towns principles implemented in our existing and new communities.

This document was compiled after gathering feedback from our supporters and members.

We are also keen to build relationships with elected officials and municipal staff. Please feel free to reach out to us for any reason at **contact@strongtownslangley.org**.

Principles of Strong Towns

The core principle of Strong Towns is to foster the creation of resilient communities that are financially self-sustaining, use land efficiently, and are people-oriented.

In the Township of Langley, we sometimes deviate from this by planning our communities around the idea that everyone will own and use a car. When we approach urban planning this way, it requires wide roads and large parking lots which take up lots of land and don't pay much in property taxes, and hurts small business opportunities with mandated parking minimums, and it encourages us to develop more isolated communities where it is seen as acceptable for people have to use a car to accomplish daily tasks such as going to a grocery store or taking their kids to school.

This is how making financially sustainable communities goes hand in hand with building communities that are focussed around people. It is not that we are necessarily “anti-suburb” or “anti-car”, but rather we advocate simply for responsible planning and that implies building people-oriented communities that require less expensive infrastructure and make better use of limited available land for development. This is even more imperative due to the Agricultural Land Reserve that prohibits urban development on 75% of the land in the Township of Langley in combination with Metro Vancouver's urban growth boundaries.

200 Street - Road or Street?

The area of 200 Street specified as the “200 Street 2040 Corridor Plan Area”, between the Trans-Canada Highway, and 68 Avenue, is currently what Strong Towns considers to be a **road** – a fast way of getting from A to B. This is opposed to a **street**, which is a human-scale built environment with sidewalks, narrow lanes, street parking and buildings that front the sidewalk.



Road Option: We feel that the most cost-effective approach is to preserve 200 as a Road and avoid adding elements that require a more “street-like” approach such as housing with direct driveways onto 200 Street. These and other points of conflict without significant changes to the road design will turn 200 Street into what Strong Towns considers to be a **stroad** – a hybrid street/road which fails to move traffic quickly and fails to provide a nice built environment for people.

Street Option: If there is no alternative but to place housing and other businesses situated directly on 200 Street, then it is imperative that 200 Street is scaled down to a human scale, with larger sidewalks and slower vehicle speeds. It should either be a road or a street, it cannot succeed at both.

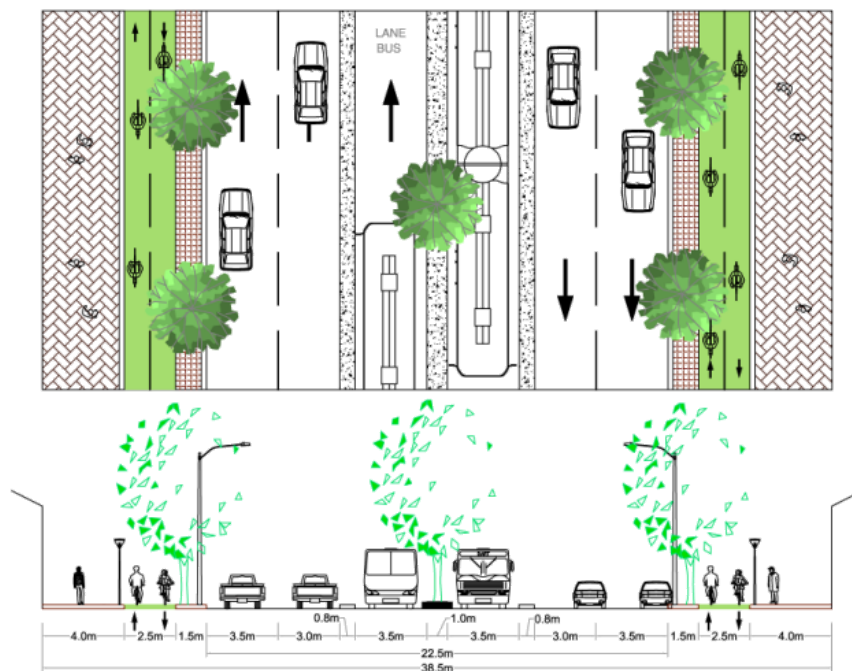
Bus Rapid Transit

We want to congratulate the Township of Langley upon being promised a Bus Rapid Transit corridor along 200 Street from Translink, this is a major win for our community. BRT goes hand-in-hand with preserving 200 Street as a Road, as BRT is more like a replacement for commuter rail, working best at high speed on dedicated rights-of-way with few stops.

Mixed use developments and density should be concentrated around the stations, and preferably neighbourhood amenities such as grocery stores and childcare facilities.

The BRT lanes should be placed in the centre rather than curbside as recommended on **22.2 Roadway Configurations** in the BRT Planning Guide (<https://brtguide.itdp.org/branch/master/guide/>)

While it is typical to find conventional bus lanes at the curbside, it is rare for BRT to place the busway on the sides of the roadway. The BRT Standard awards no points for this configuration under the “Busway Alignment” metric, as curb lanes rarely function as intended. Curb lanes have conflicts with turning traffic, stopping taxis, delivery vehicles, and non-motorized traffic, greatly reducing the system’s capacity. Achieving capacities of more than five thousand customers per hour per direction is quite difficult if turning vehicles frequently interfere with busway operations. Curbside busways create the potential for the entire busway to be stopped due to a single taxi picking up a customer, a policeman temporarily parking, an accident, or a turning vehicle trapped behind high pedestrian-crossing volumes.



Street Design

If 200 Street is to continue with the **road option** with its current configuration of high traffic volumes, then all access to housing and businesses should work using parallel **Frontage Roads**. This approach is currently in front of Latimer Heights and works well to reduce points of conflict with ground floor retail, in addition to some residential areas in Langley.

	
208 Street and 92 Ave (<i>Walnut Grove</i>)	202b Street and 70 Ave (<i>Gordon Estates</i>)

If 200 Street is to instead have housing and businesses directly set on the street itself, then the **street option** becomes necessary. The street design needs to be radically changed to reduce the scale, with street parking, a maximum of 2 car travel lanes each way, protected bike lanes, wider sidewalks, street-lit crosswalks and a more human-scale environment.

Within neighbourhoods, we advocate for the use of roundabouts to reduce vehicle speeds and reduce the chance of accidents. Pedestrian crossings can be placed a short distance from roundabouts allowing people to cross away from points of traffic conflict.

Finally we also advocate for at least one **pedestrian-only shopping street** somewhere along and near the corridor, similar to the recently completed District 1881 in Chilliwack, or Village Stroll in Whistler.



Thunderbird Lane / District 1881 (*Chilliwack*)



Village Stroll (*Whistler*)

Pedestrian Crossings on 200 Street

If 200 Street is scaled down to a neighbourhood street with the **street option**, with slower traffic speeds, crossing with standard triggered pedestrian crossings is probably acceptable, though allowing pedestrians who cannot traverse the road in one go to wait in a central island would be ideal.

However, if 200 Street remains as a road as outlined in the **road option**, then another approach is needed. Pedestrian bridges are expensive and are undesirable to use as they require the user to climb up and down on either side which is slow and inconvenient. Ideally we would see two crossing types instead:

a) **Underpasses**



Underpasses are more convenient for pedestrians, although they do require moving or containing infrastructure under the road. Overall they are better value than bridges as they receive far more use. We currently don't have any underpasses in Langley, although a good starting location for this corridor may be near the Langley Events Centre allowing people to access LEC on foot from the opposite side of 200 Street.

b) Skyways



Like underpasses, Skyways don't require so much work for pedestrians as they are bridges where the adjacent land is already at "bridge height". This might work well south of 72 Ave, allowing 200 Street to descend down the hill but keeping the ground at a higher level. It may also work if high or mid-rise developments either side of 200 Street are coordinated to be connected via a public access Skyway. Skyways also have the benefit of allowing users to use elevators in a building to ascent and descend.

Housing Types

The corridor should have a variety of housing types to meet all income levels.



All detached and multiplex housing should be rear vehicle loading with either attached or detached rear garages onto a laneway. Rear loading creates a safer environment for pedestrians using the sidewalk and reduces driverways points of conflict with traffic on streets.

Denser housing should be placed the closest to transit hubs to allow the most people to live closest to stores and transit facilities.

Townhomes should be placed directly on the street grid similarly to detached houses, and not be in a suburban “pod” format with limited entry/exit points into a complex. Limited entry/exit points can create friction for pedestrians and can encourage car use.

Low, mid and high-rise apartments should strive to either

a) feature ground floor retail and/or incorporate office space, or



b) be “point towers” with ground floor townhouses to create a human-scale streetscape.



Greenways

While we would like to see active transportation lanes on 200 Street, such as protected cycle lanes, the reality is that cycling next to busy traffic is noisy and unpleasant and often limited to more confident cyclists.

As such, multi-use greenways with street lighting connecting all the neighbourhoods along the 200 Street corridor would be ideal, preferably situated at least a block away on either side of 200 Street. Street lighting on the route can even be solar powered to reduce infrastructure costs if needed.



Local Business



We would like to see more local businesses peppered throughout the new areas along 200 Street, providing all residents with shops and services in walking distance.

Additionally we would like to see the implementation of zoning similar to 68 Ave in the East Clayton neighbourhood of Surrey, permitting basement-entry commercial spaces to operate within residential areas.



This could even be expanded further to allow the same design in townhomes as well as detached (if they are placed on the street grid), allowing ground floor businesses rather than just basement level.

Allowing this provides residents with local barber shops, daycare facilities and even coffee shops.

Schools

Historically we have seen some new schools not reflect the true capacity needed in new neighbourhoods, possibly due to incorrect assumptions about how many families and children will be living in missing-middle housing such as apartments and townhomes. We hope to see the Township work closely with the provincial government to more accurately predict needed school capacity in future.

Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to read through our proposals, we hope that they are taken into consideration when planning the 200 Street Corridor. If you have any questions or concerns, we can be reached at contact@strongtownslangley.org



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