Foundation for
Social Connection

SOCIAL Framework & The Built Environment: Key Terms, Definitions, and Acronyms

Companion Resource

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SOCIAL Framework & The Built Environment

Key Terms, Definitions, and Acronyms

Social Connection Related Terms	
Belonging	A fundamental human need—the feeling of deep connection with social groups, physical places, and individual and collective experiences
HiAP	Health in All Policies
Loneliness	A subjective unpleasant or distressing feeling of isolation. A perceived discrepancy between one's actual and desired level of social connection
SIL	An acronym referring to both Social Isolation and Loneliness
SILC	An acronym referring to Social Isolation, Loneliness, and Social Connectedness
Social Capital	The resources to which individuals and groups have access through their social connections - often used as an umbrella for both social support and social cohesioN
Social Cohesion	The sense of solidarity within groups, marked by strong social connections and high levels of social participation, that generates trust, norms of reciprocity, and a sense of belonging
Social Connection	The (i) structure, (ii) function, and (iii) quality of relationships with others. Social connection includes not only the size and diversity of one's social network and roles, but the functions these relationships serve, and their positive or negative qualities
Social Connectedness	The degree to which an individual or population falls on the continuum of social connection
SOCIAL Framework	Systems of Cross-sector Integration and Action across the Lifespan
Social Isolation	Having objectively few social relationships, social roles, group memberships, and infrequent social interaction
Social Support	The perceived or actual availability of informational, tangible, and emotional resources from others, commonly one's social network
Socio-Ecological Model	A a framework used in public health to understand the individual behavior as influenced by multiple levels of interaction, including personal, interpersonal, organizational, community, and societal factors.

[Learn more of the language of social connection in the Action Guide for Socially Connected Communities](#)

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Built Environment Related Terms	
5 D's	Five design factors intended to create efficient, sustainable, and accessible spaces: design, density, diversity, distance, and destination
Active Design	A strategy in building development that leverages architectural and urban planning techniques to promote physical activity and facilitate social interactions in new constructions
Age Friendly Communities (AFC)	A city or community that modifies its services and physical infrastructure to better accommodate and respond to the needs of its residents and support aging in place and a higher quality of life across the lifespan
Blue/ Green Space	Blue spaces are areas featuring water elements like rivers, lakes, and oceans, while green spaces are natural or landscaped areas with vegetation, such as parks, gardens, and forests
Broadband	High-speed internet access
Built Environment	The human-made or modified structures that provide people with living, working, and recreational spaces
Co-Housing	A model of market housing with many private households that use shared common spaces.
Collective Impact	A collaborative strategy designed to address complex issues by bringing together diverse stakeholders through a structured approach to seek change
Community Listening Session	A strategy in the Action Guide for Building Socially Connected Communities for a collaborative discussion involving residents, changemakers, and leaders to gain a deeper understanding of community strengths and challenges, amplify historically underrepresented voices, focus on socially connected initiatives with community input, brainstorm local solutions, and foster a network of changemakers committed to enhancing social connections
Complete Streets	A method for creating streets that are safe and accessible for everyone by focusing on serving groups historically overlooked or underserved by traditional transportation planning
Cooperative Housing	A living arrangement where residents become partial owners of a building or complex typically owned by a nonprofit corporation
Digital Equity Planning	The process of designing and implementing strategies to ensure all individuals and communities have equal access to digital tools, resources, and services
Green Prescribing	The practice of referring individuals to nature-based activities and interventions to improve mental and physical health
Intergenerational Community	A space that supports the safety, health, education, and basic needs of individuals of all ages by fostering cross-generational cooperation and interaction through mutually beneficial programs and policies
Multi-Solving	An approach to addressing multiple issues or achieving various objectives at once with a single solution

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Built Environment Related Terms	
Open Streets	A concept, also known as Ciclovía, that temporarily closes streets to motor vehicle traffic and opens them up for recreational activities (e.g., walking, cycling) and community-based programming (e.g, markets, festivals)
PANACHe	Acronym for six evidence-based design guidelines or creating built environments that support connection: sense of place, accessibility, nature, activation, choice, and human scale
Physical Infrastructure	Systems that provide our homes and other physical spaces with water, electricity, connectivity (broadband/technological infrastructure), and transportation (roads, bridges, paths for diverse modes of transit)
Placemaking	A collaborative process that reimagines public spaces to boost community engagement and connection
Proxemics	The study of how people perceive space and use it in social contexts
Public Open Space	Generally refers to land that is primarily undeveloped, open to public access, and designed to be highly accessible - attracting users of different ages, genders and cultural backgrounds
Social Connection Workshop	A strategy in the Action Guide for Building Socially Connected Communities for gathering a coalition of partners to create a 'Social Connection Coalition' and hosting one or more workshops aimed at building momentum and transforming discussions into actionable steps
Social Infrastructure	The crucial organizations, spaces, and groups that facilitate social connection and enable communities to form and sustain relationships that help them thrive
Social Prescribing	A method for supporting patients' social needs through community-based interventions and tailored social connections
Stakeholder	Individual or group of individuals with an interest in any decision or activity of an organization or topic area
Third Place	Social spaces separate from an individual's typical social environments (e.g.,the home and workplace)
Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)	A way to build communities that make it easy for people to get around without needing a car, by centering transit stations
Universal Design	The design of buildings, products, or environments to make them accessible to all people, regardless of age, disability, or other factors
Urban/ Regional Planning	The professional practice of designing and managing the use of land and infrastructure in urban, suburban, and rural areas to guide community development and address environmental, economic, and social issues
Zoning Codes	The process by which municipalities and/or cities divide and allocate space for different use types

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Environmental Sector	*Related Terms*
Climate Change	The long term changes in weather and temperature patterns that have accumulated into climate crisis experiences like heat-waves, natural disasters, and increased greenhouse gas emissions.
Climate Mitigation	Human interventions aimed to decrease the effects of the climate crisis through reducing greenhouse gas emissions and storing carbon.
Climate Resilience	Building systems and infrastructure that can respond to a constantly changing environment and withhold the negative impacts of climate change.
Environmental Stewardship	Actions that are taken by groups or individuals to protect, restore, and manage the environment responsibly and sustainably.
Intersectional Climate Justice	A form of climate justice that examines the overlapping systems of disadvantage that cause members of different identities, races, and ethnicities to feel disproportionate effects of the climate crisis.
Nature-Based Solutions	Solutions that use natural and organic elements to protect, restore, or manage ecosystems.
Participatory Approaches	Approaches that consider both the opinions of the changemakers and those of the individuals and communities who experience development changes.
Social Sustainability	Building social systems and relationships that support the abilities of current and future generations to maintain healthy and connected communities.

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Transportation Sector Related Terms	
Active Transportation	Methods of transportation that involve physical activity rather than the use of motorized vehicles.
Community Transit Solutions	Alternative forms of transportation created to fill gaps in community transit needs that are not met by conventional transit options.
First and Last Mile Connectivity	The distance between an individual's origin point and a transportation service station as well as the distance between a transportation service station and the individual's destination.
Geographic Dispersion	The physical distances between individuals and communities from services and destinations. Larger geographic dispersion is more common in rural communities.
Mobility Audit	Assessment process that evaluates the accessibility and ease of movement within a built environment, ensuring that spaces are inclusive and navigable for individuals of all mobility levels, including those who use aids such as wheelchairs, canes, or scooters.
Play Streets	Designated streets that are closed off to traffic to create an area for play and recreation.
Road Diets	Modifications that reduce the amount of lanes for automobiles to create separate, full-sized lanes for cyclists.
Tactical Urbanism	A short-term intervention that revitalizes and empty space for a commercial or social purpose.
Traffic Gardens	Green spaces that imitate city streets networks for cyclists to become more comfortable with biking on large streets.
Walk/Bike/Roll	Inclusive term used to describe active transportation options that accommodate a variety of mobility methods, emphasizing inclusivity for individuals who may use mobility aids, such as wheelchairs or scooters.

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Circulation Areas	Areas in buildings that are frequented often and route throughout a complex, like lobbies and hallways.
Community Land Trusts	A model of non-market housing where land is protected as a legal asset for affordable housing that is led by residents.
Cooperative Housing	A model of non market housing where residents can become partial owners of a building and engage in democratic processes to determine management of the community.
Gentrification	The transformation of a low-resource neighborhood to a high value neighborhood through redevelopment.
Master Planned Estate	Large scale residential neighborhoods designed with a range of diverse housing options and a large quantity of resident-exclusive amenities.
Missing Middle Housing	Smaller multi-unit residences like duplexes or fourplexes traditionally built in single-family home neighborhoods.
Rapid Rehousing	Housing models that facilitate a quick transition from homelessness and provides short-term rental assistance without paired social services.
Redlining	The historical practice of outlining predominantly racially and ethnically minoritized neighborhoods in red on maps which were used to deny individuals access to economic opportunities and inform development practices.
Resident-Led Initiatives	Efforts coordinated by residents to address goals and needs of their communities.
Sociable Housing Design	Housing design that considers how certain elements can encourage socialization among residents.
Supportive Housing	Housing models that facilitate a transition from homelessness to being housed paired with social support services.