



**HEALTHY
PLACES
BY DESIGN**

Creating Social Connected Communities

*South Carolina Social Isolation
in Older Adults Task Force*

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Philip Bors

Senior Project Director



HEALTHY PLACES BY DESIGN

**Advancing community-led action &
proven,
place-based strategies to ensure health &
wellbeing for all.**

www.healthyplacesbydesign.org



Socially Connected Communities



Solutions for Social Isolation

View the full report: bit.ly/h93r



**Strong social connections
and networks can boost a
person's survival by 50
percent.**

Scientific American

A meta-study of more than 300,000 participants across all ages reveals that strong social networks are linked to longer lives.

Loneliness

The **feeling** of being **alone**, regardless of the amount of social contact.

VS.

Social Isolation

A **lack** of social **connections** and sense of **community**.



Social isolation is not a personal choice or individual problem, but one that is **rooted** in community design, social norms, and systemic injustices.

System Designs that Lead to Isolation and Oppression

- Culture
- Education
- Health Care
- Housing
- Internet Access
- Public Space
- Justice
- Security
- Transportation



Public Spaces

Challenges

- Inaccessible buildings and public spaces reduce connection and engagement in civic life.
- Historical symbols and artwork that favor certain races and worldview can feel unsafe or unwelcoming.



Recommendation 1

Design, Maintain, and Activate Inclusive Public Spaces

- Co-create inclusive, healthy public spaces
- Design safe places for all ages to gather
- Equitably maintain the quality of public spaces
- Activate public spaces to encourage healthy social interaction

Transportation

Challenges

- Highway development split communities.
- Using bicycles and busses is often stigmatized.
- Pedestrian fatality rates are disproportionately racialized.



Recommendation 2

Prioritize Connection in Transportation Systems

- Think "people first"
- Use policy levers to promote health and equity
- Support elements that enhance public life



Housing

Challenges

- Racially segregated neighborhoods produced extreme wealth disparities.
- Laws and policies have made homelessness a crime.



Recommendation 3

Construct Housing Environments that Build Community

- Strengthen and safeguard inclusive, affordable housing
- Include spaces specifically designed for gatherings
- Zone to encourage diversity



Recommendation 4: Community-Led Solutions

Invest in Inclusive Practices and Community-led Solutions

- Shift power to community members
- Elevate practices rooted in culture
- Harness creative communications channels
- Create universal broadband access



Recommendation 5: Community Norms

Make Social Connectedness a Community Norm

- Use a “social in all policies” framework
- Implement trauma- and resilience- informed practices
- Declare community values



Examples of Social Connection Solutions in Practice

BROWN COUNTY
COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN



2022 to 2024

Strategy 1:

Build community connections
at the neighborhood level

Strategy Lead:

NeighborWorks
Green Bay

- Percent of respondents who see themselves as a member of the community
- Percent of respondents who rate "good" or "excellent" for living together as neighbors
- Percent of respondents who are satisfied or very satisfied with personal relationships

Measuring and Prioritizing Social Isolation and Connectedness

Brown County Health Improvement Plan and
Community Health Needs Assessment - Green
Bay, WI

SOCIAL COHESION

Help people connect with each other and their community in healthy ways

Strategy 1:

Build community connections
at the neighborhood level

Strategy Lead:

NeighborWorks Green Bay



Strategy 2:

Increase availability and visibility of
healthy food options

Strategy Lead:

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Division of Extension Brown County



Strategy 3:

Improve walkability and
recreational opportunities

Strategy Lead:

Wello



Intergenerational Mentoring

McDowell County, WV Commission on Aging and WVU Extension Service

- Programs to connect older adults experiencing social isolation and young people
- Greenhouse/high tunnel to support both nutrition security and social connectedness.
- Produce from the gardens harvested by seniors and college students support senior center congregate meals.



Connected Public Spaces



Asian Community Development Corporation, Chinatown, Boston, MA

Codman Square Library, Dorchester, Boston, MA



BPL Codman Square pop-up designed by [CultureHouse](#)

Creating Opportunities for Conversation and Connection



Massachusetts: Salem, Boston,...

"Let's Talk, New York!"
Say it like a REAL New Yorker and it RHYMES!

SHOW UP – Join one of these upcoming conversations
STEP UP – Host a conversation or join our team
SIGN UP – keep informed about upcoming events

Lively-minded New Yorkers like you are coming together in conversations that are exhilarating and empowering. Join us to make your life even more enjoyable, interesting, and meaningful.

→ **Calendar of Conversations** ←



Bryant Park, NYC

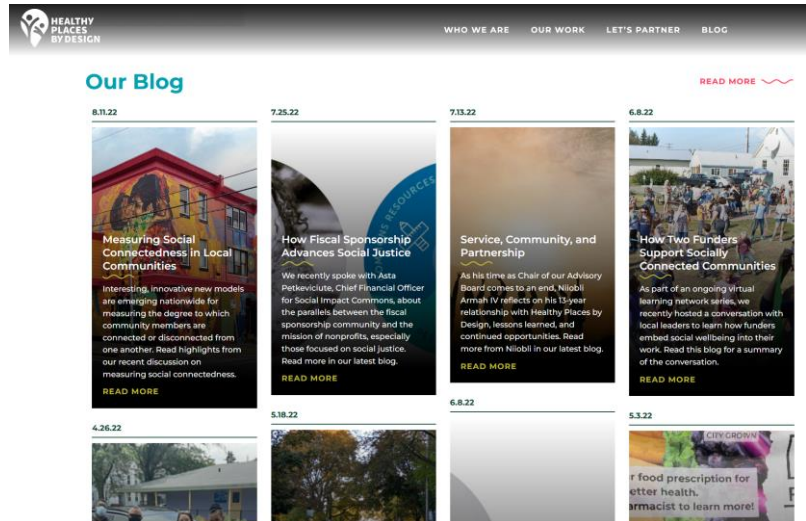
State Network: Massachusetts Task Force




Get Started / Keep Moving

- Share the report and action guides
- See our blog for more!
- Host conversations in your community
- Gather community data on isolation
- Integrate social connections in current strategies and priority statements
- Connect with us:
philb@healthyplacesbydesign.org

<https://healthyplacesbydesign.org/>





“Connection builds a virtuous cycle: when people feel valued and cared for within the community, they are more likely to contribute and participate in creating healthy, equitable places.”

—
Belonging & Civic Muscle,
Thriving Together

<https://winnetwork.org/>



Investing in Nonprofits for Social Connectedness

John Hancock – Activating Boston
Pilot Project grant...

Local nonprofits receive \$50,000 investment to help create equitable, age-inclusive spaces

By [Phil Bors](#) on December 7th, 2022



INVESTMENTS FROM JOHN HANCOCK, SUPPORTED BY THE CITY OF BOSTON, AARP MASSACHUSETTS, UMASS BOSTON, AND HEALTHY PLACES BY DESIGN STRENGTHEN LOCAL

CITY of BOSTON | Mayor Michelle Wu

PAY AND APPLY PUBLIC NOTICES FEEDBACK

HOME | LATEST CITY OF BOSTON NEWS
'CREATING COMMUNITY AND REDUCING SOCIAL ISOLATION' GRANT RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

'CREATING COMMUNITY AND REDUCING SOCIAL ISOLATION' GRANT RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

Sixteen community nonprofits will receive \$360,000 in total to strengthen social connections and community for Boston's older adults.

Last updated: May 17, 2022

ACE+ PUBLISHED BY:
Age Strong Commission

City of Boston grants to connect older adults



Thank you!

For more information, contact:

Phil Bors

philb@healthyplacesbydesign.org