Building Our Communities for the Sake of Mental Health Checklist

Build a network of allies
- ☐ Consider establishing relationships with the public health department, local senior center, child care center, local government agencies, and emergency services.
    - o Start with the simple step of setting up a meeting with someone from an organization with a common mission.
- ☐ Develop an advisory group or network of like-minded and mission-aligned organizations to assist the municipalities with incorporating mental health into built environment projects.

Incorporate health assessments into your planning work
- ☐ Conduct a health assessment for existing land use regulations and long-range plans.
- ☐ Use a health impact assessment on future development projects.
    - o What is known about the area, including surrounding land uses, location and quantity of community infrastructure and open space, access to public transport, employment opportunities, and demographic trends?
    - o Characteristics of the existing (including surrounding) population and the future (projected) population including size, age, household composition, socio-economic status, and ethnicity.
    - o Is the development or plan likely to change population numbers and the community demographic profile?
    - o What are the proposed development densities and housing types?
    - o Are there new employment opportunities? Is there housing to accommodate the new employment opportunities?
    - o Is there a commitment to affordable housing in the project?
    - o Is there a commitment to open space, parks, recreation centers or areas, active transportation infrastructure, and social capital infrastructure, such as community gathering spaces?
    - o Who will benefit and who will most likely be affected? What is known or understood about the sections of the community most likely to be affected? Reach out to community partners to discuss the project.
    - o How are vulnerable groups in the community being impacted?
    - o What are the foreseeable impacts/consequences of the policy, plan, or proposal? What is the likelihood of these impacts?
    - o Are effects likely to be differentially distributed by socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender, geography, or some other factor?

Leverage policy change opportunities to better address mental health
- ☐ Update land use regulations and long-range plans to reflect recommendations in the health assessment.
- ☐ Reframe park accommodation regulations to better address equitable park access.
- ☐ Require safe pedestrian and bicycle connections from new development to existing networks.

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