

# AGE-FRIENDLY WINTER SPACES

## Ideas for Municipalities to Embrace Winter

Communities have an opportunity to support people of all ages in remaining physically active and socially engaged during the winter months. There are simple and innovative ideas for communities to improve their physical environments—and promote the physical and mental wellness of their residents – all 52 weeks of the year!

### Promote Winter Walkability

**Identify and promote a walking route** to allow individuals of all ages to stay active. Establish a walking loop through main street and city center to promote local business and connect essential services or use existing areas, such as local parks or an outdoor track for the walking route.

#### Things to consider when choosing the walking route:

- Is there sufficient lighting to allow for use during evening hours?
- Are there accessible restrooms and benches available near the walking route?
- How are community residents learning about the walking route?
- Can your community commit to keeping the walking route clear of snow and ice?
- Do you have well-plowed municipal parking lots that could serve as walking loops?
- Does the walking route provide access to essential businesses that people may need to visit?



### Create Winter Destinations

**Plan outdoor winter activities or attractions** to promote engagement and reduce social isolation during the winter months. Organize outdoor programming, such as performances, games or winter markets or promote an outdoor venue by providing warm drinks, an art display or a self-guided walking tour.

#### Things to consider when creating winter destinations:

- How do the staff ensure proper social distancing is followed during busier times?
- Is there an opportunity to add heat lamps or heated benches?
- Are there outdoor accessible restrooms?
- Is there adequate accessible seating?
- Is there available transportation to the winter spaces or activities?

# Potential Funding and Support for Age-Friendly Winter Programs & Spaces

- [Shared Winter Streets and Spaces Grant Program](#) - MassDOT for design and quick-build infrastructure grants in support of public health, safe mobility, and renewed commerce
- Regional Planning Agencies may have equipment assistance programs, such as the [MAPC Public Works and Public Safety Cooperative Purchasing Program & Vendor Guide](#)
- [MassDOT Complete Streets Program](#) for routine sidewalk improvement needs
- [Mass Cultural Council](#) for cultural programming
- [Community Compact Program](#) to implement a best practice that is unique to the community and reflects needed areas of improvement
- [AARP Livable Communities Grant Program](#) to help communities make immediate improvements
- Establish an “adopt a bench or sidewalk” program where local volunteers offer to keep an area clear or provide financial resources

## Potential Partners



**Local Businesses and  
Business Groups**



**Philanthropy and  
Service Organizations**



**Cultural Organizations  
and Local Arts**



**Municipal Organizations:**  
Library, Planning & Economic  
Development, Council on Aging, Public  
Works, Park & Recreation, Schools

## Age-Friendly Winter Space Planning Considerations

- Include older adults in planning the projects and build off of what communities have already been doing during the summer or in previous winter seasons
- Engage with local residents, including students who may need community service hours or volunteers who are unable to perform current duties due to the pandemic
- Ensure the programs and spaces are accessible for individuals of all ages and abilities and utilize the [MA Age- and Dementia-Friendly Integration Toolkit](#) and [Healthy Aging For All Guide for Promoting Inclusion in Age- and Dementia-Friendly Communities](#)
- Consult the [Patronicity report](#) on winter places
- Avoid or minimize the need to permit and consider using easily available public spaces
- Leverage existing infrastructure including underutilized public or private spaces, such as office parking lots

## Resource Library - Community Examples

**Do you have questions, need assistance, or have a best practice to share?**

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