

MICHIGAN PLANNER



Michigan Chapter
American Planning Association

A photograph of a person sitting on a swing set in a snowy landscape at sunset. The person is wearing a dark winter coat and a red hat. The swing set is made of dark metal. The ground is covered in snow. In the background, there is a frozen body of water and some buildings in the distance. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm orange glow.

WINTER COMES ONCE A YEAR

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CONNECT

Welcome to 2021! I think most of us will be happy to say good bye to 2020, what with the impacts of Covid, the shut-downs, and the economic challenges being experienced across the state ... not to mention missing our planning colleagues at training events and our families over the holidays.

As for MAP, there were some upsides to the year, including learning new technology skills to run our educational programs on Zoom, strengthening relationships with our members, and cleaning out our storage unit! We on boarded FOUR new board members, including two newly created ex officio positions, a faculty and an elected official representative.

And 2021 is already off to a strong start. By the time you read this we will have successfully launched our Winter Cities collection, in partnership with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and their Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) and Michigan Main Street (MMS) programs. The collaboration includes products and resources that promote Winter Cities solutions to activate downtowns and commercial districts to keep the local economy rolling. You can still access the presentations, reports, and publications. Go to <https://www.planningmi.org/winter-cities> to learn more.

And Transportation Bonanza 12 – yes, 12 years of partnership with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and their Safe Routes to School program - will be behind us as well. MAP values our longstanding partnership with MDOT and SRTS, and are grateful to collaboratively plan and design an event that brings together so many professions and industries that collectively make our transportation systems better.

Look for details on the Student Michigan Association of Planning (SMAP) Conference (February 19, remote, and we always need professional volunteers and mentors). Contact Wendy Rampson at wrampson@planningmi.org if you can participate. Spring Institute is slated for May 20th, and our Regional Workshop series for planning and zoning officials is scheduled throughout March (see ad on page 18) with many dates and topics to choose.

During 2020, MAP successfully launched a pilot project with EGLE's Coastal Management Program, a Coastal Leadership Academy, and MAP is approved for a second round of program funding in 2021. The CLA brings together community leaders and stakeholders in a collaborative environment to collectively learn and ultimately share coastal resilience experiences throughout their region. A combination of education and collective learning underscores the critical hazards facing coastal communities and prepares participants to collaborate and problem solve for more informed local decision-making. Phase II will start up in February, with two CLA cohorts supported during 2021.

And finally, to the scores of members, partners, advocates and funders who contributed to our success over the last, trying year. From members who presented at our events, helped program workshops, wrote articles or developed curriculums, served on committees, and generally provided advice and council, thank you. This is YOUR professional organization, and you claimed it as yours through direct contributions that made us better. Your MAP board and staff are proud to serve the planners and officials in Michigan, and it is clear that you are proud of your profession, your calling, your work.

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ON THE COVER: Cold Sunset by Giuseppe Milo

(lit up town)
by Jazmin Million



Winter Comes Once a Year: Making the Most of It

“The hard soil and four months of snow make the inhabitants of the northern temperate zone wiser and abler than his fellow who enjoys the fixed smile of the tropics.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson

The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented demand for being outdoors in Michigan. Encouraging outdoor activity and socialization during the winter has been key to Michigan businesses and residents this year. But some communities in Michigan and elsewhere have been embracing their winter weather for many years now. This issue of the *Michigan Planner* was produced in partnership with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and their Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) and Michigan Main Street (MMS) programs. Read how planners and policy makers have not only accepted the cold, but created excitement about being outside during the winter, turning this fact of life into a true asset. If you are interested in learning more, go to <https://www.planningmi.org/winter-cities> to access the Winter is Coming presentation from October 2020 and the panel discussion from January 2021. In addition, MAP has assembled a list of winter resources at <https://www.planningmi.org/planning-tools-during-covid-19>. They will be included in next month's *E-dition* as well.



Winter Fun!
by Larry Lamsa

Planning and Design for Winter Cities

The winter cities concept was established about 40 years ago. Since that time, a growing number of communities across the northern tier of the United States and in Canada have embraced the winter season and found the opportunities it offers economically, socially and culturally. These cities are transforming themselves with year-round bicycling lanes, snow management innovations, festivals, ice skating plazas and all-season town squares, winter markets and other business opportunities. People want to shop, walk, bike, and socialize outside

year-round, as long as they can do so with relative ease and comfort. It only makes sense to plan and design the city for winter as much as we do for summer. Especially now during the COVID pandemic.

Since the pandemic, there has been a surge of interest in being outdoors for socializing and recreation. Record sales on outdoor recreation and leisure equipment have been reported. In addition, restaurants and bars find outdoor seating more necessary than ever, whether these spaces are patios, parklets, closed streets, or parking lots.

The winter cities approach makes the most of winter's opportunities by creating a culture shift so a community is considered one of best places to live, work and play in year-round. Winter city strategies can be adapted to both large and small communities, and when implemented, will minimize winter's negatives and create a more livable city, where the realities of a northern location—snow, ice, and darkness—are resources used to make it easier to live and function well in all seasons.

Principles and Best Practices of Winter City Planning

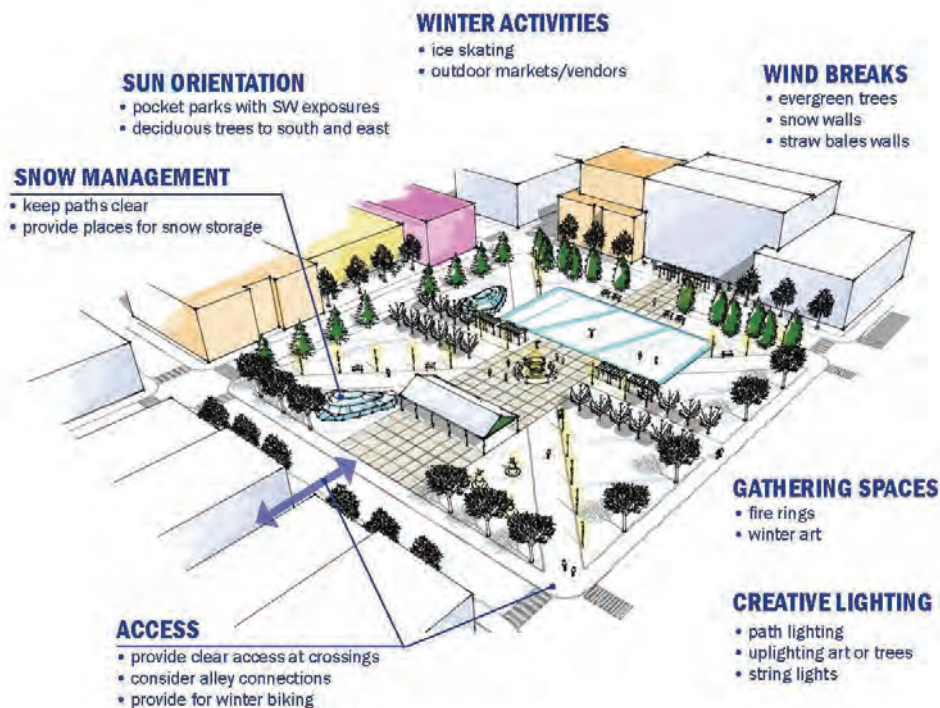
Improving livability in “winter cities” requires an innovative approach that addresses the problems of snow, darkness, and cold, while enhancing the advantages, opportunities and beauty of the winter season. A positive approach benefits community members, and bolsters the community’s ability to retain and attract new businesses and residents.

Infrastructure

Improve winter life, cold weather comfort, and access with appropriately designed infrastructure. Consider ways to use existing city parks, trails, and open space for additional winter activities, such as a sledding hill, an ice skating rink or pathway, outdoor gathering area with a fire pit and creative warming hut. For trails, maintain/groom the snow for a multi-purpose skiing, running and walking path. Communities that experience extended above freezing temperatures may find it better to plow the trail for walking/running/biking.

Plan and design for winter in roadway design that considers all users. Separate walkways from the road where possible. Bike lanes should not be used for snow storage. Downtown streetscape design should account for snow storage and snow management equipment, with gentle radii at bump-outs and easy to maintain corner ramps and crosswalks. Stormwater catch basins should not be located in crosswalks. Designate critical pedestrian areas, including transit stops. These areas should receive priority when clearing sidewalks and walkways.

The November/December 2017 issue of the *Michigan Planner* “Maintenance: Many Roads Lead to Rome” presented sidewalk maintenance strategies. A link will be provided in the next *Michigan Planner E-dition*.



Schematic by North of 45 and SRP Design Studio

Wind

Consider design strategies to block prevailing winds and downdrafts from tall buildings. Buildings and vegetation can be used to protect outdoor spaces, such as pocket parks, from prevailing winter winds. Implementing these design strategies requires a two prong approach: regulatory and tactical.

In your zoning ordinance, require buildings taller than three stories to step back higher stories from the street in order to minimize downdrafts. When reviewing site plans, avoid building orientations that will create wind tunnel effects. Coniferous vegetation should be used on the north and west sides of a building or public space to protect the area from prevailing winter winds.

With existing buildings and sites, provide wind blocks in areas that serve as outdoor gathering spaces. Map out snow management problem areas and issues to evaluate the impacts of winter winds and drifting snow on city streets and walking paths. Redesign areas where wind is problematic using earth forms and vegetation to reduce wind and drifting snow.

Sunshine

Take advantage of solar radiation in the orientation of buildings and outdoor spaces to maximize a southern exposure for warmth and sunlight. Plant deciduous trees on the southern face of a building or outdoor area to provide cooling in the summer (when leaves are present), while allowing sunlight to filter in during the winter (when leaves have fallen). Avoid creating public spaces for winter use in areas shaded from the sun.

Color

Winter can be monotonous with the short days being mostly white and grey coupled with long nights. Using bright and natural colors in building facades, public art, and street furniture offsets winter’s palate and adds visual interest to the streets and public spaces.

Lighting

Use lighting in public spaces and buildings to brighten up the city during winter’s dark days and nights. Dress up downtown, public buildings and parks with not only lighting, but public art, and



Photo by Public City Architecture

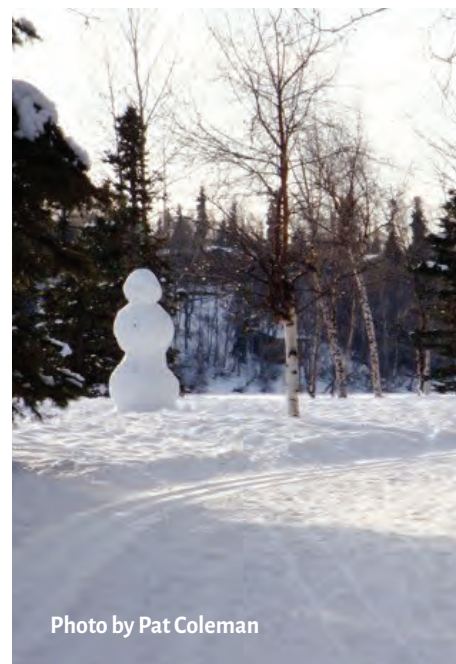


Photo by Pat Coleman

snow/ice sculptures. Decorations should be out during the entire winter season, not just during the holidays.

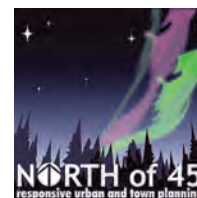
Change Perceptions about Winter in Your Community

There are short term and long term strategies to changing perceptions. In the short term, establish a local Winter Strategies Task Force to discuss winter issues and assets, such as outdoor recreation, pedestrian mobility, improved community and business district snow removal, and other initiatives. Identify and promote appropriate winter activities, attractions, and attire.

Longer term, think winter when updating the master plan or the capital improvements plan. Cities such as Marquette, Houghton and Calumet have chapters in their master plan devoted entirely to winter. Develop and adopt branding that promotes your community as a winter destination. Install additional decorative lighting to brighten up the community.

Adopting a winter cities approach will have long-lasting benefits for your community.

Patrick J. Coleman, AICP, is an urban and town planner whose firm, *North of 45 LLC*, provides services in the snowy and cold upper Great Lakes Region, as well as in Alaska. Mr. Coleman has been recognized internationally as a leader in promoting the concept of livable winter cities for many years. He has conducted extensive research on planning and design practices of northern cities around the world, has applied this knowledge in the planning and design of northern cities, and leads the *Winter Cities Institute*, providing resource materials and technical assistance in support of the concept of the livable winter city.



The Livable Winter Cities Association (WCA), from 1982-2005, organized conferences, published books and the quarterly magazine “Winter Cities”. **The Winter Cities Institute has replaced WCA**; its mission is to identify, promote and share the positive attributes of winter living, new concepts in architecture and urban design, and success stories from those places that are thriving in the north.

Falling Back in Love with Winter: Transforming Edmonton into a Great Winter City

Our northernness is a liability. Winter is something to be endured.

This is where Edmonton was ten years ago. We closed washrooms in our parks, wondered about the sanity of the few hardy souls who cross-country skied, and hibernated in our homes and shopping malls. Quite simply, we'd built our city for summer.

Then along came City Councillor Ben Henderson who noticed that people had become disconnected from the outdoors and that recruiting people to live and work in Edmonton was difficult. He decided it was time to do something about it.

In 2011, the community-led Winter-City Task Force was born. They consulted local leaders in industry, post-secondary education, development, planning, and city-building. They talked to cultural pacesetters, artists, and even meteorologists. They discussed how we thought about, approached, described, and talked about winter. And they asked citizens: What would make you fall in love with winter in Edmonton?

Councillor Henderson charged the task force with dreaming big. He told them not to get bogged down with existing regulations, processes, or bylaws: they could be changed. The task force ensured that all of the ideas would not only work for Edmonton, but would be attitude-changing and long-lasting. In 2012, the Winter-City Strategy was adopted by Edmonton's City Council. This holistic, 10-year plan is divided into four pillars: Winter Life, Winter Design, Winter Economy, and Our Winter Story.

Winter Life

The Winter Life pillar focuses on people. The actions call for providing more opportunities for outdoor activities and active



Photo by Laughing Dog Photography



transportation. For example, we have increased snow clearing in some parks, including the picnic tables. We have two new skating trails in our river valley, both of which are lit for nighttime use. Play Street kits are available for community leagues to use year-round to temporarily close off residential streets for play.

Winter Design

The Winter Design pillar addresses how we plan and design for our northern context. The creation of Edmonton's Winter Design Guidelines was a two-year project made possible through countless volunteer hours from local planners, designers, architects, landscape architects, builders, community developers,

and city staff. The Guidelines focus on the pedestrian realm, with the aim of making Edmonton more comfortable for people year-round. The five basic principles of winter city design are blocking wind, capturing sunshine, using colour, adding light (especially creative lighting), and providing infrastructure that supports outdoor winter activities. These five principles are woven throughout the streetscape and open spaces guidelines.

Winter Economy

The Winter Economy pillar has three goals: to support our local festivals, to develop a four-season patio culture, and to support winter-related businesses. Winter festivals require equipment for warming spaces, heating, extra lighting, and tents that are rated to at least -30 Celsius (-22 F). The WinterCity team has supported festivals by managing shared equipment, as well as promoting the festivals.

Acceptance of a four-season patio culture in the city has been slow. However,

Photo by Laughing Dog Photography



Photo by City of Edmonton

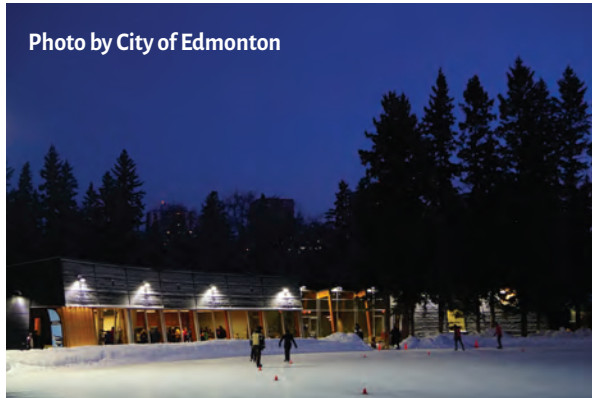


Photo by Laughing Dog Photography



the few venues that embraced winter patios have become community hubs, and have offered support to businesses trying a winter patio for the first time. When recent COVID-related restrictions were implemented, many coffee shops, pubs and restaurants kept their patios open well into winter. Most of them have been very busy as patrons felt safer meeting outdoors. The work we'd done over the past several years ensured we had city staff who were already familiar with the requirements and needs of winter patios, and were able to help the new venues set up quickly.

Our Winter Story

The final pillar, Our Winter Story, focuses on a cultural shift: how we embrace and celebrate the winter season. Language and culture are intertwined. Changing how we talk about winter has had a huge impact on how we live in winter. For example, the meteorologists we spoke to when developing the strategy now deliver the morning weather in a more positive way: rather than "it's freezing this morning, stay inside", we hear "the sun's shining, bundle up and enjoy the day". We've continued the conversation with the public through a robust social media suite where we share positive stories and ideas. We also have a website for all things winter in Edmonton, with event listings, blog posts, and a podcast called Snow & Tell.

Interconnection

Of course, the four pillars interconnect

at many junctures. Here are a couple of examples:

The most successful winter patios in Edmonton are ones that face south, capture the afternoon sunshine, and are blocked from the wind. They not only provide outdoor winter experiences, they are good for local business, and they enrich Edmonton's winter culture.

Since implementing the WinterCity Strategy, Edmonton has installed two bike networks. The bike lanes are separated, protected ones, designed to be cleared in winter. The bike lanes are cleared as part of tier 1 snow clearing operations, along with arterial roads. While cycling is still low on Edmonton's transportation mode-share list, children are starting to ride bikes to school in winter and more commuters are riding year-round. Local bike shops and businesses along the networks have seen an increase in trade. In addition, a group of cyclists meets in a downtown park for coffee outside every Friday morning, regardless of the season.

Changing the form and function of a city takes time; however Edmonton is starting to see positive changes. The new Winter Design Policy ensures that all city-led developments and redevelopments are four-season friendly. For example, the design of the new Victoria Park pavilion was influenced by the Winter Design Guidelines: it sits on the north edge of the skating oval, blocking prevailing winter winds; large south-facing windows capture sunshine for those inside; it's lit at night; it includes

a large changing area and washrooms to serve the local speed skating group, public skaters, snowshoers, and cross-country skiers. The large windows also provide excellent indoor-outdoor interaction, so skaters and spectators can wave to each other and be connected.

Edmonton's WinterCity Strategy is holistic in its approach and implementation, but we've learned that good urban planning and design really are the backbone to creating a comfortable, inviting, livable winter city. Year-round design provides the best return on financial investment and social outcomes. Edmonton no longer shies away from its northernness, but embraces it, and Edmontonians have fallen back in love with winter.

Isla Tanaka is the Winter City Planner for the City of Edmonton. She holds a Master of Natural Resources and Environmental Studies degree, where she explored outdoor recreation spaces in winter cities. She has helped plan two international winter cities conferences and has presented on winter life and design in Canada, Mongolia and Russia. Isla has raised two children in northern Canadian communities, she cycles year-round, and loves cross-country skiing.



Michigan Winter Strategy Successes

Michigan communities are no stranger to the colder temperatures and heavy snowfall characteristic of the winter season. In many communities, businesses see lower foot traffic and sales during the winter, which poses a huge challenge to the sustainability of small businesses throughout the state. The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated these challenges. Now more than ever, it is critical for communities to capitalize on the uniqueness of winter and begin to think creatively about strategies that will help support small businesses within their downtown and commercial districts during the winter season.

To help communities begin planning for the winter season as a response to COVID-19 as well as for the longer term, Michigan Main Street, a program of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), in partnership with Patrick Coleman of North of 45, LLC, created a Winter Strategies resource guide. The guide is organized around the Main Street Four-Points®, a comprehensive framework for downtown revitalization, and provides immediate and long-term winter city planning principles and strategies for downtowns and business districts to help support a transition to outdoor winter activation within communities statewide.

Below are examples of Michigan communities' winter strategy successes to inspire additional innovation and creativity at the local level. These successes are mostly in response to COVID-19 and the surge of interest in being outdoors for socializing and the reliance on outdoor public space for restaurants and bars. However, many of these community responses can be made permanent to drive economic growth during the winter season year after year.

Winter Strategy Successes: Organization

Organization considerations for implementing winter strategies include:



Image by National Main Street Center

- Developing a local winter task force and building robust partnerships to brainstorm and implement projects;
- Working to amend the existing regulatory framework, such as local ordinances and policies guiding development and outdoor seating, parklets, patios and curbside pick-up;
- Enlisting volunteers for specific winter initiatives;
- Fundraising for capital to implement winter improvements.

The City of East Lansing has been especially proactive in adapting local ordinances and regulations allowing outdoor dining. The city created a Winter 2020 Outdoor Dining Area Expansion Application allowing restaurants to expand services to outdoor areas on both public and

private property throughout the winter season. In addition, the city has changed downtown parking regulations to establish several dedicated curbside pick-up areas.

Two communities have embarked on fundraising campaigns for lighting enhancements during the winter season. Downtown Lansing, Inc. is raising money through a crowdfunding platform for light installments that include up-lighting and color washes on the downtown buildings. Charlevoix Main Street is hoping to raise \$40,000 for the replacement and ongoing maintenance of the iconic tree lights that keep downtown Charlevoix bright year-round and add to the charming atmosphere and walkability of the downtown district, especially in the dark winter season. (More on the importance of lighting below.)



Photo by Downtown Lansing, Inc.



Photo by Saline Main Street



Image by
Southwest
Detroit
Business
Association



Image by Decked Out
Detroit, Bedrock Detroit

Winter Strategy Successes: Design

As you adapt your downtown district for winter, consider retrofitting existing outdoor public spaces for use in the winter months through the addition of some or all of the following amenities:

- Fire pits and heaters
- Warm materials such as fabric seat cushions, wood, or plastic benches/outdoor seats (metal benches are especially cold)
- Awnings or canopies over outdoor areas
- Wind barriers using shrubbery, snow walls or straw bale walls
- Lighting, public art and storefront and district-wide decorations add to the vibrancy of the district throughout the season

In addition, snow management in the street and on the sidewalk are important to accommodate increased curbside pick-up as a result of COVID-19 precautions.

Many communities have installed outdoor seating in creative ways. Saline Main Street has worked with the City of Saline to close a portion of the street creating a downtown recovery zone that accommodates outdoor dining and service from the surrounding restaurants. This winter, Saline Main Street is continuing to support restaurants through the installation of

fire pits throughout the downtown. Similarly, Niles is closing a street and installing fire pits to accommodate outdoor seating that supports downtown restaurants.

The Southwest Detroit Business Association in Detroit is installing 15 custom designed Luminarias at various restaurants in Southwest Detroit to create a unique dining experience for the vibrant restaurant community in and around Mexicantown during the winter season. Also in Detroit, Bedrock Detroit and Rocket Community Fund launched the Decked Out Detroit initiative, a four month plan to promote outdoor dining, shopping and other activities in Downtown Detroit. Outdoor dining areas complete with pergolas, custom space heaters, tables and chairs will be installed strategically so diners can grab food from a variety of restaurants and enjoy the downtown atmosphere this winter.

East Lansing plans to retrofit many existing parking garages and pocket parks for outdoor winter activation. Additions to these spaces include a new Downtown Underground Market featuring local entrepreneurs and pilot city programming, additional seating options, outdoor heaters, art installations, wall partitions for wind protection, and bistro and string lighting.

Winter Strategy Successes: Economic Vitality

The strategies related to economic vitality focus on the need to support existing and new businesses in creative ways during the winter season.

Examples include:

- Establishing a micro-grant program to help local businesses with winterization
- Accommodating curbside pick-up
- Developing outdoor pop-up shop opportunities or outdoor winter markets for new retail and restaurant experiences
- Coordinating winter themed specials, sales, products, and marketing for the downtown businesses

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. (DGRI) is supporting small businesses through its Downtown Winter Ready Grant. The grant is intended to assist businesses in winterization efforts related to outdoor seating, activation, and related expansion of business activity in the public realm. DGRI used \$200,000 in available funding to launch the grant program which will provide up to \$10,000 to small businesses to buy heaters, canopies, lighting, and other items to help winterize outdoor seating areas throughout downtown. DGRI has also collaborated with a propane supplier to supply propane, set up fuel systems, monitor the systems and refill the tanks as needed.

Downtown Lansing, Inc. (DLI) has implemented a multi-faceted approach to lifting up local businesses and bringing residents back to downtown to foster economic activity. DLI developed a downtown ambassador program to showcase the variety of businesses in downtown via social media and infuse dollars into the local economy. DLI used vacant storefronts for pop-ups, developed



Concept drawing by East Arbor Architecture for City of East Lansing

a window-shopping campaign, and created a small business activation grant providing \$1,500 to businesses for outdoor seating, lighting, and entry way redesign, and has creatively activated outdoor space through the addition of outdoor pop-up retailers and restaurants.

Winter Strategy Successes: Promotion

Promotional strategies for winter activation focus on increasing the amount of activity and people for the benefit of the downtown businesses during the winter season. There are many ways to bring foot traffic to the district, such as promoting the community as a winter destination by highlighting the winter activities and attractions, developing positive winter-themed branding and marketing, and offering safe outdoor events or more passive activities.

Many Michigan communities already host winter events that activate downtowns including the Fire and Ice Festival in downtown Rochester, Let's Chill Winterfest in Milan, Hunter Ice Festival in Niles, World of Winter in Grand Rapids, and the dogsled races in Calumet and Marquette. In addition to large winter events, there are many

other ways to attract people downtown during the winter months.

Charlevoix Main Street worked with its recreation department to activate East Park. Utilizing existing infrastructure and topography, Charlevoix added passive activity to the district by creating a sledding hill and installing benches, tables, and lighting to make the space more inviting.

Niles Main Street is making full use of their social media platforms by running a series of Facebook live posts, led by the comedic duo of Gilda and Louise. The pair are promoting Niles' small businesses by highlighting the small business owners and their offerings. Decorated storefront windows not only attract visitors, but inform shoppers as well. Businesses include product ordering information in the windows so shoppers can make purchases without entering the store.

Many Michigan communities are making the most of the Pure Michigan winter by adopting strategies to activate their downtowns and business districts during the winter season. Creating unique experiences for your residents and visitors will help everyone enjoy winter during the pandemic and into the future.

The Michigan Main Street Program is here to help your community by conducting trainings and providing technical assistance to Michigan Main Street Communities and downtowns statewide. For more information, go to www.miplace.org/programs/michigan-main-street/

Leigh Young, AICP, Senior Main Street Specialist with the Michigan Main Street Program. Leigh has a Master's in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Michigan and a Bachelor's in Public Policy from Michigan State University. She has over seven years of experience in public sector planning and downtown management and is passionate about helping Michigan downtowns thrive.

Tony Garcia, Promotional Specialist with the Main Street Michigan Program. Tony has a Bachelor's in Hospitality Business from Michigan State University. He has 12 years of experience at the Michigan Economic Development Corporation previously working as Promotional Specialist with the Michigan Film and Digital Media Office. Tony is determined to help communities create a strong sense of place.



Photo by Niles Main Street



MICHIGAN ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION



Building #EauWinter

There's an appetite to extend Eau Claire's summer energy into a year-round spirit of gathering where residents thrive, not just survive, in winter.

City of Eau Claire Wintermission Proposal, November 2018

And with these words Eau Claire (in northwestern Wisconsin, population 68,000) was chosen to become one of only three Winter City Vanguards out of over 60 applicants.

880 Cities, a non-profit organization based in Toronto and leaders in helping create public spaces that improve the quality of life for all ages, abilities, and socioeconomic status, launched the competition in Fall 2018 to become an inaugural Winter City Vanguard community and embark on the journey of Wintermission.

The goal of Wintermission? "Bring public life to your winter city." That sounds simple enough. Yet we have built many of our cities to avoid winter, not embrace it. How can we expand the love we have of public gathering in summer months into those months historically labeled unpleasant?

In a year like 2021 as we collectively climb out of a viral pandemic, political unrest and likely global recession, community planners in the U.S. are faced with additional obstacles toward improving winter life: intentional physical isolation and amplified racial divisiveness. Yet we turn to our "Principles to Which We Aspire" from the AICP Code of Ethics:

We shall seek social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic integration. We shall urge the alteration of policies, institutions, and decisions that oppose such needs.
(Item A.1.f.)

Our urban design has impacted those who are disadvantaged. We have designed

our infrastructure for the able-bodied, economically advantaged, and culturally homogeneous. This is amplified in northern winters:

- Sidewalks, bus stops and bike lanes are given lower priority for snow removal.
- Outdoor activity revolves around high-priced recreational equipment like skis, snowshoes, and hockey gear.
- Public gathering is exceedingly "white"—not from snowfall, but from entrenched cultural and ethnic norms, where ice hockey and ski jumping play against a scene of horse-drawn wagon rides through downtown Christmas displays.

Through this we've come to realize the incidental, and sometimes intentional, barriers to participating in our communities that have been long-established against those who are most disadvantaged, vulnerable and segregated. Wintermission has sharpened our focus in Eau Claire for a truly more inclusive vision of winter life. Our Wintermission Vision Statement then served as a cornerstone for our Winter City Strategy:

Eau Claire is a city where a diverse community embraces a mindset of year-round activity and wellness.

After we framed this vision statement during our time with other Wintermission cities (Buffalo, NY and Leadville, CO) at the Winter Cities Shake-Up in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in January 2019, we began our journey to engage the community and build our pilot projects—all with an eye toward a final Winter City Strategy to scale up and accelerate inclusive programming,

projects, engagement and the built environment. As the Wintermission team with 880 Cities framed it:

Engage → Pilot → Scale.

Our timing coincided well with APA's new *Planning for Equity Policy Guide* published in June 2019. Planners' sharpened focus on equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is essential to finding a common and encompassing community vision, including winter city planning. APA's EDI framework and the efforts of Wintermission are making a positive and intentional impact in our goal to improve winter life for all residents of, and visitors to, Eau Claire.

Our engagement efforts included several months in early 2019—during a record snowfall of 100 inches!—of pop-up engagements, focus groups, stakeholder meetings, and surveys. Through these methods we realized that our planning documents are woefully deficient in both EDI and winter planning. Meeting with our local partners, we also learned that our winter activities (see above: hockey and wagon rides) have not been connecting with underserved communities in Eau Claire. A suggestion that stands out in particular from meetings with local Latinx and Hmong community leaders is: Don't promote "Here are some activities, please come out!" but instead ask them "What activities can we help you access and plan?" We realized we've been taking the easy, outdated path of staging static organized events but not when, where and with what the community's minority populations were accustomed to or interested in. We weren't following our own planners' strategy of community engagement by

going to where people are.

Our Wintermission team continued growing as we conducted community engagement activities. Seven in-depth conversations with specific communities and groups were held as part of the engagement process. These sessions allowed for more extensive discussions around the barriers preventing residents from engaging in social and physical activity in winter and identified potential solutions, opportunities and resources that can be brought to bear to address those barriers.

A stakeholder workshop allowed participants to collaborate in groups to identify the challenges of accessing public space in winter, and we mapped key assets and resources present in Eau Claire that could be utilized to overcome those challenges. Groups then developed action plans to further the engagement process and connect with Eau Claireans of all socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. Over 1,000 people were connected, with 533 attending engagement events and 471 survey responses.

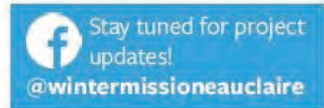
From there we structured our pilot projects around four primary community priorities: snow and ice management; winter mobility; winter events and activities; and winter culture. Each priority produced many potential pilot projects, with an emphasis on inclusive winters and winter awareness.

As we build upon the success of last winter and the \$15,000 Wintermission funding to implement these initial test projects, we look to promoting our new Winter City Strategy this year. We distilled down our initial four priorities into three pillars of the Winter City Strategy—all “supported by a foundational belief in increasing the equity and inclusiveness of winter for diverse populations”: Winter Accessibility; Winter Events and Recreation; and Winter Culture.

Recommendations and next steps center around three formats for implementation: Programs and Events; Infrastructure and Operations; and Plans, Policies and Guides. As planners, all formats play a

Pilot Projects

Wintermission Eau Claire is implementing a series of pilot projects to reduce social isolation for the 2019/2020 winter season.



Dedicated Winter Route

A dedicated winter recreation path creates a circuit around the Randall Park neighborhood. The route will receive high priority plowing after snow events for people to have a safe place to be active.



Winter Way-finding Signage

New and improved signage will help guide people in Eau Claire to key winter activities or attractions like Winter After Hours at Pinehurst Park.



Winter Gear Share

One of the largest barriers of being active in winter is access to the appropriate gear. Free winter gear will be made available to check out through the libraries in both Eau Claire and Altoona.



Highlight Winter Programs

Eau Claire is rich in winter programming. Wintermission will better promote and create awareness of winter event opportunities.



Reframing Winter Culture

How we talk about winter affects how we feel about winter. Wintermission Eau Claire will take a positive approach when communicating the winter season to hopefully change residents' perceptions.



critical role in building an inclusive winter community. For the built environment in particular, incremental enhancements guide the way, including signage and way-finding, warming stations (both public and private), bus stop enhancements, winter greenhouses, and of course winter design guidelines like those pioneered by the City of Edmonton.

The Winter City Strategy of outdoor activities (Programs and Events), innovative business options (Infrastructure and Operations), and expanded public space usage (Plans, Policies and Guides), has not only led Eau Claire to a better foundation for winter living, but also led to a more

equitable and resilient place so that Eau Claire is better positioned for the ‘new normal’.

Scott Allen, AICP recently celebrated 25 years as a local government planner. He currently serves as Community Development Director for the City of Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Scott has worked in planning in both cities and counties in the Wisconsin, Minnesota and Missouri.



Winter Is Coming:

6 Ways Local Leaders Can Help People Warmly and Safely Social Distance Outdoors During COVID-19

Communities across the globe have adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic by re-imagining social gatherings — moving dining and other activities outdoors, for instance — where open spaces make social distancing easier. But winter is coming — or, in many places, has already arrived.

“We need to find new and creative ways to connect with one another outdoors where we can physically distance,” says Amanda O’Rourke, executive director of 8 80 Cities, a livability and public spaces advocacy organization — and frequent AARP Livable Communities partner — based in Toronto, Canada. “This is especially true for older adults, who are among the most susceptible to COVID, the most likely to report feeling socially isolated and the most likely to remain indoors during winter.”

Although social isolation tends to increase for everyone during the winter, O’Rourke asserts, “we are misdiagnosing the issue by blaming winter. The problem is much deeper than that. Public spaces and transportation systems that are already forces for exclusion and social isolation become even more problematic in winter.”

“The way we design, plan and manage our outdoor public spaces do very little to invite vibrant winter activity and public life,” she explains. “That’s the root cause, which, combined with the impacts of COVID-19, creates a perfect storm for mental and physical health crises. The good news is that winter can be an asset to communities if leveraged properly.”

According to O’Rourke and David Simor, a senior project manager at 8 80 Cities,



Snow carving Tip up town
by Joe Ross

local governments can make winter spaces inclusive and inviting for people of all ages by addressing the challenges caused by cold temperatures, winter light and accessibility and by “reframing the conversation about winter.” Their suggestions:

1. Clear sidewalks, bike lanes, and walking paths of snow and ice

Sidewalks are public spaces that improve mobility, accessibility and quality of life. Yet public works departments prioritize the clearing of snow and ice from roads while generally neglecting sidewalks. In fact, many cities don’t bother to clear sidewalks at all. Why devalue these important assets by leaving them inaccessible for three or four months of the year? Cities with accessible, active transportation networks — including sidewalks and bike paths — see high levels of physical activity and social connection in winter. Keeping sidewalks walkable and streets

or paths bikeable during the COVID-19 pandemic can relieve crowding on public transit systems.

2. Make outdoor lighting “human scale”

For many people, one of the hardest parts of winter is the lack of sunlight. The decrease in daylight hours contributes to a higher rate of traffic collisions during the winter months. To combat the hazards, many cities increase the wattage of lighting along streets, sidewalks and public spaces. Some use lighting in fun ways by hosting festivals, competitions and art installations that brighten the night.

3. Design for winter by creating comfortable “micro-climates”

Being cold isn’t fun. Warmth is an essential ingredient for creating the winter-friendly public places so many communities need. Local governments, businesses and organizations can plan and design

spaces for winter by installing warming zones and fire pits in places where people normally congregate for physical activity, such as parks and plazas, as well as in locations where people typically have to wait outdoors, such as transit stops. Such micro-climates can raise the surrounding air temperature by up to 15 degrees and both encourage and enable people to spend more time outdoors. When closed to vehicle traffic, street spaces can support social, physical and commercial activity through the use of heated patios and parklets.

4. Use snow and ice to a community's advantage

The River Trail in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, and the Rideau Canal in the nation's capital city of Ottawa, Ontario, provide distinctive skating and recreational opportunities that connect large parts of each city. Communities with beautiful trail systems that teem with people in the summer can support safe recreational opportunities for walking, cross-country skiing, and fat-tire bicycling in winter. Leadville, Colorado, closes its downtown streets for cold-weather activities such as ski-joring (a sport in which a person on skis is pulled by a horse, dog or motor vehicle). Other cities close streets for tobogganing or Open Streets programs. Wintertime also creates opportunities for snow building and ice sculpture competitions.

5. Maintain park amenities

Properly maintained walking paths can boost physical activity levels for park users during the winter. But in many North American cities, parks are closed, or essentially closed, once cold weather arrives for the season. Restrooms are locked, paths aren't cared for and event programming (see item 6) comes to a halt. Winterizing park restrooms is even more important during a pandemic when people have fewer options for accessing indoor washrooms (such as in libraries, community centers, stores or eateries). Older adults and

Prioritize the Most Vulnerable

People experiencing homelessness or who are housing insecure need a way to get out of the cold. The pandemic has placed already overwhelmed shelter and support systems under even more duress.

Local governments can support the under-housed by contracting with local hotels that have excess vacancies as well as by using publicly owned assets – such as libraries, community centers and civic buildings – as winter shelters and temporary housing.



Photo by cereidz

families with young children are much less likely to visit a park or outdoor space if safe, clean toilets aren't available and accessible. Places that invite people to spend time outside need to provide comfortable and clean restrooms.

6. Provide winter programs and activities

Another reason parks and public spaces see significantly fewer visitors during colder months is because many municipalities don't host events and activities in winter.

Programming that would typically occur inside libraries or community centers can be moved outdoors. The activities that work best are ones that encourage people to move their bodies for both exercise and warmth, such as yoga, walking, tai-chi, dancing, golf and simple games for people of all ages to enjoy. It doesn't take much effort or money to enable people to be active and healthy in winter. Following are just a few of the creative ways communi-

ties can woo people outdoors in winter:

- Host pop-up hot chocolate stands
- Install Little Free Library book and grocery giveaway boxes on lawns
- Place "wishing trees" and "kindness rocks" in neighbourhoods
- Organize volunteer snow-shovelling crews

For many people, the appetite for connecting with others has become stronger due to the forced isolation caused by the pandemic. Communities and local leaders can be catalysts and facilitators in support of socializing and social distancing in the cold — and during the winter, mask-wearing for avoiding infection provides the added benefit of warmth.

This article first appeared on the websites AARP.org/Livable and 880Cities.org. Used with permission.



NEW AICP

In November 2020, the following Michigan planners passed the rigorous AICP exam. Congratulations!

Har Ye Kan

Bradley Sharlow

Mara Braciszewski -
AICP Candidate

Christopher Madigan

Jacob Uhazie

Benjamin Palevsky -
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Jennifer Reinhardt

Timothy Wolff

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Details at planningmi.org/regional-workshops



Student MAP Conference

Virtual Conference

hosted by Michigan State University

February 19, 2021



Interested in being a roundtable mentor?
Contact Wendy Rampson at
wrampson@planningmi.org

Michigan Association of Planning's 2021 *Online* Training Workshop for Planning & Zoning Officials

PLANNING & ZONING ESSENTIALS

March 3 & 4 | 6 PM to 8 PM

March 23 & 24 | 1 PM to 3 PM

This 4 hour program held via Zoom with live instruction is a robust introduction for new planning commissioners and zoning board of appeals members, but also a great refresher for more experienced officials looking to build upon existing knowledge. Public hearing procedures, site plan review, master planning, zoning ordinances, variances, how to determine practical difficulty, and standards for effective decision-making are covered. Participants receive a reference book.

MANAGING RISK: MAKING SOUND PLANNING & ZONING DECISIONS

2.5 Master Citizen Planner Credits

March 9 | 6 PM to 8:30 PM

This is essential training for all elected officials, planning commissioners and zoning board of appeals members and emerging planning professionals. Held via Zoom with live instruction, topics include identifying a conflict of interest, applying discretionary standards during special land use reviews, reasonable expectations of a developer and how your comprehensive plan can minimize risk. Participants receive a reference book.

SITE PLAN REVIEW

3.5 Master Citizen Planner Credits

March 10 & 11 | 1 PM to 3 PM

This 3.5 hour program will demonstrate the site plan review and approval process and provide practical tools and techniques on how to read a site plan. Held via Zoom you'll discuss site design principles, such as pedestrian and traffic considerations, lighting, utilities, ADA compliance, inspections, and landscaping. Participants in this hands-on workshop receive a reference book, engineering scale, turning template, and a sample site plan to evaluate.

PLANNING AND ZONING FOR INSPECTORS

March 16 | 1 PM to 3 PM

A community's inspector is the final and often the first word in zoning enforcement. They are the ones that see and hear how the zoning ordinance is working for property owners, but are often not at the table when master plans and ordinances are being developed. This 2 hour workshop via Zoom with live instruction offers inspectors and officers a concise history of planning and zoning, a tour of a typical zoning ordinance and development reviews and best practices for administration.

MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

3.5 Master Citizen Planner Credits

March 30 & 31 | 6 PM to 8 PM

This workshop is designed for those communities updating existing master plans as well as those creating entirely new ones. Roll up your sleeves and learn step-by-step about the requirements, components, and stakeholder involvement you'll need to organize when drafting or amending a master plan. Live instruction via Zoom. Participants also receive a reference book.

BUILD YOUR OWN WORKSHOP

Watch On Demand

New this year! Select from a list of topics that are most relevant to the issues facing your community. Pre-recorded sessions presented by experts range from 24 minutes to 2.5 hours. See the selections at www.planningmi.org/build-your-own-workshop

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Complete one form per registrant.

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<input type="checkbox"/> \$65	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100	Managing Risk March 9 6-8:30 PM
<input type="checkbox"/> \$85	<input type="checkbox"/> \$105	Site Plan Review March 10 and 11 1-3 PM
<input type="checkbox"/> \$45	<input type="checkbox"/> \$65	Planning and Zoning for Inspectors March 16 1-3 PM
<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100	Master Planning Process March 30 and 31 6-8 PM
<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100	Build Your Own Workshop (pick 3) Watch on demand Staff will email you for your session selection
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March 3-4, 2021

Planning and Zoning Essentials
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March 9, 2021

Managing Risk Workshop

March 10-11, 2021

Site Plan Review Workshop

March 16, 2021

Planning and Zoning for Inspectors
Workshop

March 23-24, 2021

Planning and Zoning Essentials
Workshop

March 30-31, 2021

Master Planning Process Workshop

May 5-7, 2021

National APA Conference
Online

May 20, 2021

Spring Institute

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