

COVID-19 Response:

# WINTER STRATEGIES

FOR DOWNTOWNS &  
BUSINESS DISTRICTS



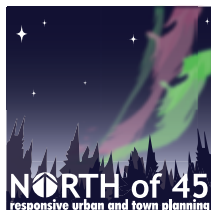
MI  
DWN  
TWN



**MICHIGAN ECONOMIC**  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

prepared by:

**NORTH OF 45, LLC**



**SRP DESIGN STUDIO, LLC**



[this document is formatted to encourage 2-sided printing]

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

FORWARD .....	4-5
INTRODUCTION.....	6-9
PRINCIPLES OF WINTER CITY PLANNING .....	10-19
WINTER STRATEGIES FOR BUSINESS DISTRICTS .....	20-33
ORGANIZATION .....	21
DESIGN .....	24
ECONOMIC VITALITY .....	29
PROMOTION.....	31
HELPFUL LINKS & RESOURCES .....	34-35

# FORWARD

October 2020

As snow begins to fly in Michigan, our Michigan Main Street communities are uniquely situated to provide innovative solutions in their communities during the upcoming winter season. Our communities are no stranger to winters in Michigan, but this year with the COVID-19 Pandemic and the need to socially distance, winter may increase the pressures felt by small businesses, community organizations, municipalities and the community at large.

The Winter Strategies guide will provide communities with ideas to give them a jumpstart on preparing for winter. This guide is an introduction to creative solutions, dialogue with community stakeholders and a foundation for embracing winter as a season of prosperity.

The guide is organized around the Main Street Four Point Approach. As with everything Main Street communities focus on, Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Vitality as the foundational elements to incrementally make downtowns and communities strong

In 1980, the Main Street 4-point approach was founded and as your state coordinating program, Michigan Main Street is here to foster creative solutions and positive downtown/neighborhood district development no matter the season.

If this is your first introduction to Michigan Main Street and the Main Street program, this guide and the ideas contained herein will still work for your community. In addition to this guide, Michigan Main Street launched our Michigan Reopen Main Street website during the height of the pandemic. The website contains COVID-19 response and recovery strategies for business owners and downtown/district management organizations. This winter guide builds off from and expands some of the ideas contained on the website, and we encourage you to visit the website for more resources.

2020 has been a year history books will remember for a long time! What small business owners and members of your community will remember are the innovative solutions implemented. Stay creative, stay focused, and most importantly stay innovative!

*The Michigan Main Street Team  
(Laura, Leigh, Joe & Tony)*



COVID-19 Response:  
**WINTER STRATEGIES**  
FOR DOWNTOWNS & BUSINESS DISTRICTS



# INTRODUCTION

The global COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for all levels of government and businesses, large and small, as they attempt to protect public health and support economic recovery. Following an initial stay at home order, Michigan businesses have been allowed to reopen following a changing set of guidelines and parameters as we learned more about the virus and as safety protocols have been developed.

The pandemic has resulted in a surge of interest in being outdoors for socializing, family recreation, biking, camping, hiking, fishing and other outdoor pursuits. It has also created demand for and reliance on outdoor public space for restaurants and bars: patios and parklets, using closed streets and parking lots for pop-up patios and outdoor seating that has allowed many restaurants and bars to operate while indoor facility capacities are greatly reduced.





## COVID-19 Response: WINTER STRATEGIES FOR DOWNTOWNS & BUSINESS DISTRICTS

These demands will not decrease in winter, in fact, the need to get people outdoors will be more important than ever this coming winter season. What actions can cities and downtown districts take to help their business district better respond to the upcoming winter season? One approach is to find opportunities to celebrate the winter in Michigan with a positive response and strategic actions to make the best of this uncharted territory we are all navigating.

### WINTER IN MICHIGAN

Michigan's climate is greatly influenced by the surrounding Great Lakes, and its northern location. Winter climatic conditions vary widely from the mild winter conditions experienced in the southeast to lake effect snowfalls off Lake Michigan and Lake Superior. The Great Lakes also create cloudy weather for much of the State,

The table lists selected Michigan cities and average January low and high temperatures, snowfall, and sunshine (for cities where data was available).



### JANUARY TEMPERATURE AND SNOWFALL AVERAGES FOR SELECTED MICHIGAN CITIES

HIGH	LOW	PLACE	SNOWFALL IN INCHES	SNOWY DAYS	% SUN
31	18	Ann Arbor	16.4	14.5	
32	19	Detroit	12.5	10.2	40
29	15	Saginaw	11.7	7.2	
32	16	Battle Creek	14.4	12.5	
31	18	Holland	25	10.5	
33	19	Grand Rapids	20.8	14.9	28
30	17	Lansing	13.8	12.5	36
27	12	Alpena	21.4	16.8	36
25	10	Gaylord	27.2	15.4	
27	14	Petoskey	36.6	14.6	
28	15	Traverse City	33.2	17.0	
26	6	Escanaba	13.1	7.0	
22	9	Houghton	68.8	23.2	
20	3	Ironwood	44.2	18.4	
25	13	Marquette	29.5	18.4	37
23	8	Sault Ste. Marie	31.6	19.1	36

Source: Current Results, Weather and Science Facts

# INTRODUCTION



CALUMET, MI 1914

A growing number of communities across the northern tier of the United States and in Canada are embracing the winter season and finding 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 our city for winter as much as we do for summer. Especially now during the COVID pandemic.

This guidebook provides ideas to make the most of winter's opportunities and to create a culture shift so that your city is considered one of best places to live, work and play in winter and year-round. The strategies, when implemented, will minimize winter's negatives and create a more livable city, where the realities of our northern location—snow, ice, and darkness—are resources we use both to make it easier and more fun to go play outside, transforming your city into a prosperous community.



## MICHIGAN AND THE WORLD

It is also possible to compare Michigan winter conditions to cities around the world. While Detroit is the only Michigan city included on this list, we can assume Marquette and Houghton compare well with Montreal and Quebec City, due to having similar latitudes and snowy conditions. This index was developed by David Philips, Environment Canada, 1988, in order to compare winter climatic conditions. Weighting is assigned in four major factors; discomfort (wind chill, length of winter, mean daily temperature; psychological, (darkness, wet days, cloudiness, sunshine); hazardous conditions (strong winds, winter precipitation); and outdoor immobility (fog, winter precipitation).

It may be safe to assume that many residents of the Upper Peninsula snow belts are better adapted to winter than residents of SE Michigan, as a result of the duration and severity of winter. Likewise, the UP and northern part of the lower peninsula are presented with more opportunities to get out and enjoy winter, such as skiing, snowmobiling, and ice fishing. And know how to dress for it.

At the same time, the areas of Michigan with moderate winter conditions (less snow and warmer temperatures) may need fewer interventions and effort to adapt cities to winter outdoor activity, such as walking, ice skating, and maintaining public space.

### WINTER SEVERITY INDEX FOR SELECTED WINTER CITIES

Anchorage	42
Buffalo	48
Chicago	36
Copenhagen	25
<b>Detroit</b>	<b>36</b>
Edmonton	49
Harbin	51
Helsinki	48
Milwaukee	44
Minneapolis	46
Montreal	49
Moscow	52
Oslo	42
Ottawa	50
Quebec City	54
Sapporo	41
Stockholm	36
Toronto	43
Winnipeg	56

# PRINCIPLES OF WINTER CITY PLANNING



Improving livability in “winter cities” requires a creative, innovative approach that addresses the problems of snow and cold while enhancing the advantages, opportunities and beauty of the winter season. A positive approach benefits the attitudes of residents, and bolsters the community’s ability to retain and attract new business and residents. The following general winter city planning principles define this approach. While these guidelines are directed towards the city overall, many can be applied to business districts and downtowns.

---

## PROVIDE OR ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WINTER OUTDOOR ACTIVITY

---

- Consider ways to use existing city parks 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.
- Create winter trails within the city on old rail grades. Where possible, connect existing trails and walkways.
  - Maintaining/grooming the snow for a multi-purpose skiing, running and walking path is possible where below freezing temperatures predominate.
  - Communities that experience extended above freezing temperatures may find it better to plow the trail for walking/running/biking.

---

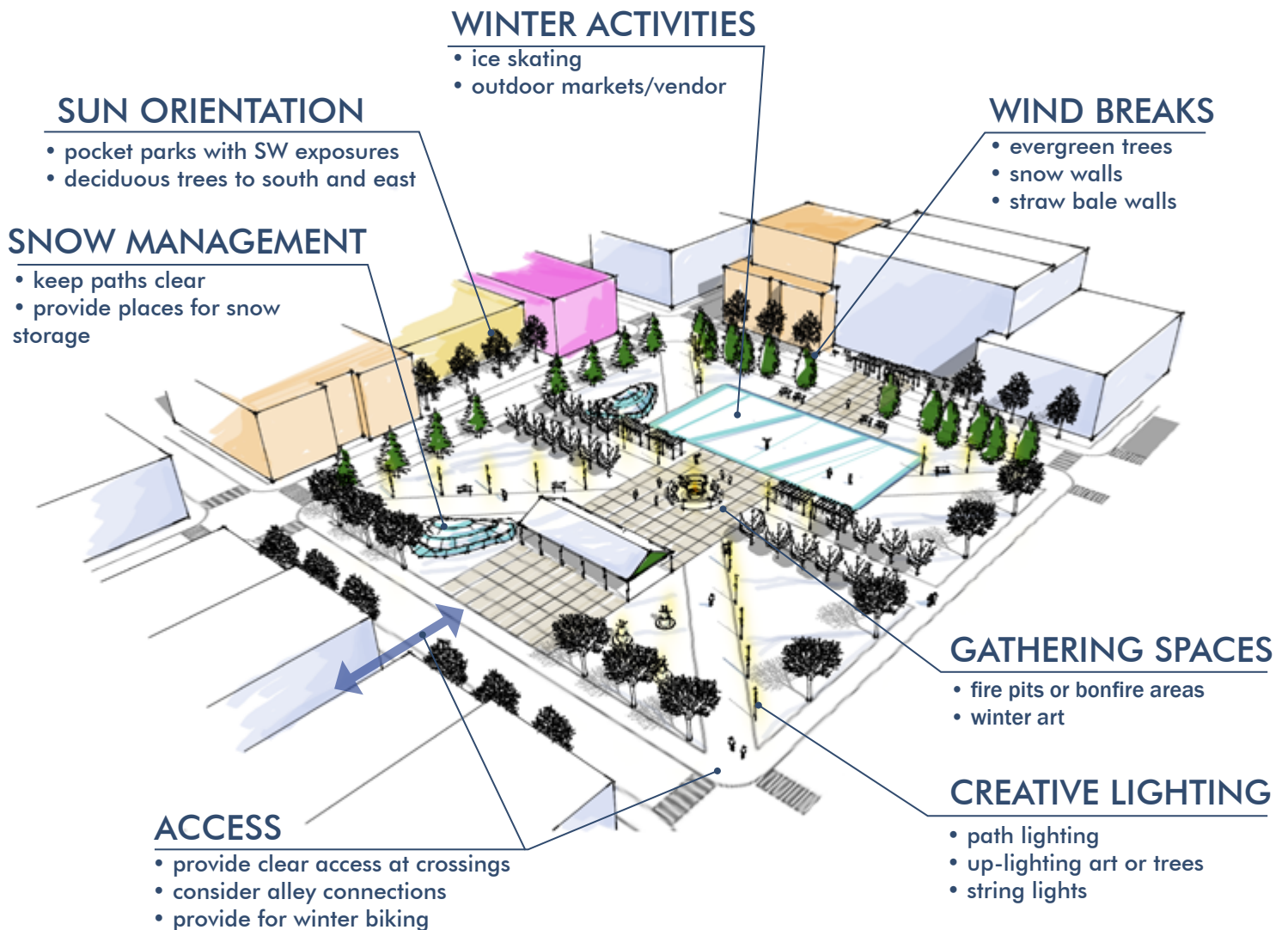
## IMPROVE WINTER TRANSPORTATION FOR PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS AND PUBLIC TRANSIT USERS

---

- Designate critical pedestrian areas that should receive priority when clearing sidewalks and walkways.
- Consider recruiting the assistance of local residents, such as business owners, neighborhood groups, or other organizations to maintain critical areas.
- Ensure that transition areas such as curb-cuts and bus stop platforms are properly plowed to ensure pedestrian safety, as these areas are often a collecting point for large mounds of icy snow due to street plowing.



## TOWN SQUARE WINTER DESIGN STRATEGIES



*The ideal town square would include some of these design features to provide both comfort from the elements and interactive pedestrian spaces during the the cold winter months.*

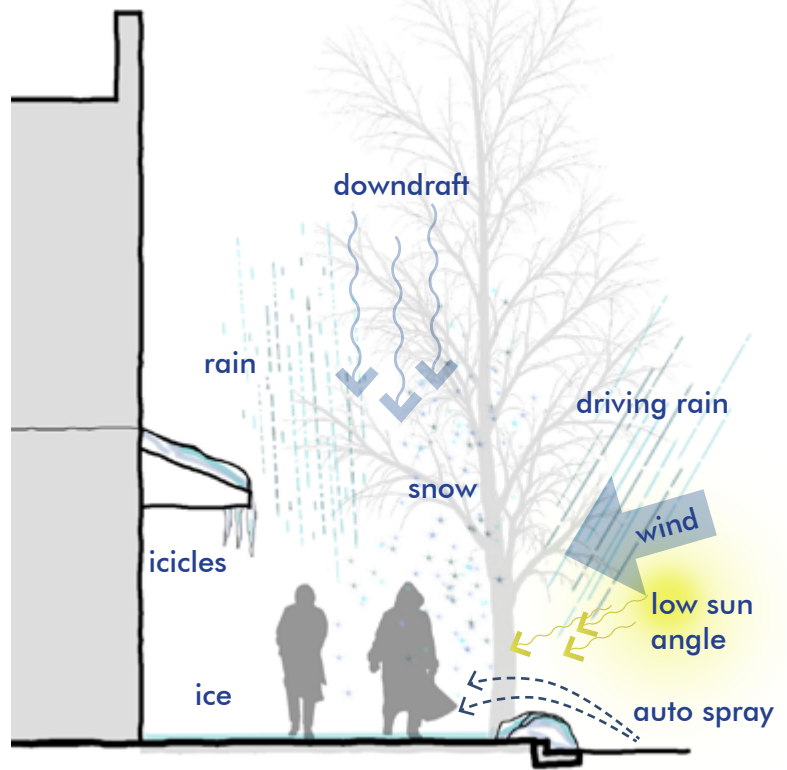
# PRINCIPLES OF WINTER CITY PLANNING



## DESIGN FOR WINTER SAFETY AND COMFORT

- Take advantage of solar radiation in the orientation of buildings and outdoor spaces to provide a southern exposure to heat and sunlight.
- Use buildings and vegetation to protect outdoor spaces, such as vest pocket parks, from prevailing winter winds.
- Avoid building orientations which will create a wind tunneling effect.
- Avoid creating public spaces for winter use in areas that are shaded from the sun.
- Provide shelters or wind blocks in areas that serve as outdoor gathering spaces.

## ELEMENTS OF PEDESTRIAN DISCOMFORTS IN WINTER CITIES



- Use technology and materials appropriate for a “winter city”. Outdoor furniture should be constructed using appropriate materials such as wood, polyethylene, or vinyl-coated metal.
- Cover ramps or stairs to protect them from snow and ice.
- Provide handrails for all public and private walkways that exist on slopes. Particularly hazardous areas, such as steps and ramps, may need to be heated to prevent snow and ice from accumulating.
- Design roofs to account for snow and ice accumulation. and also prevent snow and ice from shedding onto parking areas or pedestrian walkways.
- Create transition areas at building entrances to provide patrons with an area to shed snow prior to entering the building.



## WINTER ACTIVITY

The **Marquette Commons** is a town square designed for all season use. In Spring, Summer and Fall, the plaza is used as a Farmers Market. In winter, it is transformed into an ice skating rink



**Anchorage, Alaska,** with a climate similar to northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula, grooms their extensive bike / walking / running trails for winter use. People walk, run, bike, and ski on the packed snow surface.



**Eau Claire, Wisconsin,** began clearing snow from a natural area bike and walking path as a pilot project in their Wintermission Eau Claire program. The pilot project has been an overwhelming success.



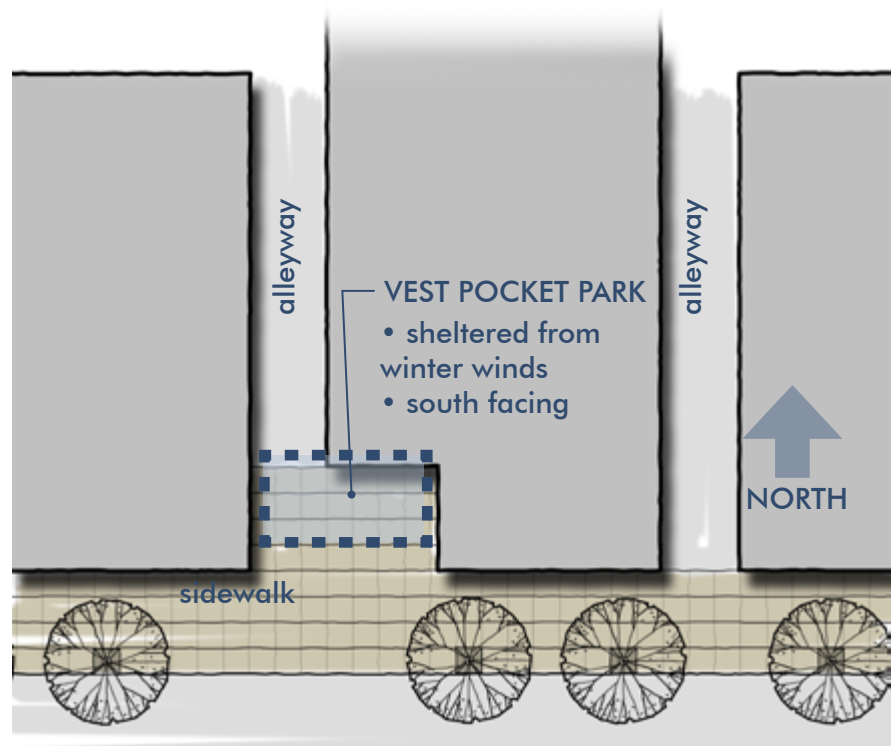
# PRINCIPLES OF WINTER CITY PLANNING



## SNOW MANAGEMENT

- ❑ Consider snow plowing and removal in the design of road improvements such as curb extensions/bumpouts, to allow for easy maneuverability of equipment around such areas.
- ❑ Design road cross-sections to provide an area for snow storage to prevent snow from being plowed onto the sidewalks when the street is cleared of snow.
- ❑ Bike lanes should not be used for snow storage, as more people are using bicycles for transportation year-round.
- ❑ Bike lanes should be maintained to the same standard as streets in order to encourage more people to commute by bicycle.
- ❑ Bike parking racks should not be put away for the winter season.
- ❑ 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 to use earth forms and vegetation to reduce wind and drifting snow.
- ❑ Investigate the use of new equipment or innovative technology for snow removal.

## VEST PARKS IN WINTER CITIES



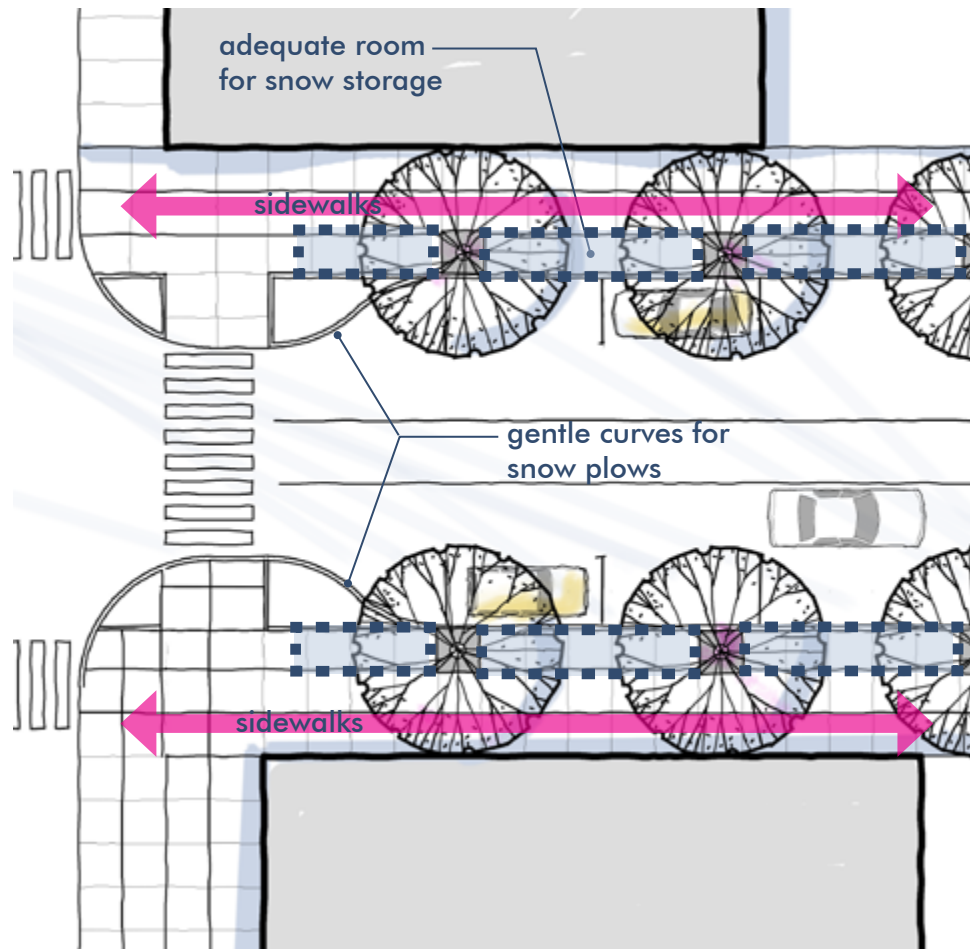


## SNOW MANAGEMENT

### CONTINUED...

- ❑ Locate snow storage areas where they will receive sufficient solar radiation to encourage melt-off and provide adequate drainage.
- ❑ Store snow in a number of smaller sites, rather than one large area in order to speed up the melting process.
- ❑ Balance the need for efficient snow removal with other considerations such as walkability, aesthetics, and parking.
- ❑ Explore and implement appropriate “best practices” for snow management that will improve service, reduce inconvenience and increase citizen satisfaction.

## SNOW PLOWING & STORAGE



# PRINCIPLES OF WINTER CITY PLANNING

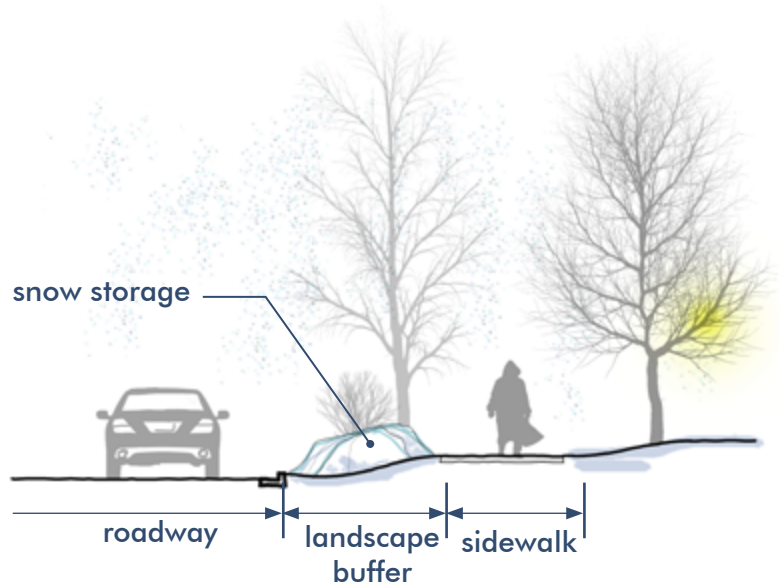


## VEGETATION AND LANDSCAPING

- ❑ Plant deciduous trees on the southern face of a building or outdoor area to provide cooling in the summer (when leaves are present), while still allowing sunlight to filter in during the winter (when leaves have fallen).
- ❑ Coniferous vegetation should be used on the north and west sides to protect the area from prevailing winter winds.
- ❑ Use berms and vegetation to direct snow drifts away from building entrances.
- ❑ Select appropriate landscaping for snow storage areas to minimize damage and poor growth due to compaction, pollutants, and poor drainage.
- ❑ Consider using vegetation as snow fences to protect open roadways and other areas from prevailing winter winds.
- ❑ Create “outdoor rooms” using trees and vegetation to shelter exposed areas from prevailing winds.
- ❑ Use landscaping plant species that offer attractive or useful winter characteristics such as twig color, fruit, and salt-tolerance.



## LANDSCAPE BUFFERS & SETBACKS





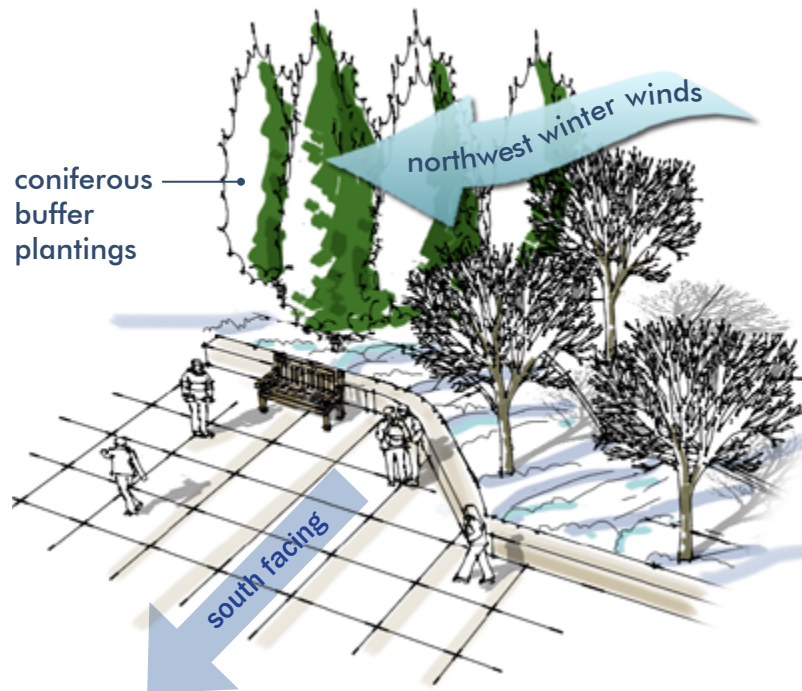
# COVID-19 Response: **WINTER STRATEGIES** FOR DOWNTOWNS & BUSINESS DISTRICTS

## LIGHTING AND COLOR

- Consider color and lighting treatments for public spaces and buildings, in order to offset the darkness and monotony of the winter season.



## OUTDOOR ROOMS



# PRINCIPLES OF WINTER CITY PLANNING



## MAKE WINTER A POSITIVE ASSET TO ATTRACT BUSINESS, TOURISM AND NEW RESIDENTS

- ❑ Collaborate with other area organizations to create a sustainable annual winter festival featuring family outdoor activities, snow/ice sculptures, winter market, food and music.
- ❑ Consider implementing a “winter market” to capture a greater share of winter tourism.
- ❑ Dress up downtown with lighting, public art, and snow/ice sculptures for the entire winter season, not just the holidays.



**Houghton, Michigan** takes advantage of steep grades and snow for this event.



## LIGHT UP THE DARK

Lighting public space and buildings brightens up dark days and nights and creates winter beauty.

The **Place D'Youville** in **Quebec City** is an historic public square that features lighting of the surrounding buildings and a winter ice rink.



Tiny **Copper Harbor**, the northernmost community in Michigan lights up their town park with a beautiful display.



# CELEBRATE WINTER!



## STRATEGIES FOR BUSINESS DISTRICTS

Celebrate Winter by adapting businesses, winter-themed placemaking, improved snow management and activities that can be experienced while social distancing and draw people to downtown! This section of the guidebook provides ideas and best practices for adapting downtowns to winter, in order to help keep them economically viable during the global COVID-19 pandemic. These ideas will also help Michigan communities foster more of a “winter culture” that can continue to provide benefits in coming winters and all seasons.

This past summer Michigan experienced unprecedented demand for outdoor recreation. It is expected that demand will continue this winter, as people will want to find things to do that can be done in a socially distanced manner. Downtown and business districts can provide some of these opportunities for people, including shopping, walking, dining/drinking, and socialization.

The strategies are organized following the Main Street Four Points. It is recognized there is considerable overlap with specific strategies fitting into more than one point.

### THREE STEPS TO GET STARTED WITH WINTER STRATEGIES:

These three steps will assist any community with establishing a Winter Strategy initiative.

#### 1. ESTABLISH A LOCAL WINTER STRATEGIES TASK FORCE

- Discuss snow removal, outdoor seating time extensions, and other initiatives.
- This task force should include a DPW representative, Main Street Director/Chair, Municipal Manager, and business owner.
- This task force should identify and create winter strategies for all Four Points.

#### 2. TAKE AN INVENTORY OF WINTER ASSETS

- Attractions
- Partnerships
- Opportunities

#### 3. IDENTIFY LOCAL ORDINANCES, ZONING, AND POLICIES TO DETERMINE IF ANY UPDATES ARE NEEDED TO SUPPORT AND ACCOMMODATE CREATIVE EFFORTS AND NEW INITIATIVES.

- Examples of new initiatives that may require policy changes include:
  - Social districts
  - Outdoor consumption policies
  - Outdoor seating/patio seating



## ORGANIZATION

As with other initiatives, partnerships are going to be important to implement winter improvement strategies.

### REGULATORY

- Work with the municipality/community to extend public consumption order/waivers/permits/social districts and outdoor seating permits into the winter months so that parklets, patios and outdoor seating on sidewalks can be extended through the winter season
- Identify local ordinances and policies that need updating to support and accommodate creative efforts and new initiatives.



### SNOW MANAGEMENT

- Downtown has the opportunity during the pandemic to become a destination for walking, and having good walking conditions downtown is critical to attract shoppers.
- Downtown sidewalks, crosswalks and corner ramps must be kept clear of ice and snow.
- Promote the use of good winter walking footwear and wearing yaktraks, spikes and other slip-on traction devices.
- Work with property/business owners to incentivize snow removal/winter maintenance in front of their businesses.

# CELEBRATE WINTER!



## STRATEGIES FOR BUSINESS DISTRICTS

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- ❑ Enlist a volunteer work crew for improving snow removal, particularly for those areas needing extra attention, such as corners and public walkway connectors, and consider paying them in gift cards, downtown dollars, etc.
- ❑ Enlist volunteers to decorate downtown for the holiday/winter season.
- ❑ Enlist volunteers for winter specific events.



### SNOW MANAGEMENT

Frequent snowfalls in **Marquette, Michigan** make it expensive to remove all snow from downtown after each snow event. Instead, the DDA creates more gaps in the snow berm enabling shoppers to reach the cleared sidewalk conveniently.

Some downtowns, such as **Tromsø, Norway** and **Holland, Michigan** have heated sidewalks.



## FUND DEVELOPMENT

- ☐ Consider a special millage or assessment to fund enhanced snow removal (long-term)/or allocate DDA or Main Street budget line item for snow management.
- ☐ Consider creating a co-operative agreement between local business owners and private contractors for snow removal (where business owners share the cost equally of snow removal via a private contractor).
- ☐ Consider funding the purchase of snow removal equipment through sponsorships/donations.
- ☐ Create a micro-grant for business owners to help fund expanded curb-side pick-up, outdoor patio winterization and other business solutions for the winter.
- ☐ Develop a sponsorship campaign to solicit donations for your organization to implement outdoor/winter activities (winterizing pocket parks, parklets (where permitted), lighting, public art, winter events, etc.).

## ORGANIZATION

# TO DO:

- a.) Identify An Action
- b.) Assign A Leader
- c.) Determine The Correct Official, Staff Person, Or Department Leader To Connect With

ACTION ITEM	LEADER	CONNECTIONS
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

# CELEBRATE WINTER!



## STRATEGIES FOR BUSINESS DISTRICTS

### DESIGN

The general winter cities guidelines and best design practices in previous section identify ways to better adapt the city for the winter season. Many of these can be applied specifically to downtown.

#### STRATEGIES FOR THE MAIN STREET ORGANIZATION

- Develop winter city design guidelines. The Cities of Houghton, Marquette, Bessemer, and Calumet have chapters in their Master Plans addressing winter cities design. Edmonton, Alberta has developed a detailed winter design guideline book. **(see *Helpful Links & Resources*)**.
- Consider using parking decks, parking lots, plaza areas and other public spaces that are underutilized in the winter to host entertainment, activities and events.
- Retrofit existing pocket parks, patios and parklets by using surplus Christmas trees or shrubbery to act as a wind barrier. Wind breaks can also be made with snow walls, or straw bale walls.
- Consider sponsoring a winter decorating contest for the patios.
- Consider the addition of fire pits and heaters to patios and public spaces.
- Use “warm”, appropriate materials, such as fabric seat cushions, wood, or plastic, for benches/outdoor seats instead of metal.
- Consider sun orientation and wind direction for patios, pocket parks, parklets, and outdoor seating areas.
- Install awnings and canopies over outdoor seating areas and outdoor retail areas.





**STRATEGIES FOR THE MAIN  
STREET ORGANIZATION**  
CONTINUED...

- ❑ Install festive lighting throughout the district and public outdoor spaces. Think of creative ways to light spaces (Edison bulbs, Christmas twinkle lights, etc.).
- ❑ Find opportunities to partner with arts groups on winter-theme displays, snow and ice sculpture, and on small scale outdoor/street theatre performances.
- ❑ Strategically install heated sidewalks in high pedestrian traffic areas and sloped walkways.
- ❑ Maintain winter biking facilities, including protected bike lanes to encourage winter biking. Keep bike racks out and cleared of snow for winter use.
- ❑ Consider opportunities to create ski trails, skating paths, skating rinks, and sledding hills in existing parks.
- ❑ Consider a window display competition driven through social media.

## INTRODUCING CROKICURL

Find a place in or near your downtown for socially distanced winter recreation, such a town square, underutilized parking lot, or nearby park and make a Crockicurl game. Crockicurl is a new outdoor winter game invented in Winnipeg, Manitoba, combining the game of crokinole and curling. It is a life-sized version of crokinole played on ice using smaller, lighter curling rocks made of plastic. Plastic curling rocks are used because they are easier to use and have less distance to travel. Like the crokinole board, the play area of crokicurl has posts around the inner ring to make it a little more challenging.



# CELEBRATE WINTER!



## STRATEGIES FOR BUSINESS DISTRICTS



### WINTER PATIOS

In northern Europe and a few places in Canada, patios for dining and drinking are used year-round. Michigan can encourage a winter patio culture by providing an exciting outdoor environment with a few basic necessities.

- A simple awning, canopy or shelter will provide protection from snow or rain yet provide plenty of fresh air flow.
- Portable patio heaters and a fire pit can provide some warmth and temper even the coldest temperature.
- Install festive, soft lighting.
- Protect the patio space from prevailing winter winds with a wall made of snow, straw bales, or a row of discarded Christmas trees with twinkle lights.
- A south orientation and sunshine will make the space feel warm even on cold days, if the prevailing wind is blocked.
- Encourage patrons to provide their own blankets and to dress appropriately.

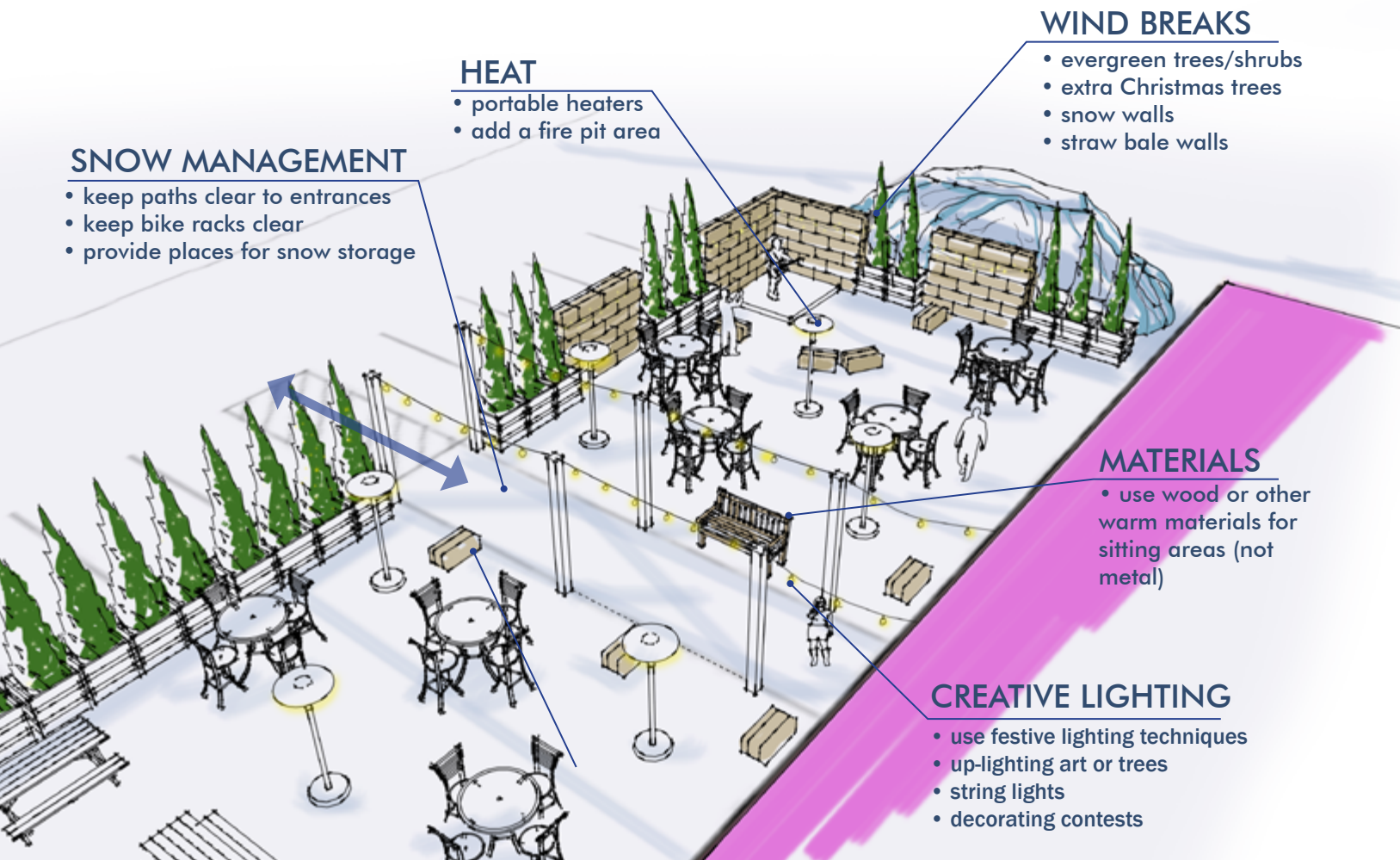


Some communities, including **Grand Rapids, MI**, are encouraging a patio culture by providing funding to develop winter patios. The **City of Chicago** conducted a contest for winter patio ideas ([\*\*see Helpful Links & Resources\*\*](#)).



COVID-19 Response:  
**WINTER STRATEGIES**  
FOR DOWNTOWNS & BUSINESS DISTRICTS

**RETROFITTING EXISTING PATIOS**



The diagram above shows how various elements can work together to create dynamic and safe outdoor spaces that will provide protection from the winter elements.

# CELEBRATE WINTER!



## STRATEGIES FOR BUSINESS DISTRICTS

### STRATEGIES FOR BUSINESS OWNERS

- Consider winter impact on maintaining Curb-side pick-up options.
- Create appealing winter storefront and window shopping displays with lighting and evergreen trees and boughs.
- Consider the ideas presented in this guide for adapting your patio for winter, such as blocking winter winds, heaters, fire pits, and lighting. Economic Vitality
- More downtown activity increases sales for all businesses. Cities and downtowns need to be flexible and allow pop-up businesses and retail activities during the winter season.

### DESIGN

## TO DO:

- a.) Identify An Action
- b.) Assign A Leader
- c.) Determine The Correct Official, Staff Person, Or Department Leader To Connect With

ACTION ITEM	LEADER	CONNECTIONS
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		



## ECONOMIC VITALITY

More downtown activity increases sales for all businesses. Cities and downtowns need to be flexible and allow pop-up businesses and retail activities during the winter season.

### STRATEGIES FOR THE MAIN STREET ORGANIZATION

- Develop pop-up opportunities in downtown for holiday shopping such as outdoor sidewalk sales and/or a winter market.
- Use a downtown public space, open area, or underutilized parking lot for food trucks and vendors.
- Evaluate and coordinate business hours for winter operations.
- Consider adaptations for Small Business Saturday and other holiday retail events, such as outdoor retail opportunities that allow appropriate social distancing.

## WINTER MARKETS

Extend the season of your farmers market or create opportunities for a pop-up winter market. A winter market can add retail diversity to your downtown. A simple shelter or temporary tent with heaters can provide protection for vendors, such as artists, farmers and craftsmen. Special events can be planned around the winter market.

***The City of Edmonton, Alberta,*** has developed a successful winter market in their downtown district.



# CELEBRATE WINTER!



## STRATEGIES FOR BUSINESS DISTRICTS

### STRATEGIES FOR BUSINESS OWNERS

- ☐ Conduct Facebook Live holiday shopping events.
- ☐ Place QR codes on storefront window to promote products and online shopping.
- ☐ Expand curb-side pick-up and delivery options for restaurants and retail.
- ☐ Develop winter themed specials, sales, and products (restaurants and retail).
- ☐ Create positive winter themed marketing for storefronts and sales.

### ECONOMIC VITALITY

## TO DO:

- a.) Identify An Action
- b.) Assign A Leader
- c.) Determine The Correct Official, Staff Person, Or Department Leader To Connect With

ACTION ITEM	LEADER	CONNECTIONS
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

## PROMOTION

More than ever, people are going to be seeking out places and activities that are safe and allow for socially distanced fun! Now is the time to begin a winter branding campaign to draw people to the downtown and benefit your downtown businesses.

### EVENT SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

- Consider themed restaurant/pub crawl style events that can take place outdoors.
- For large holiday shopping events, considerations might include:
  - Staging large events over a longer period (i.e. 12 days of Christmas)
  - Encouraging staggered attendance by offering specials based on first letter of first or last name on different days; spreading out events over larger areas (i.e. extended parade routes, vendor exhibit halls/ expo set-ups, etc.)

## USE SNOW & ICE AS AN ATTRACTION

Identify locations where CLEAN snow, uncontaminated by road salt, sand and dirt, can be harvested for constructing snow walls, mazes, sculptures, forts and castles. Snow walls to shelter space can be used as an alternative to prefab igloos and other shelter structures in pocket parks, parklets, and other public space. Fill plywood forms with snow, let them sit for a day, remove the form, and shape/carve the snow wall or block. Use snow to create a fun event and/or fun competition for the community. Ice may be harvested from nearby lakes and ponds for sculpture, walls, and outdoor bars.



# CELEBRATE WINTER!



## STRATEGIES FOR BUSINESS DISTRICTS

### EVENT SPECIFIC STRATEGIES CONTINUED...

- Using VIP, invite-only and RSVP events and sub-events that help to control the number of attendees at any given time.
- Consider working with property owners to use larger underutilized or vacant buildings to hold indoor events using social distancing and safety precautions.
- Develop and implement a winter snow or ice festival that includes a variety of events.
- Examples of winter events are:
  - Fire and Ice - Rochester, MI
  - Winterfest - Grand Haven, MI
  - Snowfest - Frankenmuth, MI
  - Winter Carnival – Michigan Tech University, Houghton, MI
  - Hunter Ice Festival - Niles, MI

### IDEAS FOR WINTER MARKETING

Using some of the ideas in this guidebook, make your downtown a safe and magical place to visit this winter and develop appropriate marketing efforts to promote it.

- There's no bad weather, only bad clothing! Promote the wearing of appropriate attire.
- Consider opportunities to create and market community-branded winter wear.





### IDEAS FOR WINTER MARKETING CONTINUED...

- ☐ Create positive winter themed marketing around downtown promotion and attraction.
- ☐ Develop winter branding for the district and businesses.
- ☐ Promote existing winter attractions in your area, enhance connectivity to existing attractions, and develop partnerships with local and regional winter attractions. Offering visitors discount cards for downtown businesses is one possibility.
- ☐ Change perceptions about winter in downtown. Promote a positive winter attitude.
- ☐ Promote downtown as a winter destination for walking, shopping, restaurants, etc.
- ☐ Create a winter activity guide for downtown highlighting attractions, special retail and dining experiences, outdoor patios, outdoor markets, and anything else your downtown has to offer during the winter season.

### PROMOTION

## TO DO:

- a.) Identify An Action
- b.) Assign A Leader
- c.) Determine The Correct Official, Staff Person, Or Department Leader To Connect With

ACTION ITEM	LEADER	CONNECTIONS
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

# HELPFUL LINKS & RESOURCES

## **Winter Cities Institute**

<https://www.wintercities.com>

## **Winter Cities Institute Facebook Page**

<https://www.facebook.com/WinterCitiesInstitute>

## **City of Edmonton WinterCity Strategy**

[https://www.edmonton.ca/city\\_government/documents/PDF/COE-WinterCity-Love-Winter-Summary-Report.pdf](https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/PDF/COE-WinterCity-Love-Winter-Summary-Report.pdf)

[https://www.edmonton.ca/city\\_government/initiatives\\_innovation/wintercity-strategy.aspx](https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/initiatives_innovation/wintercity-strategy.aspx)

## **Edmonton Design Guidelines**

[https://www.edmonton.ca/city\\_government/documents/PDF/WinterCityDesignGuidelines\\_draft.pdf](https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/PDF/WinterCityDesignGuidelines_draft.pdf)

## **Edmonton Winter Patio Design Guide**

[https://www.edmonton.ca/city\\_government/documents/PDF/all-season-patio-design-tips.pdf](https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/PDF/all-season-patio-design-tips.pdf)

## **8 80 Cities Wintermission**

[https://www.880cities.org/portfolio\\_page/wintermission/](https://www.880cities.org/portfolio_page/wintermission/)

## **City of Houghton Winter City Planning Report (1997)**

[https://www.cityofhoughton.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/City\\_plans\\_Winter\\_City\\_Planning\\_Report.pdf](https://www.cityofhoughton.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/City_plans_Winter_City_Planning_Report.pdf)

## **City of Houghton Master Plan 2019**

<https://www.cityofhoughton.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Master-Plan-2019-2023.pdf>

## **Ann Arbor Heated Patios**

[https://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/2020/10/heated-patios-carryout-what-ann-arbor-area-restaurants-will-do-to-keep-people-coming-this-winter.html?fbclid=IwAR0tCp7ODPL-S27yBBUCH4FgJ08ZisJZG0uVvqeXtXl\\_OEiXfXWP7vulaQM](https://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/2020/10/heated-patios-carryout-what-ann-arbor-area-restaurants-will-do-to-keep-people-coming-this-winter.html?fbclid=IwAR0tCp7ODPL-S27yBBUCH4FgJ08ZisJZG0uVvqeXtXl_OEiXfXWP7vulaQM)

## **Grand Rapids Patio Grant Program**

[https://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/2020/10/grand-rapids-board-approves-200k-to-help-restaurants-winterize-outdoor-seating-areas.html?utm\\_campaign=mlivedotcom\\_sf&utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_medium=social&fbclid=IwAR1Wdcl5bAWoVol5uxE7zfSIODL1WKFBx\\_J3qb\\_jFihDTa3C-YbBJ8whJXA](https://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/2020/10/grand-rapids-board-approves-200k-to-help-restaurants-winterize-outdoor-seating-areas.html?utm_campaign=mlivedotcom_sf&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&fbclid=IwAR1Wdcl5bAWoVol5uxE7zfSIODL1WKFBx_J3qb_jFihDTa3C-YbBJ8whJXA)

## **Chicago Patio Design Contest**

<https://challenges.openideo.com/challenge/city-of-chicago-winter-dining-challenge/top-ideas>

COVID-19 Response:  
**WINTER STRATEGIES**  
FOR DOWNTOWNS & BUSINESS DISTRICTS



**What Al Fresco Dining May Look Like When It's Cold**

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2020-10-20/what-outdoor-dining-may-look-like-in-winter>

**Winter Places: A Design Guide for Winter Placemaking**

<https://patronicity.s3.amazonaws.com/static/bench/Winter+Places+-+Design+Guide+for+Winter+Activation+2020.pdf>

PHOTO CREDITS - pg 6: NASA, pg 8: Michigan Tech Archives, pg 13: Matthew Evans (bottom pic), pg 15: City of Marquette, pg 18: City of Houghton, pg 22: Thomas Nilsen (bottom photo), pg 25: Public City Architecture (both photos), pg 26: Lisa Zacherl (top photo), Public City Architecture (bottom photo)