

Belmont Age Friendly Action Committee Outdoor Spaces Guidelines



BELMONT AGE FRIENDLY ACTION COMMITTEE

Age Friendly Communities - background:

- The World Health Organization established the Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities *to help people live easily and comfortably in their homes and communities as they age*. AARP is the USA affiliate and provide resources and support in US.
- 2018+ – Gov. Brown declared Massachusetts would be an Age Friendly community. The Town of Belmont was honored with becoming an Age-Friendly Community in March of 2018.
- Select board appointed Age Friendly Advisory committee partnered with The Gerontology Institute of Umass to assess Belmont.
- In 2021, the Select Board agreed to the Age Friendly Action Plan Goals and appointed the Age Friendly Action Plan Committee to implement goals in 4 areas: Housing, **Outdoor Spaces**, walkability /transportation and Communication.

Age Friendly Outdoor spaces goals are:

- Expand number of age friendly recreational spaces.
- All planned outdoor space designs will incorporate age friendly features.

Age Friendly Action Committee Members:

Judy Morrison – Chair, COA representative

Tim Flood - Special Needs Task Force

May Forkin - Library

Lt Kristin Daley, BPD - Public Safety

Jeff Liberty- School

Paul Cowing -Recreation

TBD- Housing Trust

Susan Polit- Resident

TBD – Resident

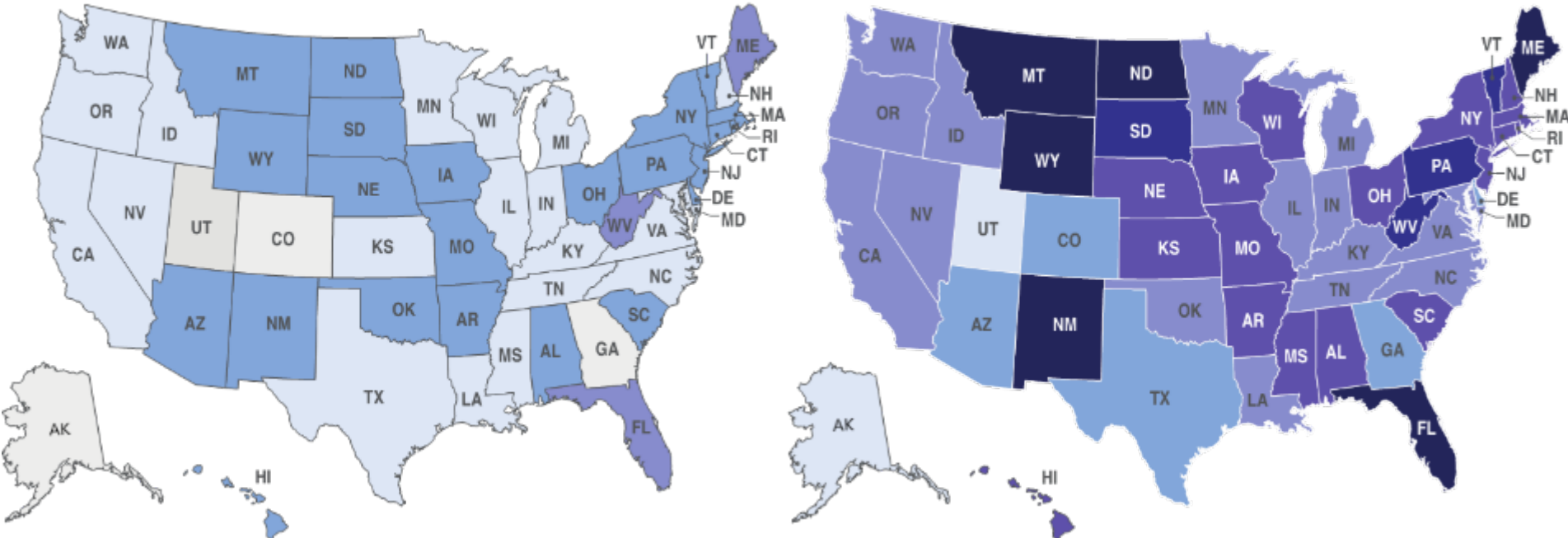
Brandon Fitts (Transition Director COA)- Ex-Officio

AMERICA IS AGING



2015

2030



PERCENT OF POPULATION AGE 65+

0-10	10-12.5	12.5-15	15-17.5	17.5-20	20-22.5	22.5-25	25-27
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Source: US Census

Common characteristics of aging fall under “disabilities”

- More than 30% of Americans over age 65 have some kind of disability
- Over 50% of those over age 75 have a disability

Although people who are aging often don't think of themselves as having a disability, we often experience decline in seeing, hearing, walking or thinking.

ADA, states that “physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity” means a person has a disability, regardless of the cause.





Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

Nearly three-quarters of adults (73%) say it is important to have safe, well-lit parks that give residents places to gather and interact with friends.

Resources:

[Creating Parks and Public Spaces](#)
[The Pop-up Placemaking Toolkit](#)
[The Walk Audit Toolkit](#)





Belmont Age Friendly, Outdoor Spaces Approach/ process:

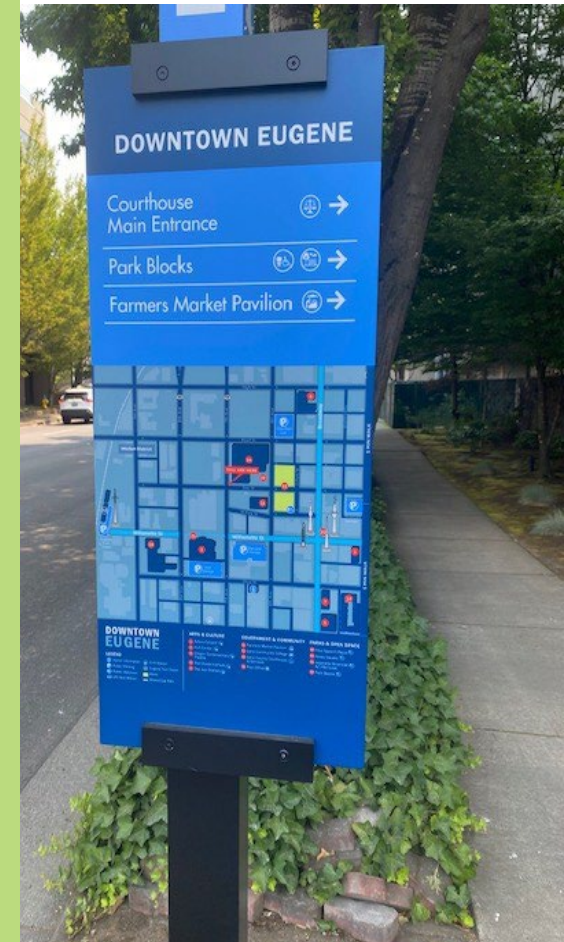
Goal –Establish a process to incorporate “age friendly” elements in Belmont outdoor spaces.

What age friendly means: SAFE, Inclusive and easy access and usable for all ages, 0 – 100, and abilities, walking and wheeling

CHECKLIST OF AGE-FRIENDLY FEATURES - OUTDOOR SPACES FOR SAFETY AND SECURITY

- √ **Safe Sidewalks** - well-maintained, cleared, non-slip and accessible.
 - √ Sidewalks are continuous, with low curbs that accommodate wheelchairs and scooters.
- √ **Accessible benches** - (at appropriate height, with arms), located along sidewalks, or paths and spaced at regular intervals.
- √ **Snow removal** - prompt and considerate of seniors, young families
 - √ Allows seniors/ young families to get in and out of cars
 - √ Keep major intersections and curb sides clear of snow and ice for seniors, wheelchairs or strollers
- √ **Streets and Parking lots** are well-maintained, well lit and cleared of snow and ice.
- √ **Shade and Rain shelters** - available to support pedestrians.
- √ **Public washrooms** – accessible, can accommodate those with a variety of disabilities* and are conveniently located with proper signage.

* accommodations include push buttons, wide doors, handrails, locks easy for those with arthritis to use



A 5-prong approach:



- 1. Select Board Approve Recommended Guidelines*
2. Communicate the specific age friendly elements with senior citizens, School Committee (safe routes to school) town officials, town committees and employees
3. Partner across town to Incorporate age friendly features in existing/new processes, when possible, via guidelines
 - Establish Safe Walkways for priority maintenance – partner with Safe Routes to School to include Senior walkways as well.
4. Approving programs:
Add a AFAC rep on the recreation commission
5. Sponsor AFAC – Outdoor projects – e.g. walking circle sidewalk around town field in front of Senior Center.

CONSIDERATIONS:

BELMONT'S AGE FRIENDLY OUTDOOR SPACES GOAL – to provide Belmont a set of policy guidelines to help build awareness of and implement the ADA regulations as well as common sense solutions in such a way as to provide access and enhance the lives of our citizens of all ages and abilities

- **Lack of Town Funding:** Mandate with new projects. Incorporate Age Friendly Guidelines from the start by requiring projects with designed access for all citizens. For example, if a project includes benches, use Age Friendly/ADA-approved version with arms. (Not more funds, just more thoughtful use of funds.)
- Examples of Age Friendly and ADA regulations and how they can be applied to playgrounds:
 - According to ADA, an accessible playground is one that offers a range of experiences to citizens of varying abilities. There must be:
 - An accessible path from the building or parking lot to the edge of the play area.
 - An accessible path from the edge of the play area to the (play) equipment.
 - Surfacing that complies with ASTM 1951 (Determination of Accessibility of Surface Systems Under and Around Playground Equipment).
 - Age Friendly enhances ADA by adding features of the playground that are specifically designed for use regardless of disabilities.
 - Consider how this might apply to our Veterans' Memorial – thoughtful design incorporating Age Friendly Guidelines could have made it accessible with no more cost.



THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY GUIDELINES AND THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA):

1. Age-Friendly Community Guidelines:

1. These guidelines focus on creating environments that enhance the quality of life for **older adults**.
2. Developed by organizations like **AARP**, the availability and quality of these features directly impact the well being of older adults and help make communities more **livable** for both older residents and people of all ages.
3. The **8 Domains of Livability** framework is commonly used in age-friendly communities:
 1. **Outdoor Spaces and Buildings:** Providing accessible public spaces for people of all ages.
 2. **Transportation:** Ensuring safe and convenient mobility options beyond just driving.
 3. **Housing:** Designing homes and communities suitable for aging in place.
 4. **Social Participation:** Encouraging social activities to combat loneliness.
 5. **Respect and Social Inclusion:** Valuing intergenerational connections.
 6. **Employment and Civic Engagement:** Offering opportunities for active community involvement.
 7. **Communication and Information:** Share information through a variety of methods for those not tech savvy.
 8. **Community and Health Services:** When help is needed be able to access and afford assistance and care nearby

2. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

1. The ADA is a **federal law** passed in 1990 (and later amended) to prevent discrimination against people with disabilities.
2. It includes both the **ADA statute** (the text of the law) and **regulations** developed by the Department of Justice.
3. The ADA applies to **state/local governments** and **businesses**, ensuring accessibility and equal rights for people with disabilities.

NET: Both aim to create inclusive and supportive environments and complement each other, but their scope and target populations differ. Age-friendly community guidelines focus on enhancing the well-being of older adults. ADA specifically addresses accessibility and anti-discrimination measures for people with disabilities.