

# 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

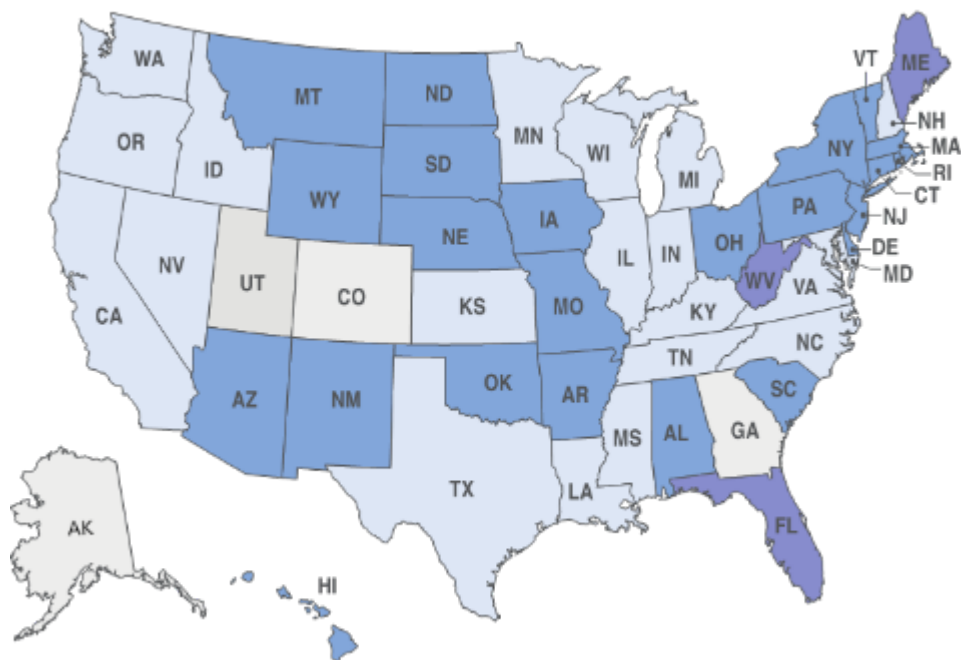
TBD – Resident

Brandon Fitts (Transition Director COA)- Ex-Officio

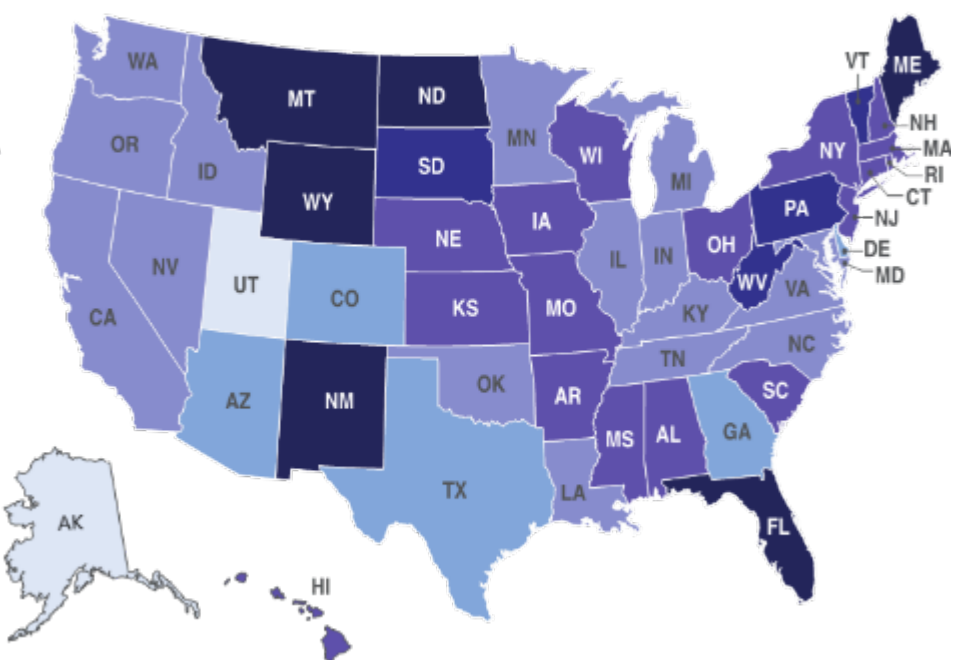
# AMERICA IS AGING



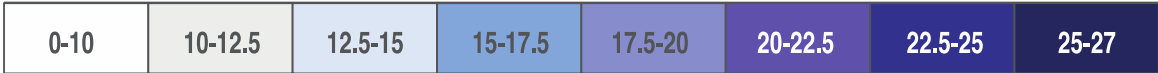
2015



2030



PERCENT OF POPULATION AGE 65+



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](#)



Source: AARP Home and Community preferences Survey 11/21







## Belmont Age Friendly, Outdoor Spaces Approach/ process:

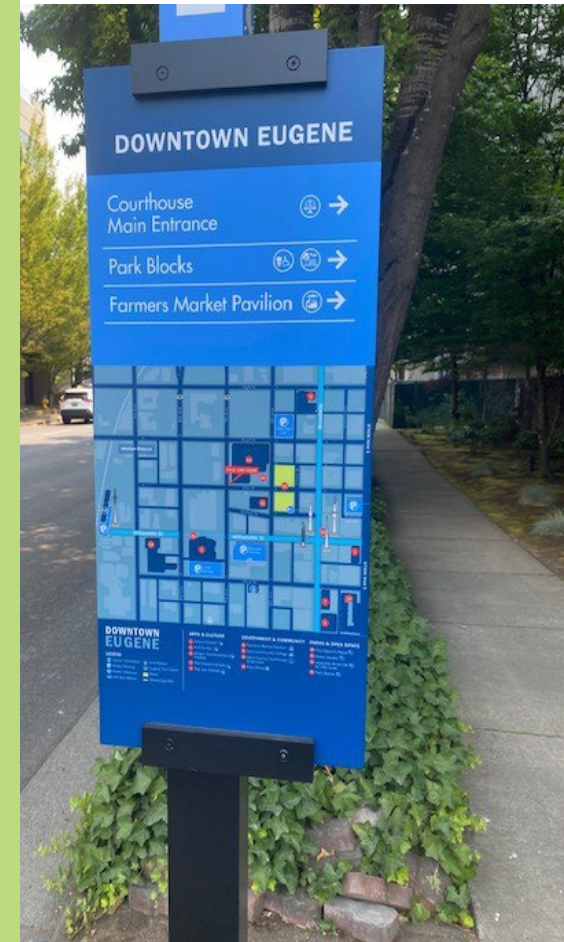
**Goal** –Establish a process to incorporate “age friendly” elements in Belmont outdoor spaces.

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.