

# Age-Friendly Walking

## **8 Municipal Policies to help Older Adults Age in Community**

Community residents can get the ball rolling by talking with elected officials and staff, and by working with local community organizations or jointly with friends and neighbors to engage with the municipal officials and staff who will implement the policies.

- 1. Include an explicit line item for sidewalk construction and sidewalk and crosswalk maintenance in the municipal budget**
  - Prioritize areas where there are many older adults and senior-serving facilities (along with schools and parks).
- 2. Pass and enforce a sidewalk snow shoveling ordinance with a particular focus on areas where a lot of people walk, including senior-serving facilities, schools and civic buildings**
  - Think about carrots - like “Best Shoveled Sidewalk” awards and programs to shovel walks for low-income older adults and people with disabilities. Use enforcement that works in your community - like ticketing by parking officers and attachment of fines to property tax bills.
- 3. Conduct age-friendly built environment assessments to support prioritization of age-friendly infrastructure improvements - and involve older adults in the process!**
  - Examples include: sidewalk and crosswalk condition assessments, accessible transit inventories, public building accessibility assessments, lighting analyses, pedestrian signal studies.
- 4. When planning for pedestrian infrastructure improvements, involve older adults in setting improvement priorities**
  - Consider improvements near destinations that serve older adults like congregate meal sites, senior centers, recreation centers, libraries, medical facilities, and parks.
- 5. Use the municipal opt-in for 20 MPH slow zones near older adult housing, senior centers and other locations frequented by older adults**
  - Schools, parks and shopping districts are other places that should have slower speeds – see a list of municipalities that have already opted in ([bit.ly/municipaloptin](http://bit.ly/municipaloptin)).
- 6. Evaluate existing municipal planning documents to determine if the needs of older adults are adequately considered**
  - Some municipal plans to review with an age-friendly lens include: master plans, bike and pedestrian plans, open space & recreation plans, and complete streets prioritization plans (some great advice about how to do this can be found here: [bit.ly/healthydesign toolkit](http://bit.ly/healthydesign toolkit)).
- 7. Establish a collaborative partnership between municipal departments and set shared goals for age-friendly infrastructure improvements**
  - For example: host shared meetings between your community’s disabilities commission and pedestrian advisory board when determining priorities for improving walking infrastructure.
- 8. Consider zoning policies that prioritize locating senior-serving facilities in walkable locations near transit and a mix of commercial and civic land uses**
  - Older adult housing, senior centers, medical facilities, libraries, post offices and civic buildings should all be located where seniors (and everyone) can “get there on foot” to the greatest extent possible. Empty lots on the outskirts of town are not the right choice for older adult serving facilities. If they are currently in these locations, consider offering programming options in buildings that are located in more walkable locations.