

# ALL-SEASON SPACES



## Highlights

- All-season spaces include design elements that support consistent use of the space throughout the year.
- They are all about prioritizing the what and the where.
- To attract use of your space year-round, lean into your climate.
- Trees are a powerful landscaping tool, and your choice of tree type and placement make all the difference.
- For snowy climates, research local policies about clearing sidewalks.

## Overview

This two-page handout introduces the concept of all-season spaces and provides a few tips to get you in the mindset of developing public spaces into a year-round destination.

## What are All-Season Spaces?

All-season spaces are public spaces that capitalize on the climate of their location. They include design elements that support consistent use of that space throughout the year.

“All-season” may mean different things to different public spaces. But two things are certain: 1) spaces in different climates should look different from each other, and 2) a public space should lean into the unique qualities of its location.

# All-season spaces are all about prioritizing the **what** and the **where**.

## **Tip #1: Plan for Activity**

If you know the audience you are trying to attract to your public space, your next question may be, “What do our visitors want to do here?” And you should ask that for each season the space experiences.

For example, café seating is vibrant in the mild weather months but practically useless in the extreme weather months. Another example: a playground or field (with good water drainage) is more attractive for activity in the bare ground months, but a hill is more attractive in the snow-covered months.

Seasonality is reality. To attract use of your space year-round, lean into your climate.

## **Tip #3: Consider Site Access**

Best practices in park and street design historically come from warm, snow-free climates. But some places are cold and snowy for a quarter of the year! To consider equitable use and access of public spaces, investigate what your local policies say about snow/ice clearance of sidewalks.

## **Tip #2: Seize the Trees**

Trees are a powerful landscaping tool, and your choice of tree type and tree placement can make your space vibrant or vacant.

Coniferous trees block blasts of cold wind during the winter, but they need to be planted in the correct location. Deciduous trees bring shade and absorb groundwater during warm months, but they require more maintenance in autumn. And ornamental trees are beautiful but high maintenance.

Whatever and wherever you plant, do your research about soil types and tree diseases, which may make planting certain types of trees in your public space a bad investment.



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