

# *Wintermission: Saint Paul, MN*



Community Engagement Summary Report  
by 8 80 Cities



8 80 Cities is a non-profit organization based in Toronto, Canada. We believe that if everything we do in our public spaces is great for an 8 year old and an 80 year old, then it will be great for all people. Our mission is to improve the quality of life for people in cities by bringing citizens together to enhance mobility and public space so that together we can create more vibrant, healthy, and equitable communities.

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# Project Overview

Winter in cities is fun and beautiful. The colder months bring opportunities to enjoy exciting outdoor activities like tobogganing, cross-country skiing, and snow fort building. Snow covers the city in a clean white blanket that cushions city noise and brightens the landscape. Of course, winter also brings challenges for urban dwellers. Plummeting temperatures can make it difficult to tolerate long stretches of outdoor fun. Meanwhile, piling ice and snow can make even basic city trips feel like a slow obstacle course.

Despite these trials, cities can't afford to shut down for the winter season, and people aren't made to hibernate. Winter cities are finding new and exciting ways to embrace – even celebrate – the unique cultural and placemaking opportunities that winter presents.

That's what the Wintermission project is all about – identifying the best ideas and finding new ways to improve the livability, accessibility, and vibrancy of winter cities.

## Our mission was to:

**Capture lessons** from winter cities around the world who are experimenting with policy, programming, and design innovations to make winter warmer and more fun.

**Implement an inclusive, meaningful, and interactive engagement process** to collect new ideas and feedback from residents in winter cities.

**Identify low-cost, high-impact projects** that could increase the safety and vibrancy of streets, parks, and public spaces in winter.

**Develop resources and tools** that would help cities around the world embrace the winter season.

The Wintermission project has four phases:

### *Phase 1*

Research winter city best practices to identify policy, programming, and design innovations that improve the quality of city life in winter.

### *Phase 2*

Implement a community engagement process in one winter city to collect locally-specific ideas for low-cost, high-impact public realm projects.

### *Phase 3*

Write an engagement summary report to highlight major themes and overall feedback. Develop Wintermission Engagement Flashcards that can be used by city builders and community leaders as a community engagement tool.

### *Phase 4*

Develop a Winter City Strategy that captures key lessons and provides practical tools for other cities to scale and adapt winter ideas to their community.

This report marks the conclusion of Phase 3. The aforementioned Wintermission Flashcards can be accessed on our website at: <http://www.880cities.org/index.php/resources/8-80-tools/engagement-tools>

# Wintermission Principles

No two winter cities are the same. Each place has its own culture, identity, and even climate—we have all heard comments along the lines of “it’s really more of a dry cold”. That said, great winter cities share a few things in common. They maintain accessible and multi-modal transportation networks. They provide opportunities for unique winter activities and exercise. They encourage spontaneity and winter fun. They celebrate the season and embrace winter as a part of their civic identity.

After searching for best practices and lessons from winter cities around the world, we’ve distilled our findings into four Winterhood Principles:

## Warmth



If asked what they would change about winter, most people respond “the weather.” The answer may be tongue-in-cheek, but it cuts right to the reason that many people aren’t as active in the winter. We get it. It’s an issue of comfort. No one likes to be cold. Even worse is being cold and alone.

**Places to heat up:** A great winter city provides places for people to heat up, but they also provide opportunities for people to feel the warmth of community. Many cities are finding creative ways to keep people warm and safe through public fire pits, heated bus shelters, and even pop-up saunas.

**Connecting communities:** These nodes of warmth in the public realm also become community hubs and gathering places for people to huddle together and strengthen their sense of shared experience and civic pride by collectively roughing it through the coldest months.

## Spark

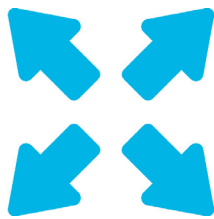


Sure, winter can be endured for a couple of months, maybe. But beyond that, the season tends to drag on with no end in sight. That’s why cities must provide more than just the bare essentials for winter survival, and implement creative programs that embrace the season.

**Celebrating winter culture:** Projects that create a spark are ones that celebrate the unique winter culture of a city. Examples include winter fashion shows, signature winter drink competitions, outdoor movies, and snowy fun runs. These programs create fun and whimsical experiences that can only be enjoyed during winter.

**Encouraging winter play:** Celebrating winter also means providing more opportunities to play outside – from building snow forts and snowshoeing to walking with friends and enjoying a card game indoors, winter play should be accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

## *Movement*



Boosting your heart rate and breaking a sweat is the quickest way to warm up in winter. Plus, snow and cold weather combine to make possible some of the best outdoor activities.

**Getting physical:** Cross-country skiing, ice skating, tobogganing, and snowman building – to name just a few – are great reasons to get outside and enjoy the season. A winter city should support and promote unique winter activities whenever possible. Public ice rinks, free ski rentals, maps to the best toboggan hills, and neighborhood snowman contests are some of the ways that city leaders and residents can boost winter activity.

**Winter mobility:** People are most likely to exercise if they can embed it into their daily routine by walking, cycling, and visiting parks and public spaces. It's important to address barriers that make basic physical activity a challenge in winter. Clearing sidewalks, plowing bike lanes, and maintaining parks and public spaces is vital to encourage exercise, but also to create a safe and accessible transportation network.

## *Light*



The short days and long nights of winter means that most people barely come in direct contact with the sun. This can lead to negative public health impacts through seasonal mood disorders. Darker days are also linked to dangerous road conditions, which contributes to the higher rates of traffic accidents during winter months.

**Brighten the City:** Many cities have seen the light, and taken significant steps to increase the wattage in streets, sidewalks, and public spaces. Creative lighting festivals and art installations can lighten up a city, while also bringing some fun and culture to the winter landscape.

**Activate the night:** In addition to adding light fixtures, cities can encourage and support events and programs that bring excitement to wintery nights. Live music, outdoor festivals, and ice bars are just some of the ways cities around the world are fostering winter night life.



Our laboratory for this first phase of the Wintermission project was Saint Paul, Minnesota. The capital of Minnesota has a population of 297,640 (US Census Bureau) and lies at the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers.

Saint Paul's connection to winter is embedded in its geographical roots. The city's physical characteristics and steep river bluffs were shaped by thawing glaciers during the last ice age. That legacy lives on during the long winter season in Saint Paul. Average temperatures dip below 30 °F (-1 °C) for five months of the year between November-March. In fact, the Twin Cities boast the coldest annual mean temperature among metropolitan areas in the US with an average annual temperature of 45.4 °F (7.4 °C).

There is no doubting Saint Paul's status as a winter city. The city's response to the season is what truly sets it apart. Saint Paul has embraced its winter heritage through unique events, activities, and programs. The challenge is to build on these successes to ensure all residents can enjoy the winter season.



# Wintermission Engagement Process



Credit: David Gonzalez



Saint Paul residents, decision makers, and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds and perspectives shared their feedback on winter life in the city through three engagement channels: Outdoor Engagement Labs, an online survey, as well as focus groups and interviews.

## Outdoor Engagement Labs

80 Cities partnered with various community partners to host four community engagement events on February 17-20, 2016. The events were held in various indoor and outdoor community hubs around Saint Paul to attract a large and diverse crowd. Throughout the week, more than 400 people braved the elements to participate in the Engagement Labs.

These events were designed to collect feedback from residents about what they like about winter in Saint Paul, and what ideas they might have to improve life in winter. Information was collected through a variety of engagement tools, including survey posters and fill-in-the-blanks cards. The survey posters posed a series of questions related to existing winter habits and participants would use sticker dots to indicate their response. Similarly, the fill-in-the-blank cards invited participants to complete a phrase (i.e. I love winter because...) related to winter cities.

These events were made possible through partnerships with local organizations including the City of Saint Paul, Friendly Streets Initiative, and the Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation.

### Wintermission: 7th Place

February 17, 2016 11:00am - 2:00pm

### Wintermission : Rondo Library

February 18, 2016 10:00am - 1:00pm

### Wintermission: Como Park

February 19, 2016 5:00pm - 8:00pm

### Wintermission : Rondo Plaza

February 20, 2016 3:00pm - 6:00pm



If you are interested in hosting your own outdoor winter engagement, some useful materials include:

- Outdoor firepit
- S'more kits
- Speaker and sound system
- 10x10' tent
- Bistro tables and chairs
- Picnic linens
- Giant checkers set
- Bean bag toss
- Hot chocolate
- Coffee
- Apples and cookies
- Directional signage

**\*\*Permitting:** A food permit was acquired from the Department of Health (\$85.00). We contacted the City of Saint Paul's head fire inspector to inquire about outdoor fire permits for the fire pits, but were told that it was not necessary if we kept an extinguisher on hand. A City staff person was required to make the electrical outlets accessible so that we could power the sound system.

### **Focus Groups and Interviews:**

8 80 Cities reached out to diverse stakeholders throughout the planning stages to ensure that the Winterhood project built on existing assets and work being done in Saint Paul. The purpose of these conversations was to identify potential partners and collaborators, as well as to make connections with people and organizations that may benefit from the project.

Organizations that participated in focus groups and/or interviews about the Winterhood project include: Frogtown Farm; Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation; The Loppet Foundation; District Energy St. Paul; City of Saint Paul; Winter Cycling Congress; Friendly Streets Initiative; Twin Cities Local Initiatives Support Coalition; Knight Foundation; Little Box Sauna; Aurora St. Anthony Neighbourhood Development Corporation; Springboard for the Arts; and The Musicant Group.

# Winter Behavior Survey Results

We received a total of 492 responses to the following four behavior-related questions.

1. How frequently do you visit parks + public spaces during the winter compared to the rest of the year?

Much more	More	Same	Less	Much less
1%	5%	25%	54%	16%

70 percent of respondents visit parks and public spaces less often in the winter.

2. How frequently do you visit friends and family during the winter compared to the rest of the year?

Much more	More	Same	Less	Much less
1%	13%	58%	19%	9%

Most respondents visit friends and families just as often or more, during the winter.

3. How physically active are you during the winter compared to the rest of the year?

Much more	More	Same	Less	Much less
0%	9%	38%	44%	9%

53 percent of respondents are less or much less active during the winter.

4. What is your main mode of transportation during the winter compared to the rest of the year?

	Walk	Bike	Public Transit	Auto-mobile	Other
Winter	24%	3%	26%	45%	3%
Rest of year	19%	17%	20%	42%	1%

Most notably, there was a 14 percentage point reduction in biking as the main mode of transportation during winter.

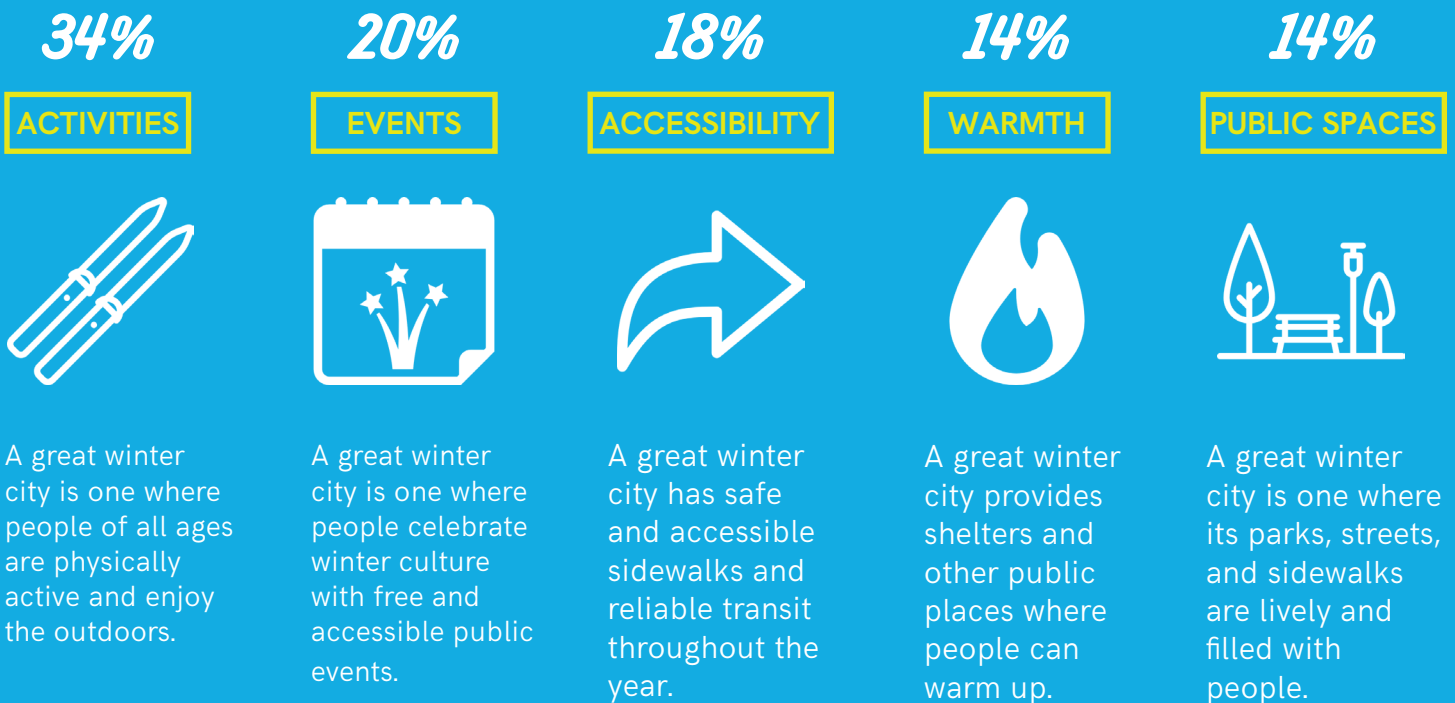


# Winter Ideas Survey Results

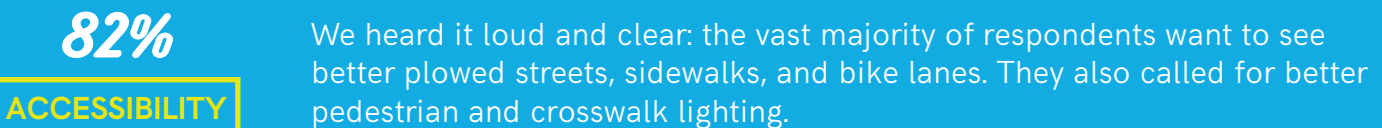
We received a total of 472 ideas in response to the following eight questions.

## 1. We asked: What does a “great winter city” mean?

Most responses fell into the following five categories.



## 2. We asked: How can Saint Paul’s streets and sidewalks be improved in the winter?





### 3. We asked: How can Saint Paul's parks and public spaces be improved in the winter?

Most responses fell into these three categories.

**47%**

**ACTIVITIES**

Respondents would like to see more organized activities and programming at parks as well as more winter-friendly infrastructure, namely ice rinks.

**16%**

**ACCESSIBILITY**

Many respondents called for better access and snow clearing at playground and along walking trails.

**11%**

**WARMTH**

Although people tend to visit parks to enjoy the outdoors, respondents also called for provision of warm shelters/hubs in parks, which would make it more comfortable to enjoy parks for longer stretches of time.

### 4. We asked: How can Saint Paul's transit system be improved in the winter?

Most respondents' answers fell into these two categories.

**50%**

**ACCESSIBILITY**

Respondents are mostly concerned with making sure that bus stops are properly cleared. Beyond this, we also heard ideas for increasing the frequency of bus and LRT service.

**35%**

**WARMTH**

The most common suggestion in the Warmth category was to provide better heating sources at transit stops.

### 5. We asked: What would compel you to be more active during the winter?

Most respondents' answers fell into these two categories.

**38%**

**ACCESSIBILITY**

Respondents expressed that unplowed sidewalks and bike lanes were the main barriers to being physically active during the winter.

**30%**

**ACTIVITIES**

Respondents wanted more opportunities to participate in winter sports and recreation, such as cross-country skiing, ice skating, and organized pick-up games (e.g. hockey). They also called for better access to information about winter activities.

## 6. We asked: What would make winter more fun?

Most respondents' answers fell into these two categories.

**50%**

**ACCESSIBILITY**

Respondents indicated that having fun in winter was directly linked with safe access to streets, sidewalks, and bike lanes.

**19%**

**WARMTH**

In this category, respondents suggested providing people with options to heat up, such as fire pits or heated transit stops.

## 7. We asked: Which of the following winter design elements are important to you?

Block wind	Maximize sunshine exposure	Use color to brighten up spaces	Use creative lighting	Create outdoor warmth and heat
23%	24%	11%	15%	27%

## 8. We asked you to complete this sentence: I love winter because...

Most respondents' answers fell into these two categories.

**38%**

**IT'S SCENIC**

Many respondents referred to the inherent beauty of winter and snow. They also appreciated the quietude that comes with the season.

**19%**

**ACTIVITIES**

Respondents listed a variety of winter activities, ranging from winter sports, to ice bars, and sledding.

**13%**

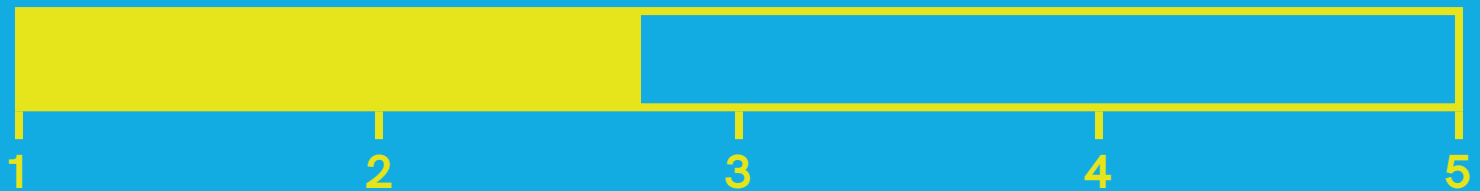
**EVENTS**

Almost all the respondents in this category referred to Winter Carnival and major events like Crashed Ice as being the reason they love winter.

# Winter Attitudes Survey Results

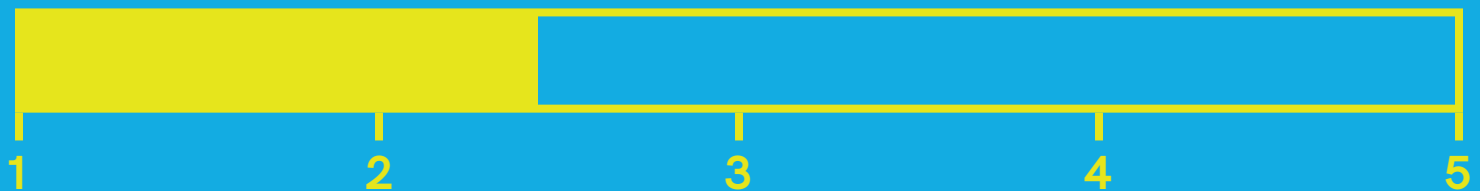
1. We asked: On a scale of 1 - 5, 1 being very poor and 5 being very good, how would you rate your winter commute?

2.7



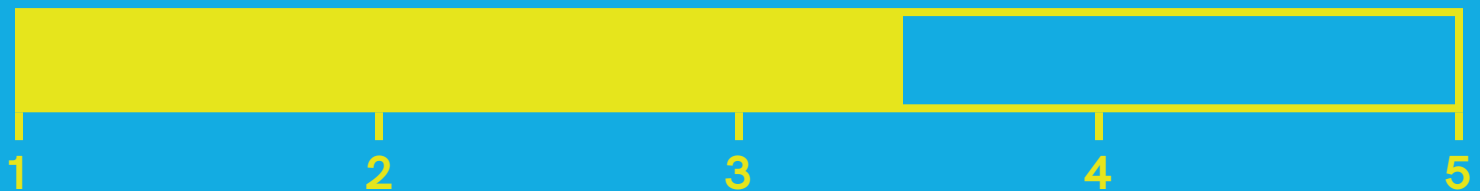
2. We asked: On a scale of 1 - 5, 1 being very poor and 5 being very good, how would you rate the safety and accessibility of sidewalks in the winter?

2.4



3. We asked: On a scale of 1 - 5, 1 being very poor and 5 being very good, how would you rate the overall quality and frequency of winter events and programming in Saint Paul?

3.4



**"A great winter city means that the city takes care of its people by plowing the streets and sidewalks."**

**"St. Paul's parks can be improved in winter by bringing the art shanties to the city."**

**"I like winter because...the beautiful scenery changes right from my window. The camaraderie with my fellow extreme weather creatures."**

**"Winter life would be better if there was...stuff to do at night because it gets dark so early. Help me fight the feeling that I should go to bed at 6 pm."**

**"Winter life would be better if there was...better lighting and clearing of sidewalks. I sometimes don't go out at night because I am scared to walk."**



# Recommendations

We analyzed the feedback from all our Wintermission surveys, public events, and stakeholder meetings—over 1400 ideas—and have distilled them into eight winter priorities.

Under each priority is a list of 'doable' case studies from other winter cities that can be adapted to the Saint Paul context. The list of case studies is not meant to be exhaustive, but instead demonstrates the range of approaches that can be used to respond to the main issues that residents raised.

Each case study also contains suggestions for who could potentially lead each type of project as well as a project budget estimate ranging from one to four "\$" signs.

\$	<=	\$1,000
\$\$	<=	\$10,000
\$\$\$	<=	\$100,000
\$\$\$\$	<=	\$1,000,000



# 1. *Celebrate the season*

## THE IDEA

Saint Paul is a great place to live. Residents are proud of their city and genuinely enjoy the diversity of life that comes with each season. While the Winter Carnival continues to be the city's largest celebration of winter, Saint Paul should find creative ways to celebrate its winter heritage throughout the entire season and further embed it into the city's identity.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

### 1.1 Winter City Mayor



Amsterdam and Paris created a "Night Mayor" role within their city administrations to enhance the vibrancy of their respective cities' nightlife. How about Winter City Mayor or Department Head who is responsible for coordinating winter-related programs and projects across Saint Paul? Other responsibilities could include developing a winter brand for the City of Saint Paul, and evaluating the quality of winter life in Saint Paul over time. As evidence of their pioneering approach to winter city building, the City of Edmonton hired Sue Holdsworth, pictured above, as the city's first ever Winter City Coordinator.

Budget: \$\$\$

Recommended lead: City of Saint Paul

Inspiration: Edmonton

More info: <http://goo.gl/m7F89n>

### 1.2 Signature Winter Drink Competition



Invite residents and local restaurants to submit ideas and recipes for Saint Paul's signature winter drink. Host a splashy public event where drink submissions are judged and a winner is announced.

Budget: \$

Recommended lead: City of Saint Paul

Inspiration: Edmonton

More info: <http://goo.gl/ZgnzIU>

## 2. “Bring the action to neighborhoods”

### THE IDEA

We heard loud and clear that while residents think the current winter festivals and events are great, they can be difficult to access since most of them are concentrated downtown. Ideally, festivals like the Winter Carnival could have offshoot events in different neighborhoods as a way to spread the air of excitement and festivity across the entire city. Residents, especially those with young children at home, called for more regular and small-scale programming in neighborhoods across the city.

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

#### 2.1 Firepits in public parks

Install firepits in public parks and set up a booking system for users. To increase safety, some cities require that residents complete a fire safety workshop before being able to book public firepits.

Budget: \$

Recommended lead: City of Saint Paul

Inspiration: Dufferin Grove Park, Toronto, Canada

More info: <http://goo.gl/uPvuxr>

#### 2.2 Build a snow playground

Organize a team of neighborhood volunteers to build a winter wonderland in a local park. Depending on your snow skills, the playground could include a maze, ice slides, and seats.

Budget: \$

Recommended lead: Community volunteers

Inspiration: Kiruna, Sweden

More info: <http://goo.gl/nz2kRv>

#### 2.3 Outdoor Winter Movies

Host free winter-themed movie screenings in local parks and underutilized public spaces. To get creative, organizers can create seating out of snow and offer free hot chocolate to viewers. Offer attendees options for warming up by providing firepits and heat lamps nearby.

Budget: \$

Recommended lead: Community leaders

Inspiration: Fort McMurray, Canada

More info: <https://goo.gl/QuqXDS>

#### - OUTDOOR WINTER MOVIE INSTRUCTIONS -

**Step 1:** Pick a site like a vacant lot or park. Sites with gradual hills make great natural theatres.

**Step 2:** Promote the event with posters, flyers, community websites, and a Facebook page.

**Step 3:** Prep the site. Make sure there are clear paths in the snow. Build seats and a screen out of snow. Bring fire pits and snacks.

**Step 4:** Wait for night, and start the show!

## 1.4 Neighborhood Snowball Fight



Invite your neighbors to a mass snowball fight after a large snowfall. Use social media and community websites to set the day and time, and promote the event.

Budget: \$

Recommended lead: Community volunteers

Inspiration: Washington, DC, USA

More info: <https://goo.gl/d0Akdr>

### - SNOWBALL FIGHT INSTRUCTIONS -

**Step 1:** Create a Facebook page for community snowball fights in your city.

**Step 2:** Pick a day, time, and site for the battle. It's best to select a public space. Secure permission if the fight takes place on private property.

**Step 3:** Set the ground rules to ensure safety (no throwing ice or throwing above the shoulders).

**Step 4:** Invite your friends and encourage people to share the news.

## 1.5 Snowscapes Competition



Challenge residents to decorate their yards with snow sculptures, lights, color, and winter plants. Participants submit photos of their yards or nominate their neighbors.

Budget: \$

Recommended lead: Local residents, parks and gardening organizations, City of Saint Paul

Inspiration: Edmonton, Canada

More info: <http://goo.gl/oMlIRb>

### - SNOWSCAPES INSTRUCTIONS -

**Step 1:** Launch and promote competition online. Announces prizes for the winners.

**Step 2:** Identify a jury of 'snowscape judges'

**Step 3:** Collect photos from residents. Post photos online and invite public to vote.

**Step 4:** Announce winners

**Step 5:** Operate tours of the best snowscape neighborhoods



# 3. “More and better plowing”

## THE IDEA

The most frequent feedback we heard from residents was the need for better plowing on streets, sidewalks, and bike lanes. Residents specifically noted that curb cuts and transit stations need to be safe so that users of all ages and abilities can safely navigate the city all year round. While the City’s Public Works Department recently committed to increasing its fleet of snow plows and launched an app that alerts residents when snow parking rules come into effect, there are other ways the City and residents can work together to improve ice and snow clearance.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

### 3.1 Share snow clearing equipment



Neighborhoods can share the cost and labor of keeping sidewalks and driveways cleared by collectively purchasing and sharing equipment. This could include simple shovels and salt in a shared shed, or a snowblowing trailer like the SnowBuddy in Ann Arbor.

Budget: \$-\$\$

Recommended lead: Community volunteers

Inspiration: Ann Arbor, USA

More info: <http://goo.gl/iQ1D8S>

### 3.2 Volunteer shovelling initiatives



Launch a program that connects seniors and those with mobility issues with volunteers willing to shovel snow from public sidewalks. This requires setting up a central online portal and telephone line where people can ask for and offer help.

Budget: \$-\$\$\$

Recommended lead: City of Saint Paul, community volunteers

Inspiration: Baltimore, USA | Edmonton, Canada

More info: <http://goo.gl/P1cJ2g>

### 3.3 Change snow-clearing priorities

A cost-neutral way of providing safe walking and cycling conditions in winter is to reprioritize the order in which streets and sidewalks are cleared. In Saint Paul there are four plowing priorities: main streets and hills are the top priority and sidewalks are the last. Compare this to Stockholm's "gender equal plowing" policy where the areas around day cares and schools—where parents stop in before work—are plowed before office districts and main roads. This acknowledges that the standard order of plowing highways and city centres ignores the areas where "vulnerable groups," including women and families, frequent the most.

Budget: \$

Recommended lead: City of Saint Paul

Inspiration: Stockholm, Sweden

More info: <http://goo.gl/7i5auV>

### 3.4 Heated sidewalks

Also known as snowmelt systems, heated sidewalks prevent the build-up of snow and ice on pavement. They function improve safety and eliminate the need to shovel/plow snow or spread de-icing salt or sand. These electric or hydronic-powered systems have sensors that will turn the system on and off depending on the outdoor temperatures.

While it may be cost prohibitive to install a snowmelt system across the entire city, certain public spaces or areas with high volumes of pedestrians can benefit the most from this technology. The sidewalks near the Saint Paul RiverCentre and District Energy St. Paul already use this system.

Budget: \$\$\$\$

Recommended lead: City of Saint Paul

Inspiration: Chicago, USA | Reykjavik, Iceland | Oslo, Norway | Sapporo, Japan

More info: <http://goo.gl/Lcj25i>

### 3.5 Winter Bike Lane Maintenance



Bike lanes are great to have, but they only work when they're safe and clear from snow, ice, and debris. In many cities, this presents a unique challenge because bike lanes are too narrow for the standard street plows (however, sidewalk plows often work in a pinch!). In Copenhagen, bike lanes are plowed before car lanes. No wonder nearly 75% of their cycling population chooses to bike year-round.

Strategies for clearing bike lanes vary from place to place. Rather than dealing with snow storage, cities in Finland pack the snow down to create a flat surface to cycle on.

Thankfully, the good people at People for Bikes have compiled all their knowledge on winter bike lane maintenance into a convenient guide.

More info here: <http://goo.gl/etsXtL>

## 4. “Make transit stops cozier”

### THE IDEA

Many Saint Paul residents rely on public transportation throughout the winter. While many of the current LRT stations have overhead heaters that can be activated with a push of a button, many residents expressed that this wasn't enough. Given that commuting is such a basic part of everyday life, how can we make waiting for the bus or train a better experience 365 days a year?

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

#### 4.1 Multi-service transit stops



What if transit stops were not just for waiting? What if they were spacious and offered free WiFi, charging outlets, bicycle parking, a coffee station, interactive information screens, and a mini library? The possibilities for making transit stops more welcoming and functional public spaces for all types of users are endless. These sorts of amenities would be especially welcomed during winter, when waiting for transit can be particularly uncomfortable.

Budget: \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Recommended lead: City of Saint Paul, Metro Transit

Inspiration: Paris, France

More info: <http://goo.gl/gMkkNS>

#### 4.2 UV Bus Stops

Umeå Energi replaced the existing lights in 30 of the city's bus stops with special bulbs that can boost commuters' moods during the winter. Their "light therapy" initiative invites commuters to spend a few minutes facing the therapeutic lights while waiting for the bus to soak up the benefits of the sun they miss during dark winters.

Budget: \$\$\$\$

Recommended lead: City of Saint Paul

Inspiration: Umeå, Sweden

More info: <http://goo.gl/QDED8l>

#### 4.3 Improved heating at transit stations

Residents would like to see more heat lamps installed in LRT stations along the Green Line, as well as in bus stops. The City can test out different types of heated infrastructure, such as heated benches or heated floor plates to warm people's feet.

Budget: \$

Recommended lead: City of Saint Paul, Metro Transit



## 5. “Share winformation”

### THE IDEA

Residents expressed that it is hard to find out about fun winter programs and activities, especially at the neighborhood level. Making information about winter in Saint Paul more accessible is a simple and effective way to increase resident engagement in winter activities. Many people, especially those new to winter climates, don't know how to dress or heat their homes properly in winter, so education campaigns should also provide practical advice for winter living.

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

#### 5.1 Winter Fun Guides

Winter fun guides are a popular and easy way to provide a comprehensive list of winter activities and events. Guides can also include winter living tips such as appropriate clothing, winter biking, and how to heat your home. Guides can be shared in both print and digital formats. By establishing this central resource, residents will know where to go to for all their winter needs.

Budget: \$-\$\$

Recommended lead: City of Saint Paul, newspapers, magazines

Inspiration: Edmonton, Canada

More info: <http://www.wintercityedmonton.ca>

#### 5.2 Winter Storytelling

Encourage residents to share stories - fiction or non-fiction - about winter life in Saint Paul. Stories could be submitted online, through social media, or at local libraries.

Budget: \$\$

Recommended lead: Local libraries, book stores, publishers, blogs, City of Saint Paul

Inspiration: Edmonton, Canada

More info: <http://www.40belowproject.ca/>

#### 5.3 Newcomer “Wintergration”



Newcomers, especially those hailing from warmer climates, can benefit from programs that introduce them to various aspects of winter living. Excursions to go sledding, cross-country skiing, and maple syrup shacks can help ease newcomers into living in a winter city. This type of program can build on existing winter welcome programs in Saint Paul, like Jun-Li Wang's **Warm Winter Hat** initiative, which bestows newcomers with a winter hat in a fun ceremonial setting.

Budget: \$

Recommended lead: City of Saint Paul, settlement agencies, community organizations

Inspiration: Toronto, Canada

More info: <http://goo.gl/IRhlyQ>

## 6. “Improve access to winter sports”

### THE IDEA

The City of Saint Paul maintains cross-country ski trails at various golf courses, providing residents with a fun and free way to enjoy winter in the city. While this is certainly one of the city’s best winter amenities, residents called for more opportunities to enjoy unique winter activities. They wanted more access to skating rinks and outdoor curling venues in their neighborhoods.

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

#### 6.1 Community-run ice rinks



Encourage residents to build natural ice rinks in local parks and other underused public spaces during the winter. Participants could be supported through training sessions in rink maintenance, micro grants, or equipment sharing.

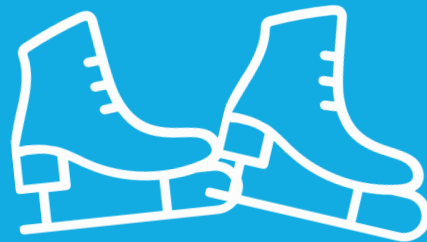
Budget: \$-\$\$

Recommended lead: Parks organizations, community centres, resident groups with support from the City of Saint Paul

Inspiration: Toronto, Canada

More info: <https://goo.gl/eYwSPX>

#### *Ice Rink Instructions*



##### Step 1

Organize a team of volunteers in your neighborhood, and pick a site for the rink.

##### Step 2

Identify partners and supporters. Local businesses may sponsor equipment while city departments can offer maintenance training.

##### Step 3

Approach city parks department for permissions and water access. Fire departments may also be willing to provide water.

##### Step 4

Build the rink. Do your homework first. Use guides like this: <http://goo.gl/qW6nPE>

##### Step 5

Celebrate! Organize a community skate day. Bring fire pits, hot chocolate, and snacks.

## 6.2 Support unique winter sports



Develop promotional strategies and how-to guides for sports and activities that can only be played in winter. This could be achieved by hosting a series of friendly tournaments at the city or community level. Mobile kits with the necessary equipment could be developed so that games can be easily started in parks and public spaces throughout the city. Games to include in this promotional strategy are:

**Snow bocce:** Played just like regular bocce, only in the snow. An informal game of snow bocce can be played just about anywhere. Some cities shovel or compact the snow on existing bocce courts, making them accessible year-round.

**Snow golf:** Snow golf is played at regular golf courses that stay open all year round. The game is typically played with a tennis ball, shorter holes, and larger cups.

**Pond curling:** While most curling matches today happen at indoor venues, pond curling takes it back to the origins of the sport.

**Snowshoe races:** These events can be for individuals or teams, and can range in difficulty. Bemidji State University holds a simple yet fun snowshoe race around campus every year. Compare this to the Shoeshoe Raid Adventure Run event where teams race to a series of different checkpoints.

Budget: \$

Recommended lead: Community volunteers, community organizations, sports-based organizations

## 6.3 Create skating trails



Use local lakes, rivers, or ponds to create linear skating trails. Skating trails could also be made in urban parks and public spaces. Double the fun by clearing a parallel walking path and including temporary hot chocolate stands and offering skate rental options.

Budget: \$\$\$

Recommended lead: Community volunteers, community organizations, sports-based organizations, City of Saint Paul

Inspiration: Winnipeg, Canada

More info: <http://www.theforks.com/rivertrail>



## 7. “Create more winter warming hubs”

### THE IDEA

Provide more indoor and outdoor places where people can warm up, linger, and connect with their neighbors. Big winter festivals and events are fun, residents also said they want more informal or casual ways to enjoy winters in Saint Paul. Simple examples could include pop-up fire pits in parks, board game nights at community centers, or shelters at parks to get food and warm up in.

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

#### 7.1 Support businesses to create winter gathering spaces and activities



Support individual business owners and business associations to identify and develop winter gathering spaces and programs. Provide businesses with incentives for maintaining year-round patios and reduce bureaucratic tape for outdoor winter/holiday markets.

Budget: \$\$-\$\$\$\$

Recommended lead: Local businesses, business associations, City of Saint Paul

#### 7.2 Raise awareness about indoor hubs



Launch a public awareness and marketing campaign to build excitement about programs and services available at indoor community hubs and public spaces such as libraries, community centers, and schools. This could be done as part of a public engagement process to collect feedback and ideas on what types of programs and events people want to participate in.

Budget: \$

Recommended lead: Local schools, libraries, community centers, City of Saint Paul

### 7.3 Warming huts



Host a design competition or commission local artists to build winter warming huts in an existing community hub. The submissions could be shared online, with the winners determined by a public vote. The winning teams would then build their structures in a public space. The huts should be creative, playful, interactive, and build on the local culture and context in Saint Paul.

**Note:** This concept could build on the existing Art Shanty project that takes place in White Bear Lake County Park. Hosting a similar program in an urban area would make the structures more accessible.

Budget: \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Recommended lead: City of Saint Paul, community organizations, artists, etc.

Inspiration: Winnipeg, Canada | Toronto, Canada

More info: <http://goo.gl/02rPRD>

### 7.4 Public Pavilions



We heard from Saint Paul residents that they felt like parks were often closed during the winter. Well-maintained warming shelters signal to residents that they are welcome to use all aspects of the City's park and trail system throughout the year. Public pavilions, complete with clean washrooms, snack bar, and seating area provides park and trail users with a comfortable place to warm and rest up in between their outdoor activities.

The City of Edmonton created a network of Winter Chalets along the River Valley that offer the public a respite from the cold. Most of the chalets are open until 10pm, bringing activity to the park during evening hours.

Budget: \$\$\$\$

Recommended lead: City of Saint Paul, parks groups and conservancies, etc.

Inspiration: Edmonton, Canada

More info: <http://goo.gl/02rPRD>



## 8. “Extend daylight hours”

### THE IDEA

Winter’s short days and long nights can make people feel tuckered out and ready to tuck in earlier than usual. When asked what would make winter more fun, numerous people wished for more sun. While there’s no way to literally extend daylight hours during the winter, increasing evening activities and using lighting technology to make it more inviting to be out at night are very much within Saint Paul’s realm of possibility. Initiatives like the Plume Project and Holiday Lights in the Park are just a couple ways Saint Paul is already celebrating its winter nights. Our recommendations focus on more interactive forms of winter nightlife.

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

#### 8.1 Winterize nightlife



Turn the local skating rink into a nightlife hotspot with creative lighting, speakers, and a DJ booth. These simple infrastructure additions can completely transform an otherwise ordinary, empty rink into a party for all ages.

Budget: \$\$

Recommended lead: Local businesses, business associations, City of Saint Paul, recreation centres

Inspiration: Toronto, Canada | Washington DC, USA | London, UK

#### 8.2 Let there be light



Playful, interactive lighting installations can transform cold, empty corridors into places to linger during the winter. Montreal’s Quartier Des Spectacles is a crowded event space during the summer but in the quieter winter months, the area showcases different light art installations.

Budget: \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Recommended lead: Local businesses, business associations, City of Saint Paul

Inspiration: Montreal, Canada

# Conclusion

Saint Paul is already known for being a great winter city, where residents have a wide range of options for engaging in winter sports, entertainment, and activities. We learned from the Wintermission community engagements that residents can't get enough of these options. Saint Paulites want more and better choices in the winter and rightfully so.

Of the 51 largest cities in the United States, Minneapolis-Saint Paul boasts the coldest winter temperatures. It is the only American city that normally remains well below freezing throughout the day during winter months. It is time for Saint Paul kick it up a notch and truly embed and embrace winter as a core component of the city's identity. Saint Paul's motto is currently "The Most Liveable City in America". A concerted effort to improving winter conditions for its residents could well make Saint Paul The Most Livable Winter City in the World.

A coordinated effort by the City and other local actors can accelerate the pace at which Saint Paul becomes a top-tier winter city. Beyond the eight priority areas listed in the report, there are more strategic steps that can be taken, including:

## *1) Let the City Lead the Way*

The City of Saint Paul is in the best position to embrace, market, and promote Saint Paul's identity as a winter city. A single, cohesive brand for all of the city's winter projects could strengthen this identity among residents and further cement Saint Paul's reputation across the nation and the globe as a winter city leader.

## *2) Start with Pilots*

Interestingly, not many residents called for more large-scale winter festivals or huge infrastructure investments. There was greater emphasis on increasing the availability of neighborhood-based programming and events, and improving existing infrastructure and services. The City can respond to these demands by piloting some winter solutions on a small scale, before expanding it across the entire city.

## *3) Winter-Friendly Policies*

The City can also set the tone by developing some internal review processes to ensure that all departments are thinking critically about "the winter side of things" in all aspects of their work. For example, how can Parks and Recreation make efficient and effective use of its assets all year round, including parks, outdoor gyms, sports fields, etc.? How can Planning and Economic Development incorporate winter-friendly design criteria in all of its major development applications? When communities are consulted on improving neighborhood infrastructure and programs, how can engagement facilitators ensure that the community addresses winter issues? Hint: Using our Wintermission Engagement Flashcards is a good first step!

## *4) Empower Community Groups*

As one of the most civically engaged cities in America, there is a wealth of community groups and active residents across Saint Paul that are ready and willing to take advantage of any City incentives (see Case Studies 3.2, 6.1 & 6.2) to make Saint Paul more winter-friendly. Incentives could even come in the form of simplifying and promoting the permit application process to host certain winter activities in public spaces, such as bonfires, cookouts, or holiday markets.

# *Tips for Winter Engagement*

It's February and it's freezing. You're standing on the street. People are bundled up with their heads down, scurrying to their next destination. Your job is to get them to talk to you about your initiative. What do you do? If you think the answer involves giving away free hot drinks, you're on the right track.

If you live in a winter city and need to host a community consultation, consider mixing things up by hosting it outdoors. Some simple tips for making it a success include:

## *Go places where people already go.*

This is a general 80 Cities rule that applies year-round. It rings even truer during the winter, when people are less likely to go out of their way to attend an event. Our most popular engagement took place at lunchtime on a busy pedestrian corridor in downtown Saint Paul.

## *Pair-up or piggyback.*

Team up with another winter event. We set up one of our engagements next to Little Box Sauna in Como Park. Our inviting table with engagement materials made it easier to build awareness about the purpose of the sauna among passersby. A winter win-win!

## *Warm people up.*

People are more likely to pause and talk if you provide warmth in exchange. Offering free coffee and hot chocolate is an inexpensive way to draw people in and to thank them for their time. Simple infrastructure like a propane heater or fire pit encourages lingering. We took it a step further and gave out s'more kits, which were a hit for all ages. Don't forget to check in with your fire department to see what the bylaws are around hosting open fires.

## *Make music.*

Winter tends to be a quieter time outside, so music will go a long way towards drawing people in. If you are considering live music, know that some instruments suit the cold better than others.

## *Move it.*

Attract people by providing an activity that gets them moving. Ping-pong worked really well for us. You can

play it in a puffy jacket and work up a good sweat. Our large-format chessboard was much less popular because it involved a lot more idling in the cold.

## *Use visually engaging materials.*

Leave the traditional paper surveys at home. Catch people's attention with bright, large-format engagement materials that they can interact with, even while wearing gloves.

## *Have a back-up plan.*

Winter weather can be even more unpredictable and extreme than summer weather. Come equipped with heavy-duty tape, paperweights, and other creative ways to prevent your materials from flapping in the wind or flying away! Worst case scenario, have a back-up indoor space to hold your engagement.







Wintermission at Como Lake



Wintermission at Victoria Bridge



Wintermission at West 7th Place



Wintermission at West 7th Place