



Age Friendly NYC

A Progress Report

Spring 2011

NYC

Michael R. Bloomberg

Mayor

Christine C. Quinn

City Council Speaker



AGE-FRIENDLY NYC:

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Christine C. Quinn
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THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10007

Dear Friends:

In Fall 2007, Speaker Quinn and I launched *Age-friendly NYC* in conjunction with the New York Academy of Medicine. We spoke with older adults in all five boroughs to see what we could do to position New York as the world's most "age-friendly" city, and I posed the same question to my agency commissioners. In August 2009, our research efforts culminated with the announcement of 59 City-sponsored initiatives to help New York better meet the needs of older adults. Several months later, we seated the Age-friendly NYC Commission, a blue ribbon panel of civic leaders, business executives, academic researchers, policymakers, and other talented individuals charged with making recommendations on how the nonprofit and private sectors might contribute to advancing our age-friendly work.

In announcing the 59 initiatives, I noted that "our society must redefine the concept of what it means to grow older." Today, I am proud to report that our work has been nothing short of transformative. As you'll read in the pages of this progress report, hundreds of older adults and others have embraced the concept of "neighbors helping neighbors" by offering cooking lessons, tutoring sessions, and other services through *TimeBanksNYC*. Yellow school buses, which previously sat idle during the school day, have been used to provide 216 trips for older adults to travel to supermarkets and grocery stores. Older New Yorkers and others who rely on the Access-A-Ride paratransit service are now able to use debit cards to take yellow taxicabs for trips in Manhattan, an option that is both more time and cost-efficient. A Silver Alert system that enables New Yorkers to assist the NYPD in finding vulnerable older adults with cognitive impairments was launched last year. Aging Improvement Districts—the idea of bringing businesses, organizations, and residents together to make their neighborhoods more age-friendly—have taken root in East Harlem, in Bed-Stuy, and on the Upper West Side.

Our work has not gone unnoticed. This past June, for example, New York was recognized by the World Health Organization as the first municipality in the world to meet the WHO's criteria for an age-friendly city. Still, our efforts remain unfinished. Over the next year, City agencies will work tirelessly to ensure that all 59 initiatives are implemented, and we look forward to further strengthening our partnership with the Age-friendly NYC Commission in advancing their efforts. As an older New Yorker myself, I can proudly say that I have a personal, vested interest in building an age-friendly New York—I welcome your feedback and look forward to sharing stories about our continuing successes with you.

Sincerely,


Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor





CHRISTINE C. QUINN
SPEAKER

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Dear New Yorker,

The New York City Council, Mayor Bloomberg's Office, the New York Academy of Medicine and the Age Friendly Commission have made significant progress toward our goal of making New York a more age-friendly city. Despite a persistently tough economy and with the help of our many partners in the community, we were able to push through some key initiatives and policy changes to help make life in our city more livable for older New Yorkers.

Today, family members and caregivers can be comforted knowing that the city has a strong protocol and safety net for missing seniors with our Silver Alert program. We're also using school buses during off hours to take older adults to the supermarket so they have greater access to healthier foods. Additionally, the Council has helped support the creation of Aging-Improvement Districts, in which local communities work together to help make their part of the city safer and more accessible for older residents.

Also encouraging, our efforts have spurred interest from other private and public partners to do their part in helping us become a more age-friendly city. For example, this past fall the Council partnered with AARP and their Create the Good campaign on two key initiatives: The Complete Streets campaign, which engaged older adults and community residents in surveying dangerous cross sections in neighborhoods across the five boroughs, and a campaign to fight hunger among seniors.

Despite these advances, we still have more work to do. With our city expected to add roughly half a million older adults over the next 20 years, we must remain steadfast in our efforts to become a more age-friendly city, while ensuring that the critical services that seniors rely on are protected to the greatest extent possible.

The following report provides an overview of the progress the city has made since the launch of our "Age Friendly NYC" initiative in 2007. The Council remains firm in our commitment to making New York City a wonderful and welcoming place for older adults. Continuing to work together, we can make aging in place a reality for all New Yorkers for decades to come.

Sincerely,

Christine C. Quinn
Speaker
New York City Council

Jessica S. Lappin
Chair, Committee on Aging
New York City Council

Previous Pages: Mayor Michael Bloomberg (Credit: Spencer T. Tucker), as well as Council Speaker Christine Quinn, flanked by Council members (Credit: William Alatraste), announced 59 City-sponsored initiatives in August 2009 as part of Age-friendly NYC



*Older New Yorkers applaud the August 2009 announcement
(Credit: William Alatraste)*

A Message from the Co-Chairs of the Age-friendly NYC Commission

To Our Fellow New Yorkers:


Of the 8.2 million of us who live in New York City, close to one million are older adults. Over the next 20 years, this number will increase by nearly 50%. To prepare for this demographic transformation, the Age-friendly New York City Commission was established in 2010 by Mayor Michael Bloomberg, City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, and The New York Academy of Medicine. Our Commission is charged with engaging the dozens of sectors and hundreds of professions in the City to consider how they can better serve and benefit from this momentous shift, to augment the City's efforts, and to change the perception of aging throughout the City.

It has been our honor and pleasure to lead an outstanding group of professionals from the fields of government, business, architecture, law, housing, technology, academia, and others to make New York City an outstanding place in which to grow old. We have created examples of innovation which we believe will serve as models for cities around the world. All of our efforts are guided by the thousands of voices of older adults with whom we are in constant consultation and partnership. Our work has been strengthened by experts in the fields older adults told us have the potential to impact them most. We had an exceptionally visionary advocate in Dr. Robert Butler—a Pulitzer prize-winning author, noted gerontologist, founder of the International Longevity Center, and dedicated Commission member—who passed away last year. He will be dearly missed.

In our first year, we laid the groundwork for transforming New York City into a place where the potential of New Yorkers of every age, neighborhood, community, and income level can be maximized. As you will read in the following pages, we have defined the characteristics of what makes a business age-friendly through consultations with older adults and business owners. We have encouraged hundreds of the City's small businesses to see the aging of the population as not just a responsibility, but as an opportunity to improve the way they do business through our Local Retail Initiative. We have similarly defined what makes an institution of higher education age-friendly and introduced the concept to more than 100 of the City's colleges and universities. And, we have developed a ground-breaking model of community organizing and local change through our three neighborhood-level, pilot Aging Improvement Districts. In our second year, we will disseminate these models to ensure success is spread to all corners of New York City.

As we plan to reach into new sectors and neighborhoods, we invite you to consider how you, your work, your community, and the organizations you are connected to can contribute to the initiative. We are thrilled with the partnership and progress created to date and look forward to its effects reaching all New Yorkers in the years to come.

Sincerely,



Gordon Campbell



Robin Willner

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This Page: Members of the JASA Alliance Senior Center in Far Rockaway, Queens created ceramic tiles with an aquatic theme through a workshop made possible by Space for Art, one of the City's 59 age-friendly initiatives

Opposite Page: Creating art at the Staten Island Senior Center (Credit: William Alatraste)



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A Brief History of Age-friendly NYC

*Mayor Michael Bloomberg
visits with members of the
City Hall Senior Center in
Manhattan in July 2010
(Credit: Spencer T. Tucker)*





New York City is growing older. Over the next 20 years, the number of New Yorkers age 65+ is expected to increase by nearly 50%. As a result, older New Yorkers are expected to outnumber school-age children for the first time in history. The growth of our City’s older adult population mirrors national and worldwide trends. The Census Bureau estimates that the number of Americans age 65 and older will double over the next 30 years—from 40.2 million in 2010 to 81.2 million in 2040. Similarly, the World Health Organization (WHO) predicts that the number of people age 60 and older as a proportion of the global population will double from 11% in 2006 to 22% by 2050.

Under the leadership of Mayor Michael Bloomberg and City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, our City sees this “aging revolution” as an unprecedented opportunity. In Fall 2007, the Mayor and the Speaker joined with the New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM) to launch *Age-friendly NYC*. Age-friendly NYC represents a rev-

One of the many community forums sponsored by the City Council and NYAM to gain older adults’ feedback on creating an age-friendly city
(Credit: William Alatraste)

olutionary way of thinking. The idea has been to examine all aspects of City life—infrastructure, recreation, social services, housing, employment, and volunteerism, to name a few—through an “age-in-everything” lens to determine how they might be improved and enhanced to be more responsive to older New Yorkers. In doing so, we became part of a global effort launched by the WHO more than three years ago. Called the *Global Age-friendly Cities* initiative, this effort engaged 35 cities around the world in evaluating their communities and neighborhoods through a framework that shifts city planning away from a “needs-based” approach toward a “rights-based” approach recognizing that individuals should have equal opportunity and treatment in all aspects of life as they grow older.

The first part of Age-friendly NYC consisted of a comprehensive assessment of New York City’s “age-friendliness”—the first in our City’s history. During 2008, the Council and NYAM had conversations with hundreds of older adults in 14 neighborhoods throughout all five boroughs. Roundtable discussions were held with business, housing, social services, health, transportation, and higher education experts. A literature review and mapping process provided an evidence base to complement what older adults shared.

Older New Yorkers told us that the City’s sophisticated public transportation system, vast cultural resources and historical traditions, unique and storied public spaces, excellent medical centers, and social service networks all make New York a wonderful place to grow old. At the same time, older adults indicated that it is often more difficult to remain independent and engaged with increasing age. Families and friends move away or pass away. Retirement often comes with no transition. There are physical barriers, rising costs, and less disposable income. Nearly one-third of older New Yorkers live in poverty. In Fall 2008, the findings from these conversations and research process were released by NYAM in *Toward an Age-friendly City: A Findings Report*. The report is available online at www.agefriendlynyc.org.

NYAM President Jo Ivey Boufford, City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, Council Members Jimmy Vacca and Gale Brewer, and Deputy Mayor Linda Gibbs announce the release of Toward an Age-friendly City: A Findings Report in September 2008
(Credit: NYAM)

The Mayor’s Office simultaneously led an assessment of the age-friendliness of the programs and services offered by City government agencies. City agency heads were asked to evaluate to what extent the City’s policies, programs, and resources are age-friendly and to develop recommendations that would better enable their agencies to meet the needs of older New Yorkers. In response to these findings and those contained in the NYAM report, the Mayor and the Council Speaker announced 59 City





initiatives to make New York more age-friendly in four key areas: community and civic participation; housing; public spaces and transportation; and health and social services.

Some of the initiatives, such as using school buses to transport older adults to supermarkets during the school day and enabling users of the Access-A-Ride paratransit service to use yellow taxicabs and black cars, allow City resources to be used more efficiently while providing better service. Others, such as the *Safe Streets for Seniors* project launched by the Department of Transportation and the establishment of a citywide Silver Alert notification system, seek to improve safety. Still others, such as offering a senior health club discount, partnering artists with senior centers, and expanding the number of volunteer opportunities available to older adults through timebanking and other initiatives, will further enhance New York's status as a city that has a wealth of cultural and recreational opportunities

Thelma Kirkpatrick shops at a Brooklyn supermarket. The visit was made possible by MarketRide, one of the City's 59 age-friendly initiatives. (Credit: Pearl Gabel)

available for people of all ages. Most importantly, all 59 initiatives reflect a transformative way of thinking about aging. They are detailed in the report, *Age-friendly NYC: Enhancing Our City's Livability for Older New Yorkers*, which was released by the Mayor and City Council Speaker in August 2009 and is available online at www.agefriendlynyc.org. Since that time, numerous City agencies have been working to successfully implement the initiatives.

In addition, the City joined with the New York Academy of Medicine to seat the Age-friendly NYC Commission in January 2010. The Commission—comprised of leaders in the business, education, civic, and nonprofit sectors (among others)—was charged with making recommendations on how the City might partner with these sectors and leverage their resources to enhance our age-friendly efforts. As New York is a financial, cultural, and healthcare capital of the United States and home to hundreds of thousands of neighborhood-level businesses and organizations, there is a deep well of resources to draw upon to better the lives of older adults. The Commission spent its first year developing its mission and work plan and on making advances in three areas of city life where older adults said they most wanted to see change: age-friendly business; age-friendly schools, colleges, and universities; and Aging Improvement Districts, a neighborhood-level initiative.

Our efforts in implementing the 59 age-friendly initiatives and the work of the Age-friendly NYC Commission are detailed in this first update report. The progress we have made has been transformational and has received international accolades, including recognition from the World Health Organization as the first municipality in the world to meet the WHO's newly-established criteria for an age-friendly city. As you read the pages of this report, we invite you to think about how you can partner with us to further improve the lives of older New Yorkers as well as how older adults—as New York's greatest treasure—contribute to making our City a wonderful place to live and work.

City Initiatives

COMMUNITY & CIVIC PARTICIPATION

*Council Speaker Christine
Quinn meets with a con-
stituent at the Caring Com-
munity/Our Lady of Pompei
Senior Center in Manhattan
(Credit: William Alatrisme)*





Community & Civic Participation

*A job fair for older workers sponsored by the
NYC Department for the Aging*

Employment & Economic Security

- Provide job training and search assistance to older New Yorkers
- Increase the number of paid job opportunities for older New Yorkers
- Assist older New Yorkers short of work histories to obtain employment allowing them to be eligible for Social Security

Volunteerism

- Promote intergenerational volunteering and learning through partnerships with schools and nonprofit organizations
- Provide new volunteer opportunities and expand resources for older New Yorkers through timebanking and other initiatives

Cultural & Recreational Activities

- Establish citywide partnership between senior centers and libraries

- Recruit artists to conduct programs in senior centers
- Provide a guide of discounted arts/cultural events for older New Yorkers

Information & Planning

- Publicize citywide opportunities for older New Yorkers through new older adult-focused NYC & Co. website
- Redesign DFTA's website to be more user-friendly and provide greater information about services
- Conduct local community assessments of neighborhoods to determine age friendliness
- Conduct cultural competency trainings on LGBT issues with the City's senior service providers

1. Employers and industries need assistance in recruiting, placing, and training older workers to meet the demands of today's economic environment.

Initiative: Provide job training and search assistance to older New Yorkers. The City will assist older New Yorkers wishing to re-enter the workforce or improve their skills by providing them with training in the use of technology and in other areas. Access to career counseling and other specialized services will be made available through enhanced partnerships with the Workforce1 Career Centers operated by the Department of Small Business Services as well as other job training providers.

Update: Through its senior employment services program and other initiatives, the City's Department for the Aging (DFTA) continues to work closely with Workforce1 Career Centers to connect older job-seekers with job-readiness workshops, computer classes, and other training enhancements. DFTA's senior employment staff has a presence at every Workforce1 Career Center. Other DFTA training partners include the Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) program of the New York State Education Department, Literacy, Inc., Goodwill Industries, American Indian Community Partners, and Services and Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Elders (SAGE). DFTA is also partnering with the City University of New York and its Adult and Continuing Education Initiative. Through this partnership, older New Yorkers have enrolled in classes to train as bookkeepers and accountants, administrative and teachers' assistants, and home health workers.

2. Employment opportunities are important for the personal and financial well-being of older New Yorkers.

Initiative: Increase the number of paid job opportunities for older New Yorkers. The City will explore opportunities to provide paid transitional jobs and increased access to paid employment for older New Yorkers. Ways in which this will be accomplished include tapping into state and federal funding streams to provide short-term paid employment opportunities for eligible older adults as well as partnering with programs such as ReServe, through which retired professionals have an opportunity to work on short-term projects at public and nonprofit employers in exchange for a stipend.

Update: With the assistance of federal stimulus funds, the City has increased the number of older adults placed in jobs through DFTA's senior employment program. The City is also providing transitional, on-the-job training to older New Yorkers in home health care and in security services. After four weeks of training, graduates move into part- or full-time positions. Also, scores of City agencies and non-profits have hired ReServists, who bring their experience, resources, and savvy with them to the workplace. As of April 2011, 184 ReServists were employed by the City, with large contingents serving at the Human Resources Administration (HRA), DFTA, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and Health and Hospitals Corporation.

3. A number of older New Yorkers, including recent immigrants and those whose employment histories are limited to informal work, are ineligible for Social Security.

Initiative: Assist older New Yorkers short of work histories to obtain employment allowing them to be eligible for Social Security. Some older adults, particularly those who are recent immigrants or those who were primarily engaged in work inside the home or in informal work, may not have the 40 quarters (i.e. 10 years) of qualifying employment necessary to be eligible for Social Security. To help address this situation, the NYC Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO), DFTA, and HRA will launch an initiative to assist older New Yorkers who have 35 to 39 quarters of employment to secure work that would allow them to attain the 40 quarters needed to be eligible for Social Security benefits.

Update: CEO obtained a planning grant from a private foundation and retained a consulting firm to map out available data and potentially feasible program models that could be developed to support this initiative. The first phase of planning has involved determining how to best identify older New Yorkers who should be targeted for participation in the program, both through information obtained from the Social Security Administration and through other means. CEO is also collaborating with DFTA and HRA to learn more about their existing subsidized employment programs and the ways in which they could potentially contribute to this initiative's aims by identifying and recruiting program partic-

Two participants in one of the intergenerational volunteering and mentoring opportunities offered through the City's Department for the Aging



ipants. CEO hopes to seek funding for a pilot initiative in 2011, once an appropriate program strategy has been determined.

4. Many older adults live separately from their families and are at risk for social isolation; conversely, many younger adults lack contact with elders.

Initiative: Promote intergenerational volunteering and learning through partnerships with schools and nonprofit organizations. The City will create and promote additional opportunities to participate in intergenerational volunteering. These efforts will include building partnerships between senior centers and schools that will allow older adults to tutor and mentor students.

Update: The City has been working to expand an already rich array of intergenerational volunteer activities for older New Yorkers. For example, in conjunction with the nonprofit organization Learning Leaders, older New Yorkers are working with elementary school students in a reading enrichment program. The City has also forged ties between Jumpstart (a nonprofit that focuses on early childhood education) and DFTA's Foster Grandparents Program, with the goal of placing older New Yorkers in daycare centers and other settings that allow them to work with children and youth. In addition, the City continues to explore opportunities to bring intergenerational programs into Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs).

5. Older New Yorkers provide critical resources to the City and seek continued involvement in political and civic activities.

Initiative: Provide new volunteer opportunities and expand resources for older New Yorkers through timebanking and other initiatives. DFTA will launch a timebanking program that will enable New Yorkers of all ages to volunteer their time and services in exchange for time credits that can be redeemed for services. The City will also continue to make a multitude of other volunteer options available to older New Yorkers and others through the Mayor's NYC Service initiative.

Update: *TimeBanksNYC*, a collaboration among DFTA, NYC Service, and the Aging in New York Fund, was introduced in November 2009 and formally launched by the Mayor in Summer 2010. Through the TimeBanksNYC website (www.nyc.gov/timebanksnyc) and neighborhood walk-in sites located in each of the five boroughs, New Yorkers of all ages can learn more about and enroll in the program. TimeBanksNYC has enjoyed great initial success: as of February 2011, 671 members have enrolled and more than 4200 hours of service have been exchanged between members. Some examples of service exchanges that have already had an intergenerational benefit include: a professional craft teacher and designer teaching a regular crochet class for the Manhattan Valley Golden Age Senior Center; an older New Yorker who enjoys researching herbs and nutrition sharing nutritional information with other older adults who are TimeBanksNYC members; and a professional artist teaching a beginners' drawing class for 12 TimeBanksNYC members of varying ages. In addition, NYC Service has made a variety of service opportunities that may be of specific interest to older adults available through its website, www.nycservice.org.



Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Council Member Jimmy Vacca, and Council Speaker Christine Quinn launch TimeBanksNYC by assisting an older New Yorker with her grocery shopping (Credit: Edward Reed)

Spotlight on *TimeBanksNYC*

TimeBanksNYC is living up to its promise of bringing people—and generations—together. Helping the process are many of the organizations that have joined TimeBanksNYC. Hudson Guild in Manhattan, for example, is an organizational member that receives time credits in exchange for hosting events. Recently, Hudson Guild hosted a cultural “Eat and Greet” for TimeBanksNYC members in its Chelsea neighborhood. People were invited via the TimeBanksNYC alert system to bring foods from different cultures and to teach some words in their own language to other guests.

Over 20 members attended. They tasted a chicken recipe from Chad, a pasta recipe from Italy, several Mediterranean dishes, homemade salsa, beignets, Chinese candies, and a pumpkin pie—among other things. The languages shared included French, Italian, Mandarin, Russian, and Spanish.

Those who attended traded time credits in order to participate and those who brought food or taught a language earned time credits for their service. It was a diverse group ranging in age from several in their twenties to a number of older adults. As they rotated from one table to another, enjoying the food and each other’s company, everyone had a chance to learn to introduce themselves, say “hello” and “goodbye,” and pick up a few other phrases in a new language.

Said one member: “It was very enjoyable and very eatable. I learned a little bit more Italian than I knew and just today I sent the person who brought the chicken from Chad an e-mail asking for his recipe—it was so caliente!”

6. Use of public libraries declines after age 50.

Initiative: Establish citywide partnership between senior centers and libraries. DFTA will work with the Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) to establish rotating “mini-libraries” at senior centers in Brooklyn. In addition, DFTA will collaborate with the New York Public Library (NYPL, which has locations throughout Manhattan, the Bronx, and Staten Island) to encourage senior center members to sign up for library cards and use the City’s public libraries.

Update: DFTA has been working with all three of the City’s public library systems to encourage more older New Yorkers to take advantage of the wealth of resources that the libraries have to offer. BPL’s “mini-libraries” program at senior centers throughout the borough has been enhanced by DFTA’s and the Library’s successful efforts to bring a bookmobile to centers that do not have a mini-library. The bookmobile now visits 12 senior centers every six weeks. At the beginning of the project, the BPL issued cards to close to 300 members of these centers, and it continues to issue cards to older adult visitors to the bookmobile who are not already members of the Library. DFTA has also partnered with the Queens Public Library (QPL) to encourage older adult participation in “Books by Mail.” Last spring, every older New Yorker who received

home-delivered meals through DFTA also received information about the program and an application form. According to the QPL, DFTA’s outreach efforts have resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of mail-based library card ap-

plications from older adults. In addition, DFTA has partnered with the City’s Department of City Planning to map the locations of senior centers and public libraries in the NYPL system to aid in the NYPL’s outreach/library card drive efforts in neighborhood senior centers.

7. Many older adults are interested in cultural activities and desire greater access to them.

Initiative: Recruit artists to conduct programs in senior centers. DFTA and the City’s Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) will launch an initiative in senior centers citywide to offer “studio” space to artists in return for services such as teaching art classes to senior center members.

Visiting the St. Agnes Branch of the New York Public Library in Manhattan (Credit: Community Health Education Students, Hunter College)



The City will work with local arts organizations to identify artists young and old to participate in the program.

Update: Through the *Space for Art* initiative, DFTA and DCA have worked with local arts councils to place 12 artists in nine senior centers throughout the five boroughs over the past year. Projects created by the artists and older New Yorkers have included a documentary of seniors telling their life stories; painted tiles with an aquatic theme for a public installation; and an exhibit of paintings done as part of a larger exhibition featuring community artists. Through the initiative, older adults have also participated in painting and ceramics classes, as well as a series of workshops in which they deconstructed board games to create large figure sculptures out of the game elements. In November 2010, participating artists, senior center directors, and representatives from borough arts councils came together at a DCA breakfast to plan for the second year of the Space for Art initiative.



A member of the Sirovich Senior Center in the East Village neighborhood of Manhattan participates in a sculpture workshop made possible by the Space for Art initiative

Spotlight on *Space for Art*

Shirley Birnbaum is a student in the clay sculpture class of artist Judith Hugentobler at the Sirovich Senior Center in Manhattan. She is learning to sculpt and fire clay figures through Space for Art, a joint initiative between the Department for the Aging and Department of Cultural Affairs to bring local artists into senior centers where they teach or work on creative projects with center members in return for free part-time use of center space for a “studio.”

A long-time member of the center, Shirley has participated in lots of classes over the years. “I dabbled in art before,” she says. “You know, I’ve made things from molds, things like that. But this is different. This is a whole new world. There’s no room for cheating or fudging or being lazy. Judith’s teaching us to build from scratch, and to fire properly, and boy, you’d better be careful because if you make a mistake—for instance if you don’t put the holes in that allow it to vent—all your work can be for nothing. But she shows each and every one of us how to do it, and is so patient. And it’s wonderful to create something nice like this cat I’m working on now and to look at it and say, I did that! I did sculpture.”

From Ms. Hugentobler’s point of view, the experience has been equally rewarding. Ms. Hugentobler is at the center two-and-a-half days a week, using the center’s kiln on Saturdays to fire her own work. “I’ve been surprised and pleased by how enthusiastic everyone is to try something new,” she reports. “The seniors are different from the college students I also teach. Here people are so eager, they make one figure and then once they’ve learned the technique, they do three more. You can’t keep them down. It’s rewarding to feel that what I’m exposing them to makes an impression.”

8. New York offers many cultural opportunities, but affordability can be a challenge.

Initiative: Provide a guide of discounted arts/cultural events for older New Yorkers. Through a partnership among the Alliance for the Arts, Council Member Jessica Lappin, and DFTA, a one-stop resource guide on arts and cultural opportunities—geared specifically toward older New Yorkers—will be published. The guide, which will be made available on DFTA’s website, will include museums, galleries, theaters, and a variety of other venues that offer discounts for older adults.

Update: The Alliance for the Arts has published the *NYC ARTS Manhattan Cultural Guide for Seniors* (available at www.nyc-arts.org/collections/162/manhattan-seniors-guide, as well as through DFTA’s website, www.nyc.gov/aging). The guide contains information about 160 cultural organizations in Manhattan that offer programs or discounts for older New Yorkers. Efforts are underway to expand the guide’s reach across the City.

9. Older adults want to pursue their interests and interact socially while staying active and busy.

Initiative: Publicize citywide opportunities for older New Yorkers through new older adult-focused NYC & Co. website. The Mayor’s Office and NYC & Company, the City’s official marketing and tourism organization, will explore ways to increase awareness of events, activities, and special promotions that may be of interest to older New Yorkers. These efforts will include devoting a special section of the NYC & Co. website to highlighting tours, shows, discounts, and other events for older New Yorkers across all five boroughs.

Update: NYC & Co. has created articles and editorial features specifically tailored toward older adults on its website, nycgo.com. The website is the Internet destination for visitors and residents to explore what to do and see in New York City. It contains a variety of resources—such as trip planners, event listings, and information about lodging/accommodations—that are of interest to individuals of all ages, including older adults. The Mayor’s Office will continue to explore new ways to promote older adult-focused activities and raise general awareness through the NYC & Company portfolio.

10. Older adults desire a “one-stop shop” for information about City services.

Initiative: Redesign DFTA’s website to be more user-friendly and provide greater information about services. DFTA will redesign its website (www.nyc.gov/aging) so that it is more user-friendly and provides an even greater wealth of information on numerous City services, programs, and other opportunities for older New Yorkers.

Update: DFTA has been working to design and develop the agency’s new website in conjunction with the City’s Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT). New content will address the needs of three audiences—older New Yorkers, caregivers, and community partners—and will provide information and links to City resources for these three groups. Menus on the new site will include

programs and services for seniors; health and wellness; financial literacy and education; benefits and resources; job training and volunteering; caregiver support; Age-friendly NYC; and information for community partners. The new site is slated for launch by late Spring 2011.

11. Older adults desire to be included in all levels of decision-making about their communities' needs.

Initiative: Conduct local community assessments of neighborhoods to determine age-friendliness. The Mayor's Office, DFTA, City Council, and New York Academy of Medicine will develop and administer a community needs assessment of the City's neighborhoods to determine how well they are meeting the needs of older New Yorkers across different domains such as infrastructure and social services. The assessments will engage older adults and be used to create benchmarks to gauge the "age-friendliness" of communities throughout the five boroughs.

(Credit: NYAM)



Update: DFTA and the Mayor’s Office worked with a team of graduate students from the Wagner School of Public Service at New York University to develop a survey that can be used to assess the age-friendliness of communities throughout New York City. The survey is designed to be administered by older adults and other volunteers while they are walking through their neighborhoods. In conducting the survey, volunteers are asked to observe and record a variety of neighborhood features and characteristics, such as the accessibility of supermarkets and the presence of street lamps. A pilot of the survey was conducted by the students in East Harlem. The survey and others like it are among the tools that could help the Age-friendly NYC Commission’s efforts to launch Aging Improvement Districts in various neighborhoods throughout the City (more information about the districts can be found in the next section of this report).

12. Some older adults who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) do not feel welcome in trying to access City services.

Initiative: Conduct cultural competency trainings on LGBT issues with the City’s senior service providers. In order to ensure that LGBT older adults benefit from the City’s full range of supports, the City will facilitate LGBT cultural competency trainings across a spectrum of services for older New Yorkers. The trainings will target senior centers, home and community-based caregivers, and residential facilities (including assisted living and nursing home settings).

Update: DFTA’s Training Center has conducted 21 training sessions on the issue of LGBT cultural competency in the last two years. Participants in these training sessions have included directors, supervisors, and frontline case managers in every case management agency funded by DFTA. In addition, training has been conducted for managers and supervisors of DFTA-supported senior centers and Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC) programs on the topic of “Creating an LGBT-Welcoming Center.” Several additional sessions on the topic will be conducted in the upcoming months.

City Initiatives

HOUSING

Two residents of the Grandparent Family Apartments, the first housing facility in the United States built specifically to meet the special needs of older adults who are caring for their grandchildren or other relatives. The Apartments, which are located in the Bronx, were made possible through a collaboration among various public and nonprofit agencies, including Presbyterian Senior Services, the West Side Federation for Senior and Supportive Housing, and the NYC Housing Authority.

(Credit: Annie O'Neill)





Housing

Affordable Housing Development

- Target housing funds and streamline process of building low income housing for older New Yorkers
- Examine parking requirements for affordable senior housing and amend the zoning code as necessary to facilitate construction of senior housing
- Provide loans for rehabilitation and new construction of affordable housing

Homeowner & Renter Assistance

- Provide loan assistance to older New Yorkers for home repairs
- Engage NYC home improvement contractors in best practices for the older adult market
- Improve access to SCRIE through transfer to Department of Finance
- Expand eviction prevention legal services for older New Yorkers

The Grandparent Family Apartments in the South Bronx (Credit: Presbyterian Senior Services)

Aging in Place

- Provide additional supportive services to NORCs
- Target Section 8 vouchers to vulnerable older adults at risk of eviction
- Promote access to new models of housing that support aging in place

13. Demand for publicly-subsidized or financed low income senior housing (such as Section 202 units) far exceeds supply.

Initiative: Target housing funds and streamline process of building low income housing for older New Yorkers. In order to ensure that housing for older New Yorkers continues to be built and to encourage developers to build more, the City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) will launch an initiative to provide "gap financing" for Section 202 projects through other federal funding sources. At the same time, the City will advocate for enhancements to the current Section 202 program to provide funding for additional units and to allow housing sponsors to give preference to high-need older adults.

Update: As mentioned in the Mayor's and Speaker's *Age-friendly NYC* report released in August 2009, Section 202 (also known as "HUD 202") is a program funded by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development to support the construction of affordable housing for low income older adults as well as to subsidize the rent in these housing units once they are built. HUD 202 is unique in that it has traditionally been one of the only public funding streams for senior housing that funds both construction and rental assistance. However, building HUD 202 developments can be challenging because the funding provided under HUD 202 does not cover the full cost of building each unit in New York City, which must often be supplemented by government-supported tax credits and other forms of financing.

HPD has been very active in making HUD 202 projects in New York City a reality by providing additional financing. In the 2010 fiscal year, HPD provided gap financing assistance for 445 units of affordable senior housing. However, on the federal level, the HUD 202 program is facing significant funding challenges. Funding for the federal fiscal year 2011 was recently reduced by 52%. Furthermore, in October 2010, HUD issued a legislative proposal aimed at new HUD 202 housing that called for (among other things) converting the rental assistance supported by HUD 202 to Section 8 and moving to even more of a gap financing model for construction costs. While this would mean fewer administrative requirements and make using certain tax credits to fund construction easier, it would also result in a reduction in the amount of money available to fund each unit. In addition, legislation enacted in January 2011 will impact existing HUD 202 housing by (among other things) enabling housing providers to better maintain and improve existing housing units as well as increasing the availability of supportive services. In the wake of these major program changes, the City is currently re-evaluating how to best advocate for additional federal support for senior housing.

14. Zoning requirements for parking may be an impediment to the development of new affordable housing.

Initiative: Examine parking requirements for affordable senior housing and amend the zoning code as necessary to facilitate construction of senior housing. Building unnecessary parking spots in senior housing developments adds unneeded costs, limits the number of housing units that can be built, and decreases the amount of open space around the project. While the City's zoning code currently allows for reduced parking requirements for non-profit residences for older New Yorkers, some housing developers have expressed concern that the existing requirements remain too high and that the cost of parking is

an unnecessary impediment to development. The City will study this issue and explore amending the zoning code to allow for a further reduction or waiver of parking requirements for low income senior housing.

Update: Over the past year, HPD has conducted an analysis to determine what types of modifications to the zoning code regarding parking in senior housing developments would best meet both the increased demand for senior housing and community needs. To this end, HPD has completed a findings report which is currently under review by the City's Department of City Planning (DCP). In the coming months, HPD and DCP will continue to work together on this important issue.

15. Preserving innovative, affordable, and appropriate housing is an important determinant of health for older New Yorkers.

Initiative: Provide loans for rehabilitation and new construction of affordable housing.

To ensure that developers have the funds available to build affordable senior housing, HPD will continue—as part of the Mayor's *New Housing Marketplace Plan*—to provide loans for developers to create and preserve affordable housing throughout the City's five boroughs, including housing for older adults.

Update: Since 2003, when the Mayor first announced the New Housing Marketplace Plan, HPD and the New York City Housing Development Corporation have funded more than 100,000 units of affordable housing—putting the City on track to reach the goal of 165,000 units by 2014 as outlined in the

Joined by HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan and City officials, Mayor Michael Bloomberg announces that the City has financed the preservation or construction of more than 100,000 affordable homes since 2003 under the City's New Housing Marketplace Plan. The announcement was made in May 2010 at a groundbreaking for the Via Verde development in the South Bronx. (Credit: Edward Reed)



Plan. A key aim of the Plan has been expanding the City's supply of affordable and sustainable housing. To this end, HPD is strategically targeting new construction funding toward populations with the greatest need, including older New Yorkers. HPD set a goal of investing more than \$90 million through 2014 to supplement HUD 202 allocations in order to finance an additional 1,000 units of affordable housing for older adults. The City is well on the way toward meeting this goal. As mentioned earlier, HPD provided gap financing assistance for 445 units of affordable senior housing during the 2010 fiscal year and plans to support an additional 200 units during the current fiscal year. One project that has received support is Markham Gardens, a development in Staten Island that includes an 80-unit residence for older adults that was built on land formerly controlled by the New York City Housing Authority.

16. Many older homeowners are on fixed incomes and may not have the resources to make needed repairs to their homes.

Initiative: Provide loan assistance to older New Yorkers for home repairs. The City will work to increase awareness about the Senior Citizens Homeowner Assistance Program (SCHAP), which provides zero or low-interest forgivable loans to New Yorkers over the age of 60 years in order to enable them to perform home repairs.

Update: Administered by the Parodneck Foundation with funding provided by HPD, SCHAP has made over \$15 million in assistance available to older New Yorkers since its inception in 1998. During this time, more than 1,000 housing units for older New Yorkers have been preserved through loans and related services that have included safeguarding older adults from predatory loans and foreclosures, as well as replacing badly deteriorated building systems. The program will continue to assist older adult homeowners in the coming year.

17. Some older adult homeowners may have special needs and circumstances and could benefit from a contractor who is sensitive to these needs when they are seeking home repairs.

Initiative: Engage NYC home improvement contractors in best practices for the older adult market. The Department for the Aging (DFTA) and the City's Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) will launch a program to enhance older adults' interactions with home improvement contractors licensed by DCA. With DFTA's guidance on how to best address the needs of older adults, DCA will develop a checklist of best practices for New York City's 12,000+ home improvement contractors—as well as explore other ways to assist contractors in better serving older New Yorkers.

Update: DFTA and DCA have developed a tipsheet for home improvement contractors on how to best serve older adult clients (such as having large print materials on hand) and how to make a home more age-friendly (such as installing grab bars in bathrooms and ramps at entryways for improved accessibility). The tipsheet will be available on the DCA and DFTA websites as well as at DCA's Licensing Center in Lower Manhattan. It is also being mailed to all licensed home improvement contractors with their license renewal packets.



(Credit: NYAM)

18. Affordability of housing is a concern. Nearly half of all renters age 65 and older in NYC spent at least 35% of their income on rent in 2005.

Initiative: Improve access to SCRIE through transfer to Department of Finance. The Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption Program (SCRIE) provides eligible older New Yorkers with an exemption from some or all increases in rent. The City will work to streamline the application process and increase efficiency in administering the program by transferring responsibility for SCRIE from DFTA to the Department of Finance.

Update: The City successfully transferred responsibility for administering SCRIE from DFTA to Finance in Fall 2009. Since then, Finance has updated application forms and has been working to further streamline the application process. Information about SCRIE applications and renewals can be found on the Department of Finance website (www.nyc.gov/finance) and by calling 311. SCRIE application materials can also now be obtained electronically through the City's online benefits portal, AccessNYC (www.nyc.gov/accessnyc).

19. Older adults fear the costs of housing-related legal proceedings and often do not have the resources to defend themselves.

Initiative: Expand eviction prevention legal services for older New Yorkers. DFTA will partner with the New York City Housing Court to offer legal assistance and crisis intervention to older New Yorkers who are at risk of eviction. The City will provide not only legal representation, but also social services to address the root causes of financial distress that may have contributed to the pending eviction.

Update: The City continues to assist older New Yorkers who face eviction through the Assigned Counsel Project (ACP), a partnership between DFTA and the city court system, under the leadership of Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Fern Fisher. Operating in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens, the Project pairs social workers with attorneys to address both legal and social service needs. While project-assigned attorneys assist clients with legal issues, the social workers provide advocacy, direct social services, and support during a client's eviction crisis while attempting to secure alternate housing if warranted. Through the support of federal stimulus funding administered by the City's Department of Homeless Services, efforts are underway to expand ACP to serve older adult clients in Staten Island and the Bronx. In addition, ACP will soon launch a pilot program called PALS (Person to Advocate for Litigant Seniors) in Queens Housing Court through which older adults will be paired with fellow older adult volunteers who will help them to navigate the court system.

20. Older adults appreciate and benefit from living in close-knit micro-communities. Social service programs within the City's NORCs should be expanded.

Initiative: Provide additional supportive services to NORCs. New York City is home to many Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs). A NORC is an apartment building, a housing complex, or a cluster of small multi-family buildings that was not originally built for older adults, but has developed over time as an area where a significant population of older adults resides. Through partnerships among housing unit managers, residents, and nonprofit providers, older adults living in NORCs are able to receive case management, health care, friendly visiting, housekeeping, and other social services that allow them to age in place. DFTA will collaborate with NORCs across the City to ensure that such services are being provided and to support additional services as needed. The City will also partner with the United Hospital Fund (UHF) to implement strategic evidenced-based interventions (such as diabetes education) in these communities, as well as seek funding opportunities to promote independent living and increase healthy aging behaviors among NORC residents.

Update: DFTA secured funding for UHF to work in 33 NORCs throughout the City to improve health prevention efforts and treatment outcomes for NORC residents, as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of this initiative. UHF first conducted a health survey of residents to identify health issues of particular relevance within each NORC. UHF then worked with NORC staff to develop a process to help senior residents "learn their numbers" for blood pressure, blood sugar, etc., and coached staff members on how to guide residents in following up with health care professionals to treat different conditions that residents became aware of through the "learn the numbers" process. UHF has now trained DFTA staff members who oversee the work of NORCs so that DFTA can maintain this program on an ongoing basis.

21. Frailty can lead to an inability to keep living independently in the community.

Initiative: Target Section 8 vouchers to vulnerable older adults at risk of eviction. The Adult Protective Services (APS) program at the City’s Human Resources Administration (HRA) is responsible for investigating abuse, neglect, and exploitation of adults who are mentally and/or physically impaired; 60% of APS clients are older New Yorkers. The City will pilot an initiative to provide Section 8 vouchers for vulnerable older adults who are at risk of eviction, unable to afford their rent, and clients of the APS program. Through Section 8, APS clients will receive a federal rent subsidy paid directly to landlords that limits tenants’ share of their rent to 30% of their income.

Update: The pilot was launched in Fall 2009 with HPD providing Section 8 vouchers to vulnerable older adults who are APS clients. Since that initial allocation was made, however, HPD’s supply of Section 8 vouchers citywide has been exhausted due to exceptional demand. Once new vouchers become available, HPD will re-evaluate the status of its Section 8 pilot programs (including this initiative with Adult Protective Services) to determine whether it would be feasible to continue them going forward.

22. While there is an increased demand for alternatives to nursing home care, such models can be prohibitively expensive to develop and difficult for older adults to access.

Initiative: Promote development of and access to new models of housing that support aging in place. Research has shown that older adults prefer aging in place—receiving care in a home/community setting in lieu of an institutional setting in response to increased medical and other needs—through housing models such as assisted living. Unfortunately, a number of older adults cannot afford the cost of assisted living. One option that has been proposed to address this issue is to create “hybrid” Section 202 housing developments with some units that are designated for assisted living and funded by Medicaid. However, applying for both Medicaid assisted living beds and for HUD 202 funds can be quite cumbersome. The City will work with community-based organizations, the State Department of Health, HUD, and other stakeholders to facilitate construction of Section 202 housing developments for low-income seniors that contain assisted living units. Initiatives that will be considered include improving coordination of application deadlines and other requirements; increasing communication among city, state, and federal agencies; and providing support to “beginner” organizations seeking to build Section 202/assisted living projects.

Update: As was mentioned earlier, federal proposals are being considered that would substantially reduce the amount of funding available for HUD 202 projects as well as dramatically change the nature of the program. In the wake of these major proposed changes, the City is currently evaluating how to best advocate for additional federal support for senior housing. In addition, the City has been researching how to best enhance and direct its housing resources to assist New Yorkers who have very low incomes, including older New Yorkers who wish to age in place. Additional information on programs and initiatives resulting from this research will be available over the next year.

City Initiatives

PUBLIC SPACES & TRANSPORTATION

(Credit: CHE Students, Hunter College)





(Credit: CHE Students, Hunter College)

Public Spaces & Transportation

Accessible & Affordable Transportation

- Improve elevator and escalator service and enhance accessibility of subway stations
- Improve efficiency of Access-A-Ride by equipping vehicles with GPS devices and implementing phone notification system
- Match accessible taxis with users who need them
- Develop model accessible taxi
- Develop taxi voucher program for older New Yorkers who are unable to use public transportation

Safe & Age-friendly Public Spaces

- Increase seating in bus shelters
- Install public restrooms at key locations citywide

- Create new, pedestrian-friendly public spaces while calming traffic
- Redesign street intersections at key locations citywide to improve safety for older New Yorkers
- Identify age-friendly parks and encourage older adults to utilize them

Planning for the Future

- Provide environmental stewardship workshops and engage older New Yorkers in planting trees as part of *PlaNYC* and *MillionTreesNYC*
- Conduct study to better address the mobility needs of older New Yorkers
- Promote use of Universal Design Guidelines through education and awareness efforts

23. Half of New Yorkers regularly use mass transit, but not all subway stations are accessible. Older adults desire information regarding the status of elevators in subway stations before making a trip.

Initiative: Improve elevator and escalator service and enhance accessibility of subway stations.

The Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) will work to ensure that elevators and escalators located in subway stations are functioning properly and will implement a system through which customers may receive e-mail notifications of disruptions in elevator and escalator service at specific stations.

Update: Increasing the reliability of station elevators and escalators is critical to enhancing the accessibility of our City's subway system. Consequently, the MTA has launched a program to improve these entry points that includes conducting multiple daily inspections and installing electronic monitors that alert personnel if an escalator or elevator stops working. To address temporary delays in function, the MTA is also developing a subscription program for customers to receive an e-mail advisory for disruptions in elevator and escalator service at specific stations. Using the latest in technology, New York City is striving to make public transportation as accessible and efficient as possible.

24. Some older adults have reliability and efficiency concerns regarding Access-A-Ride.

Initiative: Improve efficiency of Access-A-Ride (AAR) by equipping vehicles with GPS devices and implementing phone notification system. Operated by the MTA, AAR is a federally-mandated transportation service (consisting of a fleet of sedans and accessible vans) for New Yorkers who cannot use public transit, usually due to mobility impairments. To better serve AAR users, the MTA will equip AAR vehicles with GPS devices. The MTA will also implement a system that will allow AAR users to receive phone notifications when their AAR vehicle is 15 minutes away from the pickup location.

Update: AAR vehicles have now been equipped with GPS devices, enabling drivers to locate addresses with ease. In addition, the MTA continues to work on implementing the client phone notification system, with an anticipated launch in Summer 2011. Both initiatives are designed to improve service by reducing wait time and allowing clients to get to their destinations more quickly and efficiently.

25. Many taxis are not wheelchair accessible or easy to get in and out of.

Initiative: Match accessible taxis with users who need them. The Taxi & Limousine Commission (TLC) will pilot and evaluate a program that offers New Yorkers the option of calling 311 in order to request one of the TLC's wheelchair accessible yellow cabs.

Update: The TLC recently completed the two-year pilot, which included training for drivers on how to assist wheelchair and scooter users in boarding and exiting taxis. In December 2010, the TLC released a Request for Information that seeks input on how to address the needs of persons with disabilities through a citywide dispatch system. Based on the lessons learned from the pilot and information received from the RFI, the TLC is working with community and industry stakeholders to create an improved next generation



accessible taxi dispatch program. The program will allow Manhattan residents who use wheelchairs to call to arrange for a pick-up by one of the 231 wheelchair-accessible yellow cabs, while residents in the outer boroughs will be able to arrange for pick-up by a wheelchair-accessible for-hire vehicle.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg announces the winner of the Taxi of Tomorrow competition (Credit: Edward Reed)

26. A goal to strive for in the future is assuring that all taxis purchased for use in the City are wheelchair accessible.

Initiative: Develop model accessible taxi. The TLC will work to develop a new, model *Taxi of Tomorrow* that is universally accessible and environmentally friendly.

Update: Seeking to upgrade the City's aging taxi fleet, the TLC convened a group of stakeholders, including taxi drivers, fleet owners, and passengers, to outline goals for the design of a Taxi of Tomorrow. In December 2009, the TLC issued a Request for Proposals, inviting auto manufacturers and designers to submit their best ideas for a purpose-built vehicle to serve as a New York City taxicab. The public was invited to offer their feedback on the three designs chosen as finalists through the TLC website in late 2010. Recently, the TLC announced that it had selected a winning design and manufacturer for the Taxi of Tomorrow. The new taxi design will include (among other features) an extra step and handle bar designed to assist passengers with mobility impairments in entering and exiting the taxi. In addition, the vehicle manufacturer and TLC will seek extensive community feedback to ensure that other features are included to help make the new taxi more accessible to New Yorkers with impaired mobility.

27. There are large sections of the City not well-served by bus or subway routes.

Initiative: Develop taxi voucher program for older adults who are unable to use public transportation. The City will establish a program through which low-income individuals who are unable to use public transportation will be able to utilize taxis through transportation vouchers provided by the City.

Update: In December 2010, the Mayor, Council Speaker, and MTA Chairman announced the launch of a pilot initiative to enable certain Access-A-Ride (AAR) clients needing transportation in Manhattan below 96th Street to use yellow taxicabs in lieu of AAR vehicles. The program, which is a partnership between the MTA and TLC, provides eligible participants with a prepaid debit card that can be used to pay the fare (passengers pay \$2.25 per ride and the City/MTA pays the balance) after the ride is complete. The first several months of the pilot have been promising: a total of 325 passengers have taken about 800 trips per month, and the total cost of each taxi trip is an average of 70% less than one taken through AAR. The pilot, which was originally slated to last 90 days, has now been extended to June 2011.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg, joined by Deputy Mayor Stephen Goldsmith, MTA Chair Jay Walder, Council Member Jimmy Vacca, and TLC Chair David Yassky, launches a taxicab debit card pilot for Access-A-Ride users in December 2010 (Credit: Spencer T. Tucker)

The City is focusing on the outer boroughs as well. The New York City Department for the Aging (DFTA), in collaboration with the TLC and the Mayor's Office of People with Disabilities, was awarded a federal grant to begin a pilot program that will allow older adults and individuals with disabilities who are eligible for Access-A-Ride to use taxicabs and black cars/livery vehicles (in lieu of AAR) to





get around the City. The pilot will initially serve AAR clients who are residents of Astoria (Community Board 1) in Queens and Canarsie (Community Board 18) in Brooklyn. Planning for the pilot is currently underway and a launch is anticipated within the next year.

One of the many new bus shelters with benches that have been installed throughout the City (Credit: NYC DOT)

28. Many bus stops lack seats or shelter.

Initiative: Increase seating in bus shelters. Through a partnership with a franchisee that comes at no cost to the City, the City's Department of Transportation (DOT) will oversee the installation of new, modern bus shelters with benches at bus stops throughout the five boroughs.

Update: The transformation of New York City's bus shelters is well underway. As of March 2011, 2,705 new bus shelters with benches have been installed throughout the City. DOT anticipates that by the end of Fall 2011, nearly 3,200 of the City's existing bus shelters will have been replaced with the new, modern version.

29. Unexpected delays in transit and poor weather can make access to restroom facilities difficult for older adults.

Initiative: Install public restrooms at key locations citywide. Through the same franchise arrangement noted earlier, DOT will oversee the installation of accessible, automatic public toilets (APTs) at key locations in all five boroughs at no cost to the City.

Update: To date, three APTs have been installed: one on Flatbush Avenue near Grand Army Plaza in Brooklyn, another at Madison Square Park in Manhattan, and a third at Corona Plaza in Queens. DOT is in the process of identifying and studying additional locations where the installation of APTs may be appropriate and will continue to gather public feedback in this regard.

30. There are few places to sit and some sidewalks are crowded and have various obstacles.

Initiative: **Create new, pedestrian-friendly public spaces while calming traffic.** DOT will work to reduce congestion, calm speeding traffic, and create more inviting public spaces in key areas of the City. The inaugural effort in this regard will be *Green Light for Midtown*, a pilot project to end vehicular traffic on Broadway near Times and Herald Squares as well as to create several new pedestrian plazas in the area.

Update: During Summer 2009, two of New York City's premier shopping and entertainment districts—Times and Herald Squares—received a dramatic makeover. Broadway was closed to vehicle traffic at the squares and opened to pedestrians. In the former roadbed, plaza spaces were created and filled with tables and chairs for visitors to rest their feet, grab a snack, and do some people watching. Landscaping was also added to provide a breath of fresh air at the previously traffic choked intersections. The project has provided great safety benefits, with pedestrian injuries down 26% in Times Square and 25% in Herald Square. Broadway's transformation was expanded in 2010 to include the streets around Union Square. A new plaza with seating and landscaping was

Times Square got a new look as part of the Green Light for Midtown initiative
(Credit: NYC DOT)





added around the intersection of East 17th Street and Broadway, helping to simplify a previously confusing intersection while providing amenities for those visiting the area. Overall, the project has been received positively by residents, local business owners, and out of town visitors.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg launches Safe Streets for Seniors (Credit: Spencer T. Tucker)

31. Pedestrian safety is a concern for older New Yorkers.

Initiative: Redesign street intersections at key locations citywide to improve safety for older New Yorkers. Through its *Safe Streets for Seniors* initiative, DOT will aggressively implement safety improvements to reduce pedestrian fatalities and injuries at 25 areas throughout the City that have been identified as having a higher than average density of severe injuries among older adult pedestrians. Planned safety improvements include pedestrian refuge islands, curb extensions, upgraded and improved signage, and extended signal timing to provide more time to cross at intersections.

Update: To date, DOT has studied and completed improvements to intersections in five focus areas that were chosen as pilots for the Safe Streets initiative: Brighton Beach in Brooklyn, Fordham/University Heights in the Bronx, the Lower East Side in Manhattan, Flushing in Queens, and Hylan/New Dorp in Staten Island. Modifications have also been completed at locations in five additional neighborhoods: Borough Park in Brooklyn, Pelham Gardens in the Bronx, Chinatown and the Upper West Side in Manhattan, and Jamaica in Queens. Typical improvements that have been made throughout these areas include: modifying pedestrian signals to accommodate slower walking speeds, upgrading street markings for better visibility, installing improved signage, installing pedestrian refuge islands and planted medians to provide safer

Spotlight on *Safe Streets for Seniors*

According to DOT, improvements to intersections in the first five pilot neighborhoods that are part of the Safe Streets for Seniors initiative have led to dramatic improvements in safety:

- **Brighton Beach:** All crashes with injuries decreased by **19%**
- **Flushing:** All crashes with injuries decreased by **19%**; pedestrian crashes decreased by **9%**
- **Lower East Side:** Pedestrian crashes decreased by **19%**
- **Hylan/New Dorp:** All crashes decreased by **47%**; pedestrian crashes decreased by **60%**
- **Fordham/University Heights:** All crashes decreased by **29%**; pedestrian crashes decreased by **25%**
- **For all areas:** Non-pedestrian motor vehicle crashes decreased between **23%** and **46%**

crossings, extending curbs to shorten crossing distances, and calming traffic in the area through lane reductions, painted medians, and left turn bays. These modifications have led to dramatic reductions in accidents in the pilot areas. DOT is currently conducting studies evaluating the remaining 15 focus areas; 10 to 12 additional focus areas will be selected in the upcoming months for the second phase of the Safe Streets project.

32. Some older adults feel that certain parks are at times too crowded and their programs geared to the younger population.

Initiative: **Identify age-friendly parks and encourage older adults to utilize them.** The City will assess its parks to determine which ones are best-suited for older New Yorkers, looking at criteria that include accessibility (ramps, grade level entrances, etc.), as well as the availability of benches and public rest rooms. The City will also identify recreation centers with programs for and other park-related activities geared toward older New Yorkers, as well as make information about these activities available through a central resource.

Update: To make the City's vision of age-friendly parks a reality, a working group of representatives from the Parks Department, DFTA, and Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities has been meeting to discuss how the Parks Department's already strong programs, activities, and facilities can be enhanced to be more accessible to and better serve the needs of older New Yorkers. In addition, focus groups with older adults were held at several City recreation centers. As a result of these efforts, the Parks Department is currently studying a number of ways in which the "age-friendliness" of the City's parks could be improved, including making more information available on and enhancing senior-focused activities and programs, as well as setting aside certain areas of parks for the use and enjoyment of older adults. Already in 2010, the Parks Department greatly expanded its aquatics programs—including "seniors-only" hours at certain public pools. In addition, through the efforts of Council Member Jessica Lappin, the City Council set aside funds to renovate an area of John Jay Park so that it could have designated fitness equipment for, be accessible to, and serve as an inviting area for older adults.



33. More opportunities should be created for older adults to engage in volunteerism with issues they feel passionately about.

Initiative: Provide environmental stewardship workshops and engage older New Yorkers in planting trees as part of *PlaNYC* and *MillionTreesNYC*. The City's Parks Department

and DFTA will collaborate to encourage the involvement of older New Yorkers in MillionTreesNYC, the City's tree planting and stewardship initiative launched in 2005 as part of the Mayor's PlaNYC sustainability initiative. Older New Yorkers will also be enlisted in helping to identify sites for tree planting opportunities, including senior centers, housing developments, religious institutions, and City streets.

Update: DFTA engaged the help of the New York-based arm of the Gray Panthers—an advocacy group that works toward protecting the environment—to enlist older adults to participate in an Earth Day event at Pelham Bay Park in the Bronx. DFTA is also reaching out to senior centers to involve center members in MillionTreesNYC's tree planting and stewardship initiative. Specifically, older adults will be encouraged to participate in street tree stewardship workshops that empower citizens to care for newly planted trees, commit to watering and mulching schedules for trees in their communities, and become trainers of future tree stewards themselves.

Joined by elected leaders, city officials, and children from P.S. 43, Mayor Michael Bloomberg broke ground on a regional park in Far Rockaway, Queens, in October 2010. The new park is the fourth of eight regional parks proposed under PlaNYC, the City's long-term plan for a greener, greater New York.
(Credit: Spencer T. Tucker)

34. The needs of older people and individuals with disabilities should be incorporated into transportation and related planning efforts.

Initiative: Conduct study to better address the mobility needs of older New Yorkers. The Department of City Planning (DCP) will undertake a study that will seek to identify current mobility issues and present trends and travel patterns of older adults. This study will examine current worldwide practices in transportation, mobility, and accessibility for an aging population. It will then analyze data about existing transportation practices in other cities throughout the world. New York City will learn from the successes of and challenges facing other cities, and use this information to adopt potential mobility solutions for our City.

Update: The study, entitled *Mobility Initiatives for an Aging Population: A Scan of Current Practices*, is well underway. Planners at DCP have almost completed the study but some additional work, including an examination of case studies and additional analysis of demographic data, remains. DCP plans to publish a final report with the study's findings in 2011.

35. Participation in the life of the City could be made easier with fewer architectural and physical barriers.

Initiative: Promote use of Universal Design Guidelines through education and awareness efforts. Universal design is (according to the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University) the “design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.” The Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) is developing a publication on universal design called *Inclusive Design Guidelines, New York City* to accompany the City’s new building code. This book will offer recommendations to produce inclusive environments and is intended for use by professional designers, educators, and advocates. In addition, the Department of Design & Construction (DDC), in conjunction with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and other City agencies, will develop *Active Design Guidelines*. The guidelines will provide architects and urban designers with strategies for creating healthier buildings, streets, and urban spaces, based on the latest academic research and best practices in the field.

Update: MOPD released their Inclusive Design Guidelines, New York City (IDG) in November 2010. Written and produced by the MOPD, the book is a New York City blueprint for universal design. The aim of the guidelines is to go beyond the requirements of the City’s new building code to create more user-friendly and safe buildings and landscapes that improve the quality of life for everyone—including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities. In particular, the IDG offers a one-stop reference with explicitly detailed design guidance to help designers produce multi-sensory, enhanced environments that accommodate the diverse physical and mental abilities of people of all ages. The IDG, which can be used both as a stand-alone publication and in conjunction with the building code, contains recommendations for all use and occupancy classifications, especially residential and commercial buildings. Many topics are covered, including: basic building components, routes, general site, and building elements;

plumbing elements and facilities; communications elements and features; selected spaces, furnishings, and equipment; and dwelling and sleeping units.

Likewise, the DDC—in conjunction with the City Departments of Health and Mental Hygiene, Transportation, and City Planning—published its Active Design Guidelines (www.nyc.gov/adg) in 2010. Among other things, the Guidelines present strategies for designing neighborhoods, streets, and outdoor spaces that encourage active transportation and recreation, including walking and bicycling. Architects and others are also encouraged to help occupants of buildings incorporate physical activity into their daily routines through a variety of measures, such as enhancing the use of stairs, locating building functions to promote brief periods of walking, and providing facilities (such as bicycle storage rooms) that support exercise. Both the MOPD and DDC are currently working with their partners to increase awareness about their guidelines among design professionals and members of the general public alike. Since Spring 2010, for example, there have been over 6,500 downloads of the Active Design Guidelines from the DDC website, and the publication has received four local and national awards.

Officials from the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities and the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects celebrate the release of MOPD's Inclusive Design Guidelines



City Initiatives

HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

(Credit: NYAM)



Health and Social Services

Wellness & Healthcare Planning

- Increase HIV awareness and health literacy among older New Yorkers
- Redesign senior centers to focus on wellness and develop health outcomes
- Establish fitness club discount for older New Yorkers
- Increase awareness about health insurance options through DFTA's HIICAP program

Assistance to At-Risk Older Adults

- Implement citywide falls prevention initiative
- Provide free air conditioners to at-risk older New Yorkers
- Conduct outreach to older New Yorkers at risk of social isolation
- Add Silver Alert to Notify NYC
- Expand "Savvy Seniors" campaign to educate older New Yorkers about identity theft and fraud

Access to Nutritious Food

- Improve older New Yorkers' access to food stamps by implementing telephone application process and outreach campaign
- Implement NYC Green Cart program and form supermarket commission to address needs of neighborhoods underserved by supermarkets
- Provide bus service for older New Yorkers to access grocery stores
- Increase efficiency in the City's case management and home-delivered meals programs

Caregiving & Long-Term Care

- Provide counseling and support services to grandparents raising grandchildren
- Expand educational materials and supports available to family caregivers
- Explore policies that would allow more New Yorkers to take family leave when needed
- Conduct outreach and workshops on long-term care and caregiving resources for employers in NYC
- Increase access to community-based care
- Expand training opportunities and other supports for paid caregivers
- Promote awareness and education about long-term care insurance

Palliative Care & Advance Directives

- Promote palliative care
- Expand existing HHC palliative care programs
- Promote advance directives
- Advocate for State legislation authorizing family members or domestic partners to act as surrogates to make health care decisions on behalf of an incapacitated adult

36. The number of older New Yorkers with HIV/AIDS is on the rise.

Initiative: Increase HIV awareness and health literacy among older New Yorkers. The City will work to expand and enhance the HIV Prevention and Health Literacy Initiative for Older Adults. Developed by a working group convened by Council Member Maria del Carmen Arroyo in 2006, the initiative is a partnership between the City and the AIDS Community Research Initiative of America formed to educate older adults about HIV and behaviors that may put them at risk. Through the initiative—which has been considered by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as a model for national replication—HIV awareness and health literacy trainings take place citywide through older adult peer educators who are recruited for this purpose.

Update: Through the initiative, more than 450 trainings for over 5,000 HIV and aging service providers and older adults have been conducted since 2007. The City's first HIV/AIDS resource directory specifically targeted to older adults has also been developed. In addition, representatives from the City's Department for the Aging (DFTA) and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) participated in New York State's Red Ribbon Silver Threads conference. The event brought together experts in the fields of HIV/AIDS, chronic disease, and geriatrics with consumers, caregivers, and community members to recommend steps to improve HIV prevention and care for older adults. In the coming year, DFTA will continue its HIV/AIDS outreach and education efforts through its community partners and senior center network.

37. Studies show that older adults using senior centers desire a greater variety of programs and activities.

Milton Greidinger demonstrates using his laptop to participate in activities at the Benjamin Rosenthal Senior Center in Queens through the Virtual Senior Center initiative



Initiative: Redesign senior centers to focus on wellness and develop health outcomes. The City will engage in a collaborative process with both community partners and relevant City agencies to reach consensus on the direction of the City’s senior center network. Helping the City’s older adults to live healthy and active lifestyles will be a strong priority of this effort, and key to the redesign will be enhancing the programs and activities offered by the centers. Some examples of enriched programming that senior centers could offer include: technology training, employment assistance, health screenings and disease prevention programs, physical activity (such as dance, yoga, weight training), access to the arts (jewelry making, painting) and recreational trips to museums, theaters, or sports events. In collaboration with its community partners, DFTA will explore new models of funding for the enriched programming and seek additional funds to support this effort.

Update: Leveraging public and private funds, the City is working with community providers to develop well-funded Innovative Senior Centers (ISCs) across the five boroughs, focusing first on communities with high need and limited resources. The ISC initiative will allow DFTA to fully tap the expertise of providers

Spotlight on the *Virtual Senior Center*

Milton Greidinger could feel his loneliness growing deeper every day. A lifelong New Yorker, Milton is gregarious by nature, and enjoyed his working life first as a salesman and later as a department store buyer. After he retired, Milton, who is single, developed a spinal condition that has kept him largely confined to his home. He lost touch with most of his friends and former co-workers, rarely met anyone new, and felt increasingly isolated and alone.

Today, Milton is busy making new friends, learning new skills, embracing new experiences, discussing current events and literature with other older adults, and communicating regularly with friends and colleagues. What is making the difference for Milton is the Virtual Senior Center, a demonstration project made possible through a public-private partnership among Microsoft, DFTA, the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications, and Selfhelp Community Services, a nonprofit organization that is dedicated to serving older New Yorkers.

The Virtual Senior Center enhances the lives of homebound older adults by using computer, video, and Internet technology to help them interact with their peers. Each participating older adult has a desktop computer with broadband Internet service, plus a touch-screen monitor, webcam, and microphone. Video cameras, microphones, and monitors at Selfhelp’s Benjamin Rosenthal Senior Center in Flushing, Queens, enable homebound older adults to see, hear, and interact with classmates and instructors at the center and to take part in activities such as armchair yoga, art classes, discussion groups, and Tai Chi.

The Virtual Senior Center, says Milton, “saved my life.” “Before this project,” he notes, “I was bored to death. I was just waiting for my time to finish. Now all of a sudden, I’m wide awake. I’m alive again.”

and build on this experience to create centers that will be held accountable for producing vibrant programs, high participation rates, and better health outcomes for older New Yorkers. The framework for the innovative centers was largely informed by an extensive consultative process with stakeholders including advocacy groups, service providers, City agencies, philanthropic organizations, researchers, and older adults that was convened by the New York Academy of Medicine and funded by the New York Community Trust.

In conjunction with the announcement of the ISC initiative, DFTA and the Mayor's Office of Contracts unveiled a streamlined procurement process to select ISC sponsors. The new method, the first of its kind in City government, differs significantly from the traditional Request for Proposals process and is projected to decrease processing time, reduce the volume and complexity of paperwork, and promote innovation in the development of programs and services. There are two stages to the new process: a prequalification stage and a program narrative stage. In the first stage, organizations apply for prequalification by demonstrating their experience and ability to provide congregate senior services. Prequalified status lasts for three years. Once prequalified, an organization is eligible to compete for contracts to run Innovative Senior Centers through its submission of a narrative proposal detailing programmatic plans and goals. DFTA has completed assessing prequalification applications for the first round of Innovative Senior Centers and has now invited prequalified organizations to submit narrative proposals that will be evaluated by DFTA. ISC providers will be expected to address five key areas through their programming that have been identified as areas of need among the older adult population in New York City, including health and wellness.

38. A significant percentage of older adults does not engage in regular physical activity.

Initiative: Establish fitness club discount for older New Yorkers. Through a partnership with the City, New York Sports Clubs (NYSC) will offer a discounted membership plan for older adults and provide fitness classes in senior centers on a pro bono basis.

Update: In Summer 2009, NYSC launched a citywide senior discount membership, through which older adults may receive a 25% discount on club membership fees. DFTA is also partnering with NYSC to offer free fitness classes at local senior centers by certified fitness instructors. The program has been launched in Brooklyn; the Bronx, Manhattan, and Queens are sites for possible expansion.

39. Older New Yorkers desire assistance with understanding the intricacies of various health plans.

Initiative: Increase awareness about health insurance options through DFTA's HIICAP program. Through DFTA's Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP), the City will help to ensure that older New Yorkers are fully aware of the insurance and related options that affect their health and wellness. Continued outreach to senior groups, caregivers, and health professionals will allow HIICAP to ensure that older New Yorkers are provided with the tools necessary to make informed decisions regarding their health.

Update: DFTA has been undertaking a variety of efforts to inform older New Yorkers about the health insurance options available to them. For one, HIICAP conducts monthly seminars that offer a two-hour overview of Medicare. Sessions are specially tailored to the audience, including those new to Medicare, those who assist older family members, and professionals such as social workers and senior center staff. DFTA also makes a *Complete Guide to Healthcare Coverage for Older New Yorkers* (published in English, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, and Korean) widely available through the agency's website and other distribution points. In addition, HIICAP has been helping older New Yorkers to navigate the new prescription drug coverage and related options available to them since the passage of the Federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Another area of focus has been Medicare fraud. The HIICAP team is working to educate older adults on how to read their Medicare Summary Notice to spot questionable charges. In November 2010, the team participated in a federal Medicare fraud summit led by Attorney General Eric Holder and Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius.

40. Falls are the leading cause of morbidity and mortality from unintentional injury among older individuals.

Initiative: Implement citywide falls prevention initiative. DFTA and DOHMH will jointly convene a citywide falls prevention coalition to identify and address the problem of falls among older individuals. This coalition's activities will include: (a) conducting research and collecting data,

Engaging in exercise on a regular basis is among the steps older adults can take to help prevent falls (Credit: NYAM)



(b) identifying and distributing best practices for falls prevention, such as tools for assessing and remediating fall hazards in the home and community, and (c) creating informational and educational materials and programs for a variety of audiences including physicians, home visiting programs, organizations that serve older adults, and City agencies.

Update: DFTA and DOHMH have convened a group of experts whose initial task will be to develop a falls prevention toolkit that will be posted on the Internet. This group has recommended that an online community be created to share best practices in falls prevention. In addition, DOHMH has recently published two guides concerning falls prevention issues. The first, *How to Prevent Falls* (available at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/public/dohmhnews9-04.pdf>), is geared toward older New Yorkers and includes straightforward tips to avoid falls. The second, *Preventing Falls in Older Adults in the Community* (available at <http://home2.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/chi/chi29-4.pdf>), is intended for medical professionals to help them identify and mitigate the risk of falls among their patients.

41. Older New Yorkers are especially at risk for health problems related to heat.

Initiative: Provide free air conditioners to at-risk older New Yorkers. The City will provide free air conditioners to low-income older New Yorkers who are at-risk of becoming ill due to high temperatures. In addition, DFTA will collaborate with DOHMH on education and outreach efforts to prevent heat-related illnesses.

Update: Through the *Cool Assistance Program*, the City distributed more than 1,700 air conditioners during Summer 2010 to older New Yorkers eligible for the federal Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). The program was administered by the City's Human Resources Administration (HRA), which was responsible for processing applications. DFTA partnered with HRA by providing names of HEAP-eligible seniors who requested air conditioners through DFTA in 2009, as well as by assisting older adults with completing their applications. In addition, DOHMH produced a brochure (printed in English, Spanish, Russian, and Chinese) with tips for older adults on "keeping cool." The brochure was distributed to all of DFTA's senior centers as well as made available at health fairs and other venues.

42. A sizable percentage of older New Yorkers lives alone and nearly 17% are at risk for social isolation.

Initiative: Conduct outreach to older New Yorkers at risk for social isolation. DFTA will launch a program through which volunteers will make telephone calls to older adults who live alone to provide reassurance and support. DFTA will also expand an initiative—operated in conjunction with the Hebrew Home for the Aged and the Service Employees International Union Local 32BJ—through which superintendents, doormen, and other building service workers are trained how to identify and access help for socially isolated older New Yorkers who need assistance.

Update: During the 2010 fiscal year, 52 community-based senior center providers participated in DFTA's telephone reassurance program and made 50,121 calls to homebound older adults in their respective communities. Also, the Hebrew Home for the Aged has continued a series of trainings for superintendents, door-



men, and other building service employees in collaboration with 32 BJ and DFTA. In 2009, six trainings that focused on recognizing the signs and symptoms of elder abuse and social isolation were held.

*Flanked by City officials, Mayor Michael Bloomberg signs the Silver Alert legislation into law
(Credit: Kristen Artz)*

43. Alert systems should be adopted to protect vulnerable older adults.

Initiative: Add Silver Alert to Notify NYC. The City will implement a citywide Silver Alert program to alert the public when vulnerable older adults suffering from Alzheimer’s disease and other forms of dementia are reported missing so that the public may aid in their return. The alerts will be broadcast through Notify NYC, the citywide service that allows New Yorkers to sign up to receive notifications about emergency events by text message, recorded telephone message, or e-mail.

Update: In October 2010, the Mayor and City Council enacted legislation sponsored by Council Member Jessica Lappin that makes New York City one of the first municipalities in the country to create a Silver Alert system. Silver Alert is a public notification system that aids in the safe and prompt return of vulnerable older adults with dementia (caused by Alzheimer’s disease or a similar condition) who wander from their homes or neighborhoods. Under the new law, when a New Yorker age 65 or older with dementia is reported missing and deemed to be in imminent danger of serious physical injury or death, the New York City Police Department (NYPD) will initiate a protocol through which a wide audience—including media

outlets, senior service providers, medical facilities, and community organizations—will be notified so that the public may assist the police in the search for the missing older adult. The Silver Alert notifications will be accompanied by a special number that the public will be asked to call to provide any tips and will eventually also be wirelessly transmitted to the City's 13,000+ taxis. The law expands on an effort, first announced in April 2010, to broadcast alerts to Notify NYC subscribers when a vulnerable older adult is reported missing. The alerts are issued to Notify NYC subscribers residing in the borough of the missing person via e-mail, text, Twitter, and RSS. The notification initiatives are the product of strong collaboration among the Mayor's Office, several City agencies (including DFTA, NYPD, and the Office of Emergency Management), and the City Council.

44. Older adults are worried about being cheated or robbed in financial schemes.

Initiative: Expand "Savvy Seniors" campaign to educate older New Yorkers about identity theft and fraud. In partnership with DFTA, the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) and its Office of Financial Empowerment have implemented a broad outreach program called Savvy Seniors to help protect older adults from identity theft, frauds and scams, and deceptive advertising practices. DCA will expand Savvy Seniors to include targeted information and materials about financial education, counseling, and coaching. Presentations may include such topics as budgeting, reverse mortgages, tax credits, credit cards, safe banking opportunities, concerns about debt, and most importantly, how to get trusted financial help and advice.

Update: In February 2010, DFTA and its not-for-profit arm, the Aging in New York Fund, launched "It's My Money!"—an interactive videogame that teaches older New Yorkers about financial fraud and scams perpetrated through a variety of media, including the telephone, traditional mail, television, and cyberspace. The game is suitable for team play in settings such as senior or community centers or for individual or two-player use. It can be downloaded in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Russian versions from DFTA's website at no cost. DCA has also conducted nearly 200 Savvy Seniors presentations over the last few years and has made a variety of information (on such important topics as tax credits, safe banking opportunities, debt and credit issues, and identity theft and scams) available to older adults and others. In addition, DCA's 20 Financial Empowerment Centers throughout the City offer free, professional one-on-one financial counseling in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Russian.

45. Access to affordable and nutritious food is a concern among older New Yorkers.

Initiative: Improve older New Yorkers' access to food stamps by implementing telephone application process and outreach campaign. HRA is launching an initiative through which the agency will identify and conduct outreach to older New Yorkers who are receiving Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) program benefits but are not receiving food stamps. These older adults will be encouraged to apply for benefits at community locations, where they will be able to complete their application electronically with the assistance of staff members from the Food Bank for NYC. In addition, HRA plans to launch a program through which DFTA staff and other volunteers will be trained to assist Spanish-speaking older adults with completing their food stamp applications.



A screenshot from DFTA's "It's My Money!" interactive videogame

Update: With funding from the federal Department of Agriculture, HRA, DFTA, and the Food Bank for NYC launched the NEEDS (Nutritional Enhancement for Elders through Data Sharing) initiative. Through this effort, outreach was conducted to more than 7,000 older New Yorkers receiving SCRIE who were identified as likely being eligible for food stamps. These New Yorkers were invited to visit a local community center to complete a food stamp application with the help of Food Bank staff members; to date, nearly 1,300 older adults have done so. In addition, HRA has made it easier for older adults to renew their food stamp benefits by giving them the ability to complete the recertification process through an automated telephone system, and phone interviews are available to anyone applying or recertifying for food stamp benefits as well. DFTA has also conducted additional outreach efforts through the EatWell program. Under this initiative, DFTA worked with 12 senior centers citywide that have a high concentration of Spanish-speaking older adults to enhance food stamp enrollment at these sites. More than half of the older New Yorkers screened through the program were eligible to receive food stamps. HRA provided technical assistance, as well as processed and tracked applications received as a result of the outreach efforts at these 12 centers.

46. About three million New Yorkers do not live near grocery stores. Older adults are concerned about the closing of affordable supermarkets as a significant loss to their neighborhoods and to their well-being.

Initiative: Implement NYC Green Cart program and form supermarket commission to address needs of neighborhoods underserved by supermarkets. Through the efforts of the Mayor's Office, City Council, and DOHMH, the Green Carts initiative will enable DOHMH to issue 1,000 new permits for vendors to sell fresh fruits and vegetables in neighborhoods where fresh produce cannot be easily obtained. In addition, to address the need for grocery stores in underserved areas, the City has partnered with the Food Trust, Food Bank for NYC, Food Industry Alliance, and the United Way to convene the New York Supermarket Commission. Building on the recommendations of the Commission, the City plans to hire a coordinator who will conduct market research to attract supermarkets, as well as assist the markets with using economic development incentives and navigating the process for required government approvals and permits.

Update: The Green Carts program, with support from the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund, has enabled nearly 500 entrepreneurs to sell fresh fruits and vegetables in underserved neighborhoods during the first year of the program's implementation. Green Carts are proving to be a powerful tool in encouraging New Yorkers to eat healthier foods; an evaluation has shown that residents rely upon Green Carts as a frequent shopping option and rate the quality and variety of fruits and vegetables offered on Green Carts as good or excellent.

The City also continues to work diligently to address the need for grocery stores in underserved areas. The Mayor's Food Policy Task Force—along with DOHMH, the Department of City Planning, and the New York City Economic Development Corporation—conducted the *Going to Market* study. The study showed that many neighborhoods across New York are underserved by grocery stores and lack nutritious and affordable fresh food. In response, the Mayor and City Council established the Food Retail Expansion to Support Health (FRESH) program. FRESH provides zoning and financial incentives to promote the establishment and retention of neighborhood grocery stores in underserved communities throughout the five boroughs. In its short existence, FRESH has already supported the construction of two supermarkets in underserved communities. These and other efforts to encourage the development of supermarkets are facilitated by the City's new supermarket coordinator, who came on board in 2010.

47. The need to travel for nutritious food is burdensome to older adults with disabilities.

Initiative: Provide bus service for older New Yorkers to access grocery stores. The City will expand an initiative that began as a pilot in Brooklyn through which older New Yorkers will receive transportation—using Department of Education school buses when they are not needed to transport students—from senior centers and naturally occurring retirement communities (NORCs) to supermarkets throughout the five boroughs.

Update: The *MarketRide* initiative has proven to be very popular and has now been expanded to all five boroughs. Since the initiative began, DFTA has received 216 requests from senior centers throughout the City for bus trips related to food shopping. Trips have been provided to supermarkets as well as to farmers' markets, where older adults are able to use vouchers provided by the federal Department of Agricul-



ture that are distributed at DFTA senior centers. Many participating seniors have observed that, in addition to appreciating the variety and healthfulness of the foods available at the markets they visit, they have enjoyed the social aspects of sharing bus rides with friends.

*Mohammed Firouz sells fresh fruit in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, as part of the City's Green Carts program
(Credit: NYC DOHMH)*

48. An ever-increasing demand for home-delivered meals and other supports requires fine-tuning and streamlining delivery of services.

Initiative: Increase efficiency in the City's case management and home-delivered meals programs. DFTA is engaging in a redesign of its case management system to create distinct service areas for each case management provider and establish case managers as the point of access for determining eligibility for home-delivered meals and homecare, as well as other benefits and entitlements. DFTA is also working to enhance the City's home-delivered meals program by making service areas more efficient as well as providing for greater coordination between home-delivered meals and case management providers.

Update: Through a redesign of the City's case management and home-delivered meals programs for older adults, DFTA awarded case management contracts in 23 service areas throughout the City and meals contracts in 21 areas. The redesign has allowed DFTA to: increase coordination among DFTA's in-home services;



*Thelma Kirkpatrick boards a MarketRide bus
(Credit: Pearl Gabel)*

Spotlight on *MarketRide*

MarketRide began on October 14, 2009, when approximately two dozen older adults from Raices Times Plaza Senior Center in Brooklyn climbed aboard yellow school bus 2261. They were bound for the Fairway Market on Atlantic Avenue in Red Hook, where they planned to load up on everything from apples to Caribbean cooking spices. One older New Yorker hoped to locate a special kind of cookies. Another was excited about the variety of cereals she would find.

Increasingly, senior centers throughout the City are arranging MarketRides for their participants. Through a partnership between the Department of Education and DFTA, the City's school buses take senior center members on trips during the school day when the buses would otherwise be sitting idle. MarketRide provides transportation to supermarkets and green markets, including the many farmers' markets around town. The program's goal is to make it easier for seniors who live in neighborhoods dominated by convenience stores and bodegas to access fresh produce and healthful foods.

Better nutrition is not the only benefit of MarketRide. Participants seem to enjoy the chance to be in each other's company and catch up with friends. Carmen Senda, one of the Raices Times Plaza riders, said appreciatively as she settled into a conversation with her seatmate, "It's like a little outing."

offer clients a broader range of benefits and services; establish distinct service areas with clearer boundaries; and create a stronger link between the case management and home-delivered meals systems.

49. While the increasing role of grandparents as parents is a phenomenon that has gained visibility in recent years, their role is not well-acknowledged in some social service systems.

Initiative: Provide counseling and support services to grandparents raising grandchildren. The Grandparent Resource Center (GRC) at DFTA will provide information and assistance to grandparents who are raising grandchildren or other young relatives, and are in need of support in this role. Resource specialists will offer advocacy and case assistance, and workshops on a variety of issues will be held at the Center to increase the support network for grandparents. These resources—coupled with community support groups and training for staff of City agencies and community-based organizations—will enable New Yorkers to better understand the circumstances of and the resources available to grandparent caregivers. The Center will also maintain a close working relationship with the New York City Kincare Task Force, a group of representatives from the aging, child welfare, legal, and other sectors which strives to promote policies and comprehensive services that address the evolving challenges faced by kincare families.

Update: The GRC has continued to provide information, referrals, and assistance to grandparents who are raising grandchildren or other young relatives. Resource specialists offer advocacy and case assistance, and workshops on a variety of issues are held at the Center to increase the support network for grandparents. The Center facilitates coalition meetings, forums, and workshops across the City, and continues to work in close partnership with the New York City and New York State Kincare Task Forces. As there is a great need among caregivers in the African American, Latino, and Asian communities, GRC staff have placed particular emphasis on reaching grandparents among these populations. The Center also participated in the International Forum on Child Welfare’s annual summit by highlighting grandparent caregiving as a global phenomenon. In addition, Center staff is working with the Osborne Association on its *New York Initiative for Children of Incarcerated Parents* to assist families in which a parent is involved with the justice system and it is likely that the child will be raised by a grandparent caregiver.

50. More than one million NYC residents provide care to older family members with chronic illnesses. Informal caregivers need more support in coordinating care for relatives.

Initiative: Expand educational materials and supports available to family caregivers. To support family caregiving, DFTA’s Alzheimer’s and Caregiver Resource Center will provide counseling, education, training, and referrals to appropriate resources such as respite care services. The Center will conduct training sessions on such issues as Alzheimer’s disease, residential alternatives, and other aspects of long-term care for caregivers, older adults, professionals, and the general public. Targeted services will be provided to a variety of special populations including Chinese, Korean, Russian, and Spanish speaking caregivers, caregivers who are gay or lesbian, and grandparents who are sole caregivers for their grandchildren. In addition, the United Hospital Fund of New York City—as part of its *Next Step in Care* campaign—will partner



(Credit: NYAM)

with the City’s Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) to produce and distribute informational guides and other resources for both health care providers and family caregivers.

Update: DFTA’s Alzheimer’s and Caregiver Resource Center continues to support caregivers by making counseling, information, and referral services available. Trainings offered by the Center cover a variety of topics, including Alzheimer’s disease, residential alternatives, and other long-term care supports. *Keeping Your Mind Sharp* training sessions—offered in English, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Hindi, Urdu, and Russian—promote physical and mental exercise, proper nutrition, and stress reduction. Additional trainings through the evidence-based Chronic Disease Self-Management Program and Diabetes Self-Management Program have been offered at NORCs and in senior centers citywide.

51. Many caregivers who are eligible for unpaid family leave and need to use it cannot afford to do so.

Initiative: Explore policies that would allow more New Yorkers to take family leave when needed.

The City will work with businesses and legislators to examine policies that may be implemented either by government or the private sector to enable more New Yorkers to take leave from work to care for an ill older relative, child, or other family member.

Update: The Age-friendly Business Workgroup (described in the next section of this report) of the Age-friendly NYC Commission will be working with members of the City’s business community to formulate

recommendations on how employers can better accommodate the needs of older workers as well as develop policies that support employees with caregiving responsibilities.

52. A majority of unpaid family caregivers work and have had to make some adjustments to their work life as a result of caregiving responsibilities. Conflicts with such responsibilities impact workplace productivity.

Initiative: Conduct outreach and workshops on long-term care and caregiving resources for employers in NYC. DFTA will develop a series of programs and resources on caregiving issues that will better equip New York City employers to support employees with caregiving responsibilities. Areas of focus for employers may include providing caregiving information sessions to employees, encouraging the expansion of insurance benefits to include eldercare components, and developing alternative work arrangements such as telecommuting and job-sharing. The initiative will also provide employers with information on convening support groups for caregiving employees as well as employer/employee funded long-term care insurance.

Update: DFTA's Alzheimer's and Caregiver Resource Center conducts an array of trainings on long-term care/caregiving issues for professionals in a wide variety of settings. Resource Center staff have coordinated conferences for a diverse group of agencies, participated on panels, given radio and television interviews, and made presentations to numerous audiences (including City employees, union retirees, nursing home staff, NORC staff and residents, and senior center staff and participants). In addition to English, educational outreach sessions have been offered in Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Spanish, and Russian. DFTA also continues to collaborate with Emblem Health on their *Care for the Caregiver* training series, which offers information to corporate executives regarding the value of making caregiver support services available to employees. DFTA will work with Emblem to further expand these trainings to a greater number of corporations.

53. Most older adults prefer to “age in place” by receiving care in their homes and communities as an alternative to nursing home care.

Initiative: Further increase access to community-based care. HRA's Home Care Services Program administers community-based long term care programs that offer eligible New Yorkers a range of services, including housekeeping and home attendant services, nutritional counseling, and skilled nursing care, as well as physical, occupational, and speech therapy. The City will continue to strive to improve access to publicly-funded home care services and develop initiatives to increase the quality of these services. For example, HRA is in the process of implementing one such initiative—the joint assessment visit—through which nurses and case workers make joint visits to clients and consult each other in order to make more accurate assessments of client eligibility and needs. The nurses and case workers also work in tandem to offer information and guidance to clients on the full range of available services through HRA's home care program.

Update: Implementation of the joint assessment initiative has had promising results. The initiative has made the assessment process more efficient, accurate, and consistent. More specifically, it has eliminated the stress of multiple assessment visits for clients and clients' families; produced more accurate service plans as nurses have been able to focus exclusively on medical issues and case workers on social issues; and enhanced communication between nurses and case workers, which has produced more consistent assessments. Over the past 18 months, over 5,500 joint assessments have been conducted.

54. There is a shortage of paid caregivers despite increasing demand. Direct care workers may not receive the training and support they need to perform their duties.

Initiative: Expand training opportunities and other supports for paid caregivers. To help address a shortage of and high rate of turnover in paid direct care workers, the City will explore a number of initiatives to help recruit, train, support, and retain this workforce. Specifically, DFTA will expand already-successful training that it offers to caregivers on Alzheimer's and dementia to focus on other caregiving

challenges (such as isolation and depression) as well as offer the training in multiple languages. In addition, the City will work to make English as a second language classes more widely accessible to the caregiver workforce.

*An older New Yorker meets
with a HIICAP counselor*



Update: DFTA's employment program trains older New Yorkers to become certified home health aides and personal companions. Topics covered in the training include guidance on working with clients who have complex nutrition needs, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, physical impairments, and HIV/AIDS. The training also offers practical experience through internships. DFTA and its partner home health agencies have conducted trainings in Spanish and Chinese, and many of those placed in home health care settings are multi-lingual.

55. Long-term care costs are rapidly increasing and many older adults are concerned about how they will afford care. Only a quarter of New York State residents age 50+ have purchased long-term care insurance.

Initiative: Promote awareness and education about long-term care insurance. The City will expand efforts to make more New Yorkers aware of long-term care insurance options, including the Partnership for Long-Term Care Program—a unique program that combines long-term care insurance and Medicaid Extended Coverage. Coordinated through DFTA's Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP), these efforts will include educational materials, seminars, workshops, and information offered through the Internet.

Update: Through education and outreach efforts, DFTA's HIICAP program is working to make New Yorkers aware of the various long-term care options available to them. In addition to focusing on the Partnership for Long-Term Care Program, HIICAP has been publicizing a key provision within the Federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, called the Community Living Assistance Services and Support (CLASS) Act. Under the CLASS Act, employed individuals will be able to obtain long-term care insurance (irrespective of pre-existing conditions) through salary contributions that cause the insurance to become effective after premiums have been paid for five years.

56. Palliative care programs are often underutilized.

Initiative: Promote palliative care. The City is planning a number of initiatives to educate New Yorkers about palliative care. To inaugurate this effort, the City will organize a summit on palliative care and end-of-life issues that will focus on critical issues such as the education of medical professionals, discussion of cultural and religious differences in the context of chronic illness, and the role of faith-based organizations. The City will also work to expand public awareness about palliative care and end-of-life issues, as well as offer greater supports for individuals who are at the end of life and do not have family members and friends nearby.

Update: In partnership with DFTA, HHC hosted a summit in November 2009 to discuss palliative care and health care planning through a multi-disciplinary lens. Attendees and presenters included physicians, policymakers, and caregivers. The City is also continuing to explore avenues to expand consumer awareness about palliative care. For example, more than 250 participants attended a conference—*Unburdening the Family: Conversations on Chronic Care in the Pan-Asian Community*—organized by DFTA's Alzheimer's & Care-



Participants in DFTA's Chronic Disease Self-Management Program receive recognition for successfully completing the program (Credit: Karl Crutchfield)

giver Resource Center. The conference addressed cultural sensitivities attendant to palliative care, and its applications to chronic and life-threatening illnesses.

57. More can be done to increase access to hospital-based palliative care, as 42% of hospitals in New York State still do not have such programs.

Initiative: Expand existing HHC palliative care programs. HHC will continue to integrate the discipline of palliative care throughout its 11 acute care hospitals. Each HHC hospital now has a palliative care team and a central HHC Palliative Care Council provides expert advice by sharing opinions and making recommendations. Special PC programs are being created at several HHC hospitals to serve the needs of each hospital's community. One hospital has used specially-trained volunteers to help end-of-life patients who are without family; another is focusing on ensuring that palliative care principles based on the alleviation of suffering are used in the emergency room (the site where most people enter the hospital). In addition, another hospital is working to ensure that patients maintain continuity of treatment and ongoing contact with the hospital palliative care team as they transition from hospital to hospice care. HHC will continue to work on expanding the availability of palliative care services to its patients throughout the HHC system.

Update: HHC was named a Circle of Life Award honoree in July 2010 by the American Hospital Association for its comprehensive, sensitive, and dignified approach to the care of patients with serious and life-threatening conditions. Specifically, HHC received recognition for its leadership efforts and a system-wide approach that have resulted in the establishment of palliative care programs across the 11 public hospitals

in New York City. In May 2010, HHC also hosted the first of what will be an annual symposium to discuss the intersection of palliative care and clinical ethics.

58. Many individuals do not make their wishes regarding what types of end-of-life care they would want to receive known. Only an estimated 15 to 25% of Americans complete advance directives.

Initiative: Promote advance directives. Advance care planning, such as health proxies and living wills, helps an individual to make sure that his or her wishes regarding care will be known and followed. In collaboration with its community-based organizations and health care partners, DOHMH will work to make health care providers and New Yorkers alike more informed and aware about advance care planning. These efforts will include making forms and resources for completing advance directives publicly available, as well as helping to facilitate discussions about advance care planning and hospice care.

Update: DOHMH has developed an online resource for consumers seeking health care planning information (see <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/hca/advance-directives.shtml>). At this site, users can download forms with which they can designate health care proxies and also learn about related concepts, including living wills and do not resuscitate orders. DFTA makes wallet-sized health care proxies available in English, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Korean, and Bengali for distribution at appropriate educational and outreach events. Also, DFTA's Chronic Disease Self-Management Program—which is offered at senior centers, NORCs, and other locations throughout the City—incorporates two workshops on advance directives. They include information about and assistance with the completion of health care proxies, as well as advice on ways to make one's health care wishes known to physicians and family members.

59. Absent advance directives, a physically or mentally incapacitated person may not have health care decisions made by loved ones who best understand his/her wishes.

Initiative: Advocate for State legislation authorizing family members or domestic partners to act as surrogates to make health care decisions on behalf of an incapacitated adult. The City will work to make sure that the wishes of New Yorkers regarding their own health care are respected by encouraging the State Legislature to pass the Family Health Care Decisions Act. This legislation addresses the legal uncertainty that currently exists when a health care proxy is not in place by authorizing family members (including domestic partners) to act as surrogates on behalf of adults who lack decisionmaking capacity regarding treatment and/or end-of-life care.

Update: With the strong support of the Mayor, City Council, and other advocates, the State Legislature enacted the Family Health Care Decisions Act in March 2010. Before the Decisions Act was passed, existing state law set a very high standard for evidence expressing a patient's wishes, and it did not automatically permit family members to make health care treatment decisions for those who lacked decisionmaking capacity. The new law allows individuals such as spouses, close friends, and domestic partners to make health care decisions for an incapacitated person if that person has not executed a health care proxy. These decisions may include withholding or withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment.

Age-friendly NYC Commission

BACKGROUND

Community residents, elected officials, and others gathered at a NYAM forum in August 2010 to discuss improvements they would like to see in the community as part of the East Harlem Aging Improvement District (Credit: NYAM)



Recognizing the need to catalyze the City's vast private and nonprofit resources to improve the quality of life for older New Yorkers, the Mayor and City Council Speaker partnered with the New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM) to seat the Age-friendly NYC Commission in January 2010. The Commission is a public/private partnership comprised of leaders from a variety of fields, including business, education, healthcare, law, architecture, and aging. The Commission's charge is to promote and infuse an "age-in-everything" perspective into the many sectors of New York City that have not traditionally focused on aging issues, including higher education, business, and nonprofits outside of the social service field. Gordon Campbell of the United Way of New York City and Robin Willner of IBM chair the Commission, which meets quarterly and is staffed by NYAM.

Specifically, the Commission has been charged to:

- Identify existing best and innovative policies and programs that benefit older adults and expand their reach
- Design, pilot, and disseminate new policies and programs
- Tap into non-profit and private sector networks to adopt a similar "age-in-everything" approach to their planning and work
- Better understand how City agencies currently are applying and can apply an aging lens to their planning efforts
- Identify new and more effectively harness existing funding streams in the public and private sectors to support innovative programs and services for older adults
- Monitor City and private sector progress in implementing initiatives to enhance the age-friendliness of New York City.

Members of the Age-friendly New York City Commission

Michael Adams
SAGE

Lois Wagh Aronstein
AARP New York State

Philip Brickner
Mount Sinai School of Medicine

Robert N. Butler
(1927 – 2010)
International Longevity Center

Calvin O. Butts, III
Abyssinian Baptist Church

Gordon Campbell
United Way of New York City

Maria del Carmen Arroyo
New York City Council

Sydney Walter de Jongh
Chartis International, Inc.

Linda Fried
Columbia University

Barbara Gimbel

Pamela E. Green
Weeksville Heritage Center

Helen R. Hamlin
International Federation on Ageing
United Nations

Paloma Hernandez
Urban Health Plan, Inc.

Robert M. Kaufman
Proskauer Rose LLP

Jessica Lappin
New York City Council

To guide its work, the Commission adopted the following principles:

- Building an age-friendly city benefits individuals of all ages
- Older adults are a tremendous resource to the community and should be involved in planning for their own needs, according to their own interests
- The work of the Commission should span all five boroughs and address the full diversity of the City's older population including ranges of functioning, age, economic resources, and demographics
- Stakeholders and sectors should be engaged in problem identification and resolution around aging issues
- Commission recommendations, programs, and initiatives should be innovative, evidence-based, sustainable, and capable of replication
- The work of the Commission should build upon the rich and varied institutions and assets of the City and complement existing resources and activities.

After establishing this mission and set of principles, Commission members began leveraging their own professional networks, raising public awareness, and forming three workgroups to focus on areas that older adults had identified—during the community consultation sessions that were held throughout the City in 2008—as among those that are particularly important to them. Specifically, the three areas of focus are: employers and retailers (Age-friendly Business Workgroup); higher education (Age-friendly Schools, Colleges, and Universities Workgroup); and creating change at the local, neighborhood level (Aging Improvement Districts Workgroup).

Each workgroup is chaired by a Commission member and comprised of Commission members and others with expertise in (and/or an interest in advancing) the group's area of focus. The groups meet on a monthly basis and are staffed by NYAM in partnership with the Mayor's Office, City Council, and Department for the Aging. In their first year of operation, the workgroups have created goals and vision statements to guide their work, raised awareness about key issues affecting older New Yorkers, and implemented innovative programs. The following pages offer more information about their progress.

Melissa Mark-Viverito
New York City Council

Len McNally
New York Community Trust

Diane E. Meier
Mount Sinai School of Medicine

Edward I. Mills
Edward I. Mills + Associates,
Architects p.c.

Jacqueline Mondros
Hunter School of Social Work

Meredith Oppenheim

Denise Scott
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
NYC

Mark L. Wagar
Empire BlueCross BlueShield

Arthur Webb

Robin Willner
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Ex-Officio Members

Lilliam Barrios-Paoli
New York City Department for the
Aging

Jo Ivey Boufford
The New York Academy of Medicine

Linda Gibbs
Deputy Mayor for Health and Human
Services

Christine C. Quinn
Speaker, New York City Council

Age-friendly NYC Commission

AGE-FRIENDLY BUSINESS

Shopping on the Upper West

*Side (Credit: CHE Students,
Hunter College)*



As the home to Wall Street and a hub of international commerce, New York City is the financial capital of the United States. Our City is also home to more than 200,000 small businesses. Older adults are important to businesses as both customers and employees. Businesses have an immeasurable effect on the lives of older New Yorkers as the places where people shop, invest their money, and work.

The Age-friendly Business Workgroup has two dozen members including leaders of business improvement districts (BIDs), chambers of commerce, large companies, and small businesses. Organizations with expertise in older adult employment issues—including the AARP, MetLife Market Institute, and Conference Board—are also represented. Workgroup members decided that the workgroup would initially focus on retail businesses—specifically, their accessibility to and marketing efforts toward older adults.

Local Retail Initiative

While the Census Bureau reports that Americans over 50 make up one-third of the population, this age group (according to the Federal Reserve) controls 50% of the country's discretionary spending. In fact, the Federal Reserve estimates that in 2010 older adults outspent younger shoppers by roughly \$1 trillion. Also, older adults are more likely to frequent local, neighborhood businesses and they are also often the most loyal customers. The Age-friendly Local Retail Initiative was created to make businesses aware of the needs of older adult customers and of the opportunity for expanding business to this growing population. To this end, the workgroup developed a guide for businesses looking to become more age-friendly. The guide contains an introduction to the initiative, making the case to businesses about the increase in the older adult population and how important older adults are to their businesses as customers and clients. The guide also has a list of ways products, services, and the physical environment can be improved to become more appealing and comfortable to older adults (see box).

Age-friendly Businesses Consider:

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

- Offering food, products, and/or services that are appropriate for older adults.
- Making discounts or special offers available to older adults.
- Offering drop off/delivery services.
- Providing respectful human contact, in person and on the phone, and offering extra customer service for older adults.
- Communicating through printed materials/signs and the Internet in a large, clear font in appropriate languages.
- Participating in the community.

PHYSICAL FACILITY

- Having a place where customers can sit and rest.
- Providing a drink of water if asked.
- Allowing customers to use a restroom.
- Providing adequate lighting at the entrance and throughout the business.
- Avoiding heavy doors, or offering electronic doors.
- Being mindful of stair safety: stairs (if there are any) should have handrails/ramps and stair treads should be sufficiently deep (at least 11 inches).
- Placing products on shelves which are easily reachable, or readily offering help in reaching items.

Some are simple suggestions many businesses already implement—like having a person who answers the phone and placing items on the shelves so that people can reach them. Others involve a more substantial cost, such as installing electronic doors or offering discounts or delivery service for older adults. The idea is to reinforce existing practices and encourage businesses to adopt new ones as they are able. Lastly, the guide contains detailed recommendations on ways to make a business more accommodating to older adults with special needs, including those with vision, hearing, and mobility impairments. Included is information on financial resources, such as tax incentives, that are available to businesses seeking to make capital improvements to better accommodate older adults with such needs.

In 2010, the initiative was piloted in several neighborhoods in partnership with BID's and local business associations. The majority of business owners who were approached agreed that older adults are some of their best customers. They were excited to see practices they already adopted listed and were open to making additional accommodations and improvements. One bakery owner described bringing out a milk crate on several occasions for older adults who were tired and needed to sit. It was not until he was introduced

*A meeting of the Age-friendly Business Workgroup in November 2010
(Credit: NYAM)*



to the age-friendly concept, however, that he focused on these incidents and decided to purchase a chair. A supermarket manager described several extraordinary steps he took to help his older customers—such as allowing them to shop before the store was officially open to avoid crowds as well as offering them a drink of water and a place to sit while shopping and an area to leave walkers. However, that manager had not considered how aisle width, shelving heights, and the size of signage and labeling were affecting his older customers.

2011 and Beyond

The Business Workgroup will distribute the age-friendly retail guide to 1,000 businesses in 10 neighborhoods throughout the City with the support of business organizations. Several strategies are being considered to raise public awareness regarding businesses that choose to embrace the principles outlined in the guide, including a website, an easily identifiable window decal, and special shopping events. Trainings, information about shared best practices, and an e-mail address and phone number through which business owners can ask questions will be made available. In select neighborhoods, older adult ambassadors will be trained to visit businesses that request assistance in assessing their age-friendliness. In addition, information will be collected from business owners and older adults to determine the guide's effectiveness.

Workgroup members will also focus on studying and promoting age-friendly employment practices in 2011. As older adults are living longer, many are working (either by choice or economic necessity) well beyond traditional retirement age. However, some older adult workers may need training or other assistance to ensure that their knowledge and skills remain current, while others may wish to transition to part-time work. Though many employers recognize that older adults are experienced and valuable members of their workforce, their adoption of age-friendly practices designed to better accommodate older adult employees may be lacking. To this end, the workgroup is planning to bring together older adults and employers to research, discuss, and make recommendations in key areas that promote an age-friendly work environment. These areas include: phased retirement; flexible scheduling; benefits and accommodations; retention of employees; training for older adults; and accommodating caregivers.

Age-friendly NYC Commission

AGE-FRIENDLY SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, & UNIVERSITIES

*Linda Fried, Chair of the Age-friendly
Schools, Colleges, & Universities
Workgroup, delivers a lecture on
Longer Lives in an Aging Society at
Columbia University in November 2010
(Credit: Columbia University)*



New York City has a rich network of resources for those, including older adults, who wish to pursue higher education and other opportunities for learning. With 480,000 students at 23 colleges and institutions, the City University of New York (CUNY) is the nation's largest public, urban university system. CUNY reaches all five boroughs, offering courses in dozens of subject areas through community colleges, technical schools, senior colleges, and its Graduate Center. New York City is also home to dozens of private institutions of higher education including world-renowned research universities as well as top art, music, and vocational schools.

In our conversations with them, older adults repeatedly expressed their desire to continue learning, whether it be by taking college courses for credit, enrolling in a seminar to sharpen job-related skills, or simply making use of the rich resources that our City's colleges and universities have to offer. However, many older New Yorkers find information about such opportunities challenging to access. In addition, they may face financial, physical, or other barriers.

The Age-friendly Schools, Colleges, and Universities Workgroup—whose members include deans and professors from many of the City's educational institutions—was charged with identifying the wealth of resources offered by these institutions that might benefit older adults and determining how they might be enhanced to be even more age-friendly. The group began by defining an age-friendly college/university, determining that such an institution is aware of its leadership role as part of an aging society and sets a strategic direction to respond through its research agenda, curriculum, engagement with the community, and relationship to its own faculty, staff, and students. Workgroup members further identified core practices that help to define an institution as age-friendly, including

- Strengthening older adults' access to educational opportunities
- Increasing access to university resources for older adults in the community (library, computers, physical education, arts, lectures, etc.)
- Developing partnerships with community organizations to build and expand learning opportunities for older adults and to prepare the community to become an age-friendly city
- Facilitating and using university and college expertise and resources to help build an age-friendly city
- Enhancing the curriculum at all levels to broaden students' views of their personal and professional roles in an aging society
- Creating knowledge and models to make the transformation to an aging society positive for all generations
- Expanding engagement opportunities for alumni as well as emeritus/retired faculty and staff

Institutional Inventory

Because no centralized resource exists to catalog all of the classes, courses, seminars, and other opportunities that New York City's colleges and universities offer for older adults, the workgroup decided to make creating such an inventory its first priority. To this end, Mayor Bloomberg and City Council Speaker Quinn

sent a joint letter to more than 100 of the City's college and university presidents in October 2010. The letter introduced Age-friendly NYC and the principles of an age-friendly college/university. It also asked each school to provide information about current opportunities for older adults on campus. As a follow up, institutions were provided with a guide recommending steps that they can take to become more age-friendly as well as asked to complete a comprehensive questionnaire that will assist workgroup members in completing the inventory.

The response to date has been very positive, with numerous college and university presidents designating a staff member to share information and otherwise serve as the institution's point person on age-friendly issues. The information shared by the colleges and universities is being compiled into an inventory of resources and programs for older adults across the City.

2011 and Beyond

The Schools, Colleges, and Universities Workgroup will continue its work on compiling an inventory of the resources that our City's institutions of higher learning offer to older New Yorkers, with the expectation that it will be completed by the end of 2011. Once completed, the inventory will be widely disseminated to older adults and other interested parties across the City through the Internet and other media. The workgroup is aiming to identify a core group of lead institutions that will work to inspire their peers by being leaders in adopting age-friendly principles and practices. A symposium will be planned as part of this effort. In addition to courses, classes, seminars, and related opportunities, it is anticipated that the discussions will focus on other equally important areas, including promoting research in the field of aging as well as advancing policies and programs that provide a supportive environment for older adult faculty and staff members.

Age-friendly NYC Commission

AGING IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

*Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito
with fellow New Yorkers at a NYAM forum
in August 2010 to discuss the findings of
a community assessment for the East
Harlem Aging Improvement District
(Credit: NYAM)*



New Yorkers live in a patchwork of neighborhoods with diverse populations and varied assets and challenges. Older adults say that this rich quilt of stores, restaurants, community organizations, churches, parks, museums, and streets is what makes our City such a great place to live. Yet as they age, they face more barriers to accessing these resources. In our many consultations, older adults told us that they would like our age-friendly efforts to be locally-focused, as their own neighborhoods are where they spend most of their time. In response, the innovative concept of Aging Improvement Districts was born.

The concept of an Aging Improvement District brings together older adults living in a specific neighborhood with a variety of other local stakeholders—businesses, non-profit organizations, City officials, and cultural, educational and religious institutions, among others—to think strategically about how they might partner to enhance the quality of life for older New Yorkers in that particular neighborhood. After identifying specific areas that need to be addressed, the older New Yorkers and community partners work to enact change.

Guiding the Commission's efforts in advancing the Aging Improvement District concept is a workgroup of leaders from community-based organizations (including those that focus on older adult issues), neighborhood associations, and local businesses (among others). Group members began their work by developing principles to guide each Aging Improvement District. They determined that Aging Improvement Districts should:

- Embrace a variety of engagement approaches tailored to each community rather than a one-size-fits-all model
- Start small and build on what is learned from initial successes
- Be based on the ownership and participation of older adults in the community
- Identify a catalyst (such as a neighborhood organization or community activist) to help local leaders emerge
- Connect to existing efforts and activities in the community
- Connect to small businesses and BID's where possible.

In 2010, the first Aging Improvement Districts were piloted in East Harlem and the Upper West Side in Manhattan, as well as in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. The workgroup also developed a plan to evaluate the three initial districts, beginning with the one in East Harlem. The evaluation will measure how well each pilot involves multiple sectors and older adults, inspires change in the community, creates new leadership in the neighborhood, prompts new organizations to consider how they serve older adults, and encourages senior service organizations to connect to community resources.

East Harlem

The City's first Aging Improvement District was launched in East Harlem in partnership with Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito. The pilot is led by an advisory group comprised of older adults as well as leaders from a variety of sectors, including senior service providers, businesses, cultural institutions, and housing organizations.

The initiative began with a dozen community discussions at a variety of locations that were conducted in English, Spanish, and Cantonese with more than 200 older adults. Through these conversations, older adults identified their neighborhood's strengths as well as shared their thoughts on what might be improved to make the area more age-friendly. The findings from these discussions were shared in a film—narrated only by the voices of the neighborhood's older adults (the film can be viewed at <http://www.nyam.org/news/audio.shtml>)—that was presented at a community forum hosted by NYAM in August 2010. At the forum, older adults joined business, community, and government leaders to discuss the findings from the discussions and brainstorm ideas on how to make East Harlem an even better place to live for older New Yorkers.

Following the event, the advisory group identified priority issues and began developing a strategy to address them. Initial areas of focus include increasing indoor and outdoor seating for older adults (especially in locations where people wait on lines), connecting older adults to existing community events and resources, and improving access to laundry facilities and swimming pools. Making the area around the intersection of 125th St. and Lexington Avenue—which serves as a transportation and shopping hub—more age-friendly is also a priority. While still in their early stages, our efforts have been met with success. For example, there will be special

*Mayor Michael Bloomberg visits with
members of the Moose Lodge Senior
Center in Brooklyn in January 2011
(Credit: Kristen Artz)*





hours for older adults at the Thomas Jefferson Park Pool beginning this summer, NYCHA is working on improving laundry access in public housing, and a number of neighborhood institutions (including museums, restaurants, and libraries) have expressed strong interest in improving access and programming/services for older adult residents.

Older New Yorkers at Project FIND's Hamilton Senior Center share their feedback as part of the consultation process for the Upper West Side Aging Improvement District (Credit: NYAM)

Upper West Side

The City's second Aging Improvement District was launched on the Upper West Side in June 2010 in partnership with Council Member Gale Brewer. The Upper West Side has one of the greatest concentrations of non-profit organizations, Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs), cultural institutions, and businesses in the City. An advisory group comprised of leaders from these institutions, as well as older adults and representatives from neighborhood senior service providers, leads the initiative. The initiative began with 20 community discussions with older adults in English and Spanish in a wide range of settings, including religious institutions, senior centers, and an assisted living facility. The advisory group worked with NYAM to compile the findings, which focus on such areas as streets/transportation, businesses, cultural institutions, and community engagement. The findings from the discussions were shared at a community event held in April 2011.

Bedford-Stuyvesant

Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn is home to the City's third Aging Improvement District, which began in November 2010. While the first two districts were staffed by NYAM and led by an advisory group, this district is being led by an established community organization—the Coalition for the Improvement of Bedford Stuyvesant (CIBS).

For the initial phase of the project, CIBS is working with older adults and its community partners to assess the neighborhood's age-friendliness. Initial areas of focus will include housing and physical infrastructure, workforce development, business vitality, and social services.

2011 and Beyond

Two additional districts—one in the Bronx and one in Queens—are slated for launch in 2011. Criteria considered in selecting neighborhoods for new districts include: diversity in and size of the older adult population, the housing stock, physical infrastructure, available community resources, and the presence of a lead organization to galvanize the project.



Looking Back & Moving Ahead

(Credit: CHE Students, Hunter College)



As the previous pages summarize, much has happened since Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Speaker Christine Quinn, and NYAM President Jo Ivey Boufford announced the City's Age-friendly NYC initiatives in August 2009 and the seating of the Age-friendly NYC Commission in January 2010. More than a dozen City agencies have joined with the Mayor's Office and their community partners to implement 59 projects that seek to enhance the City's responsiveness to the needs of older adults in the areas of community and civic participation; housing; transportation and public spaces; and health and social services.

Dr. John Beard of the World Health Organization presents a certificate recognizing New York as the first municipality to join the WHO's Global Network of Age-friendly Cities to Council Speaker Christine Quinn and Mayor Michael Bloomberg as officials from the City, NYAM, Age-friendly NYC Commission, and AARP look on
(Credit: Kristen Artz)

The Age-friendly NYC Commission, staffed by NYAM in conjunction with the Mayor's Office and City Council, has been meeting quarterly to make recommendations on how the nonprofit, private, and education sectors can partner with government to make New York City even more age-friendly. In addition, three Commission workgroups have been spearheading projects that older New Yorkers have identified as critical: enabling businesses to better serve older adult customers, identifying and cataloging the wealth of resources our City's colleges and universities make available to older adults, and engaging communities

in an assessment of their own age-friendliness through the creation of Aging Improvement Districts in three of our City's neighborhoods. Perhaps most importantly, Age-friendly NYC has inspired New Yorkers of all ages and from a variety of backgrounds to take a critical look at the future of our City through an "age-in-everything" lens. Our work has not gone unnoticed. In June 2010, the World Health Organization recognized New York as the first member of its *Global Network of Age-friendly Cities*. Stories about Age-friendly NYC have appeared in numerous print publications and other media, including the *New York Times*, *U.S. News and World Report*, and the *AARP International Journal*. In fact, the strategy we have adopted—engaging in a community consultation process to identify areas that need to be addressed and developing solutions through public/private partnerships—is increasingly being looked to by other cities throughout the world as a model in preparing for the rapid increase in the older adult population. Over the past year, leaders of age-friendly initiatives in Spain, Australia, and Canada came to New York to learn about Age-friendly

Older New Yorkers make music at a fair in East Harlem sponsored by DFTA in conjunction with Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito. East Harlem is among the first neighborhoods to pilot the Age-friendly NYC Commission's Aging Improvement District initiative. (Credit: William Alatrسته)

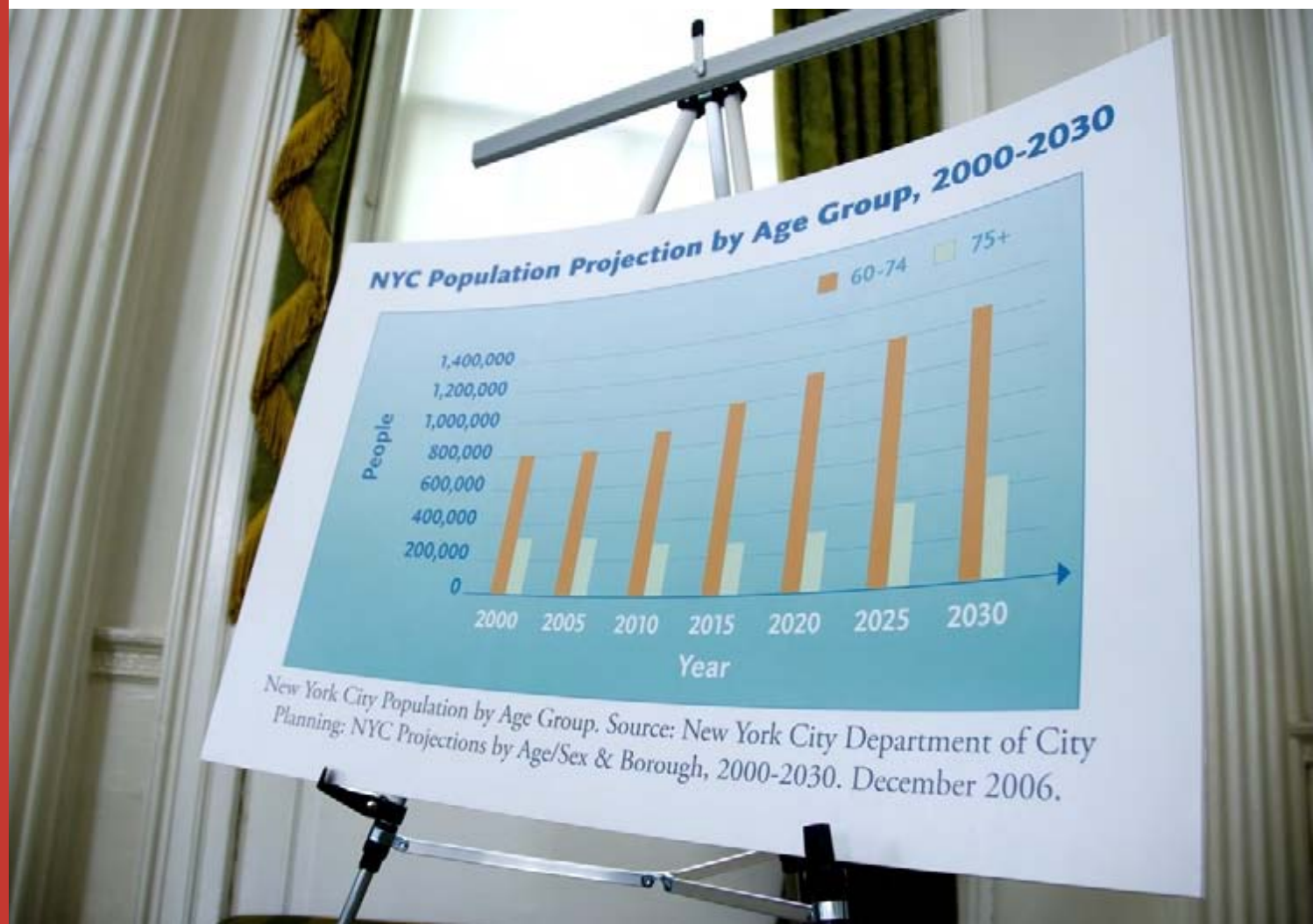


NYC. In addition, NYAM staff members traveled to Hong Kong and Austria to speak with leaders from countries throughout the world about our work. We have also provided guidance to cities across the country—including Columbus, Ohio; Omaha, Nebraska; Chicago, Illinois; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania—to help them launch or consider the feasibility of launching their own age-friendly initiatives.

Still, our work remains unfinished. Over the next year and beyond, City agencies and their partners will continue to work on implementing and evaluating the 59 City-sponsored age-friendly initiatives that were announced by the Mayor and City Council Speaker in August 2009—including winding down those initiatives that have not shown promise. At the same time, the Age-friendly NYC Commission has put forth an ambitious agenda and goals for its second year. The Commission's three workgroups—focusing on age-friendly businesses, age-friendly schools, colleges, and universities, and Aging Improvement Districts—will continue to advance the initiatives which they began in their inaugural year as well as start work on new areas of focus. One area that has already been chosen as a priority is technology and its impact on older adults. We look forward to sharing updates about our continued progress with you as we further advance our efforts to build an age-friendly New York.

Age-in-Everything: Age-friendly NYC by the Numbers

(Credit: William Alatryste)



50%	Approximate amount by which NYC's older adult population is expected to increase in the next 20 years
69	Age of Mayor Michael Bloomberg
14	No. of neighborhoods in which the City and NYAM had conversations with older adults to begin planning for <i>Age-friendly NYC</i>
59	No. of City-sponsored initiatives to make NYC more age-friendly announced by the Mayor and Council Speaker in August 2009
184	No. of ReServists employed by the City as of April 2011
4200	Hours of service exchanged by <i>TimeBanksNYC</i> members from Nov. 2009 to February 2011
160	No. of cultural organizations featured in the <i>NYC ARTS Manhattan Cultural Guide for Seniors</i>
21	No. of LGBT cultural competency trainings conducted by DFTA in the last two years
445	No. of units of affordable senior housing for which HPD provided gap financing in FY 2010
\$15M	Amount of assistance made available through the Senior Citizens Homeowner Assistance Program (SCHAP) since its inception in 1998
1000+	No. of housing units that have been preserved through SCHAP
12,000+	No. of licensed home improvement contractors who will receive a checklist from the Dept. of Consumer Affairs outlining best practices for the older adult market
\$2.25	Per ride cost to older adult and other Access-A-Ride users to utilize a taxicab for their Manhattan transportation needs as part of an MTA/TLC pilot initiative
2705	No. of new, modern bus shelters with benches installed throughout NYC as of March 2011
26%	Percent reduction in pedestrian injuries in Times Square since it was made over as part of DOT's <i>Green Light for Midtown</i> initiative
25	No. of areas throughout NYC undergoing street/intersection improvements as part of DOT's <i>Safe Streets for Seniors</i> initiative
60%	Percent decrease in pedestrian crashes in the Hylan/New Dorp area of Staten Island since improvements were made through Safe Streets
226	No. of pages in <i>Inclusive Design Guidelines, New York City</i> , a publication released by the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities
6500	No. of downloads of DDC's <i>Active Design Guidelines</i> from their website since Spring 2010
4500+	No. of HIV and aging service providers who have received training through the City's HIV Prevention and Health Literacy Initiative for Older Adults since 2007
25%	Amount of discount applied to membership fees for older New Yorkers seeking to join the New York Sports Club as a result of a special partnership with the City
1700	No. of air conditioners distributed to older New Yorkers during Summer 2010 through the City's <i>Cool Assistance Program</i>

- 50,121** No. of calls made to homebound older adults during FY 2010 through DFTA's telephone reassurance program
- 13,000+** No. of taxis that will receive notification when a Silver Alert is activated
- 200** No. of "Savvy Seniors" presentations conducted by the Dept. of Consumer Affairs over the past several years to educate older New Yorkers about frauds and scams
- 7000** No. of older adults to whom outreach was conducted in an effort to enroll SCRIE participants in food stamps
- 216** No. of bus trips that have been taken to transport older adults to supermarkets and farmers' markets through the City's *MarketRide* initiative
- 8** No. of languages in which DFTA's Alzheimer's and Caregiver Resource Center has offered *Keeping Your Mind Sharp* training sessions
- 5500+** No. of joint assessment visits conducted by nurses and case workers over the past 18 months to clients of HRA's Home Care Services Program
- 98** Total no. of members of the Age-friendly NYC Commission's three workgroups
- 110** No. of college/university leaders contacted by the Mayor and Council Speaker to request information about their programs, services, and activities for older adults
- 3** No. of Aging Improvement Districts launched in NYC since January 2010

(Credit: NYAM)



Acknowledgments

(Credit: NYAM)



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Mayor Michael Bloomberg prepares to announce 59 City-sponsored initiatives in August 2009 as part of Age-friendly NYC (Credit: William Alatrisme)

