



# The New York Academy of Medicine

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**Age-friendly New York City Community Forum Notes**  
**American Bible Society**  
**Council Member Gale Brewer**  
**Co-sponsored by One Stop Senior Services**  
**March 25, 2008**

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Approximate number of attendees: 260

## **What to be Called**

- Seniors is OK
- Elders
- Mature adults
- Who cares?
- “Call me what you want, just do things for me.”

## **Civic Participation and Employment**

- Baltimore example – “Experience Corps”
- Need an employment agency specifically tailored for older adults
- Affirmative action for older workers – require companies to hire a certain number of older workers
- “We can all participate in cleaning up the streets. If you can walk, you can bend. Bend down and pick up the garbage.”
- Neighborhood too expensive now for people that want to run small businesses
- Want jobs for well educated older workers, like in business or education (vs. minimum wage, non-skilled jobs)
- Lots of people volunteer but also want paid opportunities

## **Social Participation**

- Need evening events for seniors. 5pm closing of senior centers is too early

- UWS has a lot of great assets. Let's make sure they are accessible.
- Need a list of exercise programs for seniors
- Create special walking programs for seniors in Central Park

### **Respect and Social Inclusion**

- Cross-town bus driver is rude to disabled
- Need affordable retail and services for older people. Everything is aimed at younger people.
- Noise level in restaurants is too loud. Ask owners to turn down music

### **Transportation**

- Cross-town buses refuse to lower for person with a walker
- Need more stops on the M20 near CPW
- M10 not running as often as needed
- Put a video camera in the front of every bus to monitor bus drivers
- How will congestion pricing affect us? Disabled drivers should be exempt.
- Important to insure that congestion pricing revenue goes to mass transit
- People who have difficulty speaking need a way to be able to communicate with the access-a-ride service. Need an internet-based system. Gale Brewer said she would pursue.
- In-person interview required for Access-A-Ride is bad idea, since the only way to get there is on public transportation
- "We moved back to the city from Suffolk county when we couldn't drive anymore."

### **Outdoor Spaces**

- Restaurants that dump dirty water in the gutter on 84<sup>th</sup> and Broadway
- Gutters are dirty
- Broken sidewalks
- Sloping sidewalks are a hazard.
- People should curb their dogs. Mess is a hazard.
- Need people to clean the grates so water and snow can drain; puddles at intersections are a hazard
- Need more time to cross the streets, esp Broadway; "I get old every time I cross the street."

- Need better pedestrian control, especially at intersections (consider New Zealand plans which prevent cars and people in intersections at the same time)
- Benches needed
- People in scooters have a hard time with the curbs. There is no continuity in the curb cuts.
- Homeless people on 97<sup>th</sup> street
- Rats
- Develop a task force that inspects sidewalks, curb cuts and accessibility
- Get the City to open up school yards after school and on the weekends so older people can use them for exercise and recreation

### **Housing**

- More money for NORCS
- SCRIE upper limit is unrealistic
- Combine NORCS with horizontal residences and services - see if NORC's could work together with Business Improvement District
- Put nursing homes within NORCS or in community setting that includes Co-ops
- See if City could partially support NORCs in privately owned buildings
- Create mixed developments that include elderly and supported housing (with services like gyms, physical therapy, community rooms) - but are not exclusively for old people
- City should use eminent domain powers to punish landlords with too many violations and reclaim properties to build housing for older adults
- Lots of recognition that older adults who have been in rent stabilized or rent controlled apartments are a "landlord's worst nightmare"
- Preventing the conversion of Mitchell Lama housing is a big concern
- Number of affordable apartments is rapidly declining; older people are being pushed out of Manhattan
- Reform rent stabilization laws to protect older people from eviction

### **Community Services**

- MCOs that oversee home attendants should make sure they are fluent in English and that they receive appropriate training. Need more oversight of home care attendants.
- Need educational opportunities for people of all ages
- Need well trained and compassionate caregivers

- Need respite services for caregivers

### **Sources of Support**

- Less than half the room had family in the neighborhood or city
- “We rely on our girlfriends”
- Family, friends
- Local religious institutions – provided assistance in ways that are less bureaucratic than government services
- Neighbors – story about an older woman who a neighbor hadn’t seen in a few days and called landlord. Woman was found too sick to call for help and rescued just in time.
- Buddy system where neighbors are assigned to check in on one another
- Local elected officials accessible and helpful

### **Cost of Living**

- SSI, pensions are tough to live on
- Need grocery stores to offer discounts for seniors
- Rising cost of living are straining fixed incomes
- Need more affordable retail and restaurant options

### **General Problems**

- Homelessness/eviction is a problem
- Officials don’t listen to us

### **UWS Assets**

- Gale Brewer
- UWS political officials are accessible
- Goddard Riverside Community Center
- Westside Federation
- Lost of cultural institutions - need to make sure they are accessible to older adults