



THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

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SPEAKER QUINN ANNOUNCES “AGE FRIENDLY NEW YORK” INITIATIVE *Will Develop Blueprint Helping City Prepare for Aging Population*

City Hall – Council Speaker Christine Quinn was joined today by New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM) President Jo Ivey Boufford, M.D., Aging Committee Chair Maria del Carmen Arroyo, Senior Centers Subcommittee Chair James Vacca, elected officials and advocates to announce the “Age Friendly New York” initiative, which will create a blueprint to help the City prepare for its growing aging population.

New York City has already begun to look at the future in areas such as the environment, infrastructure, and energy use. However, existing plans have not been focused on our senior population, which is estimated to grow by 40% by 2030. Upon its completion next spring, this blueprint will be a comprehensive set of proposals on how to remain an age-friendly city in a range of areas such as health care, transportation, housing and workforce development.

“New York City is expected to add a million new residents by 2030, and we’re already preparing for that impact on areas like our environment, energy use and housing stock,” said Speaker Christine Quinn. “What gets talked about less is the fact that our City will have over 300,000 additional senior citizens in 2030, and we want to be sure that we are focused on their needs as well. Age Friendly New York will help us guarantee that the people who are working to make our City great have a New York that they can retire in safely and comfortably.”

“This initiative will assess New York City using a universal standard of what is required for city-dwelling seniors to thrive,” said Academy President Dr. Boufford. “It marks an exciting opportunity for New York to join a network of global cities working to address issues of aging, urbanization and globalization. While focused on the needs of older adults, this initiative stands to increase the quality of life for residents of all ages. Modifications that make a city more age-friendly – such as well-maintained sidewalks – are good for seniors, small children, disabled individuals and mothers with strollers.”

NYAM will assess New York City’s age-friendliness and develop an overarching blueprint for improvement by bringing together key decision makers and local communities to implement policy recommendations. A steering committee of policymakers, service providers, community leaders and senior residents has been convened to advise the Academy.

Between December and January, NYAM will be hosting a series of six roundtables being co-chaired by prominent New Yorkers and bringing together experts in a number of fields. Round table topics will include:

1. *Business*, chaired by Partnership for NYC President Kathryn Wylde,
2. *Transportation and Outdoor Space*, chaired by Straphangers Campaign Senior Attorney Gene Russianoff,
3. *Housing Development*, chaired by Citizens Housing and Planning Council Executive Director Jerilyn Perine,
4. *Tenant Rights*, chaired by Citywide Taskforce on Housing Court Executive Director Louise Seeley,
5. *Civic Engagement*, Wagner School of Public Service Associate Professor Dr. Walter Stafford,
6. *Health*, chaired by NYAM President Jo Ivey Boufford

The Council and NYAM will also conduct at least one Community Forum in each borough, to solicit input from residents of all ages. In addition, NYAM will be researching existing literature and studies, and will be conducting focus groups to incorporate the views and needs of vulnerable populations of seniors often underrepresented in secondary research. Any stakeholders can also submit their ideas and concerns online at www.AgeFriendlyNYC.org

“The age related demographic changes we will see in the years ahead make this initiative an imperative one,” said Senior Center Subcommittee Chair James Vacca. “As a 52-year-old baby boomer, I recognize that we must begin planning now for a senior-friendly city for my generation and those who are now seniors and living longer. Our quality of life is important to us and I know that we can only be secure in our future if we have foresight today.”

“The depth and diversity of our workforce is a key competitive strength of New York City,” said Kathryn Wylde, President & CEO of the Partnership for New York City. “The knowledge and skills of our most seasoned workers are a very valuable resource. The business community is eager to support an effort to keep older workers productive and contributing to our economy.”

“New York City should have a transportation network that makes it easier for seniors to get around town,” said Gene Russianoff, senior attorney for the Straphangers Campaign, a riders' advocacy group. “Age Friendly NYC will help us to plan for these, and other future needs of our senior citizens. I look forward to working with the New York Academy of Medicine, the City Council and my colleagues on the aim of an accessible and friendly transportation system for older New Yorkers.”

“If we are serious about ensuring that adequate infrastructure, resources and services are available for our aging population, we must begin planning now,” said Jerilyn Perine, Executive Director of the Citizens Housing and Planning Council. “This process is the beginning of that important and much needed work.”

In October 2007, the World Health Organization released a guide to help cities throughout the world become more “age-friendly.” It provides a protocol for cities to utilize as they engage in comprehensive planning efforts around the needs of their seniors – present and future. Age-friendliness is a holistic concept encompassing eight domains, including key issues such as access to outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, housing, respect and social inclusion, social participation, communication and information, civic participation and employment, and community support and health services.

Thirty-five cities around the world have participated in the initiative including Mexico City, Moscow, London and New Delhi. NYAM is coordinating the protocol’s implementation in New York City, one of only two participating U.S. cities. This marks an exciting opportunity for New York to join a network of global cities working to address issues of aging, urbanization and globalization.

Founded in 1847, The New York Academy of Medicine is an independent, non-partisan, non-profit institution whose mission is to enhance the health of the public. Its research, education, community engagement, and evidence-based advocacy seek to improve the health of people living in cities, especially disadvantaged and vulnerable populations. Learn more about the Age Friendly New York initiative at www.nyam.org/agefriendly.

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