



**visits4u Case Studies:  
City Transportation  
New York, U.S.A.**

## NYC Transportation



### NEW YORK, USA

**Title: Fully participate in all that City life has to offer**

#### Description

The City of New York is the world's busiest and most dynamic city. With an estimated 2016 population of 8,537,673 distributed over a land area of about 302.6 square miles (784 km<sup>2</sup>). New York City is also the most densely populated major city in the United States. Located at the southern tip of the state of New York, the city is the centre of the New York metropolitan area, one of the most populous urban agglomerations in the world with an estimated 23.7 million residents as of 2016. A global power city, New York City has been described as the cultural, financial, and media capital of the world, and exerts a significant impact upon commerce, entertainment, research, technology, education, politics, and sports. Its ethnic and cultural diversity and vibrant mix of world influences might be one reason why NYC attracts millions of visitors each year.

For over 40 years, the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD), has worked to ensure that people with disabilities can fully participate in and enjoy all that City life has to offer. Since its founding in 1973, the office has kept pace with the evolution of the disability rights movement.

In July 2016, the de Blasio Administration issued the inaugural edition of Accessible NYC, the first-ever annual report on the status of improving accessibility through the initiatives, programs and services of New York City agencies. The report focused on areas that have persistently challenged people with disabilities.

## Becoming inclusive:

### 1. Description

There are almost 1 million New Yorkers who have disclosed living with a disability, or roughly 11.2% of the city's population. In addition, by applying the 11.2 % to the 60.7 million people who visited New York City in 2016, is approximately 6.8 million visitors to the city each year have a disability. In July 2016, the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) issued the inaugural edition of Accessible NYC an annual report on the lives of people with disabilities in the city. The 2017 edition of Accessible NYC is organized into six sections: Transportation, Employment, Access, Education, Housing and Health. Transportation is the section that will be presented in this case study.

Residents and tourists alike rely on the streets to be safe and on public transportation to get them where they need to go. Of the nearly 1 in 8 New Yorkers who have self-identified as living with disabilities, about 10% are estimated to use wheelchairs. Through the Department of Transportation (DOT), the Department of City Planning (DCP), and collaboration from other agencies working with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD), the City has made a concerted effort to ensure that people, including the more than 5.5 million people who use public transportation each day, are able to navigate the City.



### 2. Description of steps taken, changes and progress

New York City's public transportation system lags behind the majority of American cities in wheelchair accessibility. Opened in 1904, the underground subway system has been slow to see accessibility renovations due to the project's complexity. However, in order to achieve full

accessibility to transport, a lot of interventions have been made by stakeholders.

These interventions include increasing pedestrian ramps and detectable warning surfaces at pedestrian crossings through an ongoing DOT project funded at \$20 million per year. In addition, DOT is increasing the rate of installation of Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS). These devices help the 351,685 New Yorkers who are blind or have low vision cross the street safely by alerting them through audible tones, speech messages, and vibrating surfaces of the “walk” phase of a traffic signal at a given intersection.

The City, through the Taxi Limousine Commission (TLC), has increased the number of accessible vehicles for people with mobility, vision, and hearing disabilities. There are approximately 500 wheelchair accessible yellow taxis (scheduled to reach 7,000, or 50 percent of the fleet by 2020) and 900 wheelchair accessible green taxis (ultimately scheduled to reach 9,000, or 50 percent of the fleet by as early as 2024).

Out of New York’s 469 subway stations, there are currently 84 key stations (stations with high ridership) serving major activity centers and transfer hubs that are accessible to individuals with mobility disabilities. The number of accessible key stations is scheduled to reach 100 by 2020, through a combination of State and City funding. Accessible stations include access to stations and platforms via elevators and ramps, as well as tactile warning strips along the platform edge.

All New Yorkers have access to the City’s Yellow and Boro Taxis and FHV’s. Boro Taxis, or green taxis, are dispatched by local car service companies or pick up street hails in Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, Staten Island, and upper parts of Manhattan. The City will expand the existing dispatch services so wheelchair users in all five boroughs will be able to have an accessible taxi or Boro Taxi dispatched on-demand or by advanced reservation. This service is especially important for people with disabilities in the outer boroughs, whether they are wheelchair users or not, because of the difficulty of hailing taxis in many residential areas outside of Manhattan.

Wheelchair-accessible yellow taxis are available for Access-A-Ride (AAR) trips. Participants to the AAR program enjoy all the benefits of yellow taxi service for the cost of an Access-A-Ride trip, including a \$2.75 fare for door-to-door service.

It is furthermore proposed adding ferry service between the boroughs in order to provide New Yorkers and tourists with more transportation options. These connections will include routes between Queens and

Manhattan, Bronx and Manhattan, and Brooklyn and Manhattan. The MOPD is working with Hornblower to monitor and ensure that accessible features include accessible gangway accessible toilet facilities on ferry vessels, and that accessible communication features are implemented at terminals and on vessels. The Rockaway, South Brooklyn, and Astoria routes are scheduled to launch in 2017 and the Soundview and Lower East Side routes are scheduled to launch in 2018.

### 3. Main stakeholders / actors

Many actors have worked together in order to achieve all of these interventions. The main coordinator is the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD). The Department of Cultural Affairs, New York City Emergency Management, the Human Resources Administration, the Department of City Planning (DCP), the Department of Transportation (DOT), collaborated in the best possible way. The success of the effort is also due to effective partnerships with institutions outside City government, including organizations that share the commitment to equal rights for all.

### Results and Impact

Creating a welcoming street - city environment generated economic development. New York City's analysis shows that 21st-century streets can contribute to the economic vitality of neighborhoods across the full spectrum of income levels and geography, from major destination shopping districts to neighborhood main streets.

### Lessons learnt

New York City's public transportation system is an ongoing project and will be the most accessible in the world with the initiatives undertaken. The city aims for an inclusive city, providing equal opportunities for all. While people with disabilities have been integrated into society as never before, it is necessary to do more to overcome the barriers that remain. The City's Accessible NYC Annual Report represents a clear commitment to continue working to bring equal access and opportunity to people with disabilities. Accessible NYC demonstrates that meanwhile a strong framework of support for people with disabilities certainly exists—including legal protections, health services, and employment programs— there is still more work to be done.

### Further information

[http://www.nyc.gov/html/mopd/downloads/pdf/ACCESS\\_NYC\\_updated.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/mopd/downloads/pdf/ACCESS_NYC_updated.pdf)

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