

# Chapter 7. Unmet Needs and Service Redundancies

## Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 4, the availability and coverage of public transportation in New York City is unique in the U.S. because nearly all geographic areas in the city are served by at least one transportation provider, with many services available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The accessibility and availability of these services, however, varies by community and neighborhood and by an individual's abilities. In particular, members of the target populations – older adults, persons with disabilities and persons with low income – do not always enjoy the same access to transportation as other groups and thus are frequently challenged to travel to specific locations, for different trip purposes and at certain times of the day. An examination of unmet needs and gaps and redundancies in existing services is analyzed first to begin the identification of the most appropriate and effective strategies needed to improve community transportation services in New York City.

To understand unmet needs, service gaps, and service redundancies, the transportation services available to each of the three target populations were examined, both for New York City as a whole, as well as individually for each of the five boroughs. The analysis is based on a number of sources including examining the supply of community and accessible public transportation with travel origins and destinations of the target populations. The analysis also incorporates needs and gaps identified in previous studies in the region, provided from stakeholder interviews, collected from a citywide community transportation provider survey, and gleaned from public workshops and focus groups with members of the target population.

## Available Transportation Services and Service Gaps

New York City's network of public transportation services is well-documented in this report. However, for the purpose of understanding service needs and gaps for older adults, persons with disabilities and persons with low income, the five primary layers of transportation service available to members of the target populations are broadly reviewed.

### **Public Transit Service**

New York City's public transit network consists of rail, subway, bus, and ferry services. Portions of this network are available throughout the five borough area, most are available seven days a week and many operate with extended or 24-hour service. Cash fares for the subway and bus are currently priced at \$2.25 per trip, with discounts available through bulk purchases. Older adults and persons with a disability are also eligible for reduced fares when using public transit. While the entire bus network is accessible, only portions of the rail and subway network are accessible. Thus, anyone who can physically access it and pay the fare is able to use the system to travel most times of the day, to many parts of the city, for any trip purpose.

## **ADA Complementary Paratransit Service**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, New York City Transit (MTA NYCT) offers individuals with a qualifying disability in New York City complementary paratransit service called Access-A-Ride (AAR). AAR is available in all five boroughs for travel anywhere within this area, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Fares are currently priced at \$2.25 per trip (half fares and bulk discounts are not available on AAR). Service is available to any qualifying individual traveling for any trip purpose, but reservations must be made at least 24 hours in advance. AAR provides broad coverage for persons with disabilities. The complexity of service delivery and increasing demand for service has had a significant negative impact on AAR's service quality and reliability. Rider complaints are widespread, and ultimately for many people, AAR functions best as a back-up rather than primary transportation system.

## **Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation**

For individuals who qualify for the program, Medicaid will pay transportation costs for travel to most medical appointments. The programs require individuals to use the lowest cost option given their circumstances and conditions, thus travel options typically include public transportation, taxis/livery cars, and ambulettes. Service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and typically requires making reservations in advance. Medicaid transportation, however, is only available to eligible individuals and only for travel to/from medical appointments and cannot be expanded to include quality of life trips.

## **Human Service Transportation**

Human service agencies provide specialized transportation typically targeted to meet specific client needs and usually involves transporting individuals to/from agency programming or services. Most human service transportation operates during normal business hours, on weekdays between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM, although some agencies in New York City offer staggered or extended hours. Geographic coverage varies by program and agency; some organizations serve a specific group citywide, while others are neighborhood-oriented. Human service transportation is an essential piece of the community transportation network. In most cases, however, transportation is only available to individuals affiliated with an agency and traveling to agency-sponsored activities. In addition, services need to be reserved in advance and typically operate only on weekdays during normal business hours.

## **Privately-owned, Public Transportation**

New York City has a fleet of 13,000 taxi cabs and approximately 33,000 for-hire vehicles, also referred to as community car services, livery cabs, or black cars. Taxis and car services are an essential part of New York City's transportation system. These cars are available to anyone who is able to pay the fare, although only a very small portion (estimated at 2%) of the fleet is accessible. Taxicabs are more tightly regulated by the city and have more accessible vehicles available, but are predominantly available in Manhattan and a very few neighborhoods in the outer boroughs, where car services are the alternative. Car services have far fewer accessible vehicles available.

Each layer of service makes an important contribution to meeting the needs of the target populations; however, mobility challenges persist. For example, while some members of the target populations successfully use the public transportation network, access for others is challenged by physical abilities, emotional and mental limitations, language and cultural barriers,

and financial circumstances. To understand how the services work together to meet the range of needs, each of the transportation services was compared against mobility criteria associated with 1) eligibility to use the service; 2) geographic coverage; 3) reservation requirements; 4) temporal coverage; and 5) allowed trip purpose. This analysis is shown in Figure 7-1, which also highlights the major challenges and gaps associated with individual service options.

**Figure 7-1 Community Transportation Services in the New York City Subregion**

	Public Transportation		Community Transportation		
	Public Transit	Taxis, Car Services, and Jitneys	Access-A-Ride	Medicaid Non-emergency Medical Transportation	Human Service Transportation
Eligibility	All	With fare	ADA Paratransit eligible	Medicaid recipients (low income)	Age and disability based
Geographic Coverage	Available; Buses with 100% accessibility; Rail with limited accessible infrastructure	Mostly available	Available	Available	Mostly available
Reservation Requirements	None	Advance and same day (car services, jitneys) Immediate (taxis)	Next day advance request	Next day advance request	Next day to one week or more advance request
Temporal Coverage	24/7	On demand	24/7	On demand	Weekdays, typically 8 AM to 5 PM
Allowed Trip Purpose	Any	Any	Any	Medical only	Agency programs; medical appointments; some quality of life
Cost	Low	High	Low	Low	Low
Service Challenges and Gaps	Availability, condition and maintenance of accessible infrastructure	Price; Accessibility; Availability	Eligibility; Service Quality	Limited trip purpose; Eligibility	Eligibility; Quantity of service available

## Service Gaps and Unmet Needs in New York City

With these services in mind, and looking at the communities where members of the target populations groups live and travel, a series of unmet needs and gaps across New York City have been identified. Following this section are borough-specific gaps and needs in transportation services.

### Older Adults

- The pedestrian environment varies greatly across the boroughs and can present serious challenges for older adults and persons with disabilities, who may require more time moving from place to place and are more likely to need comfortable places to wait for transportation services.
- New York City's subway system is challenged by a lack of accessible infrastructure and unreliable maintenance of existing infrastructure. In addition, information systems and signage to direct individuals to and within the system are not always available at all locations, nor are they frequently available in accessible formats, making wayfinding challenging for people looking for accessible entrances and facilities.
- Travel needs for older adults are largely met through the services established by DFTA; these services are primarily available during normal business hours only. The biggest challenge associated with the DFTA program is the limited availability and increasing demand for services. Data also suggest that some programs are more oversubscribed than others (see borough-specific analysis).
- Many able-bodied older adults, however, can meet off-hour and occasional travel needs with services available through public transportation, AAR and/or Medicaid.

### Persons with Disabilities

- There is a lack of physical infrastructure to support an accessible public transportation network, particularly for persons with disabilities in the form of street lighting, sidewalks, safe street crossings, waiting areas, and information.
- The pedestrian environment varies greatly across the boroughs and can present serious challenges for older adults and persons with disabilities, who may require more time moving from place to place and are more likely to need comfortable places to wait for transportation services.
- Travel services available for the highest need segments of the target populations are limited. Older adults who are frail and individuals with more physical, developmental, or emotional disabilities cannot easily use public transportation or AAR. Thus they are dependent on program-specific services and Medicaid. These individuals, therefore, have fewer opportunities to travel on weekends, during the evenings or for non-agency, non-medical purposes.
- Some of the AAR backup systems, such as the taxi reimbursement program for stranded clients, are not applicable to individuals using wheelchairs because most taxis and car services do not have wheelchair-accessible vehicles available.
- Individuals with a disability who are not formally associated with a specific agency program have the fewest travel opportunities. These individuals must rely on AAR or the public bus system, if they are able. Taxis and car services are generally not wheelchair-

accessible. Finally, most specialized community transportation is oriented towards older adults.

## Persons with Low Income

- Opportunities to travel on evening and weekend services in some parts of the city are limited, making accessing some types of job opportunities difficult.
- Costs associated with taxis and black cars limit the usefulness of these options for many.
- Some parts of New York City, typically low income neighborhoods, have less adequate public transportation infrastructure. While public transportation meets many of the travel needs for persons with low income, for many individuals living in neighborhoods in the far reaches of the outer boroughs, especially Queens and Staten Island, public transit can be unreliable, too time-consuming or cumbersome to make it a reasonable option.
- Many individuals with low income have limited access to key employment markets and/or lack direct, affordable and reliable transportation service options. This is especially true for cross-borough and travel between counties, such as people living in parts of the Bronx seeking to travel to Westchester County and people in Queens trying to get to jobs in Nassau County. Similarly, there is limited access to key employment centers, such as the industrial centers located in the outer boroughs and the airports in Queens; getting to these locations requires long, circuitous travel from any borough outside of Manhattan or Queens.
- Medicaid transportation is available only to individuals who qualify for the program and only for trip purposes identified by the program. Thus, some individuals will qualify for some medical treatments and programs but not others.

## All Target Populations

- No single source of information about accessible or community transportation services is available citywide. Although some services, including MTA and DFTA, offer information about their systems and services, there is less information available for human service transportation, including what services are available and how to gain access to them. A single source of information that is available in multiple languages and accessible formats and clearly explains travel options would help individuals find the services they need.
- AAR is not appropriate to meet all travel needs. While AAR offers broad service coverage and is adequate for occasional travel, the service is less effective at meeting needs for flexible, reliable, and timely transportation required for many purposes, such as employment, school and some medical appointments. Also, the application system required to qualify for the service can be onerous for some individuals.

## Bronx (Bronx County)

Some of the unmet needs and service gaps facing members of the target populations living in the Bronx are similar to those facing the whole of New York City. As compared with the other boroughs, however, the Bronx is challenged by a high proportion of persons with low income and a transportation infrastructure that is largely geared towards bringing people to and from Manhattan as opposed to across the borough or into other boroughs in the city. Unique needs and gaps facing members of the target population living in the Bronx include:

- Public transit routes, especially the subway, is oriented along corridors running north-south corridors; east-west connections therefore, are more difficult and primarily consist of bus service which requires longer travel times and is less reliable. Thus traveling within the borough to services, jobs and between neighborhoods is challenging.
- Service to many of the borough's recreational areas and employment centers in other boroughs, such as Long Island City and the airports in Queens, is poor, limiting the accessibility of these destinations.
- DFTA sponsors a significant number of demand response services in the Bronx, many of which are run by small operators, who typically have less capacity for ad hoc, quality of life trips. Likewise, smaller operators limited to specific geographic areas result in fewer opportunities for cross-borough travel.
- There are few transportation options for individuals with disabilities in the Bronx. Individuals with disabilities must rely on MTA buses and AAR to meet their travel needs.
- While the Bronx is contiguous to Westchester, high fares and limited reverse commute services make it difficult to travel from the Bronx to job markets in Westchester. This limitation is partially addressed with JARC-funded commuter routes operated by the Westchester Bee-Line service.
- Many neighborhoods in the Bronx lack late-night and weekend express bus services. This is especially the case for those living in more remote, low income neighborhoods and working night or weekend shifts. Express buses could provide necessary connections to jobs they could not otherwise access.

## Brooklyn (Kings County)

Brooklyn is characterized by its cultural and ethnic diversity; distinct cultural and ethnic groups help define the boroughs neighborhoods, sustain population growth, and create a demand for a diverse set of transportation services. Brooklyn also has a large number of community transportation providers, several of which run substantial operations with fleets of 10 or more vehicles. Overall, however demand for community transportation services is high and outpaces supply. Specific service gaps and unmet needs include:

- There are geographic gaps in Brooklyn's public transportation network, especially in Canarsie, Flatlands, Flatbush, and neighborhoods in southern Brooklyn. While the gap has begun to be filled organically by commuter vans and jitneys, these services are not tightly regulated and typically are not accessible for individuals with disabilities. Furthermore, despite these ad hoc services, fast and reliable services is needed between southern Brooklyn, downtown Brooklyn and Manhattan to connect residents of these low income neighborhoods with employment opportunities.
- Connections to some industrial areas, such as the Sunset Park waterfront and the Brooklyn Navy Yard, are difficult from within the borough, especially from neighborhoods in southern Brooklyn.
- Accessible subway infrastructure is limited throughout New York City and is extremely limited along subway lines outside of downtown Brooklyn, where they fan out to the borough's neighborhoods. The lack of accessible infrastructure means individuals with mobility constraints must transfer between multiple buses and services to travel to downtown Brooklyn and Manhattan.

## Manhattan (New York County)

While New York City has one of the densest networks of public transportation services in the world, services in Manhattan are even more concentrated. Manhattan also has one of the wealthiest populations overall, but some of its neighborhoods are among the poorest in the entire city. Community transportation services, therefore, must navigate these contrasts to provide essential services and meet needs. Service gaps include:

- Lack of accessibility. While Manhattan has one of the most pervasive networks of public transportation in the US, most of this network, in particular, much of the subway system and taxi services is not accessible to individuals with disabilities.
- Neighborhoods in Manhattan, such as Washington Heights and Inwood, are among the highest need areas in New York City. These areas also have limited access to the public transportation network, especially some areas distance to the subway. Thus, individuals with low income have fewer fast and reliable options for travel to employment markets in other parts of the city.
- High need neighborhoods in Manhattan are served by community transportation operators, including DFTA-funded and other population specific services. Demand in these areas, however, outstrips supply.

## Queens (Queens County)

Queens faces challenges that reflect its geographic and demographic characteristics. In particular the borough's large geographic area includes relatively isolated communities and a large, diverse population with a high portion of new immigrants. The demographic and geographic characteristics combine with a unique set of public and community transportation services that have the following unmet needs and gaps:

- Some community transportation providers subsidize black car fares for individuals traveling to/from medical programs. This program is very popular and over-subscribed, such that it takes up to two years to get off the waiting list. The high level of demand indicates that there is unmet demand for flexible, non-Medicaid, medical transportation.
- There are few transportation options for individuals with disabilities in Queens, thus individuals with disabilities must rely on MTA Bus and AAR to meet their travel needs.
- While Queens is contiguous to Nassau County, travel between the counties is limited and expensive, making it difficult for individuals with low income seeking to access nearby job markets.
- Many neighborhoods in Queens lack late night and weekend express bus services. This makes it difficult for individuals living in low income neighborhoods and working night or weekend shifts.

## Staten Island (Richmond County)

Staten Island, as discussed, is unique among the New York City boroughs due to its relative geographic isolation, fewer transportation resources in general, including more limited public transportation services and infrastructure network. Accordingly, travel for members of the target populations is more challenging. Some of the key gaps and unmet needs in the community transportation network include:

- The Staten Island Railway provides transit along a north-south corridor on the eastern edge of the island. Bus connections to the Railway, however, are not well-timed with the stops, making east-west travel more challenging for both individuals using public transportation and community transportation services.
- The limited public transportation network disproportionately affects individuals with disabilities and individuals with low income as these groups are more reliant on public transportation. Some of these needs have been partially met by new JARC-funded services that offer bus connections to the College of Staten Island.
- A limited number of community transportation providers in Staten Island means there are more capacity constraints in the system. Limited capacity further challenges the portion of the population that is most dependent on the DFTA funded services, especially the more frail segments of the older adult population.
- There are few transportation options for individuals with disabilities in Staten Island, thus individuals with disabilities must rely on buses and AAR to meet their travel needs.
- More than any other borough, Staten Island's pedestrian environment lacks essential infrastructure to support older adults and persons with disabilities traveling to/from neighborhood destinations and public transportation services. Many bus corridors lack sidewalks and bus shelters, and in many cases bus stops are located a long distance from the entrance to the desired destination, such as hospitals and shopping malls.
- Compared to the other boroughs, Staten Island has a very limited number of car services and no essentially yellow cabs available, limiting opportunities for flexible, on-demand transportation.

## Summary of Focus Groups

Focus groups were an important source of information about service gaps and unmet need. One focus group was held in each borough for each target population group, totaling 15 focus groups. The following tables detail comments and service improvement priorities stated at the groups.



**Figure 7-2 Summary of Focus Groups**

Issue Categories	Bronx	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Queens	Staten Island
<b>Older Adults</b>					
<b>Existing Service Needs and Gaps</b>	<p><b>General:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• East-west travel difficult</li> <li>• Hard to get to Riverdale, Downtown Manhattan, Brooklyn, Richmond Plaza</li> <li>• New developments will need service</li> <li>• Senior MetroCards are difficult to get and refill Don't trust automatic refill</li> </ul> <p><b>Buses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Destinations not well advertised</li> <li>• Signage is poor</li> <li>• Drivers are not aware of request-a-stop option for disabled and older adult riders</li> <li>• Limited night service</li> <li>• Handrails difficult to use</li> <li>• Nice low-floor buses</li> <li>• Express service too Midtown-oriented</li> </ul>	<p><b>General:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Announcements on subways and buses are garbled</li> </ul> <p><b>Subways:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Escalators and elevators do not work</li> <li>• Subway stairs are steep, especially at elevated tracks</li> </ul> <p><b>Access-A-Ride:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often late</li> <li>• Poor service</li> </ul>	<p><b>General:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MTA website works well</li> <li>• Phone is decent for information</li> <li>• Subway/bus maps helpful, available at convenient places</li> <li>• Use newspapers for service change announcements</li> <li>• More transit information</li> <li>• More driver customer service training</li> </ul> <p><b>Buses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not enough info for people waiting at bus stops for rerouted buses</li> <li>• Too slow and often infrequent</li> <li>• Following routes specifically - M7, M10, M20, M23, M57, M116</li> <li>• More bus benches, shelters</li> <li>• Difficult to see street signs from buses</li> </ul>	<p><b>Access-A-Ride:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the most part, provides decent and critical service</li> <li>• Lack of scheduling flexibility</li> <li>• Waiting outside for vans</li> <li>• Long wait times</li> <li>• Punctuality</li> <li>• Need for same-day service</li> <li>• Lack of consistency of information from operators</li> </ul>	<p><b>General:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prefer city bus to AAR</li> </ul> <p><b>Bus:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Like low-floor buses</li> <li>• Lines not oriented to ferry terminal are not well-served</li> <li>• Drivers refuse to use kneeling feature</li> <li>• Drivers do not pull to curb</li> <li>• Express buses crowded, seniors have to stand</li> </ul> <p><b>Staten Island Railway:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not go where seniors need to go</li> </ul> <p><b>Access-A-Ride:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor on-time performance</li> <li>• Long wait times</li> <li>• Poor driver courtesy</li> <li>• Drivers don't know where they are going</li> <li>• Can only be reimbursed for one mode</li> <li>• A "good, cheap way to go" vs. taxis</li> </ul>

Issue Categories	Bronx	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Queens	Staten Island
<b>Older Adults</b>					
<b>Existing Service Needs and Gaps</b> <i>(cont'd)</i>	<b>Subways:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stairs steep; too few escalators/elevators</li> <li>• Limited night service</li> <li>• Overcrowded</li> </ul> <b>Access-A-Ride:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficult eligibility process</li> <li>• Long travel times</li> </ul> <b>New Select Bus Service:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't like pre-paying</li> <li>• Local service reduced on Bx12</li> <li>• Look like local buses</li> <li>• Fewer stops than the old Bx12 Limited</li> <li>• Overcrowded to Orchard Beach in summer</li> </ul>		<b>Subways:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More escalators and elevators (escalators preferred)</li> <li>• Announcements are hard to hear</li> <li>• Stations need token clerks</li> </ul>		<b>Taxis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabs often charge a full fare when carrying multiple passengers going different places, may not be legal</li> </ul>

Issue Categories	Bronx	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Queens	Staten Island
<b>Older Adults</b>					
<b>Strategies</b>	<p><b>General:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MetroCards and cash passengers should be allowed more transfers</li> <li>• Bus shelters/ subway stops need better lighting</li> </ul> <p><b>Buses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glass shelters should have a decal so people can see them and not walk into them</li> </ul> <p><b>Taxis:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase availability of accessible taxis</li> </ul>	<p><b>General:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better information distribution about transportation services</li> <li>• Centralized community transportation directory available in hard copy, on the internet and by phone</li> <li>• Mobility manager</li> <li>• Map of entire transportation system's accessible stations</li> </ul>	<p><b>General:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better announcements</li> <li>• Incentives for off-peak car travel, carpools</li> <li>• Enforce cyclist safety on sidewalks</li> <li>• Less interruption from street fairs</li> </ul> <p><b>Buses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve speed and frequency</li> <li>• Multiple articulated buses don't fit at stops</li> <li>• Remove parking to facilitate operations</li> <li>• Address taxi/bus conflicts at curb</li> <li>• Reduce Madison Avenue bus lanes</li> </ul> <p><b>Subways:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More escalators/elevators</li> <li>• Better local maps in subway stations, station area wayfinding information</li> </ul>	<p><b>General:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistency in policies</li> <li>• Better Nassau/Queens bus connection</li> <li>• Shopper shuttles, route deviation service</li> <li>• More frequent service</li> </ul> <p><b>Buses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More reliable service, esp. the Q60</li> <li>• More bus service at night</li> <li>• More benches and shelters at bus stops</li> <li>• Better reliability of kneeling buses</li> <li>• Better weekend service</li> <li>• Better maintenance of fareboxes</li> </ul> <p><b>Access-A-Ride:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognized destinations instead of only street addresses</li> </ul> <p><b>Taxis:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subsidized taxi program</li> </ul>	<p><b>General:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Driver sensitivity training</li> <li>• Discounted/free transit for seniors</li> <li>• More transit funding in Staten Island</li> <li>• Better education for using public transit</li> <li>• Community Bus route, shopping shuttle, route deviation, Mobility Manager</li> </ul> <p><b>Bus:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand weekend service, esp. express</li> <li>• More bus benches</li> <li>• Stops closer to destinations</li> </ul> <p><b>Access-A-Ride:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Driver sensitivity training</li> <li>• "Call-ahead"s before driver arrives</li> </ul> <p><b>Taxis:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve taxi service quality</li> <li>• Subsidized taxi program</li> </ul>

Issue Categories	Bronx	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Queens	Staten Island
<b>Persons with Disabilities</b>					
<b>Existing Service Needs and Gaps</b>	<b>Buses:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long rides with multiple transfers</li> <li>Bus tickets only allow two transfers</li> </ul> <b>Subways:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Braille signs in stations only serve a fraction of the visually-impaired population</li> <li>Steep inclines and stairs in subway stations</li> </ul>	<b>General:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information about transit is not accessible</li> </ul> <b>Buses:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wheelchair lifts do not work</li> <li>Stops not announced</li> </ul> <b>Subways:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gaps between platforms and train are too big</li> <li>No MTA booth attendants in stations</li> </ul> <b>Access-A-Ride:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AAR drivers not accountable</li> </ul>	<b>General:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time-consuming trips to Brooklyn</li> <li>Unsafe gaps on NJ Transit</li> <li>Insensitive drivers (fixed-route)</li> <li>Audible announcements</li> </ul> <b>Subways:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elevator outages in subway system</li> <li>No clerks in MTA booths</li> <li>Announce accessibility, transfer info at stops</li> </ul> <b>Access-A-Ride:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Circuitous routing</li> <li>Accountability for late or no-show drivers</li> </ul>	<b>General:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Announce stops on buses and subways</li> </ul> <b>Buses:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-existent or broken lifts</li> <li>Front-entry buses are difficult to enter</li> </ul> <b>Subways:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gap between platform and train floor</li> </ul> <b>Access-A-Ride:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Driver no-shows</li> <li>Drivers not knowledgeable about geography</li> <li>Voucher car services not accessible</li> </ul>	<b>General:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No free transfers with ½ fare card</li> </ul> <b>Access-A-Ride:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Circuitous routing, long rides</li> <li>Unequal wait times – 5 minutes for drivers, 30 for riders</li> <li>No driver accountability</li> <li>Call-&amp;-assist not used when it should be</li> </ul> <b>Other:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hospital (SIUH) van requires round trip</li> </ul>
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>General:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travel training for blind and visually impaired</li> <li>Shuttle services to major destinations, including shopping centers, regional recreation attractions and the casino</li> <li>Direct transfers to Westchester and Nassau counties</li> </ul>	<b>General:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public disability awareness campaign</li> <li>Make online information more accessible</li> <li>Accessible ped signals and signage</li> </ul> <b>Buses:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Real-time bus stop information</li> <li>More reliable bus schedules</li> </ul>	<b>General:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audible announcements on buses and subways</li> <li>Better information on regionally accessible transportation</li> <li>Better connections bet. buses and subways</li> <li>Sensitivity training for bus and subway drivers</li> </ul> <b>Buses:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safer, cleaner bus stops</li> </ul>	<b>Buses:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More accessible bus shelters</li> <li>Reduce bus bunching</li> <li>Driver training conducted by people w/ disabilities</li> <li>Better, safer bus stop configuration</li> </ul> <b>Subways:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More accessible stations</li> </ul>	<b>Buses:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better and more reliable bus lifts</li> </ul> <b>Subways:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audible and visual warning system about changes to routing or express service on the subways</li> </ul> <b>Access-A-Ride:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better maintenance vehicles to reduce jostling</li> </ul>

Issue Categories	Bronx	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Queens	Staten Island
<b>Persons with Disabilities</b>					
<b>Strategies (cont'd)</b>	<b>Subways:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fix broken elevators and escalators</li> <li>• Make audible announcements clearer</li> </ul> <b>Access-A-Ride:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop supplemental local car service using voucher (or voucher-less) system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority seating for people w/ no obvious disability</li> <li>• Next stop announcements</li> <li>• More shelters and accessible stops</li> </ul> <b>Subways:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No high exit/entrance turnstiles</li> <li>• Seating area away from crowds – safe zones, rest areas</li> <li>• Improve access with tactile edges, elevators</li> <li>• Keep and re-instate booth attendants</li> </ul> <b>Access-A-Ride:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MTA should take over AAR operation</li> <li>• Customer satisfaction cards</li> <li>• Driver internet report cards</li> <li>• Enable use of MetroCards on AAR</li> <li>• Better information out about paratransit</li> <li>• Involved and reliable person with a disability on the on AAR board</li> </ul>	<b>Subways:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tactile warning strips</li> <li>• Tactile directional indicators in stations</li> <li>• In-station assistance</li> <li>• Better maintenance of subway elevators</li> <li>• Real-time information about elevators/escalators</li> <li>• Cell phone service in subways for emergencies</li> </ul> <b>Access-A-Ride:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automated reservation system</li> <li>• Greater driver accountability</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use call-and-assist and/or signs at pick-ups</li> <li>• Better training for telephone receptionists</li> </ul>

Issue Categories	Bronx	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Queens	Staten Island
<b>Persons with Disabilities</b>					
<b>Strategies</b> <i>(cont'd)</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More communication w/ AAR drivers</li> <li>• Improve driver training</li> </ul> <b>Taxis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More accessible cabs</li> </ul>			

Issue Categories	Bronx	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Queens	Staten Island
<b>Persons with Low Income</b>					
<b>Existing Service Needs and Gaps</b>	<p><b>General:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information about transit good overall</li> <li>Difficult to reach beaches, rec. areas, places that require lots of walking</li> <li>Difficult to reach work opportunities in Queens (LIC), New Jersey, Staten Island and Brooklyn</li> <li>Parking and traffic congestion are big issues</li> <li>Passengers don't give up seat</li> </ul> <p><b>Buses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Takes 3 to Throgs Neck, Belmont, Pelham Bay</li> <li>Unfriendly bus drivers, unhelpful staff</li> <li>#15 to the Staten Island Ferry is a poor link</li> <li>#26 to Co-op City too small and overcrowded</li> </ul> <p><b>Subways:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Map is good</li> <li>MTA online trip planner and telephone assistance helpful</li> </ul>	<p><b>General:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travel around Brooklyn and to Manhattan relatively easy</li> <li>Difficult to reach New York Hospital, borough of Queens, Queens Center Mall, Kings Plaza, Coney Island, Gateway Shopping Center, Long Island, New Jersey and Staten Island</li> <li>MTA worker attitude is poor</li> <li>Announcements in the subway and buses difficult to understand</li> <li>Poor air quality on trains and buses</li> <li>Lack of restrooms</li> <li>Fares too high</li> <li>Limited weekend service</li> </ul> <p><b>Buses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not enough free transfers</li> <li>Lack of shelters</li> </ul>	<p><b>General:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transit in Manhattan is overall very good</li> <li>Insufficient free transfer time (2 hrs)</li> <li>Student MetroCards do not cover after-school tutoring or activities</li> <li>Irregular late night transit service</li> <li>Certain subway lines (Lines A and C) do not operate on weekends</li> </ul> <p><b>Buses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulty on stairs and finding seats for pregnant women</li> </ul> <p><b>Subways:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Announcements at stations are unclear</li> <li>Regular track work during the weekends makes riding the subway lines very frustrating</li> <li>Bad customer service in stations</li> </ul> <p><b>Taxis:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inconsistent taxi fares</li> </ul>	<p><b>General:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employers see public transit riders as less reliable than employees who drive</li> <li>All regional lines go thru Manhattan</li> <li>Wrong information given over phone</li> <li>Website not current about delays</li> <li>MetroCards priced differently if not purchased at subway station</li> </ul> <p><b>Buses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor weekend service, especially Sun.</li> <li>Long travel times</li> <li>Unreliable service</li> <li>Transfer times not coordinated</li> <li>Too overcrowded to accommodate people using wheelchairs, lifts malfunction</li> <li>Signage doesn't always work/is unclear</li> <li>Shelters lack lighting and are unsafe</li> </ul>	<p><b>General:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public transit is not sufficient and does not meet their needs</li> <li>Bus and SIRT schedule not coordinated</li> <li>Costs are too high, esp. express buses</li> <li>Limited public information</li> <li>MTA staff very negative and unhelpful</li> </ul> <p><b>Buses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long wait/transfer times on buses</li> <li>Not enough buses</li> <li>Do not run late enough,</li> <li>Unreliable, dirty and unsafe</li> <li>Poor service on express buses</li> <li>Express buses only run peak hours</li> </ul> <p><b>Access-A-Ride:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unreliable</li> </ul> <p><b>Taxis:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fares too high and inconsistent</li> <li>Taxi drivers negative and unhelpful</li> </ul>

Issue Categories	Bronx	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Queens	Staten Island
<b>Persons with Low Income</b>					
<b>Existing Service Needs and Gaps</b> <i>(cont'd)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stairs difficult for some older transit users</li> <li>Heat in the subway stations and trains in summer</li> <li>Escalators and elevators often out of service</li> </ul> <p><b>Taxis:</b> Taxis are expensive and inconsistent</p>	<p><b>Subways:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travel times too long</li> <li>Distances to stations too far</li> <li>Limited/ broken elevators and escalators</li> </ul> <p><b>Access-A-Ride:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No free transfer from AAR to fixed-route</li> </ul> <p><b>Taxis:</b> Fares are too high</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Express buses charge full fare during peak hours (no "½ fare riders")</li> <li>Must have exact change</li> </ul> <p><b>Subways:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Announcements unclear</li> <li>Overcrowded</li> <li>No air-conditioning in stations</li> <li>Stations lack staffing - unsafe</li> </ul>	<p><b>Staten Island Railway:</b> Unsafe stations and trains</p> <p><b>Staten Island ferry:</b> Long ferry travel times</p>
<b>Strategies</b>	<p><b>General:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better, clearer public service announcements</li> <li>Real-time information on subway and bus</li> <li>New/ cleaner trains and buses</li> <li>More ferries/water taxis to Manhattan and City Island</li> <li>Better MTA driver training</li> <li>Reduce fares</li> </ul> <p><b>Buses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Post-midnight service to/from Co-op City</li> <li>Shelters that are larger and more practical</li> <li>More late-night &amp; outer boro express buses</li> </ul>	<p><b>General:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower fares and modify transfer policy</li> <li>Real-time information about next bus or train and service interruptions</li> <li>New speaker systems for buses and trains</li> <li>Better driver/employee training</li> </ul> <p><b>Buses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced fare low income bus pass</li> <li>Coordinate transfers</li> <li>Dedicate bus lanes in high-congestion areas</li> <li>More shelters</li> </ul>	<p><b>General:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Special fare for college students and for children</li> <li>Reimbursable pass for parents taking children to school</li> <li>Greater flexibility for student MetroCards, for school-related activities</li> <li>Inform people about transit service problems via TV, radio, MTA website</li> <li>Lower fares</li> <li>More flexible transfers</li> <li>Better MTA customer service training</li> </ul>	<p><b>General:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New light rail or dedicated bus lanes</li> <li>Later and more frequent evening service</li> </ul> <p><b>Buses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Destination signs on sides &amp; rear of buses</li> <li>More police on buses and at stops</li> <li>More service at school dismissal hours</li> <li>Real-time info signs at bus stops</li> <li>More weekend service</li> </ul> <p><b>Subways:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More weekend service</li> </ul>	<p><b>General:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transit SI day pass for all transit services</li> <li>More service to keep pace with population</li> <li>Weekend service hours for job access</li> <li>Improve MTA on-time performance</li> </ul> <p><b>Buses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More shelters and benches at stops</li> <li>More express service between hubs</li> <li>Better-timed transfers</li> <li>All-day express buses to Manhattan</li> <li>Better driver training</li> </ul>



Issue Categories	Bronx	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Queens	Staten Island
<b>Persons with Low Income</b>					
<b>Strategies (cont'd)</b>	<b>Subways:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better subway frequencies</li> <li>• Easier connections</li> <li>• Better safety, lighting and cleanliness</li> </ul> <b>Other:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carpool program</li> <li>• Van/jitney services like in Flatbush, Queens</li> </ul>	<b>Subways:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nicer, cleaner, more accessible stations</li> <li>• Fix and add elevators, escalators</li> <li>• Open public restrooms</li> </ul> <b>Access-A-Ride:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve vehicles</li> </ul>	<b>Buses:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Announcements on the bus asking passengers “to give up your seat for the elderly and women who are pregnant”</li> </ul> <b>Subways:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleaner subway stations</li> <li>• Greater police presence</li> </ul>		<b>Taxis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create taxi zone map to ensure consistent fares, enforcement &amp; regulation</li> <li>• More taxi stands</li> </ul> <b>Other:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bicycle rental program</li> <li>• Local shuttles from major public housing facilities to key shopping locations</li> </ul>

## Summary of Key Findings

Despite having a substantial public transportation infrastructure, gaps in the network of services are acutely felt by the groups that are underserved. Coordinating transportation resources is a potential strategy that would address some of the key needs and improve service quality, increase the breadth of service and expand system capacity overall. Indeed, several of the agencies that have successfully coordinated their services have achieved such results. In spite of these achievements, many program administrators and service providers are not familiar with coordination strategies. The following section presents select examples of ongoing coordination as well as challenges and opportunities to coordinate and integrate existing transportation services.

### Examples of Successful Coordination in New York City

There are several examples of successful coordination in New York City, including examples of agencies working together on a small scale by sharing information, vehicles, and parking spaces. There are also examples of large scale coordination where agencies have consolidated services citywide. Some of the more notable examples of coordination identified as part of this study include:

- The InterAgency Transportation Services (IATS) is a consolidated operation of transportation services for individuals with developmental disabilities traveling to/from day programs. IATS currently coordinates transportation for 19 agencies, 17 program sites and 6,000 individuals. Since coordinating services, IATS has greatly improved safety and service quality as well as reduced the administrative burden for sponsoring agencies.
- DFTA coordinates its transportation services geographically and sets clear standards for service delivery and quality. This coordinated approach limits service redundancies, ensures similar service quality across providers and provides a base level of transportation services for New York City's older adult population. The services also help alleviate demand on AAR. DFTA also publishes a directory of services, which is available online and is organized by borough.
- Several of the large transportation providers contract with smaller agencies to provide transportation services. These arrangements take advantage of economies of scale where they exist and give smaller agencies an opportunity to tailor transportation services to their needs.
- The New York City Department of Education buses and drivers are available to senior centers and NORCs in New York City for group trips. In the fall of 2008 (October to December), some 90 organizations working with older adults took advantage of this program, making some 220 group trips.
- Several small transportation providers share client referrals and will transport each other's clients to help manage demand and ensure people get to where they need to go.

### Barriers to Coordination

Despite ongoing coordination success, many agencies have limited experience with coordination strategies and are reluctant to coordinate their services. Examples of specific barriers voiced during the data collection and outreach process included:

- **Staff at smaller agencies can be isolated** – Despite being located in one of the largest cities in the world, many small transportation providers have limited opportunities to work with and learn from other providers. This is especially true for agencies where transportation is an ancillary, rather than primary, function. Staff at many of these agencies could benefit from more professional interaction and opportunities to learn from others.
- **Clients have unique needs** – Many agencies felt they could not share vehicles or services due to the specialized needs and circumstances of their clients. These needs make it inappropriate to share rides and services.
- **Vehicle use is restricted** – Several organizations express concern that restrictions placed on the use of their vehicles by funding agencies limit potential for coordination.
- **Concern over insurance, accounting and billing** – Other agencies express concern over insurance, billing and accounting issues and other regulations imposed by funding sources as a reason for being reluctant to coordinate.
- **Interest in protecting existing resources** – Although only expressed outright by one agency, many existing providers likely share a protective instinct about their resources and facilities. There is a sense that transportation resources are not easily acquired and are essential to agency success, thus need to be protected.
- **Lack of awareness and understanding** – Many agencies and individuals were unaware of coordination generally and do not know how to coordinate services. These agencies and individuals were also generally unaware of potential benefits associated with coordination.

These barriers are both overlapping and compounding. Funding restrictions on vehicle use limits the extent to which agencies can coordinate existing services (although some of these limitations are not as restrictive as perceived). Operationally, high levels of demand, non-accessible vehicles, and an inability or lack of interest in mixing client populations in vehicles have prevented additional or coordinated ridership. While possible, overcoming such barriers requires leadership and determination to find answers, solutions, resources, and regulatory clarification.

A more pervasive obstacle to coordination in New York City generally is a lack of awareness or understanding. Operators are simply not able to identify what organizations they could coordinate with or what services or costs they could potentially share because they are not aware of what other services are being provided. Stakeholder meetings conducted throughout the completion of this study have been the first time that many community transportation stakeholders have met each other, and the sessions proved to be very fruitful for some basic information sharing, such as where to find the best gas stations and mechanics. As there is no formal structure of communication or support, operators must take coordination and associated regulatory and funding challenges upon themselves.

## **Opportunities for Coordination and Addressing Unmet Needs**

Stakeholders have identified a need for coordination and an interest in its benefits. While overall support is stronger at the agency staff level, leadership is becoming increasingly interested. Community-based initiatives to provide transportation to residents represent a vital component of the transportation system in New York City and neighborhood-scale services can be coordinated.

Opportunities may depend largely on appropriate awareness of services and will face current limitations of funding, span of service and vehicle capacity.

Within New York City, community transportation providers have the potential to increase coordination of client transportation and especially administrative/operational coordination of information and services. An overview of potential applicable coordination strategies are listed here and presented in more detail in Chapter 8:

- Coordinate transportation resource planning across agencies and organizations
  - A central agency to coordinate all transportation and provide information
  - Centralized directory of services
- Expand and improve accessibility infrastructure
  - Accessible taxicabs and car services (for-hire vehicles)
  - Accessible subway stations
  - Signage and information systems directing passengers to accessible infrastructure
  - Pedestrian facilities, including sidewalks, street lighting and crossings
  - Public transportation infrastructure, such as benches, shelters and on-location information systems.
- More accessible information about services
  - Online information in accessible formats
  - On location information systems
- Diversify and increase service options
  - Reduce demand and over-reliance on AAR
  - Increase demand responsive service
  - Extend hours in the outer borough express buses
  - More older adult service
- Create local central resources to support small service operators
  - Share information and resources about fuel pricing, secure parking, and vehicle maintenance
  - Create pool of qualified substitute drivers
  - Offer driver and staff training
  - Share scheduling and accounting software systems