



AIANY partners with city agencies for Fit City conference on May 21; Seventh annual event held at the Center for Architecture

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In a continuing effort to improve public health, prevent and alleviate obesity and chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and asthma, the American Institute of Architects New York Chapter (AIANY), in partnership with the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, convened the seventh annual Fit City conference on Monday, May 21st at the Center for Architecture. Fit City brought together architects, designers and health professionals, and for the past six years has provided valuable insight into how a more active lifestyle can be achieved through design.

This year, the day-long conference included a new featured panel discussion entitled "Fit World: Encouraging Active Design Across the Globe." As in past years, design leaders and civic officials will address how community, street, and building design, as well as policy decisions; combine to improve health in communities everywhere. Hundreds of attendees at the sold-out event heard from panelists including New York City commissioners Adrian Benepe of the Department of Parks & Recreation and David Burney, FAIA, of the Department of Design + Construction, and Deputy Mayor Linda Gibbs. Angela Brady, president of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), spoke during the "Fit World" panel discussion.

"The annual Fit City conference is an opportunity to continue our dialogue on how design of the built environment can increase physical activity and promote access to healthier food choices," said Rick Bell, FAIA, executive director of AIANY. "Design matters in helping people prevent and ameliorate the chronic diseases that are impacting communities in epidemic proportions. Our collaboration with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has fostered new awareness of how people live in urban environments and what architects can do to make city life healthier."

"We have made progress in designing more physical activity into our neighborhoods, our streets and our buildings, but there is always more we can do together," said health commissioner Dr. Thomas Farley. "Our Active Design Guidelines are serving as a model for other cities around the country and indeed the world. Designing health into our structures is not only possible but also imperative to our health."

Conference participants also heard how the strategies included in the Active Design Guidelines (www.nyc.gov/adg), released in January 2010, are being implemented at New York City agencies, in the private sector, and in communities across the world.

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