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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG ANNOUNCES FIRST EVER CENTER FOR ACTIVE DESIGN
WHICH WILL PROMOTE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTH IN BUILDINGS
AND PUBLIC SPACES**

Initiatives Will Promote Stair Use and Help Architects, Planners and Urban Designers Combat Obesity, which is Killing More Than 5,000 New Yorkers Each Year

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, Deputy Mayor Linda I. Gibbs, Department of Design and Construction Commissioner David Burney and Department of Health Commissioner Dr. Thomas A. Farley today announced three first in the nation City Obesity Task Force initiatives that will address the ongoing obesity epidemic by encouraging physical activity through the design of buildings and other public spaces. These include the first ever Center for Active Design, a non-profit organization that promotes changes to the built environment to fight obesity and related chronic diseases and an Executive Order requiring all City agencies to use active design strategies – such as making stairways more visible and creating more inviting streetscapes for pedestrians and bicyclists – when performing all new construction and major renovation projects. The Mayor also announced two pieces of legislation to promote stairway access in all buildings. at The New School, which is using active design principles in the construction of its new University Center on Fifth Avenue, where he was joined by Joanna Frank, Executive Director of the Center for Active Design; Joseph Gromek, Board Chair, The New School; Lia Gartner, FAIA, Vice President for Design, Construction, and Facilities Management at The New School; and Roger Duffy, FAIA, Design Partner at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP, designers of the University Center at The New School.

“New York City has been a leader when it comes to promoting healthier eating and now we’re leading when it comes to encouraging physical activity as well,” said Mayor Bloomberg. “Physical activity and healthy eating are the two most important factors in reducing obesity and these steps are part of our ongoing commitment to fighting this epidemic.”

“We know that regular stair use increases physical activity and active stairways are one of many ways we are creating a healthy environment,” said Deputy Mayor Gibbs. “As a result of these initiatives, hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers may now take the stairs, saving the equivalent of 500,000 pounds of weight among adult New Yorkers annually.”

“For years, architects and planners have been making it easier for people to be sedentary, compounding the nation’s obesity problem,” said Commissioner Burney. “The active design movement asks design professionals to be part of the solution and find new ways to encourage

movement, both in buildings and on the streets. The benefits of active design can be profound: just two minutes of stair climbing a day -rather than using an elevator- can help prevent annual weight gain.”

“Incorporating physical activity into daily routines is the best way to get the many health benefits of exercise,” said Health Commissioner Dr. Thomas Farley. “By integrating Active Design strategies into renovations and future buildings, New Yorkers will have new opportunities to be physically active throughout their days.”

“I would like to thank the Mayor’s Obesity Task Force for supporting the creation of the Center for Active Design,” said Executive Director of the Center for Active Design Joanna Frank. “The Center has grown out of years of interdisciplinary work in New York City, convening professionals from health, planning, policy, transportation, architecture, and construction. Going forward the Center will serve as an international resource to communicate best design practices and share health research as we seek to reduce obesity and chronic diseases by promoting physical activity and healthy eating through design,”

Following years of sustained effort by the Bloomberg Administration to strengthen nutritional standards and expand physical activity opportunities for New Yorkers, New York City’s rate of childhood obesity decreased by 5.5 percent from 2007 to 2011. To continue this positive trend, Mayor Bloomberg convened a multi-agency Obesity Task Force in 2012 to recommend solutions for solving the City’s obesity crisis and addressing its associated health risks: obesity-related chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke and certain cancers. A sedentary lifestyle contributes to obesity and the benefits of physical activity include not only reducing obesity but also reducing rates of heart disease, diabetes, colon cancer and depression. In recent years, it has become clearer that the physical environment influences people’s levels of physical activity and other health-related behavior and the Mayoral Executive Order and legislation announced today and the Center for Active Design are key initiatives to emerge from the City’s ongoing effort.

The Center for Active Design promotes four key concepts of active design to reduce obesity through the design of buildings, streets, and neighborhoods:

- Active buildings: encouraging greater physical movement within buildings for users and visitors;
- Active transportation: supporting a safe and vibrant environment for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders;
- Active recreation: shaping play and activity spaces for people of different ages, interests, and abilities; and
- Improving access to nutritious foods in communities that need them most.

The Center also supports research, provides professional training, and offers technical assistance to help implement active design strategies. The Center is currently working with New York City and other communities in the U.S., Canada, the U.K., and Brazil. For more information on the Center for Active Design, visit www.centerforactivedesign.org.

To further promote active design, on June 27, 2013, Mayor Bloomberg signed an Executive Order requiring City agencies to review the design of construction and major renovation projects to assess opportunities to implement active design elements. This requirement applies to the construction or renovation of City buildings and streets. The Order also requires that agencies assess opportunities to promote the use of stairways, and that agencies train design and construction personnel in the use of the City's Active Design Guidelines. A full copy of the Mayor's Executive Order can be found at nyc.gov

Additionally, the Bloomberg Administration plans to submit for City Council approval two items of legislation to promote access to stairways in all new construction and buildings undergoing major renovations in New York City. The first bill requires that building owners give occupants access to at least one, clearly identified stairway in the building; and post signs that prompt stair use near elevators. The second bill increases access to and the visibility of stairways by permitting the use of hold-open devices in the doors of one stairway per building, for a maximum of three consecutive floors. (Hold-open devices automatically shut in emergencies.)

About Active Design

In 2010, a collaboration of City agencies, not-for-profit organizations, architects, developers, and academic partners worked to develop a manual of strategies for creating healthier communities. Using the latest academic research and best practices, this work culminated in the Active Design Guidelines. More than 15,000 copies of this award-winning publication have been distributed to a global audience. A full copy of the guidelines can be accessed at <http://centerforactivedesign.org/guidelines/>.

Active design recognizes that the built environment directly impacts people's behavior patterns. Rather than admonishing individuals for making unhealthy choices, active design looks at the environmental cues that influence people's food and physical activity decisions, and offers design strategies for making healthy choices easier. A diverse mix of land uses, well-connected pedestrian and bicycle systems, accessible recreation spaces, stairs designed to encourage regular use, and healthy food options are all associated with increases in physical activity, healthier eating, and improved community health outcomes. Active design calls upon the architects, urban designers, planners, developers, and policymakers who shape the built environment to recognize how their roles affect community health, and empowers them to use their creativity to improve it.

About the New School

For nearly a century, The New School has been at the forefront of progressive education. Its new University Center on 14th Street and Fifth Avenue establishes a critical new focal point for The New School's campus and Greenwich Village neighborhood. Described as "a celebration of the cosmopolitan city" by The New York Times, the University Center will be of Manhattan's most ambitious and innovative new buildings. When it officially opens in January 2014, the University Center will add 375,000 square feet of academic and student space to The New School's Greenwich Village campus. The 16-story center will house design studios, laboratories, interdisciplinary classrooms, nine floors of student dormitory facilities, an 800-seat auditorium

with an adjustable stage, and much more. The University Center will provide academic space to programs across all of The New School’s seven divisions. Designed by the award-winning architectural firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, led by design partner Roger Duffy, the University Center’s striking, glassed-in “communicating stairs,” and reflective, angled brass surfaces speak to The New School’s core values of open exchange, civic engagement and unorthodox thought.

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