

# **Methodology:**

## **State of the Platforms Census, 2013**

This is the third Straphangers Campaign subway station platform report. It is designed to provide riders and transit officials with a “snapshot measurement” of conditions on the system’s subway platforms.

### **Census of platform conditions**

In our 2011 and 2012 reports, the Straphangers Campaign recorded conditions on each platform in a random, usage-stratified sample of approximately 120 MTA New York City Transit subway stations. For the current report, we expanded our study, conducting a “census” of conditions on all 862 subway platforms. This represents the entire station population, except those which were closed or under construction. In the process of analyzing the information, three stations (comprised of six platforms) were inadvertently left out of the analysis.

A list of all stations selected can be found in the Appendix.

### **Survey instrument**

Campaign staff created a survey form along with detailed instructions and photographs to measure twelve specific platform conditions. These include simple yes/no questions on: the presence of garbage cans, overflowing garbage cans, garbage bags on the platform, rats, substantial graffiti, broken lights, handrails and/or staircases in disrepair, exposed wiring, substantial peeling paint, substantial water damage, substantial floor cracks, and substantial missing tiles. Three other measures—tactile warning strips, service notices, and large maps—were considered but were later dropped from the survey due to concerns of measurability and fairness. The survey instrument appears at the end of this document.

### **Census conduction and analysis**

The Straphangers Campaign trained and deployed 20 campaign staff and volunteers between June 4 and August 21, 2013. Surveyors were instructed to complete a measurement form for every one of the platforms in the census.

Each completed measurement form was visually checked for accuracy and entered into an electronic spreadsheet for analysis. “Yes” and “No” responses were then summed across all measurement forms for seven of the conditions measured: the presence of garbage cans, garbage bags on the platform, substantial graffiti, handrails and/or staircases in disrepair, exposed wiring, substantial floor cracks, and substantial missing tiles. At least one garbage can was observed on 832 of the platforms measured; out of this number the total number of overflowing garbage cans was counted.

On the four remaining measures—the presence of rats, broken lighting, substantial peeling paint, and substantial water damage—the Campaign included only totals from the 525 belowground platforms in the study. We felt that this measurement would be fairer, due to weather and structural differences between above- and below-ground stations. The findings on each of the twelve measures can be found in Tables One and Two. A comparison of below-ground platform conditions by borough can be found in Table Four.

While the methodology used in our 2012 platform report is not identical to this one, we felt that we could make careful comparisons on nine platform measures. These are: exposed wiring, substantial areas of missing tile, substantial graffiti, substantial floor cracks, rats, broken lighting fixtures, broken handrails and/or staircases, substantial peeling paint, and substantial water damage. In comparing 2012 (survey) results to 2013 (census) results, we conducted one-tailed  $z$ -tests on the 2012 findings (.05 level) to determine significant improvement or deterioration on individual indicators over the last year. See Table Three.

The campaign wishes to acknowledge the efforts of our census volunteers. They are: Sumya Akkas, Dion Aljure, Jonathan Avila, Brittany Bing, Tiffany Brown, Sebastian Bullock, Armando Chapelliquen, Nico Connolly, Ben Fraimow, Keanu Renne-Glover, Jorge Inamagua, Paul Lee, Nicole Navarrette, Oona Newman, Robert Noonan, Andrew Oppenheimer, Christopher Ratsimbazafy, Brian Shelton, Daphne Thompson, Kateri Turner, Danny Zhou.

# NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign

## 2013 Station Platform Survey Instructions

### Overall Survey Instructions

This is a survey of conditions at subway platforms in New York City by the NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign. We are **not** surveying other areas in the station, such as entrances, mezzanines, or station booths.

The questions we are asking about platform conditions:

- lend themselves to yes/no answers;
- are not directly related to changing weather conditions, such as puddles or some leaks; and
- are either not currently measured by the government agency in charge of the subways or use a different definition.

Stations will be grouped by level of ridership, then randomly picked.

It is critical to answer all survey questions honestly and fairly. There are no answers we are looking for, just correct observations. The Straphangers Campaign's credibility has been key to our success.

Surveyors will:

- be trained by their supervisors by jointly rating the same station;
- do their observations after the morning peak and before evening peak (9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.);
- survey all platforms at a single station in the same day (detailed assignments will be provided); and
- take pictures of some station platform conditions they find.

Findings will be calculated in terms of the percentage of stations with problem observed out of stations surveyed. For example, "We surveyed 50 stations and \_\_\_ percent of them had no garbage can."

### Survey Instructions

Use one survey form per platform (e.g. Brooklyn Bridge-City Hall requires three survey forms - one for the Uptown 4, 5, 6 platform; a second for the Downtown 4, 5, 6 platform, and a third for the J, Z platform which serves both directions.)

Enter your name, the station name, the train line(s), the platform, and the time and date at the top of the station platform survey form.

Answer the questions on the survey form with YES or NO answers. A space for your comments is located at the bottom of the form.

Walk the full length of the station platform for which you are making the observations. You will likely need to walk the entire length of the platform two to three times to capture the appropriate information.



Picture Key by Question (from Left to Right)

- Row One: 1. Garbage Can; 3. Large Bag of Garbage; 5. Graffiti; 6. Broken Overhead Lighting.  
 Row Two: 7. Crumbling Stair Edge; 8. Exposed Wiring; 9. Peeling Paint; 10. Water Damage.  
 Row Three: 11. Proper Tactile Warning Strip; 11. No Tactile Strip; 12. Floor Cracks; 13. Missing Wall Tiles.  
 Row Four: 14. Service Notices; 14. Service Notices on a Pillar; 16. Large-Scale Subway System Map; 17. Commodity Number;  
 Two Track-Beds.

Photography is allowed in the subway. MTA New York City Transit Rules of Conduct, Section 1050.9: 3. Photography, filming or video recording in any facility or conveyance is permitted except that ancillary equipment such as lights, reflectors or tripods may not be used. Members of the press holding valid identification issued by the New York City Police Department are hereby authorized to use necessary ancillary equipment. All photographic activity must be conducted in accordance with the provisions of this Part. <http://www.mta.info/nyc/rules/rules.htm>

# NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign 2013 Station Platform Survey

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time (btwn 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.): \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name of Station (e.g. Brooklyn Bridge-City Hall): \_\_\_\_\_

Subway Lines (e.g. J, Z, 4, 5, 6): \_\_\_\_\_

Platform (e.g. Uptown 4, 5, 6): \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer the following questions by checking the appropriate box - YES or NO.**

**YES      NO**

1 Did you observe any garbage cans on the platform?

2 Did you observe any overflowing garbage cans? A garbage can is overflowing if: a) garbage is sticking out of the top of the can; or b) there is litter on the floor surrounding the garbage can.

3 Did you observe any large bags of garbage? Answer YES if you observed one or more lawn-size garbage bags on the platform.

4 Did you observe any rats on the station track roadbed or platform? Walk the full length of the platform observing the track bed. If a train enters the station, stop where the train obscures your view and wait until the train passes out of your view before continuing your walk down the platform.

5 Did you observe any substantial graffiti on platform or on platform walls or on stairways to platform? Substantial graffiti is approximately five feet or more of continuous graffiti on station platform ceilings, pillars, columns, floors, or walls. (Do not include graffiti on advertisements or billboards.)

6 Did you observe any overhead broken light fixtures at underground platforms or on stairways to platform? Answer YES if one or more overhead lights are dark. Do not count unlit emergency lighting. Rate only underground station platforms, not open cut or elevated stations.

7 Did you observe any staircases or handrails in disrepair? Answer YES if any staircases leading up to or down to the platform have portions that are missing, crumbling, loose, frayed or damaged, or handrails that have splintering wood, are broken, or are off their hinges.

8 Did you observe any exposed wiring? Answer YES if any wiring is exposed.

9 Did you observe any substantial peeling paint on platform or platform walls or ceilings? Substantial peeling paint is approximately five feet or more of continuous peeling paint on station platform ceilings or walls.

# NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign 2013 Station Platform Survey

**Answer the following questions by checking the appropriate box - YES or NO.**

**YES      NO**

10 Did you observe any substantial water damage? Substantial water damage is rust on station platform floor or wall tiles or pillars. Also answer YES if – on outdoor stations – canopy coverings are damaged enough to admit leaks to the station (e.g. highly rusted areas of the canopy or holes so large you can see the sky). If you write YES, we need a photograph. 

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11 Did you observe any tactile warning strips? These usually orange or yellow strips can be found in the floor near the edge of the platform, run the length of the platform and help riders with visual impairment judge their position on the platform. 

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12 Did you observe any substantial platform floor cracks? Answer YES only if the crack creates an uneven surface on the floor or is five feet or more in length. 

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13 Did you observe any substantial areas of missing or damaged tile(s) on a wall? Answer YES if there are areas of continuous damages tile(s) five feet or more in length. 

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14 Did you observe any service notices? Service notices inform riders of changes in usual service patterns. 

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15 Were any service notices observed out of date? An out-of-date notice is one that expired on a past date. 

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16 Did you observe any large-scale subway system maps? This is either a stand-alone display or mounted on station platform wall. 

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17 Were these maps up to date? Please enter the commodity number, located on the lower right hand corner of the map: \_\_\_\_\_.

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
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 \_\_\_\_\_  
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Please return your completed survey form to the Straphangers Campaign at 9 Murray Street, Floor 3, New York, NY. If you have any questions call Jason or Cate at 212-349-6460 or email us at [straphangers@nypirg.org](mailto:straphangers@nypirg.org).