



NYPIRG

Straphangers Campaign

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NEWS RELEASE

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Straphangers Campaign Issues First-Ever “State of the Station Platforms” Survey

Conditions Range From “The Good to the Bad to the Ugly” Based on Survey of 28% of All Subway Platforms

Finds Platforms With 100% Garbage Cans to “Unacceptable” Levels of Exposed Wiring, Graffiti, Peeling Paint

The NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign today issued its first-ever “State of the Station Platforms” survey, finding conditions ranging from “the good” (100% of platforms with garbage cans present and 0% overflowing cans), “the bad” (28% of platforms with exposed wiring), to “the ugly” (79% of underground platforms with substantial amounts of peeling paint).

In all, the Straphangers Campaign released findings on twelve¹ subway platform conditions, including the presence of garbage cans, overflowing garbage cans, large garbage bags, rats, graffiti, lighting, handrails and staircases, exposed wiring, peeling paint, water damage, floor cracks, and missing tiles.

The survey was based on observations of all 250 station platforms at 120 randomly-selected subway stations by 14 interns and staff between July 11 and September 24, 2011. This number represents 28% of the total of 909 New York City subway station platforms systemwide.

Observations were made weekdays, between morning and evening rush-hour periods. A copy of the survey form along with illustrative photographs and instructions are attached, as is the methodology for randomly choosing subway stations.

—more, more, more—

¹ Originally, we rated 15 different conditions of station platforms. Because of measurement issues we encountered during the survey, we decided to eliminate three conditions from final consideration. These were the presence of: 1) tactile warning stripes; 2) service notices; and 3) large-scale maps.

“We found the good, the bad and the ugly, from no subway station platforms having overflowing garbage cans to clearly unacceptable conditions, such as peeling paint at three quarters of the platforms observed,” said Jason Chin-Fatt, the Straphanger Campaign organizer who oversaw the survey.

In general, the survey sought to catalogue conditions for which the Campaign felt transit officials could fairly be held accountable and were not overly time or weather sensitive. For example, we did not rate the presence of litter.

In our most positive results, we found:

- 100% of surveyed station platforms observed had garbage cans;
- 0% of percent of these cans were found to be overflowing; and
- just 6% of the time our surveyors observed large garbage bags on the platforms.

We classified the remaining results either as “bad” or “ugly.”

A measurement result was deemed “bad” if it was observed in at least 10% of the platforms, but less than half the time. That would mean a rider might come across these conditions one to five in ten times while using these platforms.

Measurements were deemed “ugly” if they were observed 50% of the time or more.

Among “bad” conditions were:

- rats at 11% of underground² station platforms observed, including roadbeds;
- staircases or handrails in disrepair at 15% of all the platforms observed;
- substantial³ areas of missing tile at 15% of all the observed platforms;
- substantial graffiti at 20% of all the platforms observed, including walls and stairways;
- exposed wiring at 28% of all the platforms observed; and
- substantial floor cracks at 33% of all the platforms observed.

—more, more, more—

² Four of the measures were calculated for underground stations only, as the Straphangers Campaign deemed that fairer, due to weather or structural factors. These measures were the presence of rats, broken lighting, peeling paint, and water damage.

³ Five of the measurements are described as “substantial.” These are defined as follows: “Substantial missing tiles” was defined as “areas of continuous damaged tiles five feet or more in length.” “Substantial graffiti” was defined as “five feet or more of continuous graffiti on station platform ceilings, pillars, columns, floors or walls, but not graffiti on advertisements or billboards.” “Substantial cracks” were defined “only if the crack creates an uneven surface on the floor or is five feet or more in length.” “Substantial peeling paint” was defined as “approximately five feet or more of continuous peeling paint on station platform ceilings or walls.” “Substantial water damage” was defined as “rust on station platform floor or wall tiles or pillars.”

Among the “ugly” conditions were:

- broken lighting fixtures at 50% of underground platforms observed;
- substantial water damage at 53% of underground platforms observed; and
- substantial peeling paint at 79% of underground platforms observed.

MTA New York City Transit does its own twice-a-year Passenger Environment Survey (PES) for subway stations. However, it mostly rates different aspects of the station environment and in some cases uses different measures. In addition, NYC Transit rates an entire station; this survey rates station platforms only.

In general, NYC Transit’s observations cannot be compared with the Straphangers Campaign survey findings.

Among different aspects of stations rated by NYC Transit are: litter; subway maps; functioning annunciators; escalators/elevators in operation; working public telephones; and working booth microphones.

Two measures may be roughly comparable:

- Our finding – that, in the summer of 2011, 100% of the observed platforms had a garbage can and that none of these were overflowing – is similar to the relevant PES measure. For the first half of 2011, NYC Transit found 100% of "trash receptacles usable in stations;" and
- NYC Transit PES found 27% of the stations had “light” “graffiti conditions” in the first half of 2011. The Straphangers Campaign survey found substantial graffiti at 20% of all the platforms observed in the summer of 2011.

In addition, the MTA Chairman Joseph Lhota has been quoted saying that he would like to take action against peeling paint conditions in stations.

The full Straphangers Campaign survey can be found at www.straphangers.org.

TABLE ONE

2012 Straphangers Campaign State of the Station Platform Survey
Conditions Observed⁴

	Measurement	Percentage	
	Garbage can observed on platform	100%	(249 out of 250)
The "Good"	Overflowing garbage can observed	0%	(1 out of 249)
	Garbage bags on platform	6%	(15 out of 250)
The "Bad"	Rats observed ⁵	11%	(15 out of 139)
	Staircases/handrails in disrepair	15%	(37 out of 250)
	Substantial areas of missing tile	15%	(38 out of 250)
	Substantial graffiti	20%	(50 out of 250)
	Exposed wiring	28%	(71 out of 250)
	Substantial floor cracks	33%	(83 out of 250)
The "Ugly"	Broken lighting fixtures ⁵	50%	(69 out of 139)
	Substantial water damage ⁵	53%	(74 out of 139)
	Substantial peeling paint ⁵	79%	(110 out of 139)

⁴Based on a Straphangers Campaign survey of all 250 platforms at 120 randomly-selected MTA New York City Transit subway stations, July to September 2011.

⁵Measured at underground stations only.

TABLE TWO

120 Stations Randomly Selected for Inclusion in Platform Survey, 2012

1 – 7 Av (BDE)	41– Avenue N (F)
2 – 7 Av (BQ)	42 – Avenue U (BQ)
3 – 7 Av (FG)	43 – Bay Pkwy (F)
4 – 8 St-New York University (NR)	44 – Bay Ridge Av (R)
5 – 14 St-6 Av (FLM123)	45 – Bedford Nostrand Avs (G)
6 – 14 St-8 Av (ACEL)	46 – Bergen St (FG)
7 – 18 Av (F)	47 – Bowery (JZ)
8 – 18 Av (N)	48 – Briarwood-Van Wyck Blvd (EF)
9 – 21 St-Queensbridge (F)	49 – Broadway (NQ)
10 – 23 St (NR)	50 – Broadway Junction (ACJLZ)
11 – 28 St (NR)	51 – Bronx Park East (25)
12 – 34 St-Penn Station (123)	52 – Burke Av (25)
13 – 45 Rd Court House Sq (7)	53 – Burnside Av (4)
14 – 46 St-Bliss St (7)	54 – Canal St (ACE)
15 – 47-50 Sts-Rockefeller Center (BDFM)	55 – Canal St (1)
16 – 57 St-7 Av (NQR)	56 – Canarsie-Rockaway Pkwy (L)
17 – 59 St (NR)	57 – Carroll St (FG)
18 – 59 St-Columbus Circle (ABCD1)	58 – Cathedral Pkwy-110 St (1)
19 – 63 Dr-Rego Park (MR)	59 – Central Av (M)
20 – 66 St-Lincoln Center (1)	60 – Chauncey St (JZ)
21 – 72 St (BC)	61 – Coney Island-Stillwell Av (DFNQ)
22 – 80 St (A)	62 – Court St-Borough Hall (R2345)
23 – 90 St-Elmhurst Av (7)	63 – Cypress Hills (J)
24 – 96 St (BC)	64 – Dekalb Av (BQR)
25 – 103 St (BC)	65 – Elmhurst Av (MR)
26 – 111 St (J)	66 – Flatbush Av-Brooklyn College (25)
27 – 111 St (7)	67 – Flushing Av (G)
28 – 116 St-Columbia University (1)	68 – Flushing-Main St (7)
29 – 125 St (1)	69 – Fort Hamilton Pkwy (N)
30 – 137 St-City College (1)	70 – Franklin Av (CS)
31 – 149 St-Grand Concourse (245)	71 – Franklin St (1)
32 – 161 St-Yankee Stadium (BD4)	72 – Fresh Pond Road (M)
33 – 163 St-Amsterdam Av (C)	73 – Grand Army Plaza (23)
34 – 167 St (BD)	74 – Grand Central-42 St (S4567)
35 – 182-183 Sts (BD)	75 – Grand St (BD)
36 – 190 St (A)	76 – Gun Hill Rd (5)
37 – Allerton Av (25)	77 – Halsey St (L)
38 – Aqueduct-North Conduit Av (A)	78 – Harlem-148 St (3)
39 – Astoria Blvd (NQ)	79 – Hewes St (JM)
40 – Avenue I (F)	80 – High St (AC)

81 – Jay St-Metro Tech (ACFR)
82 – Junius St (3)
83 – Kingston Av (3)
84 – Kingston-Throop Avs (C)
85 – Kosciuszko St (J)
86 – Liberty Av (AC)
87 – Marble Hill-225 St (1)
88 – Middle Village-Metropolitan Av (M)
89 – Mosholu Pkwy (4)
90 – Mt Eden Av (4)
91 – Myrtle-Wyckoff Avs (LM)
92 – Neck Rd (Q)
93 – Neptune Av (F)
94 – New Lots Av (3)
95 – Newkirk Av (BQ)
96 – Norwood-205 St (D)
97 – Nostrand Av (3)
98 – Ocean Pkwy (Q)
99 – Ozone Park-Lefferts Blvd (A)
100 – Park Place (S)
101 – Parkside Av (BQ)

102 – Parsons Blvd (F)
103 – Pelham Pkwy (25)
104 – Pennsylvania Av (3)
105 – President St (25)
106 – Prospect Park (BQS)
107 – Ralph Av (AC)
108 – Seneca Av (M)
109 – Sheepshead Bay (BQ)
110 – Simpson St (25)
111 – Sutphin Blvd-Archer Av-JFK Airport
(EJZ)
112 – Union St (R)
113 – Van Siclen Av (AC)
114 – Van Siclen Av (J)
115 – Van Siclen Av (3)
116 – Wakefield-241 St (2)
117 – West 4 St-Washington Sq (ABCDEFM)
118 – Woodhaven Blvd (JZ)
119 – Woodside-61 St (7)
120 – York St (F)

Methodology: State of the Stations Platform Survey, 2012

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

Station selection

In order to select a sample of platforms which is representative of the system overall, the 468 subway stations in the system were first separated by average daily ridership into ten approximately equal-sized sample groups. The first group, or “decile,” represents the top ten percent most-used stations; the second decile represents the ten percent next-most-used stations; and so on. Campaign staff then randomly selected twelve stations from each decile for inclusion in the survey. This “stratified sampling” strategy was used to ensure an even distribution of station sizes among the 120 stations selected for the platform survey. A list of all stations selected can be found in Table Two.

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, graffiti, lighting, handrails and staircases, exposed wiring, peeling paint, water damage, floor cracks, and missing tiles. Three other measures—tactile warning strips, service notices, and large maps—were also included in the survey instrument, but were later dropped from consideration due to concerns of measurability and fairness. The survey instrument appears at the end of this document.

Survey conduction and analysis

The Straphangers Campaign trained and deployed 14 campaign staff and volunteers between July 11 and September 24, 2011. Surveyors were instructed to complete a survey form for every one of the 250 platforms found in stations in the sample; these 250 platforms represent 28% of the 909 platforms throughout the system.

Every completed survey form was visually checked for accuracy and entered into an electronic spreadsheet for analysis. “Yes” and “No” responses were then summed across 250 survey forms for seven of the conditions measured: the presence of garbage cans, garbage bags on the platform, graffiti, handrails and staircases, exposed wiring, floor cracks, and missing tiles. At least one garbage can was observed on 249 of those platforms surveyed; out of this number the total number of overflowing garbage cans was counted.

On the four remaining measures—rats, broken lighting, peeling paint, and water damage—the Campaign included only totals from the 139 underground platforms in the survey. We felt that this measurement

would be fairer, due to weather and structural differences between above- and underground stations. The findings on each of the twelve measures can be found in Table One.

This report is not intended as a census study of conditions on all platforms. As subway platforms can differ from line to line and station to station, our survey results offer our best attempt at a systemwide snapshot of subway platform conditions. We feel that this philosophy is consistent with that of New York City Transit in its own respected Passenger Environment Survey (PES).

The campaign wishes to acknowledge the efforts of our survey volunteers. They are:
Angela Acevedo, Natalie Bramble, Jason Chin-Fatt, Cate Contino, Michael Harris, Jhovaé Irving,
Zephaniarh Jacob, Roshumba Llewellyn, Josh Lowell, Evan Mancini, Alessandra Newton, Ruthie Their,
Luis Velasquez, and Amelia Zaino.

NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign

2011 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."

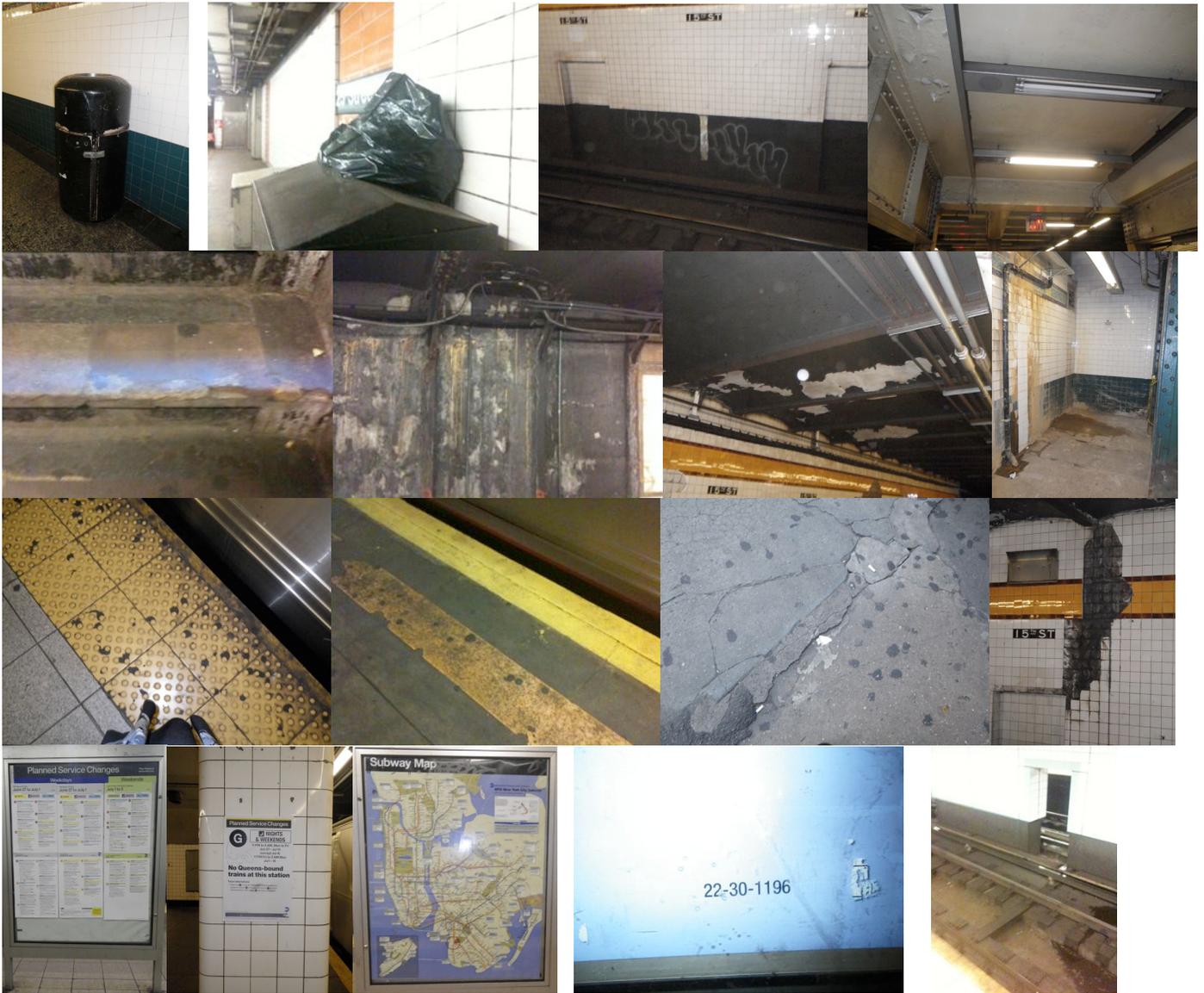
Survey Instructions

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 2011 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?

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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.

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

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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.

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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.)

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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.

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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.

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

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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.

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NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign 2011 Station Platform Survey

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

YES NO

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>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.</p> | | |
| <p>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.</p> | | |
| <p>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.</p> | | |
| <p>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.</p> | | |
| <p>14 Did you observe any service notices? Service notices inform riders of changes in usual service patterns.</p> | | |
| <p>15 Were any service notices observed out of date? An out-of-date notice is one that expired on a past date.</p> | | |
| <p>16 Did you observe any large-scale subway system maps? This is either a stand-alone display or mounted on station platform wall.</p> | | |
| <p>17 Were these maps up to date? Please enter the commodity number, located on the lower right hand corner of the map: _____.</p> | | |

Comments: _____

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.