

AUDIT REPORT



CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER
BUREAU OF FINANCIAL AUDIT
WILLIAM C. THOMPSON, JR., COMPTROLLER

Audit Report on the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Maintenance of Long Island Rail Road Stations Within the City

FN03-074A

April 4, 2003

To the Citizens of the City of New York

Ladies and Gentlemen:

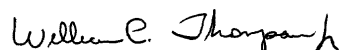
In accordance with Chapter 415, § 1277, of the New York State Public Authorities Law, and the Comptroller's audit responsibilities contained in Chapter 5, § 93, of the New York City Charter, my office has examined the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's maintenance of Long Island Rail Road stations within the City (City Stations). The New York State Public Authorities Law requires that each local governmental unit reimburse the Metropolitan Transportation Authority for the cost of maintenance, use, and operation of passenger stations (including the costs associated with providing police protection) within each local government's boundaries.

This audit reviewed the Long Island Rail Road's maintenance operations and the conditions of its City Stations. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority bill for both Long Island Rail Road and Metro North Railroad City Stations for the period April 1, 2001, through March 31, 2002, totaled \$66,726,002. The results of our audit, which are presented in this report, have been discussed with Metropolitan Transportation Authority and Long Island Rail Road officials, and their comments have been considered in preparing this report. We also conducted a separate audit of Metro-North Railroad City Stations. The results of that audit is covered in a separate report.

Audits such as this provide a means of ensuring that City Stations are properly maintained and are safe for use by the public.

I trust that this report contains information that is of interest to you. If you have any questions concerning this report, please contact my audit bureau at 212-669-8929 or e-mail us at audit@Comptroller.nyc.gov.

Very truly yours,



William C. Thompson, Jr.

WCT/GR

Report: FN03-074A
Filed: April 4, 2003

Table of Contents

AUDIT REPORT IN BRIEF	1
Audit Findings and Conclusions	1
Audit Recommendations	2
INTRODUCTION	2
Background	2
Objectives	3
Scope and Methodology	3
Discussion of Audit Results	3
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	5
Station Conditions	5
Inspections Performed by LIRR Employees	
Did Not Result in Correction of Conditions	13
LIRR Painting Guidelines Were Not Always Followed	14
RECOMMENDATIONS	14
LIRR Response	14
APPENDIX – Photographs of LIRR Stations with Unsafe or Poor Conditions	
ADDENDUM – LIRR Response	

City of New York
Office of the Comptroller
Bureau of Financial Audit

**Audit Report on the
Metropolitan Transportation Authority's
Maintenance of Long Island Rail Road Stations
Within the City**

FN03-074A

AUDIT REPORT IN BRIEF

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) was created in 1965 by the State of New York to maintain and improve commuter transportation and related services within the Metropolitan Transportation Commuter District—the City of New York, Dutchess, Nassau, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Suffolk, and Westchester counties. The New York State Public Authorities Law (NYSPAL) requires that each local governmental unit reimburse the MTA for the cost of maintenance, use, and operation of passenger stations (including the costs associated with providing police protection) within each local government's boundaries.

This audit reviewed LIRR's maintenance operations and the conditions of its City Stations. The MTA bill for both LIRR and Metro North Railroad City Stations for the period April 1, 2001, through March 31, 2002, totaled \$66,726,002. It should be noted that we are conducting a separate audit—#FN03-075A—of Metro-North City Stations. The results of that audit will be covered in a separate report.

Audit Findings and Conclusions

With the exception of the Murray Hill station, the LIRR generally maintained City Stations in a clean and safe condition, and corrected the unsafe and unsanitary conditions identified in our prior audit (FN01-190A, issued February 20, 2002). However, the Murray Hill station is not properly maintained and has potentially hazardous conditions in need of repair. The conditions, most of which were noted in our prior audit, included cracked and crumbling cement; chipped and damaged steps on staircases; and, loose metal plates on station platforms. Moreover, the LIRR did not correct all of the unsafe conditions noted by its own inspectors at the Murray Hill station, and it did not always follow its painting guidelines for City Stations.

We found no problems at three stations (Bayside, Hollis, and Long Island City) and minor problems at 16 stations (Belmont, Douglaston, East New York, Far Rockaway, Flushing Main Street, Forest Hills, Hunterspoint Ave., Kew Gardens, Laurelton, Little Neck, Locust Manor, Nostrand Avenue, Penn Station, Queens Village, Shea Stadium, and Woodside). The remaining six stations (Auburndale, Broadway, Flatbush Avenue, Jamaica, Rosedale, and St. Albans) are undergoing capital renovations and therefore have not been cited for any current conditions. Our review also indicated that the LIRR followed its standards for maintenance and cleaning services consistently at the City Stations and at Nassau and Suffolk Stations and that it adequately provided police protection at City stations.

Audit Recommendations

We recommend that the MTA and LIRR correct all unsafe and dangerous conditions immediately; repair the platforms, stairways, and other deteriorated structures identified in this report; paint, clean, and remove the graffiti and debris at the City Stations, as necessary; ensure that conditions identified during annual inspections are corrected; and, ensure that stations are painted, in accordance with the guidelines.

LIRR officials responded that they concur with the report's five recommendations, and have attached a schedule detailing the actions that have or that will be taken to remedy the conditions cited in the report. LIRR officials noted that they are not responsible for maintaining Penn Station and Belmont Park. Therefore, LIRR officials sent letters to AMTRAK (for Penn Station) and the New York Racing Association (Belmont Park) informing them of the conditions cited in this report.

INTRODUCTION

Background

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) was created in 1965 by the State of New York to maintain and improve commuter transportation and related services within the Metropolitan Transportation Commuter District. This District encompasses the City of New York as well as Dutchess, Nassau, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Suffolk, and Westchester counties. The New York State Legislature determined that an effective, efficient commuter rail system, reasonably priced, was vital to the continued economic viability of the City and its neighboring counties; and that providing such a service was dependent upon the availability of operating subsidies. Chapter 415, § 1277, of the New York State Public Authorities Law (NYSPAL) of 1966 requires that each local governmental unit reimburse the MTA for the cost of maintenance, use, and operation of passenger stations (including the costs associated with providing police protection) within each local government's boundaries.

The MTA acquired control of the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) in 1966 by purchasing all outstanding LIRR capital stock from the Penn Central Transportation Company. As a result, the City became liable to the MTA for the costs of operating and maintaining the 26 LIRR stations located within the City's boundaries (City Stations).

After the New York State Legislature amended § 1277 of the NYSPAL in June 2000 to establish an annual fixed billing, we reviewed the LIRR's maintenance operations and the conditions of its City Stations.¹ Prior to the State fiscal year ending March 31, 2000, we also reviewed the MTA's claim for reimbursement of actual costs associated with the maintenance, use, and operation of LIRR City Stations to verify whether the costs were reasonable, accurate, and allowed under Chapter 415, § 1277 of NYSPAL. The MTA bill for both LIRR and Metro North Railroad City Stations for the period April 1, 2001, through March 31, 2002, totaled \$66,726,002. It should be noted that we are conducting a separate audit—#FN03-075A—of Metro-North's City Stations. The results of that audit will be covered in a separate report.

Objectives

Our audit objectives were to determine whether the LIRR:

¹ Under the amendment, the bill is adjusted annually, based on the Consumer Price Index for Wage Earners and Clerical Workers for the New York, Northeastern-New Jersey Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area.

- Maintained City Stations in a clean and safe condition and whether LIRR's maintenance efforts at City Stations were similar to its efforts at Nassau and Suffolk Stations;
- Corrected unsafe and unsanitary conditions at City Stations identified in the previous report;
- Provided maintenance services for City Stations in accordance with the LIRR's standards and procedures; and
- Provided adequate police protection at City Stations.

Scope and Methodology

This audit covered the period April 1, 2001, through March 31, 2002. We met with LIRR officials to obtain an understanding of their station maintenance operation. We reviewed LIRR's standards and procedures adopted by LIRR, and examined station maintenance and cleaning records to determine LIRR's compliance with those procedures.

To determine whether they were properly maintained, we inspected all LIRR City Stations. We documented our inspection results on a checklist and compared them to the conditions listed on the LIRR Station Inspection Reports for each City Station. In addition, we examined the conditions at LIRR's Nassau and Suffolk County Stations to compare the LIRR's maintenance efforts at those stations with its efforts at the City Stations. We also determined whether unsafe and unsanitary conditions noted in our prior audit (#FN01-190A) were corrected.

To determine whether adequate police protection was provided at City Stations, we reviewed police officers' payroll time sheets, daily blotters, and various MTA records that documented police patrol time at the stations.

This audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards (GAGAS) and included tests of the records and other auditing procedures considered necessary. This audit was performed in accordance with Chapter 415, § 1277 of NYSPAL, and pursuant to the City Comptroller's audit responsibilities, as set forth in Chapter 5, § 93, of the New York City Charter.

Discussion of Audit Results

The matters covered in this report were discussed with LIRR officials during and at the conclusion of this audit. A preliminary draft report was sent to MTA and LIRR officials and was discussed at an exit conference on January 22, 2003. On January 28, 2003, we submitted a draft report to MTA and LIRR officials with a request for comments.

We received a written response from LIRR that was forwarded by the MTA on March 5, 2003, which stated:

“The Long Island Rail Road concurs with the five recommendations put forth in the report. Additionally, attached are copies of the letters that have been sent out to The New York Racing Association and Amtrak, for Belmont Park Station and Penn Station respectively, to inform them of the station maintenance conditions mentioned in the report.”

In addition, LIRR officials attached schedules from the Passenger Services and Engineering Departments detailing the actions that have or that will be taken to remedy the conditions noted in the report.

The full text the LIRR response is included as an addendum to this final report.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With the exception of the Murray Hill station, the LIRR generally maintained City Stations in a clean and safe condition, and corrected the unsafe and unsanitary conditions identified in our prior audit (FN01-190A, issued February 20, 2002). However, the Murray Hill station is not properly maintained and has potentially hazardous conditions in need of repair. The conditions, most of which were noted in our prior audit, included cracked and crumbling cement; chipped and damaged steps on staircases; and, loose metal plates on station platforms. Moreover, the LIRR did not correct all of the unsafe conditions noted by its own inspectors at the Murray Hill station, and it did not always follow its painting guidelines for City Stations.

We found no problems at three stations (Bayside, Hollis, and Long Island City) and minor problems at 16 stations (Belmont, Douglaston, East New York, Far Rockaway, Flushing Main Street, Forest Hills, Hunterspoint Ave., Kew Gardens, Laurelton, Little Neck, Locust Manor, Nostrand Avenue, Penn Station, Queens Village, Shea Stadium, and Woodside). The remaining six stations (Auburndale, Broadway, Flatbush Avenue, Jamaica, Rosedale, and St. Albans) are undergoing capital renovations and therefore have not been cited for any current conditions. Our review also indicated that the LIRR followed its standards for maintenance and cleaning services consistently at the City Stations and at Nassau and Suffolk Stations and that it adequately provided police protection at City stations.

These issues are discussed in greater detail in the following sections of this report.

Station Conditions

The following are the specific conditions identified during our observations of the City Stations and the status of those conditions noted during the prior audit.

AUBURNDALE STATION - (192nd Street and 39th Avenue, Queens.)

Prior Condition(s): This station was undergoing capital renovations at the time of our last audit.

Current Status: Station is still under capital renovations at the time of this audit, and, therefore, has not been cited for any current conditions.

BAYSIDE STATION - (213th Street and 41st Avenue, Queens.)

Prior Condition(s): None.

Current Status: No problems were found at the time of our observations.

BELMONT PARK STATION - (Hempstead Avenue and Cross Island Parkway, Queens.)

Prior Condition: The sheds on Track 1-2, Track 3-4, Track 5-6, and Track 7-8 platforms had rotted wood and peeling paint, and sections of the Track 7-8 platform shed were missing. There were unsecured areas on the Track 3-4 and 5-6 platforms, allowing for unauthorized access. The asphalt walkway on the Track 1-2 platform had large crevices. Tracks 2 and 7 had broken and missing edge-boards. There was broken glass on the staircase to Track 5-6 and at the ticket office.

Current Status: Partially corrected. The platform area on Track 5-6 is now secured. The broken glass on the staircase to Track 5-6 and the ticket office was cleaned. However, the sheds on the Track 1-2, Track 3-4, Track 5-6, and Track 7-8 platforms still had rotted wood and peeling paint, and the shed on the Track 7-8 platform still had sections missing. The platform area on Track 3-4 still had not been secured. The crevices in the asphalt walkway on the Track 1-2 platform still had not been patched. Tracks 2 and 7 still had broken and missing edge-boards.

Additional Problems: Litter was on Track 3. Graffiti covered the staircase wall leading to Track 7-8.

BROADWAY STATION - (Northern Boulevard and Depot Road, Queens.)

Prior Condition(s): The westbound staircase wall and the walls of the passenger walkway tunnel had peeling paint. The station's platform shelter had a broken column with nails protruding from it, as well as dirty benches and walls, litter, and puddles of water on the floor. Plexiglas and a metal frame were missing from the westbound shelter. Broken glass was on the front of the eastbound staircase. The eastbound platform had broken concrete. There were uneven sidewalks with pavement gaps on both the westbound and eastbound platforms. There was graffiti on the westbound platform shelter.

Current Status: This station is currently undergoing capital renovations, and, therefore, has not been cited for any current conditions.

DOUGLASTON STATION - (241st Street and 41st Avenue, Queens.)

Prior Condition(s): The westbound staircase had cracked steps. There was graffiti on the walls of the underpass.

Current Status: Corrected.

Additional Problems: There was graffiti beneath both platforms.

EAST NEW YORK STATION - (Atlantic Avenue and Van Sinderen Avenue, Brooklyn.)

Prior Condition(s): The steps at the rear westbound staircase, the Van Sinderen Avenue staircase, and the East New York staircase were chipped and broken. There was a loose piece of concrete and crumbling concrete on the westbound platform, graffiti on the westbound walls and shed, and no station identification signs on the platform. There were leaks on the front and rear portion of the eastbound platform and a raised expansion joint was at the front of the eastbound platform.

Current Status : Partially corrected. The steps at the rear westbound staircase and at the East New York Avenue staircase were repaired. The loose piece of concrete and crumbling concrete on the westbound platform was repaired. The graffiti on the westbound walls and shed was removed. Station identification signs were installed on both platforms. The leaks on the eastbound platform and the raised expansion joint on the eastbound platform were repaired. However, the steps on the Van Sinderen Avenue staircase were still chipped and broken.

Additional Problems : Peeling paint and graffiti were found on the walls of Van Sinderen Avenue staircase and tunnel.

FAR ROCKAWAY STATION - (Nameoke Street and Redfern Avenue, Queens.)

Prior Condition(s): None.

Current Status : The concrete on the handicapped access ramp was broken and crumbled, exposing a metal rod. (See photograph on page 1 in Appendix I.)

FLATBUSH AVENUE STATION - (Flatbush Avenue and Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn.)

Prior Condition(s): Water from the ceiling leaked over the Track 1-2, Track 3-4, and Track 5-6 platforms, and by the ticket office. Graffiti covered the wall near the staircase leading to the Track 3-4 platform. There was uncollected trash at the top of the Track 3-4 staircase.

Current Status : This station is currently undergoing capital renovations, and, therefore, has not been cited for any current conditions.

FLUSHING, MAIN STREET STATION - (Main Street and 41st Avenue, Queens.)

Prior Condition(s): Trash near the westbound staircase and shelter was not collected.

Current Status : Corrected.

Additional Problems : Trash near the eastbound staircase was not collected. (See photograph on page 1 in Appendix I.)

FOREST HILLS STATION - (Austin Street and 71st Avenue, Queens.)

Prior Condition(s): The edges of the eastbound platform were cracked and had crumbling cement. One window on the westbound staircase was cracked and a window on the ticket office door was cracked. Graffiti was beneath the westbound platform.

Current Status : Partially corrected. The edges of the eastbound platform were patched, and the broken glass by the ticket office was replaced. However, the westbound staircase's cracked windows still had not been replaced. Graffiti was still beneath the westbound platform.

Additional Problems : The eastbound platform had cracked and crumbling concrete. (See photograph on page 2 in Appendix I.)

HOLLIS STATION - (193rd Street and Woodhull Avenue, Queens.)

Prior Condition(s): None.

Current Status : No problems were found at the time of our observations.

HUNTERSPOINT AVENUE STATION - (Hunterspoint and Skillman Avenues, Queens.)

Prior Condition(s): The station's shed was missing sections of its cover.

Current Status : Not corrected.

Additional Problems : None.

JAMAICA STATION - (Sutphin Boulevard and Archer Avenue, Queens.)

Prior Condition(s): This station was undergoing capital renovations.

Current Status : Station is still undergoing capital renovations at the time of this audit, and, therefore, has not been cited for any current conditions.

KEW GARDENS STATION - (Austin Street and Lefferts Boulevard, Queens.)

Prior Condition(s): The westbound platform had crumbling concrete that created large gaps within the

platform. The eastbound platform edge near the staircase had cracked cement. Graffiti was beneath both platforms.

Current Status:

Partially corrected. The crumbling concrete on the westbound platform and the cracked cement on the eastbound platform edge had been repaired. However, graffiti was still beneath both platforms.

Additional Problems:

The eastbound platform had a broken edge. (See photograph on page 2 in Appendix I.)

LAURELTON STATION - (225th Street and 141st Road, Queens.)

Prior Condition(s): All stairways had peeling paint; the westbound and eastbound sides of the platform had broken and crumbling concrete; there were raised expansion joints at the front and rear of the eastbound side of the platform; and there was broken glass from the windowpanes of the waiting room door.

Current Status:

Partially corrected. Some concrete patchwork was completed on the westbound side and the eastbound side of the platform; however, the new concrete is already crumbling and broken. (See photograph on page 3 in Appendix I.) The raised expansion joints at the front and rear of the eastbound platform were repaired. The broken windowpanes were replaced. However, the stairways still had peeling paint.

Additional Problems:

A wall switch plate cover was missing and a lamppost was missing its protective cover, which exposed electrical wires in both cases. The benches in the waiting room were broken, which caused rusted nails to protrude.

LITTLE NECK STATION - (Little Neck Parkway and 39th Road, Queens.)

Prior Condition(s): None.

Current Status:

Graffiti was beneath both the eastbound and westbound platforms.

LOCUST MANOR STATION - (Farmers Boulevard and Bedell Street, Queens.)

Prior Condition(s): The westbound platform had a chipped edge that exposed a metal rod. The westbound staircase had cracked and crumbling cement; the shed on the westbound platform had a hole in it; and graffiti was beneath the platform.

Current Status:

Partially corrected. The cracked and crumbling cement on the

westbound staircase and the hole in the westbound platform shed had been repaired. The chipped edge that exposed a metal rod on the westbound platform had been patched. However, the graffiti beneath the platform still existed.

Additional Problems:

There was broken and crumbling concrete at the top of both the front and rear staircases of the eastbound platform. (See photographs on pages 3 and 4 in Appendix I.) The Plexiglas in the westbound platform shed was loose.

LONG ISLAND CITY STATION - (Borden Avenue and 2nd Street, Queens.)

Prior Condition(s): This station was undergoing capital renovations at the time of our last audit.

Current Status:

The station renovations were completed. No problems were found at the time of our observations.

MURRAY HILL STATION - (150th Street and 41st Avenue, Queens.)

Prior Condition(s): The eastbound and westbound platforms had cracked and crumbling cement. Steps on the westbound staircase were chipped, the asphalt at the top of the westbound staircase was cracked, and the ceiling above the westbound staircase leaked. A piece of concrete had fallen from the support beam above the eastbound platform. The eastbound staircase had a chipped step and the edge of the eastbound platform had a loose metal plate. Water from the retaining wall leaked onto the rear portion of the eastbound platform. The rusted pipes were only partially painted. There was graffiti on the walls.

Current Status:

Partially corrected. The leaks were repaired. However, the cracked and crumbling cement on the eastbound and westbound platforms still existed. (See photographs on pages 4 and 5 in Appendix I.) The broken concrete at the base of the support beam had not been repaired. (See photograph on page 6 in Appendix I.) The steps on the westbound staircase remained chipped, the asphalt at the top of the westbound staircase was cracked, and one of its steps was still chipped. (See photograph on page 7 in Appendix I.) The eastbound staircase still had a chipped step and the metal plate at the edge of the eastbound platform was still loose. The rusted pipes were still not painted and graffiti still existed on the walls.

Additional Problems:

The retaining wall at the top of the eastbound staircase has cracked concrete, which caused the stairway banister to become loose. (See photograph on page 6 in Appendix I.) The ceiling over the westbound staircase had peeling paint. Graffiti was beneath the westbound platform.

NOSTRAND AVENUE STATION - (Atlantic Avenue and Nostrand Avenue, Brooklyn.)

Prior Condition(s): A section of the westbound platform shed and sections of the eastbound platform sheds were missing. The front portion of the westbound platform had broken concrete and the edge of the platform was damaged. Graffiti was beneath both platforms.

Current Status : Partially corrected. The section of the westbound platform shed was replaced, the broken concrete at the front portion of the westbound platform was patched, and the graffiti was cleaned. However, sections of the eastbound platform sheds were still missing, and the damaged platform edge on the westbound platform was still broken.

Additional Problems : Other graffiti was beneath the westbound platform.

PENN STATION - (7th Avenue and West 32nd Street, Manhattan.)

Prior Condition(s): There were leaks above the Track 15-16, 17, and 18-19 platforms. There were broken concrete in the middle of the Track 13 platform, and cracked tiles by the Track 14 escalator.

Current Status : Partially corrected. The broken concrete in the middle of the Track 13 platform and cracked tiles by the Track 14 escalator were repaired. However, the leaks above the Track 15-16, 17, and 18-19 platforms remain.

Additional Problems : There were leaks on Tracks 13-14 and Tracks 20-21. Track 14 had a broken platform edge. Oil leaked on Track 20. A metal pipe protruded from the staircase wall leading to Tracks 18-19. Metal braces detached from two columns on Track 17 were protruding. Graffiti was on the rear wall of Track 18.

QUEENS VILLAGE STATION - (Springfield Boulevard and Jamaica Avenue, Queens.)

Prior Condition(s): The westbound platform had raised pavement and gaps. Paint was peeling from the walls of the westbound staircase.

Current Status : Not corrected. The gaps and raised pavement on the westbound platform and the peeling paint from the walls of the westbound staircase still exist. (See photograph on page 7 in Appendix I.)

Additional Problems : The Plexiglas on the Customer Information Display was broken.

ROSEDALE STATION - (243rd Street and North Conduit Avenue, Queens.)

Prior Condition(s): There were raised expansion joints at the front and middle sections on the eastbound side of the platform. There was broken concrete on both sides of the platform. There were broken platform edges in the front section of the eastbound side of platform. Pieces of patched concrete had separated from the eastbound side of platform. Broken glass on the west-side staircase.

Current Status: This station is currently undergoing capital renovations, and, therefore, has not been cited for any current conditions.

ST. ALBANS STATION - (Linden Boulevard and Montauk Street, Queens.)

Prior Condition(s): The platform had broken concrete, and paint was peeling from the station's shed and the walls of the staircase.

Current Status: This station is currently undergoing capital renovations, and, therefore, has not been cited for any current conditions.

SHEA STADIUM STATION - (Flushing Meadow Park, by Roosevelt Avenue, Queens.)

Prior Condition(s): A section of the west-end staircase shed was missing. A lamppost on the westbound side of platform was missing its protective cover plate, exposing electrical wiring. There was broken concrete and a broken platform edge on the eastbound side of the platform.

Current Status: Partially corrected. The broken concrete on the eastbound side of the platform was repaired; however, the platform edge had not been repaired. The section of the west-end staircase shed was still missing. (See photographs on page 8 in Appendix I.) The lamppost on the westbound side of platform was still missing its protective cover plate still exposing the electrical wiring.

Additional Problems: A different lamppost was missing its cover plate exposing electrical wiring.

WOODSIDE STATION - (Roosevelt Avenue and 61st Street, Queens.)

Prior Condition(s): The window at the passenger overpass for platform A-B was covered with duct tape only on the inside and had not been fully repaired. Graffiti covered the outside of the eastbound and westbound panels.

Current Status: Partially corrected. The cracked window was replaced. However, the graffiti that covered the panels remained.

Additional Problems: None.

**Inspections Performed by LIRR Employees
Did Not Result in Correction of Conditions**

LIRR did not correct all of the unsafe conditions noted by its own inspectors at the Murray Hill station. For example, from November 2000 through March 2002, LIRR's engineering inspectors consistently noted that the platforms and staircases have seriously deteriorated. We observed the same conditions during our current year inspections. In addition, a November 2000 Engineering inspection report and a December 2000 Passenger Services inspection report noted broken and chipped steps on the station's stairs, and cracked and crumbling cement on the station's platforms. Both reports indicated that the steel plates located at the edge of the platform needed to be repaired. Again, we observed these same conditions during our inspections as far back as May 1999.

We are particularly concerned, however, that a February 2002 Passenger Services Safety Inspection report did not indicate the true condition of the Murray Hill station. This report stated only that the yellow safety lines needed painting, and everything else was "All OK." Yet our inspection, as well as a March 2002 Engineering inspection, revealed all the conditions previously mentioned.

**LIRR Painting Guidelines
Were Not Always Followed**

LIRR did not always follow its station-painting guidelines, which require that stations be painted once every two to five years, depending on daily ridership. Specifically, six stations, Belmont Park, East New York, Flushing Main Street, Locust Manor, Nostrand Avenue, and Shea Stadium, were not painted as frequently as is required by LIRR guidelines. LIRR guidelines categorized Locust Manor as a level 3 station and, therefore, should have been painted every four years. Since Locust Manor was last painted in 1998, it should have been painted in 2001. The remaining five stations—Belmont Park, East New York, Flushing Main Street, Nostrand Avenue, and Shea Stadium—are categorized as level 4 stations, and should be painted every five years. Belmont Park should have been painted in 1998; it was last painted in 1993. Flushing Main Street was last painted in 1994, and should have been painted in 1999. East New York, Nostrand Avenue, and Shea Stadium were last painted in 1997, and should have been painted or should have been scheduled for painting in 2002. As mentioned earlier, we found peeling paint at the Belmont Park and East New York stations during our 2002 inspections.

Recommendations

MTA and LIRR should:

1. Correct all unsafe and dangerous conditions immediately.
2. Repair the platforms, stairways, and other deteriorated structures identified in this report.
3. Paint, clean, and remove the graffiti and debris at the City Stations, as necessary.
4. Ensure that conditions identified during annual inspections are corrected.
5. Ensure that stations are painted, in accordance with the guidelines.

LIRR Response: LIRR officials agreed with the report's five recommendations. LIRR officials also stated that since they are not responsible for maintaining Penn Station and Belmont Park, they sent letters to AMTRAK and the New York Racing Association informing them of the conditions noted in the report.