



For Immediate Release: September 17, 2020

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MTA Inspector General Releases Report on Updated NYCT Fare Evasion Methodology

4-Month OIG/MTA Collaboration Yields New Approach for More Accurate Fare Evasion Estimates

Follow-up to [2019 OIG letter](#) identifying issues

New Fare Evasion Estimates Expected 2021

MTA Inspector General Carolyn Pokorny today released a report highlighting NYC Transit's (NYCT) new methodology for calculating fare evasion rates for the bus and subway systems, which should provide a more accurate estimate of fare evasion. The update came about through a 4-month collaboration between the Office of the MTA Inspector General (OIG), NYCT and Dr. Kitty Kay Chan, a Columbia University Professor of Practice of Applied Analytics, and is a follow-up to the OIG's [July 2019 letter](#) to NYCT regarding weaknesses in the agency's fare evasion survey design and data collection processes.

"Applying academic rigor to the persistent problem of fare evasion is an innovative achievement for the MTA," said **MTA Inspector General Carolyn Pokorny**. "The OIG wanted, and the public deserves, for our transit system to have the best possible methodology, with minimal expense. We brought in one of New York's leading data specialists, so that all of our stakeholders, including MTA leadership, board, workers, riders, taxpayers, academics, and other transit agencies, can have confidence in the results and learn from our industry-leading best practice to fight this costly problem. I am especially grateful to Columbia University's Dr. Kitty Kay Chan for volunteering her time in advising on this effort, a true public service."

Dr. Kitty Kay Chan, a Columbia University data analytics professor, graciously volunteered her time and expertise to the collaboration, which yielded new sampling methodology and related changes to the calculation of results.

For the subway fare evasion survey, NYCT plans to use a stratified random sampling method and will select random samples from 5 strata that are based on average paid ridership levels. The bus fare evasion survey will be stratified by borough. For both bus and subway surveys, to calculate the overall result, the results from each stratum will be weighted by an estimate of total ridership (paid and unpaid) in the stratum.

NYCT plans to implement the new bus methodology in the 4th quarter of 2020, using video review. NYCT plans to implement the new subway methodology once subway ridership levels stabilize.

Members of the OIG's Audit Unit, including Audit Supervisor Peter Kahn and Assistant Staff Auditor Anna Gribbon, participated in the collaborative effort and produced this report.

The OIG appreciates the hard work of Dr. Chan, NYCT's Division of Operations Planning, and NYCT's Office of Management and Budget on this successful team project.

The OIG's report, including findings and recommendations, is here: <http://mtaig.state.ny.us/assets/pdf/20-17.pdf>

The OIG's 2019 letter, including findings, and recommendations, is available here: <http://mtaig.state.ny.us/assets/pdf/19-12%20with%20Response%20083019%20TM.pdf>

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