PLANNING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION: HOW DOES THE MTA COMPARE?

By Rosemary Bolich. Advisor: David King.

**Key words:** climate change adaptation, transportation infrastructure, public transportation, hazard mitigation

**Abstract:** Climate scientists predict that extreme weather events will increase in intensity and frequency as the global climate changes. Extreme weather such as Hurricane Sandy has shown the importance of planning for climate change adaptation, but few public transit agencies have developed their own adaptation plans. As demonstrated by Hurricane Sandy’s effect on transportation infrastructure in the New York City region, it is important for city officials to plan for extreme weather events and also to look forward to protecting infrastructure from the risk of flooding. The public transit agencies of nine cities were studied with a qualitative evaluation to determine the strength of their climate change planning documents. Only four transit agencies had some type of climate change document, and none of the agencies have official climate change plans. Overall, transit agencies are not developing clear goals for climate change adaptation. Possible reasons for this are a lack of funding and the idea these types of plans are not necessary. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority of New York’s sustainability report emerged as a model for other agencies’ adaptation planning efforts due to its level of detail.