



(CHARLES ECKERT)

### De Blasio makes it official

Public advocate running for mayor  
Page 4

### Celebs on the town

Stars hit NYC parties  
Pages 12-13



(PATRICK MCMULLAN)



(CRAIG RUTTLE)

# DEATH ON THE TRACKS

Spate of subway fatalities has officials seeking solutions Page 3

# NYC FLIGHT WEEK

Prepare for departure. Visit [jetblue.com/flightweek](http://jetblue.com/flightweek)

**JAN 28 - FEB 1 @ 12 PM daily**

Terms apply.

# Alarm over track tragedies

## Renewed call for platform barriers

BY TIM HERRERA  
tim.herrera@am-ny.com

A rash of subway deaths this year — from people being pushed onto the tracks to suicides — is reigniting calls for the MTA to move toward installing safety barriers and take other steps to protect straphangers.

The agency is set to discuss platform safety at a board meeting today, as yet another person jumped in front of a train yesterday in an apparent suicide. And last week, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer was joined by politicians and an MTA board member in asking the agency's inspector general to investigate the cause of the spate and the feasibility of installing the barriers.



Stringer

"Another attempted suicide cannot become a common-place occurrence in one of the largest transit systems in the world," Stringer said of yesterday's incident, in which a man jumped in front of an R train in Brooklyn. The unidentified man died last night.

"This is a troubling and dangerous trend with serious implications for the millions of commuters who ride the subway each day," Stringer said.

This year, seven people have died after being hit by subways, and Stringer's office projects a record-breaking 100 deaths in 2013 if the trend continues. In 2012, 55



Top: Police carry a body after an apparent suicide in a Times Square subway station on Jan. 22. (GETTY)



Left: A rendering of possible safety barriers for subway stations. (CROWN INFRASTRUCTURE SOLUTIONS)

people were killed after being struck by subways, out of 141 total who were hit. In 2011, 47 died out of 146 struck.

The agency has looked at installing platform barriers in the past. In 2007, Crown Infrastructure Solutions, an architectural and engineer-

ing firm, began talks with the agency to build out a full network of barriers with no charge to the MTA or straphangers, in return for being able to sell advertising on built-in screens. The barriers would have been seen through and extend from the platform to the ceiling, with

sliding doors that line up with the doors on the subway cars.

But after about four years of on-and-off talks and a full proposal from Crown, the project stalled, and the firm has since moved on to other transit systems, according to Michael Santora, president

There have been seven subway deaths so far this year:

**JAN. 1:** A woman walked onto the tracks and was killed by an uptown 2 train near Penn Station.

**JAN. 16:** A 31-year-old homeless man was killed after he fell off an uptown 6 train while relieving himself between cars.

**JAN. 19:** A man was found dead at the Third Avenue station along the L line; a body was discovered on the southbound A track near the Nostrand Avenue station; a man on the tracks at the Sixth Avenue L train station was killed.

**JAN. 22:** A man was killed after jumping in front of an uptown 2 train in Times Square

**JAN. 27:** A man jumped in front of an R train in Park Slope. (AMNY)

of the company.

"The MTA really just never moved forward on their part. We got as far as we could," Santora told amNewYork. "We never got any negative feedback from them that it wasn't a good system, it's just that no one's ever made a real move for it," he said, estimating that the project would've cost about \$1.5 million to \$2 million per station.

Santora said that he hopes the increased focus on subway safety might reinvigorate interest in New York.

MTA spokesman Kevin Ortiz declined to say whether the barriers would be discussed at today's meeting, and he declined any com-

ment for this article.

John Samuelson, president of the MTA workers' union, said the union is "willing to explore any options to end the rash of rider deaths, including barriers," but that there are safety concerns that come with them.

"If something catastrophic happened, like a train entered the station while workers were on the tracks and it's a perfect storm of many redundancies failing, the only option is to jump up on the station platform," Samuelson said. "With the barriers, that avenue of escape wouldn't be possible."

Gene Russianoff, staff attorney for the Straphangers Campaign, said barriers should be given a serious look, but that there are many obstacles.

"Obviously their cost and how feasible is it to put them in 468 stations, many of which have different designs," Russianoff said.

He added: "My bottom line is that people being struck or killed on a subway platform is a serious problem that deserves a serious answer."

Some commuters said they supported building the barriers.

"People have the tendency to cross the yellow line here and it would stop them from falling," said Marjan Adarkwa, 26, a Baychester straphanger.

Lin Lee, 27, of Flushing, agreed.

"Absolutely," Lee said of building the barriers. "It's kind of scary to listen to that kind of news so it makes sense." (WITH ANNA SANDERS)

## Family of missing S.I. mom in Turkey to search

BY MEREDITH GALANTE  
Special to amNewYork

The brother and husband of a missing Staten Island woman flew to Turkey yesterday to join officials in the hunt for their loved one.

Sarai Sierra was scheduled to return from Istanbul on Jan. 22, but the 33-year-old mother of two never boarded the plane. Sierra's husband, Steven Sierra and her brother

David Jimenez left for Turkey late yesterday hoping to bring Sarai home, a family friend said.

"More than anything, Steve just wants to bring his wife home," said Sarai's friend Magalena Rodriguez.

Sarai last sent her sister an instant message Jan. 21 that read: "I'll be home tomorrow. Yay!" according

to the Staten Island Advance.

Sierra's father waited for three hours at the airport, but his daughter never arrived. The manager at the hostel she stayed at checked her room and found her belongings still there, the Staten Island Advance reported.

Sierra is 5-foot-2 and 110 pounds. She has brown hair and hazel eyes.



Sierra

## Talks today in school bus flap

Mayor Michael Bloomberg has stepped in to try to end the school bus strike.

A representative for the mayor said today's Gracie Mansion meeting will be among the bus companies, the members of Local 1181 of the Amalgamated Transit Union and a mediator. There will be

no city representatives in the meeting.

"The mayor reached out to both the bus companies and union to arrange a meeting in hopes that they can come to an agreement to end the strike and resume bus service for thousands of students," the spokeswoman said.

Michael Cordiello, the union president, has been pushing the mayor to come to the bargaining table and still called for

Bloomberg to meet with him directly.

"Until that happens, the strike goes on," he said in a statement. The union went to strike nearly two weeks ago after the mayor refused to put an employee protection provision — which would guarantee jobs for current workers — in the bids for school bus contracts. The mayor reiterated that the courts deemed the provision illegal. (IVAN PEREIRA)