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Contact: Corey Bearak (718) 343-6779/ (516) 343-6207

## **ATU Local 1056 Testimony at MTA Hearing**

**Thursday, November 15, 2012**

**Submitted by ATU Local 1056, Daneek Miller, President/ Business Agent**

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Budget proposal for FY'2013 and to share the concerns of ATU Local 1056 regarding the future policies, planning and finances of the MTA. I am I. Daneek Miller, President and Business Agent for Amalgamated Local 1056. Local 1056 represents drivers and mechanics who work for MTA New York City Transit's Queens bus division. I also co-chair the MTA Labor Coalition.

At the outset I wish to commend MTA Chair Joe Lhota, Authority President Tom Prendergast and Bus Division chief Darryl Irick for their leadership leading up to, and in the aftermath, of Superstorm Sandy. And I want to especially commend and praise the system's workers including the membership of ATU Local 1056 for stepping up and helping New Yorkers get by and making sure alternative modes of transit existed while we waited for subway service to resume system-wide.

Based on our experience and knowledge of the MTA system, we participate in today's hearing to emphasize the need to continue to rebuild bus service and invest in the infrastructure necessary to keep our buses running and deliver the best service possible to New Yorkers and those who visit or work here. This includes the need to move on the Jamaica Depot, to bolster the Casey Stengel Depot against flooding risks (Managers moved the buses to "higher ground" in advance of Sandy.) and to look at a bus terminal in Flushing that Assembly member – soon to be Member of Congress – Grace Meng proposed late last Spring.

Public transportation remains key to economic growth. No doubt certain folks in real estate and development recognize that in their push for a Far West Side station between Javits and Times Square. That is why we continue to advocate the modernized bus terminals to meet existing ridership capacities as well as the new Jamaica depot. It also why we advocate a better bus replacement schedule for Queens with too many old buses.



*Representing all hourly rated  
Employees of the Queens  
Division, Who safely Operate and  
Maintain Buses for MTA New  
York City Transit.*

*Serving the communities of Queens,  
Manhattan, and the Bronx since  
January 23rd, 1935.*

Longer term the MTA must focus on better use of its bus lines to serve intra-borough needs rather than just funneling riders to subways and rail. Better planning will increase utilization of some under-capacity routes.

We continue to advocate a review of certain MTA practices and operations. Many question how the MTA contracts out, including for professional services. This makes much of its legal services unnecessarily costly and inefficient. The newly created Business Service Centers – transit's “CityTime” – duplicate services and create inefficiencies that undermine rather than enhance worker productivity. As we observed with other so-called efficiency projects – from CityTime to E9-1-1, a proposal that claims to save dollars through technology too often diverts dollars from services and capital improvements and fail to deliver savings (if any at all) to justify the boondoggle. We have full confidence that, under chairman Lhota, these items will receive the attention due.

Many pundits and commentators often glossed over how transit was shortchanged, if not outright robbed, by the city and state over the years. The respect and well-earned goodwill Chairman Lhota has with his colleagues in government offers an opportunity to move on a path to reverse this.

The ATU Local 1056 also urges the MTA, state and city to seek and obtain more federal stimulus and other funding for transit. Our local is working with concerned residents, our electeds, our brothers and sisters in labor and our International to effect this assistance from Congress.

Investing in transit means more than repairs, new cars and buses and routes; it means a stable, affordable fare that encourages mass transit use and provides an affordable means for workers and visitors to get around. It remains absolutely imperative that the MTA and the City and State officials who appoint the MTA board and all of our electeds remember the plight of our fellow working stiffs. Others have described reasonable revenue measure to the extent they prove necessary and ATU Local 1056 pledges to be part of any reasonable conversation that involve fairness and equity.

Thank you.