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ATU Locals Press Need for Transit Improvements Seek to Enlist Public to Lobby their electeds

Amalgamated Transit Union Locals Nos. 1056 and 1179 rallied this afternoon (Friday, May 16, 2014) with Congressman Gregory W. Meeks and state and local elected officials, including Assembly Member David Weprin and Council Member I. Daneek Miller to support “National Transit Month,” an unprecedented effort of tens of thousands of transit workers and advocates mobilizing across North America to engage millions of riders in support of more, better and safer public transit. At the (Northeast corner of Parsons Boulevard and Archer Avenue at the) Parsons Archers Bus terminal in Jamaica, Congressman Meeks, local Queens electeds, ATU Presidents/ Business Agents Mark Henry (1056) and John Lyons (1179) and labor, civic and transit activists seek to educate transit riders on the need increased funding for and investment in public transit, and to enlist them to contact their elected officials and demand more funds for transit.

“Everyone knows how investment in our infrastructure, especially public transportation keys economic growth,” stated **Member of Congress Gregory W. Meeks**. “Real estate and development interests recognized this when they promoted the Far West Side station between Javits and Times Square. For just that same rationale – economic growth and meeting the public's transit needs, my fellow electeds and I join today and everyday with ATU Locals 1056 and 1179 to advocate a better bus replacement schedule for Queens, modernized bus terminals to meet existing ridership capacities and the new Jamaica depot. Longer term we need the MTA to focus on better use of its bus lines to serve intra-borough needs rather than just funneling riders to subways and rail. Our message to the public today, we need your support for public transit; it not only helps save our environment but spurs our economy and grows good jobs.”

"New York's transit system and its dedicated workers are the backbone of our economy. To keep New York moving forward, I will continue to fight in Albany for an efficient and well-funded transit system," stated **Assemblyman David I. Weprin**.

“Problems with the funding mechanisms that provide for the maintenance and construction of transportation infrastructure have undermined urban America for decades,” said **Council Member I. Daneek Miller**. “Today, I am proud to stand with my colleagues in government, advocates, and of course, the Amalgamated Transit Union in urging transit riders to mobilize in support of increased funding and investment for transportation projects. This is a priority that deserves to be heard at the city, state and federal levels.” Miller who previously served as ATU President and co-chair of the MTA Labor coalition, added: “I have also begun drafting a formal resolution that I will submit in the City Council, urging the federal government to keep transportation funds at optimal levels and emphasize mass transit options. By investing in mass transit, we are investing in a better, more efficient and green future.”

“We rally together today to because we need to expand the use of public bus transit options and strengthen existing capabilities,” stated **Mark Henry, President and Business Agent for ATU Local 1056**, which represents drivers and mechanics who work for MTA New York City Transit's Queens Bus Division. “Increased investment in public transit creates jobs and supports our economy, enhances our environment and reduces our carbon footprint and relieves traffic gridlock.”

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John Lyons, President and Business Agent of ATU Local 1179, which represents drivers and mechanics who work for MTA Bus in Queens operating from depots in Far Rockaway and Jamaica, added, “Bus transit offers a cost-effective means to expand public transit where none or insufficient options exist. The work of ATU members during Sandy and the periodic subway service shutdowns to allow repairs to this day demonstrates how buses matter both as a practical and flexible transit mode.”

On May 20, thousands of transit workers, riders, transportation advocates, public officials and others will gather in Washington, D.C to march on Capitol Hill for a rally and to lobby federal officials to increase investment in public transportation to cut pollution, relieve gridlock and create jobs.

“We want our riders to know we stand with them in the fight for more, better and safer public transit and together we can ensure that our voices are heard,” says Larry Hanley, international president of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU). “With our exploding urban populations, worsening traffic jams, young people forgoing cars, transit ridership at record levels and stressed public transit systems, we need a major urban agenda and investment to address the growing demand for public transit.”

Also speaking at the rally were representatives of City Council Member Donovan Richards and Community Board 12 and 13 (District Manager Lawrence McClean).

Based on their experience and knowledge of the MTA system, ATUs 1056 and 1179 emphasize the need to rebuild and enhance bus service and invest in the infrastructure necessary to keep the buses running and deliver the best service possible to New Yorkers and those who visit or work here. This includes moving on a new Jamaica Depot now that the MTA assembled the land required for the projects, purchasing the many needed new buses to replace the too many old ones to ensure Queens riders received the service they need and deserve, bolstering the Casey Stengel Depot against flooding risks (Recall how managers moved buses to “higher ground” in advance of Sandy.) and looking at a bus terminal in Flushing that Member of Congress Grace Meng proposed at the ATU's behest.

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[Pictures follow on next pages]





ATU Presidents/ Business Agents Mark Henry (1056) (r) and John Lyons (1179) and Congressman Gregory Meeks. (Photo Courtesy ATU Local 1056)



Councilman I. Daneek Miller, ATU 1179 President John Lyons, Congressman Gregory Meeks and ATU 1056 President Mark Henry. (Photo Courtesy ATU Local 1056)



Councilman I. Daneek Miller, ATU 1179 President John Lyons, Congressman Gregory Meeks ATU 1056 President Mark Henry and Assemblyman David Weprin. (Photo Courtesy ATU Local 1056)