

ATU Urges Council Legislation Include Labor in Street Design

Testimony

to

City Council Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure

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by

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& ATU NYS Legislative Conference Board Financial Secretary**

Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) thanks Majority Leader Shaun Abreu and the Council Committee on Transportation and for Infrastructure for this opportunity to share ATU's concerns on legislation, Int. No. 124 proposed to establish a task force to study options for making street design and infrastructure safer but fails to include buses; as drafted ATU opposes Int. No. 124. I am Luis Alzate, ATU Local 1056 President and Business Agent and ATU NYS Legislative Conference Board Financial Secretary. I also deliver this testimony on behalf of Conference Board president Tom Mason and ATU Locals 726, 1179 and 1181 – all of our members serve the riding public.

ATU 1056 members – bus operators and mechanics – work for MTA New York City Transit's Queens Bus division with depots in Flushing (Casey Stengel), Jamaica and Queens Village.

ATU Local 726 represents bus operators and mechanics who work for MTA New York City Transit's Staten Island bus division.

ATU 1179 represents bus operators, mechanics and supervisors who work from the Far Rockaway and JFK Depots of the MTA Bus division (former Green Bus lines).

ATU Local 1181 represents bus operators and mechanics who work for the MTA Bus division (former Command Bus lines) in Brooklyn's Spring Creek Depot (and paratransit operators and Yellow School Bus drivers and escorts.

Statewide, the ATU represents more than 25,000 hard-working transit workers throughout ATU cities including Albany, Binghamton, Buffalo, New York City, Rochester, and Syracuse.

ATU remains concerned about any failure to include public transit bus operators in any decision that impact street design. While pedestrian and bicycle modes of transportation have a place in New York City and merit protection, those modes do not necessary merit primacy when it come to public transit buses and the efficiencies offered. There have been bike lane installed along bus routes that have made dedicated bus lanes virtually impossible and impractical.

Including bus operators in street design discussion make that less likely and should ensure an overall improvement in street design

As to Int. No. 409, ATU supports the Department of Transportation (DOT) posting signs on each block of any street subject to bus lane restrictions. At the same time, ATU notes greater enforcement of these restrictions remain necessary and discussing these as part of street design and re-design can yield better overall outcomes.

Bus public transit serves as the lifeline for many New Yorkers to shop, see their doctor, attend worship services, visit family members, and do many of the things that enrich their lives.

Working families need safe, equitable and efficient transportation. More often than not, including in Queens, that means reliance on our existing bus public transit system operated by the MTA.

In conclusion ATU stands ready to work with the sponsors, the committee, its chair, and the Council to pass appropriate legislation to protect the riding public.

Thank you.

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*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.*

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