

ATU Members offer insights to better public transit via buses

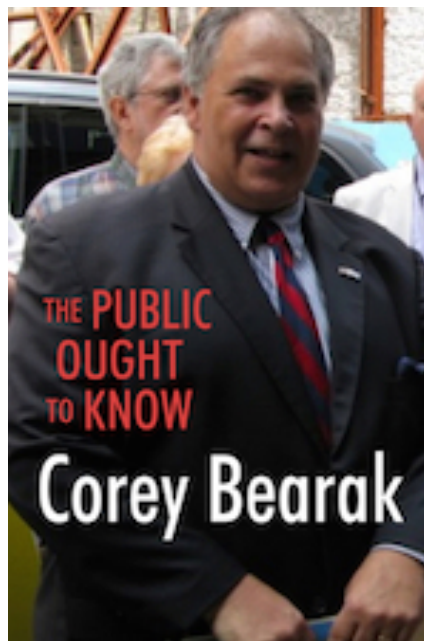
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By Corey Bearak

The Public Ought To Know

Queens, NY – Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Advocated Bus Service Improvements in Testimony to City Council Committee on Transportation, October 6, 2016.

In part one of this four-part series, we look at some unique and valuable insights ATU members offers as mass transit professionals, regarding bus public transit. ATU 1056 and ATU 1179 members – bus operators and mechanics – work respectively for MTA New York City Transit's Queens Bus and the MTA Bus divisions.



When discussing how best to improve public transit, policymakers and advocates talk up ferries, more rail and subways, light rail and, most recently, a trolley. They often give short shrift to resources to expand bus service – which offers the quickest, most cost effective and flexible means to get more people out of cars and help protect our environment.

Buses offer a quick means to address a dearth of service or improving what exists throughout the city and especially in Queens, where ATU members serve its residents, visitors, workers and students.

Building in smarter public transit options using buses also assists many residents who currently rely on personal vehicles.

Buses connect neighborhoods. City Hall's plans to develop more affordable housing units and housing with less or no parking requirements needs adequate public transit options in place, and not just to funnel commuters to subway and rail; the city needs buses in place to take residents to school, work, recreation and family within boroughs such as Queens.

Indeed, many communities that require transit or more of it clamor for better options. We need leadership from transit and transportation planners.

City Hall and the City Council should support advocacy by ATU and others for more buses that the MTA needs to maintain and expand service; this includes a focus on better use of MTA bus lines to serve intra-borough and inter-borough needs rather than just using most bus routes to funnel riders to subways and rail. A holistic approach to bus service will help remedy "transportation deserts" that elected officials such as Council Member I. Daneek Miller clearly identify.

Next The Public Ought To Know: a look at some existing bus schemes and examples for improvement.

***Corey Bearak** can be reached at StrategicPublicPolicy.com. Find his ebook, **The Public Ought To Know**, at [Kindle](#), [Nook](#) and [Apple iBooks](#).