

ATU Locals 1056 & 1179 Oppose Private Vans How Vans Operate Matters!

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Queens, NY – Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Locals 1056 and 1179 questioned applications for commuter van services from Rosedale and Laurelton to the Parsons/



Archer Subway, when the MTA already operates several bus routes that service the community. The vans would duplicate existing MTA bus service (Q3, Q85, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q111 Q113), and illegally pick up and discharge passengers at MTA bus stops. ATU 1056 Recording Secretary Gladys McDaniel presented ATU's testimony December 21 at a NYC Department of Transportation hearing at Queens Borough Hall. ATU 1056 and 1179 members – bus operators and mechanics – work respectively for MTA NYC Transit's Queens bus division and the MTA Bus Company and serve the riding public.

Rather than consider new van services, our public transit unions renew our call on City and State agencies to work together address the scourge of vans that operate illegally and unsafely in many City communities including southeast Queens.

Vans licensed and unlicensed operate illegally and unsafely – in contravention of the City's Vision Zero initiative – along bus routes and deprive the MTA of revenue it can re-invest in bus service. These illegally operating vans – unlike MTA buses – remain ADA inaccessible and foster more congestion along routes and at already heavily congested bus and subway transit hubs.

NYPD, the Taxi and Limousine Commission and the MTA need to coordinate their activities at such transit bus hubs as Parsons Archer and 179th Street/ Hillside Avenue and also address outright theft of fares by these vans. These often unregulated vans' drivers – unlike MTA bus operators drivers – face no drug testing and regular oversight and cause many pedestrian accidents.

So-called commuter vans, unreliable, often unsafe and many more times than not operating illegally, offer straphangers a dangerous alternative to MTA bus service. The woefully inadequate response to illegal, unregulated and unsafe vans allows these unsafe vans to prey upon bus routes, pick up passengers at bus stops and the subways, deprive the Authority of revenue and reduce passenger counts that the Authority uses to cut service. Their operation de facto recreates the two-fare zones we fought to eliminate over 20 years ago.