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**Car Free Day LI Fact Sheet posted at <http://carfreedayli.com/news/>**

## **Long Islanders Rally at Farmingdale State College for Car Free Day**

*LI Community Prepares to Leave Cars at Home on September 22*

(Long Island, NY...September 17, 2015) –Long Islanders rallied at Farmingdale State College today in anticipation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Car Free Day Long Island. Car Free Day is an international event observed every September 22 that encourages drivers to leave their cars at home for a day. Last year for Car Free Day LI, 2,855 Long Islanders pledged to be car free or car-lite, saving over 72,000 miles of driving, and 36 tons of CO2 emissions. To date, 2,300 Long Islanders have already pledged to be car free or car-lite on Tuesday.

In support of the event, Farmingdale State College hosted an Island-wide rally that promoted the use of more sustainable transportation choices such as trains, buses, carpooling, biking, and walking, telecommuting as well as options such as combining errands, compressed work weeks or transit-oriented development. Commuters, students and their families pledged their commitment to being car free or car-lite on Tuesday, September 22.

“We thank Farmingdale State College for once again hosting the Car Free Day LI Rally and providing a forum to educate the campus community and the public on the impact of single occupancy vehicles on Long Island. We’re excited to join in the effort of over 1,500 cities in 40 countries in promoting more sustainable transportation choices,” said Rosemary Mascali, Manager of Transit Solutions and Co-Chair of the Car Free Day LI event.

Guest speakers addressed issues such as the environmental, economic, and health impacts of transportation. Exhibitors helped build awareness of transportation alternatives.

Farmingdale President Hubert Keen kicked off the rally welcoming the students and faculty of the College as well as the broader Long Island community. “I believe we can all agree that reducing vehicle traffic is good for the environment and has positive long-term effects,” said Keen. “Getting involved with Car Free Day LI spurred the creation of a Commuter website ([farmingdale.edu/commuter](http://farmingdale.edu/commuter)) which provides information and encourages our almost 10,000-person community to find alternative methods of getting to the campus.”

Also on hand was NYS DOT Long Island Regional Director, Joseph Brown. “As a strong supporter of sustainable development and multimodal transportation, the New York State Department of Transportation is pleased to participate in this important event that helps create awareness of the alternatives, facilities and programs available to Long Island commuters,” said Joseph Brown, NYSDOT Regional Director. “We are proud that for nearly 25 years NYSDOT has led the way in reducing single occupancy vehicles trips with a robust 511NY Rideshare program, 40 miles of HOV lanes on the LIE, seven park and ride lots, pedestrian signals and facilities in every feasible road improvement project, 36 miles of separate shared-use bike paths and 162 miles of bike lanes on Long Island’s state roads.”

Members of the Car Free Day Long Island Planning Committee, a broad-based group of Long Island leaders from major employers, business, civic and environmental groups, universities and municipalities, were also on hand, including program partners Transit Solutions, 511NYRideshare, LIRR, NICE bus and Suffolk County Transit. Chris Papandreou, Director of Customer Information for the MTA Long Island Rail Road highlighted the environmentally friendly aspects of using mass transit. “The LIRR is honored to take part in Car Free Day. Our Railroad is committed to sustainability and we invite everyone to take this opportunity to show the world that Long Islanders care about their environment and take a stand by joining us on Car Free Day,” said Papandreou.

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Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone, while not able to attend the Rally, also lent his support for Car Free Day. "Car Free Day highlights the fact that attractive, affordable 21st-century public transportation is key to the future of Suffolk County. Building upon our existing infrastructure and making public transportation services more convenient and reliable is an important first step toward a larger vision to create an Innovation Zone in Suffolk County with transit links that connects people - particularly young people - to all the places that they want to be and need to be without having to get into a car. I am encouraging County employees and residents to join me in being car free or car-lite this Car Free Day by taking mass transit, walking, biking or carpooling to work or school. I also invite everyone to our Mobility in Suffolk Summit at the H. Lee Dennison building in Hauppauge that will feature panel discussions on Bus Rapid Transit, bike share and downtown walkability and development, said Bellone."

Speaking at the Rally on the County Executive's behalf, were Darnell Tyson, Deputy Commissioner of Suffolk County Department of Public Works, and Garry Lenberger, Acting Director of Transportation Operations. "We are continuing early planning efforts to bring bus rapid transit to key corridors as an alternative to the car for trips to work, school, and play," said Tyson. "BRT will provide amenities such as improved bus stations, bus signal priority, dedicated bus lanes, uniquely branded buses, and improved passenger information all aimed at making the service an attractive option," he added. Garry Lenberger spoke of technological enhancements such as Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) technology and Bus Location Apps that have Suffolk County Transit on the verge of a new frontier in increased transportation mobility for its residents.

Mascali presented the County with a Car Free Day Long Island Challenge Award in acknowledgement of Suffolk County leadership in transportation issues and their support for Car Free Day LI. Also recognized were the efforts by the Towns of North Hempstead, Huntington and Babylon, and the Villages of Amityville, Malverne and Sea Cliff to encourage residents to try a commute alternative on Car Free Day. Mascali also announced the leaders in the annual "Bragging Rights" contest, with Stony Brook University and NSLIJ Health System as the current leaders in total pledges in the University/College and Company categories.

Other Car Free Day LI Planning Committee speakers lending their support included David Gustin, President of the Melville Chamber of Commerce who stressed the economic impacts of lost productivity and limited mobility options, and Jeff Meyer, Vice President of Suffolk Bike Riders Association who underscored the importance of bike safety improvements. Paul Spreer, Regional Project Manager for 511NY Rideshare reviewed the free programs and services available to employers including ride matching for carpools and vanpools, employer commuter benefits services, and resources and information for transit, bicycling, walking, telework and other options.

Exhibitors were also on hand to build awareness of more sustainable transportation choices, including Transit Solutions, 511NYRideshare, Sustainable Long Island, Brands Cycle and Fitness, and Farmingdale State College.

Mascali concluded the Rally with a plea to all Long Islanders to take the pledge. "Whether you are commuting to work or school, or running errands around town, not using your car or just using it less qualifies for participation in Car Free Day LI. With close to three million people on Long Island, even if we each drive one mile less, it adds up to quite a bit and can have a big impact on our air quality, health, traffic congestion, greenhouse gas emissions and energy use."

Commuters, students and residents can pledge to go car free or car-lite at the Car Free Day LI website ([www.carfreedayli.com](http://www.carfreedayli.com).) Even those who are already using commute alternatives can take the pledge. Participants are also eligible to win raffle prizes including commuter bikes, gift cards, and theater and sports tickets, and more.

### **About Transit Solutions**

Transit Solutions is a federally funded program of the MTA LIRR whose mission is to improve the air quality on Long Island by increasing all forms of transit ridership on Long Island and to help educate Long Island employers and workers about the pre-tax transit benefit program that can save them money. [www.transitsolutions.org](http://www.transitsolutions.org)

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#### **About 511NYRideshare**

511NYRideshare is a federally funded program of the NYSDOT that provides a suite of programs and services including ride matching for carpools and vanpools, employer commuter benefits services, and resources and information for transit, bicycling, walking, telework and other options. [www.511NYRideshare.com](http://www.511NYRideshare.com)

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