***For Immediate Release: September 18, 2014***

***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 18, 2014) – Arriving by bus, train, carpool, bike and by foot, Long Islanders rallied at Farmingdale State College today in anticipation of the 2nd 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. To date, over 2,300 Long Islanders have pledged to be car free or car-lite on Monday.

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 Monday, September 22.

“We thank Farmingdale State College for hosting the Car Free Day LI Rally and providing a forum to educate the public on the impact of single occupancy vehicles on Long Island. Today we unite with the residents of 1,500 cities in 40 countries in trying to do something about it by making more sustainable transportation choices,” said Rosemary Mascali, Manager of Transit Solutions and Co-Chair of the Car Free Day LI event.

Guest speakers, including Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone, addressed issues such as the environmental, economic, and health impacts of transportation.   Exhibitors and panel discussions on behavior change, bus rapid transit, transit-oriented development on Long Island, and green–fleet technology 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. “Since the early days of Farmingdale’s founding over 100 years ago, the campus community has supported environmental conservation,” said President Keen. “Supporting Car Free Day and hosting this rally is a natural for us.  Car Free Day will help educate the public that using motor vehicles less by using alternative methods of transportation helps reduce traffic, conserve energy, lower harmful emissions, and reduce parking congestion.”

Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone also lent his support for Car Free Day. “I’m encouraging County employees and residents to join me in being car free or car-lite by taking mass transit, walk, bike or carpool to work or school. I also invite everyone to our Bike Summit on Car Free Day at our H. Lee Dennison location in Hauppauge that will feature panel discussions on bike safety and infrastructure,” said County Executive Bellone. Mascali presented County Executive Bellone with a Car Free Day Long Island Challenge Award in acknowledgement of Suffolk County Government’s leadership in exploring and implementing Bus Rapid Transit and Sunday bus service, and their exemplary support of Car Free Day Long Island. Also recognized were the efforts by the Towns of North Hempstead, Huntington, Babylon and Brookhaven, and the Village of Lawrence to support Car Free Day.

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. Yannis Takos, General Manager Market Development 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. We have a history of supporting and providing transportation to Long Islanders for nearly 180 years. 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 Takos. Jack Khzouz, Director of Marketing and Communications for NICE Bus highlighted their new mobile ticketing option as an example of how new technologies are improving the mass transit customer experience.

Other Car Free Day LI Planning Committee speakers lending their support included Lisa Burch, Director of Sustainability and Social Responsibility for North Shore-LIJ Health System who highlighted the health and fitness impacts of transportation choices, and Michael DeLuise, President of the Melville Chamber of Commerce who stressed the economic impacts of lost productivity and limited mobility options. Bob DeVito, President of Suffolk Bike Riders Association underscored the importance of bike safety improvements, while Eric Alexander, Vision Long Island Executive Director, stressed the importance of experiencing a commute alternative. “Kudos to Transit Solutions and 511NYRideshare for advancing this broad based initiative to make Long Islanders aware of a range of transportation solutions beyond the automobile.  The more we can experience bus, rail, walking and biking and plan our communities to support these options, the stronger our region will be to attract and retain a young workforce.   Efforts like these help increase ridership and will attract the public and private investment necessary to realize these solutions.”

Exhibitors were also on hand to build awareness of more sustainable transportation choices, including Transit Solutions, 511NYRideshare, the Sierra Club of Long Island, Sustainable Long Island, the Greater Long Island Clean Cities Coalition and North Shore-LIJ Health Systems.

Mascali concluded the Rally with a plea to all Long Islanders to take the pledge. “I know we love our cars on Long Island. But we also love clean air, no traffic, riding bikes, walking and not spending a fortune on our cars. By trying an alternative on Car Free Day we can see that both are possible.”

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).)

Whether commuting to work or school, or running errands around town, using your car less qualifies for participation in Car Free Day LI. 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)

**About 511NYRideshare**

**511NYRideshare is a** federally funded program of the NYSDOT that provides a suite of programs and services including ridematching 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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