

**ATU 113  
812 Wilson Ave.  
Downsview ON M3K 1E5**

**FOR RELEASE: 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, March 31, 2010**

**Toronto transit union to meet directly with TTC riders in town hall-style meetings**

TORONTO, March 31. Bob Kinnear, President/Business Agent of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 113, today released details of the three town-hall-style meetings the union will hold with Toronto Transit Commission riders about improving customer service.

Kinnear had promised the meetings at a media conference on February 9, at a time when TTC workers were under intense public scrutiny. A picture published in late January on the front page of the Toronto Sun of a subway station collector who had dozed off late on a Saturday night touched off a frenzy of picture taking by transit users and a brief rash of negative encounters between TTC staff and a small number of passengers. Kinnear publicly asked that the picture-taking stop but acknowledged "there are things we as workers can do to improve the customer experience." He said the face-to-face meetings would be arranged to promote open dialogue and mutual respect between TTC workers and riders.

"Our name for this initiative is 'Let's talk,'" said Kinnear. "And that's what we intend to do. We're extending an open invitation to the public to attend three meetings in the coming weeks on Sunday, starting at 1:00 pm. The meetings will be broadcast on Rogers TV and streamed live on the Internet."

The first meeting is April 11, at Downsview Secondary School, near Keele and Wilson. The second meeting is April 18, at Stephen Leacock Collegiate in Scarborough. The third meeting is May 2, at the Ryerson Library, in the heart of downtown Toronto near Yonge and Dundas.

"Ours goals for these meetings are both modest and large," said Kinnear. "The modest part is that we hope people leave these meetings thinking they were glad they came. We hope people will see that our union is open to criticism, welcomes public dialogue and wants to make things better. We also hope that the public gains a better understanding of the challenges of our work.

"We know our members will be watching as well and we believe they will also benefit from the dialogue.

"The larger ambition is that we want this process to be the platform for a new beginning of a positive relationship between transit users and workers. We are tired of the negative and unproductive 'us vs. them' climate that is distracting the city from the very serious issues facing public transit in Toronto."

Kinnear said each meeting will be run by an impartial moderator who is not affiliated with the union and is known for their public-spiritedness.

The April 11 moderator is John Tory, a well-known former politician, host on Newstalk 1010, and Chair of the Toronto City Summit Alliance.

The April 18 moderator is Diane O'Reggio, a distinguished social and political activist and currently President and CEO of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund (Canada).

The May 2 moderator will be announced soon.

Each meeting will feature the moderator, Kinnear, and four other Local 113 members who have volunteered to answer the public's questions. Additional frontline TTC workers will be available to talk to the public before and after the formal meeting.

“We believe that if TTC workers and riders work together, things can be better. And we commit to Toronto that we will do our part. The union will be taking to heart what it learns at these meetings and we will respond with future initiatives that will show this to be a meaningful and useful process.”

The meetings will be promoted in full-colour, full-page ads in the commuter papers, Metro and 24 Hours. A few days before each meeting, Local 113 volunteers will hand out invitations to TTC users at selected stations and stops.

The union has set up a Facebook page to promote the meetings: Let's Talk: TTC Riders & Workers. Details are also available on Local 113's website: [www.WeMoveToronto.ca](http://www.WeMoveToronto.ca).

-- 30 --

For more information, please call Bill Gillies at 416-455-4683.