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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

Front-Facing Advertising Debuts on MetroCards

Iconic Retail Brand Claims Historic First Ad to Appear on Front of a MetroCard

Subway station agents and MetroCard vending machines today began selling MetroCards displaying a front-facing advertisement for the first time. The MetroCards are the first in more than 15 years to feature anything other than the familiar gold design – instantly recognizable to any New Yorker – with blue lettering spelling "MetroCard."

The ad appearing on the cards was purchased by Gap and reads: "Be Bright NYC" with multicolored letters on a navy blue background. It encourages New Yorkers to visit Gap's newly remodeled flagship store at 34th Street and Broadway starting October 10, 2012. Customers who present the MetroCard at any Gap store are entitled to a 20% discount on merchandise purchases through November 18, 2012.

Advertisements have appeared on the rear face of MetroCards since 1995; but in July, the MTA announced that it would itself begin selling commercial advertising space on MetroCards rather than hiring an intermediary, and that it would offer space on the fronts of MetroCards for the first time. The Gap advertisement fills all available space on both the front and rear of the cards.

"Opening up the front of MetroCards to advertising gives the MTA a new source of revenue," said MTA Chairman and CEO Joseph J. Lhota. "We will monitor public acceptance of ads going forward to ensure that it doesn't interfere with use of the transit system. There is no reason why the MTA shouldn't put every resource it can toward helping its fragile finances."

"Because the MTA MetroCard is an iconic element of every New Yorker's life, it felt like an appropriate vehicle to promote the opening of our newly remodeled flagship store at 34th and Broadway," said Chris Gayton, senior director of media for Gap brand North America. "We're excited to take part in this historic moment as the first advertiser on the front of the MetroCard."

Approximately 10% of the MetroCards sold throughout the system in a typical month will carry the Gap ad. The Gap MetroCards are available at station booths and MetroCard vending machines at these 10 stations, which were selected based on their proximity to the Gap's flagship store and their high ridership.

- 14 St-Union Square L N Q R 4 5 6
- 34 St-Herald Square B D F M N Q R
- 34 St-Penn Station A C E
- 34 St-Penn Station 1 2 3
- 42 St-Grand Central S 4 5 6 7
- 59 St-Columbus Circle A B C D 1
- 59 St 4 5 6 / Lexington Av N Q R
- 86 St 4 5 6
- Lexington Av E M
- Times Square-42 St N Q R S 1 2 3 7

At MetroCard vending machines, cards are added to an existing supply of standard MetroCards, so there is no guarantee that purchasing a fare will result in the acquisition of a card featuring a particular design or advertisement.

Subway station agents will be able to honor specific requests for the card while supplies last. To obtain a MetroCard, one must purchase value on that card. It is not possible to request a zero-balance card from a station agent without purchasing a fare.

While the Gap ad is the first to appear on the fronts of cards, the first advertisement to appear as part of the MTA's new self-managed MetroCard advertising initiative is an ad from Health Plus, which encourages those who see it to call for free or low-cost health insurance sponsored by New York State. Distribution of 125,000 MetroCards carrying that ad began on Monday, October 1, at the following stations:

- 149 St-Third Av 2 5
- Astoria Blvd N Q
- Bay Pkwy N
- Burnside Av 4
- Delancey St F / Essex St J M Z
- Flushing-Main St 7
- Fresh Pond Rd M
- Mets-Willets Point 7
- New Lots Av 3

- St. George Staten Island Railway

The MTA anticipates that the next full-face advertising campaigns will appear on MetroCards in December and January. Future MetroCard advertising campaigns will include the word "MetroCard" on the back of the card, flush right in the white space above the zone available for advertising. The purpose of that logo will be to remove any doubt a customer could have about what he or she was purchasing.

"Since we first announced that we would accept branded MetroCards, our phones have been ringing non-stop with inquiries," said Paul J. Fleuranges, the MTA's Senior Director of Corporate and Internal Communications. "In the coming months, MTA customers will see other branded cards in the system. Like The Gap, advertisers are looking to showcase their logo and provide customers with a call to action. Not only is this a great use of the card as an advertising medium, but it gives our riders access to special discounts at retailers, which can be a substantial financial benefit. We look forward to seeing how creative advertisers can get with the card."

Businesses that are interested in learning more about the unique commercial advertising opportunities offered on MetroCards should visit <http://www.mta.info> and click on the MetroCard advertising heading in the lower right portion of the page.

The blue-on-gold design used today on standard MetroCards has remained unchanged since July 4, 1997, when MTA New York City Transit introduced free transfers between subways and buses, and officially began accepting MetroCard as a form of fare payment at all subway stations and on all buses. The design on the earliest MetroCards, first introduced in 1993, featured gold letters on blue backgrounds, the inverse of the colors used today.

	
Front and rear of a MetroCard featuring an ad for The Gap. This is the first ad to appear on the front of a MetroCard, the fare payment medium on New York City's subways and buses since the mid-1990s.	The rear of a MetroCard advertisement for Health Plus. This is the first ad to appear as part of the MTA's newly announced MetroCard advertising initiative.