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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

Brooklyn's Smith-9th Streets F/G Station Returns to Service

Service Restored to Historic Station at 11 a.m.

After a nearly two-year absence, **F** and **G** trains began making regular stops this morning at Brooklyn's Smith-9th Streets Station. This historic facility has undergone a complicated, ground-up renewal, performed in conjunction with the rebuilding of the Culver Viaduct and designed to breathe new life into a facility that first saw service during the depths of the Great Depression.

The return to customer service was marked today by a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by Acting MTA Chairman Fernando Ferrer, Acting NYC Transit President Carmen Bianco, MTA officials and community leaders. Though work is still underway, the majority of the station project is complete and the stop is once again available to riders.

"We are very happy to return the Smith-9th Streets Station to the customers who rely on it, and to return subway service to these growing and thriving sections of Red Hook, Gowanus and Carroll Gardens," Ferrer said. "This station is vastly improved thanks to the investments of the MTA Capital Program, and we are glad to return it to our customers."

"This has been a long and complicated project and the community has demonstrated tremendous patience throughout, and for that we are extremely grateful," said Bianco. "The entire Culver project serves as an example of how in a system as old and vast as ours, renewing, rebuilding and rehabilitating must be an ongoing effort. We will never be in a position where we can step back and say it's done."

Opened on October 7, 1933, Smith-9th Streets is one of only two original IND system stations constructed above ground. (The other is Fourth Ave., one station away.) Situated at the summit of the Culver Viaduct, the station's extreme elevation was necessary to allow clearance for tall-masted vessels passing on the Gowanus Canal below. At nearly 88 feet, Smith-9th Streets is the highest subway station in the world, which in itself presented some challenges to the first-ever rehabilitation of this historic stop.

The \$32 million station rehabilitation project at the Smith-9th Streets station is part of the \$389 million project to rehabilitate the Culver Viaduct. Smith-9th Streets was closed from May 2011 until today, requiring customers to use either Carroll St. or Fourth Ave. Stations. The MTA eased travel by adding service to nearby bus routes and equipping the B61 route with MTA Bus Time. The community was continually updated throughout this project, which was delayed both by contractor issues and the effects of Superstorm Sandy.

In 2010, the most recent year with full service at the station, Smith-9th Streets had 4,763 fare registrations per day, ranking 286 out of the subway system's 421 stations and complexes. It ranks 93 out of 157 in Brooklyn.

The station reconstruction work features a new and expanded street-level control house, including refurbishment of the station agent booth, customer information center, customer waiting areas including ceilings, floors and walls, a new architectural metal panel escalator enclosure and rehabilitated stairs and platforms.

The station escalators were refurbished by in-house forces. The station's structural steel and concrete elements were either repaired or replaced. ADA features were also installed, including uniform dimensions of stair risers and treads with proper height and size of stair handrails for easier accessibility and tactile warning strips at platform edges.

The project also called for the installation of new lighting, state-of-the-art public address and CCTV systems, as well as a 14-foot-tall mosaic, installed as part of the MTA's Arts For Transit program.

Though some of the finishing touches are yet to be completed, the station's improved appearance is clear even while advancing an early 20th century design to 21st century standards of beauty, efficiency and durability.

MTA Arts for Transit Installation at Smith-9th Streets

Artist Alyson Shotz has created a series of artworks for the Smith-9th Streets Station, which uses the local maritime history of the surrounding Gowanus and Red Hook communities. Shotz has maintained a studio near the station in Red Hook for over ten years, and has long been fascinated by the history that can be found in the cobblestoned streets and old factory buildings.

The area's maritime history is at a remove from the casual viewer and Shotz brings it to the forefront, first, in the station's mezzanine level, seen by arriving travelers who make their way from the elevated platform to escalators. There are 26 windows etched with silver reflective ink in layers of glass that create a prismatic effect as one passes them. Each features a different historic nautical map of the waters that are in the general direction the viewer is facing.

The maps are from the 1700's to 1900's and show the Red Hook and Gowanus waterfront and the changes evident as time progresses. The contemporary landscape seen through the windows completes the evolution. The type of glass used makes the maps seem to fade in and out, depending on the time of day and the movement of transit riders through the space. Of special interest is that these windows were boarded up for decades and the station rehabilitation enabled them to be replaced with new frames, making the station, the highest in the NYC Transit system, a place filled with natural light.

At the station entrance on 9th Street, four large transom windows are etched with what appears to be an elegant line drawing, but which is actually a historic plan of a boat hull, built in Brooklyn around 1770. The piece functions both as an abstract drawing and a marker for this ship building activity that once dominated the neighborhood.

The rear wall of the station building also may seem like an abstract line drawing created in stainless steel against a vivid blue tile mosaic background. However, as one moves closer, it is revealed as a nautical map, with numbers for depth and letters for directions. The mosaic map was adapted from a 1779 nautical map of New York Harbor as seen from the shoreline of Brooklyn.

Quotes:

Borough President Marty Markowitz: "Bravo to the MTA in getting this critical link in New York City's subway system 'back on track'. This station was sorely missed by residents and businesses of Red Hook, Carroll Gardens and Gowanus for the two years that it was closed. Now that service is resuming, commute times for the 1.5 million people each year who use this station will be significantly shorter and travel through the improved facility will be more pleasant and even more convenient."

Rep. Nydia M. Velázquez: "The reopening of this station will reconnect Red Hook residents to Manhattan and the rest of the City. I'm pleased this important public transportation resource is improved, restored and back in business."

Rep. Joan Millman: "We have waited for two years for the rehabilitation work at the Smith-9 Streets Station to be completed. This station is tallest station in the entire system and must have a reliable, state-of-the-art escalator system. Finally, my constituents will once again have access to the 

and  trains as they travel to Manhattan, Queens and Northern Brooklyn.”

Councilwoman Sara M. Gonzalez: “Finally, the long, long wait my constituents suffered is at an end. While the delays continued, residents of Red Hook endured longer waiting times and distances. I am confident they will like what they see as they begin to utilize this station again. Now, whether their transit needs are for employments, health, entertainment, academic or other personal choices, they will leave and arrive in this splendidly transformed station and I share in their joy. I look forward to advocating further with Red Hook residents as we seek further transit improvement options.”

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