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Press Release

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[NYC Transit](#)

IMMEDIATE

MTA Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony Marks the Re-Opening of the New Mother Clara Hale Bus Depot in Harlem

Metropolitan Transportation Authority Chairman and CEO Thomas F. Prendergast was joined by New York City Transit officials, union representatives, and community and elected officials for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to commemorate the re-opening of the Mother Clara Hale Bus Depot in Central Harlem. The depot will open for limited service on Sunday, November 23.

The new depot will house 120 buses serving the M1, M7, M35, and SBS M15 routes when the facility fully opens on January 4. Mother Clara Hale Depot consists of three fully enclosed floors, a mezzanine and capacity to house 150 buses. The additional capacity of the new depot will allow the Department of Buses to accommodate fleet growth in the future. The Department of Buses will initially operate 3 routes out of the depot starting Sunday; the M9, SBS M60, and M98 with 31 buses until January.

"Today marks a true milestone and the culmination of a strong partnership with the Harlem community in which we have rebuilt this depot from the ground up, in accordance with the world's leading sustainability standards," said Chairman Prendergast. "It's one of the most environmentally-friendly facilities we've ever built with state-of-the-art bus maintenance equipment that will go a long way toward enhancing service while minimizing our footprint on the surrounding community."

"The Mother Clara Hale Depot is a truly remarkable facility that will enable New York City Transit to improve service in an environmentally-friendly manner with minimal impact on the community," said Transit President Carmen Bianco. "The depot's design includes enough space onsite for employee parking and has an off-street queuing area for returning buses, which eliminates the need to wait on the street outside the depot. Inside the depot, a system of interior traffic lanes and ramps allows all buses to enter and exit via Lenox Av to improve traffic flow."

MTA New York City Transit worked with WEACT, a Harlem-based advocacy group, and the area's local elected officials to create the Mother Clara Hale Depot Community Task Force in 2007. This collaboration with the Task Force and the community involved all aspects of design of the new depot, with an emphasis on environmental mitigations. This included convening a first of its kind Community Design Charrette in September, 2008 attended by 150 community residents.

The depot's design incorporates nearly all of the priority elements identified during the charrette including:

- [LEED Certification](#): The new Mother Clara Hale Depot meets LEED specifications and through the hard work of both the MTA and its contractor, a record setting certification level for the new building is anticipated;
- [Green Roof](#): A green roof uses plants to cool the facility in the summer by adding an additional layer of insulation and absorbs CO2 from the air. It also reduces storm-water runoff, which contributes to flooding;
- [Thermal Insulation](#): The depot incorporates a thermal design, which saves energy and reduces emissions;
- [Solar Wall](#): The south façade of the depot serves an energy-conserving function as a passive heating device. The dark green wall finish material has tiny perforations that captures air and preheats it in the space between the façade and masonry; warmer air is then drawn in by HVAC units, reducing the need for natural gas;
- [Rainwater Collection](#): A collection system on the roof sends rainwater into an underground storage tank for use in depot operations. The water is then treated and recycled to wash buses saving an estimated million gallons of water a year;
- [Efficient Heat Recovery Units \(HRU\)](#): More cost effective and energy efficient Heat Recovery Units on the roof use a heat exchanger when it is cold outside and;
- [White Roof](#): The depot has a high efficiency White Roof that will prevent heat gain in warmer weather, but will not reflect light onto neighborhood buildings or cause glare.

The Mother Clara Hale Depot, located at 721 Lenox Avenue in Central Harlem, was originally a trolley barn built in 1890 and was structurally modified in 1939 to become the 146 St Bus Depot. Later, MTA New York City Transit rehabilitated the depot in 1990, renaming it in honor of Mother Clara McBride Hale in 1993. In January 2009, NYC Transit set out to demolish and rebuild the depot as it was not designed for modern bus operations and could no longer function adequately due to obsolete equipment.

"This is a project several years in the making," said Darryl Irick, Senior Vice President of Buses for MTA New York City Transit and President of the MTA Bus Company. "And with the community's involvement and input from the start, we have been able to deliver a modern, sustainable depot that will serve

Manhattan residents for years to come.”

Demolition of the old depot was completed in September 2009 and a design-build contract was awarded to Silverite Construction Company in 2010. The work on the new depot started immediately with design completed in March 2012 and steel erected by July 2012. Work continued for the next two years with underground utilities, building amenities, mechanical, plumbing, fire protection, electrical and communication systems, roofing and all the sustainable elements installed. Testing and commissioning activities started in March 2014, with final completion in November 2014 of the \$262 million project.

New York City Transit also made every effort to use Harlem-based firms and local personnel for the new depot. The MTA’s Department of Diversity and Civil Rights worked with elected officials, trade unions, and private vendors to model programs which resulted in local training and hiring on the job. Through these efforts, the MTA and Silverite achieved 25% MBE/WBE participation, including 2% participation for Harlem-based MBE/WBE businesses, provided OSHA training for 49 Harlem residents, and resulted in 48 community residents working directly on the project.

MTA Arts & Design

MTA Arts & Design and New York City Transit were also able to incorporate artwork into the depot’s design with significant input from the Task Force and the Harlem-based art community. The depot’s façade is now beautifully embellished by the first art project coordinated by MTA Arts & Design for a bus depot. The artist, Ms. Shinique Smith, was selected by an MTA Arts & Design selection committee composed of several accomplished, Harlem arts professionals, and included members of the Task Force.

Mother Hale’s Garden, created by Shinique Smith, encompasses large-scale mosaic artwork installed on the east facade of the depot facing Lenox Avenue, and laminated glass artwork in windows on the north and south sides of the building. The combined square footage for this multi-part, site-specific artwork is approximately 6,672 square feet.

Graced with exuberant, calligraphic strokes, and a vibrant collage containing materials that Ms. Smith collected during her visits to the neighborhood, *Mother Hale’s Garden* is inspired by the loving and generous nature of Mother Hale. Ms. Smith collected clothing, fabric and miscellaneous items from the community surrounding The Hale House and the site of the Mother Clara Hale Bus Depot to incorporate in her artwork, a practice she uses in creating much of her work.

A child’s drawing of a bus stop found near the Hale House influenced her deeply and became the source of inspiration for the artwork. According to Smith, “This (child’s) drawing inspired my palette. We are all connected by childhood dreams and memories threaded through clothing and the things we consume and discard. I have taken these unwanted bits and woven them into a garden in an attempt to embody the spirit of Mother Clara, creating beauty and grace from humble materials.”

Ms. Smith also worked with first grade students at PS242 to draw flowers and incorporated the children’s drawings into her glass artwork for the north and south windows of the depot.

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