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Mayor Fulop Triples Annual Number of Park Projects with Nearly \$6 Million in 2014 Investments; Renovations to 13 Parks Across All Wards & Accelerated Construction of Berry Lane Park

JERSEY CITY – Mayor Steven M. Fulop announced today that Jersey City will **triple the annual number of park projects** and invest nearly **\$6 million** in city parks in 2014, with **renovations to 13 parks across all wards** using a combination of capital dollars and grant funding to improve both the quality of life and expand recreational opportunities for residents.

The City will invest approximately **\$2.65 million of capital funds** from the 2014 budget and will utilize **\$1.475 million of Green Acres funding**, as well as **\$435,000 in Hudson County Open Space** dollars. The City will also utilize **\$1.3 million of Green Acres** funding to acquire the final parcels of lands to complete Berry Lane Park in Bergen-Lafayette. The grant funding was secured in partnership with the Jersey City Parks Coalition, who assisted in securing more than \$400,000 of Green Acres and Hudson County Open Space funds.

“Investing in parks in urban areas is key to improving the quality of life for residents and to making Jersey City the best mid-size city in America,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “Since we took office we have been restructuring our recreation department and expanding opportunities and programming. The next step is improving our parks so that all of our families throughout the city have safe and enjoyable places for both passive and active recreation.”

Berry Lane Park is an ambitious project will ultimately transform more than 17 acres of property – including former rail yards, junkyards, auto repair shops, industrial facilities, and warehouse – into a recreational amenity in the heart of the Bergen-Lafayette community. When complete, the project will result in a nine percent increase in the amount of recreational open space in Jersey City.

During summer 2013, the first phase of environmental remediation grading, demolition, and drainage installation was completed. The administration is moving quickly and Phase II, which includes the installation of new curbs and sidewalks along Woodward Street, along with an additional parking lane, is currently underway.

In the spring, the City will commence on the building out of the majority of the park – Phase III – which will include two basketball courts, two tennis courts, a baseball field, a soccer field, and a playground. These active recreation components will provide opportunities to this neighborhood where more than 60 percent of residents are children under 18 years of age.

Additional passive recreation areas – including a total of 600 new trees a rain garden – will also be included in the park. In November, 73 trees were planted and another 100 will be planted in the fall with the remainder being planted as the park is constructed. The park’s design also considered existing site features that were incorporated into the design.

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For example, existing concrete silos, remnants of the former rail yard, will be outfitted with water spraying mechanisms and will serve as a spray park for children and their parents.

“Creating and maintaining quality open space in densely populated urban areas is paramount for well-rounded, healthy living and for the safety of our families,” said **Jersey City Parks Coalition President Laura Skolar**. “The creation of Berry Lane Park will transform more than 17 acres of former industrial property into a vibrant recreational facility. Equally important is the upgrading and maintenance of our neighborhood parks, and the JC Parks Coalition looks forward to working with Mayor Fulop on all of these exciting park projects.”

In addition to **Berry Lane Park**, which will be a newly created park in the heart of Ward F, the twelve parks slated for renovations are the following:

PARKS IMPROVEMENTS:

Berry Lane Park, Ward F, 17 acres of park space that will include two basketball courts, two tennis courts, a baseball field, a soccer field, and a playground, as well as a passive recreational area with a rain garden.

Mary Benson Park, Ward E, which will see the installation of new playground equipment, new fencing, new benches, and landscaping and site remediation.

Leonard Gordon Park, Ward D, which will see the replacement of vandalized playground equipment.

Reservoir #3, Ward C, for the stabilization of deteriorating, historic structures. (Additional renovations to follow)

Van Vorst Park, Ward E, the installation of a new spray water feature.

First Street Park, Ward E, passive park renovations to include new lighting, fences, benches, irrigated lawn panels and planters, and landscaping.

Boyd-McGuinness Park, Ward B, children’s amphitheater, playground, spray ground, seating, gardens, shade trees, lighting, fencing, and security cameras, as well as ADA compliance to coordinate with adjacent senior building.

Riverview-Fiske Park, Ward D, repairs to the gazebo which was destroyed during Hurricane Sandy.

Janet Moore Park, Ward C, renovations to include site work, children’s playground, landscaping and new benches.

Pershing Field Park, Ward C, playground improvements.

Pavonia Marion Park, Ward C, renovations to include site work, children’s playground, landscaping and new benches.

Columbia Park, Ward A, renovations to the park grounds, walkway improvements, and amenities including improved lighting, new benches, and landscaping

Angel Ramos Park, Ward E, renovations to include site work, children’s playground, landscaping and new benches.

Vernator Watson Park, Ward A, renovations to include site work, children’s playground, landscaping and new benches.

All media inquiries should be directed to Jennifer Morrill, Press Secretary for Mayor Steven M. Fulop, at 201-547-4836 or 201-376-0699.////