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Community Court Pilot Program to Launch this Fall to Create a Role for Community Residents to Help Reform Justice System

Panel of Police, Court Staff, and Community Representatives Holding Forum this Thursday to Hear Residents' Input, Feedback, and Questions

JERSEY CITY – Mayor Steven M. Fulop in consultation with the Center for Court Innovation, announces the launch of a community court pilot program working to use alternative sentences to reduce crime, aid victims, and increase public confidence in the justice system. The pilot program – Jersey City Community Solutions – will launch in the fall and aims to accomplish these goals using visible community service sentences to send a message to the community that the justice system will restore quality-of-life harm done by offenders.

This court model seeks to create a role for community residents to learn about public safety and quality-of-life issues residents face, and to get input about the types of sentences and services to best address those issues. As such, the project team is currently soliciting involvement from community members.

Jersey City is one of 10 municipalities nationwide this year selected for a \$200,000 Community Court program grant to reform its court system when dealing with lower level crimes.

“This pilot program is an innovative approach using community service as a sentencing option for non-violent crimes such as cleaning up a city park or painting over graffiti,” said Mayor Fulop. “The program also looks to help address the underlying issues that contribute to criminal behavior such as drug or alcohol abuse. By asking residents for input, this initiative is the city’s latest effort to better address the needs of the community by going directly to the source.”

This **Thursday, July 6th, 2017 at 6 p.m.** a panel of court staff, police, and community representatives will host a forum at the **Mary McLeod Bethune Life Center at 140 Martin Luther King Drive**. The meeting is open to all Jersey City stakeholders looking to help shape the new Jersey City Community Court through input, feedback, and questions. It is the first of a series of sessions that will gather community feedback on the issue.

Under the new program, offenders will be offered a variety of services to help restore quality-of-life including drug treatment, job training, and GED classes. The community justice program has been successfully applied in community courts across the country. Bringing the program to Jersey City looks to shift the focus of the justice system from moving people through the court as quickly as possible, to improving outcomes for the community and its residents while meeting required case disposition standards.

All media inquiries should be directed to Jennifer Morrill, Press Secretary to Mayor Steven M. Fulop at jenniferm@jcnj.org or 201-376-0699.