



STEVEN M. FULOP
MAYOR OF JERSEY CITY

CITY OF JERSEY CITY OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY HALL | 280 GROVE STREET | JERSEY CITY, NJ 07302
P: 201 547 5500 | F: 201 547 5442



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 24, 2023

Contact: Kimberly Scalcione
Press Secretary

***** PRESS RELEASE *****

Mayor Fulop Officially Opens Much-Needed Community Park in Bergen-Lafayette Transforming Unsightly Lot into Public Park Space

Phase 1 of Pavement-to-Park Construction Completed to Double the Outdoor Recreation Space for Ward F Residents

JERSEY CITY – Mayor Steven M. Fulop joined **City Council members**, the **Department of Infrastructure**, the **Jersey City Parks Coalition**, and **community members** today to officially open the **community-driven Fairmount Park** following the renovation of underutilized lots and pedestrianization of a cut-through street near Fairmount and Summit Avenues into a thriving park and playground with amenities that will attract families of all ages to Ward F’s newest public park space.



2020

2021

2022-2023

Designed with full community input, the park improvement project includes a new playground, benches, and green areas with tree plantings. A new fence now lines the park’s perimeter after residents expressed the need for a barrier along Summit Avenue. The project also widened the sidewalk around the park, all while maintaining traffic circulation and existing parking spaces.

“This lot is unrecognizable from 2019 when we first envisioned creating a safe and accessible park where none previously existed,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “Fairmount Park embodies our broader ambitions of identifying innovative approaches to finding solutions to help this great community reach its fullest potential. We made the necessary investments to significantly improve our parks and open space networks citywide, which have become critical assets to our community and everyday quality of life.”

The City purposefully reconstructed the area to make the park much safer and more accessible to residents, furthering the Fulop Administration’s goals of promoting a healthier, active lifestyle.

The City recently acquired an unsightly car storage lot adjacent to the park to further expand the brand new park in Bergen-Lafayette by 40% for the second and final phase of construction. Phase 2 is currently in the design process as the City hosts multiple community meetings and garners public input. Construction is scheduled to start this Fall.



Throughout the first phase 1 of the pavement-to-park project, the City’s team worked closely with local residents to ensure the neighborhood’s needs are met. Following roadway studies and multiple community meetings throughout the construction process, the City designed a plan that provides pedestrians with much safer access to the park. The once triangle-shaped lot surrounded by cut-through streets was reconfigured by reconstructing two small portions of roadway to create one cohesive public park space. Notably, the entire design acts in furtherance of the City’s Vision Zero and sustainability goals.

“On behalf of the Jersey City Parks Coalition, we would like to thank Mayor Fulop, Director Barkha Patel, and Vernon Richardson for actively engaging with the residents and community over the last three-and-a-half years to transform this small, underutilized traffic island into a wonderful pocket park. Now, residents of all ages can meet and relax, and neighborhood families can safely play under the cool shaded trees and have a space to call their own,” said **Paula Mahayosnand, President of the Jersey City Parks Coalition**.

Following the City’s successful pilot programs from 2019 through 2020, local residents enjoyed the new park so much that it has remained ever since as the City made improvements and expansions over the past two years.

“We are always looking for creative ways to build more parks and green space in the City for our residents,” added **Barkha Patel, Director of Jersey City’s Department of Infrastructure**. “This project gave us an opportunity to combine various initiatives within the department related to the advancement of active transportation, sustainability, and innovation in the public realm.”

The City conducted multiple traffic studies to ensure that removing the two small segments of roadway will have minimal to no impact on the surrounding streets and will not remove any existing parking. The park renovation and expansion project also incorporates stormwater permeability throughout the lot, with almost no impervious surface used within the park.

The newly established Fairmount Park is part of the City’s broader efforts to expand and improve more neighborhood parks for all Jersey City residents to access. In 2022 alone, Jersey City advanced dozens of park projects ranging from major open space upgrades to creating brand new parks to increase public open space, such as City Hall Park and Courthouse Park, as a part of the Year of Open Space initiative.

The \$500,000 park improvement project was partially funded by a \$100,000 Blue Zones grant. The process of the entire Fairmount Park improvement project, from start to finish, will be published by Blue Zones to be used as case studies for what other municipalities around the nation can do to achieve similar

success. The City secured a grant for the project by the Made to Move program, funded by Blue Zones and the Degree Foundation. Jersey City is one of five municipalities nationwide awarded the grant to fund projects that promote healthy living and active transportation and serve as a model for other communities.



All media inquiries should be directed to Kimberly Scalcione at kscalcione@jcnj.org.