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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aug. 14, 2014

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Jersey City's First Pedestrian Plaza at Newark Avenue Opens Next Week; Plaza to Enhance Vibrant Downtown Commercial and Cultural Center with Expanded Outdoor Dining & Entertainment Area Street Closures Take Effect Tuesday, August 19th

JERSEY CITY – **Mayor Steven M. Fulop** and the **Municipal Council** announced today that street closures as part of the plan to convert a portion of **Newark Avenue into a pedestrian plaza** to enhance the City's vibrant downtown commercial and cultural district will go into effect next week.

Beginning Tuesday, August 19, 2014, Newark Avenue from Grove Street to Barrow Street and Erie Street from Newark Avenue to Bay Street will be closed from 3 p.m. to midnight, Monday through Friday and between 12 a.m. and midnight, Saturday and Sunday for the preservation of the public's safety and welfare at the newly created pedestrian plaza.

“We are excited for the creation of the new pedestrian plaza at Newark Avenue as this will provide our residents more opportunities to enjoy the great restaurants and cafes in the area and take in music and culture, while contributing to a sense of community,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “The City has worked with the businesses in the area on the street closures and we will continue to monitor the pilot program to measure the impacts and benefits, but we view this is a largely positive addition to the area.”

With tens of thousands of people passing through the adjacent Grove Street PATH plaza daily, dozens of restaurants and shops in the downtown Newark Avenue area and a thriving arts and cultural scene, Mayor Fulop wanted to expand the district's useable area by closing the roadways to vehicular traffic and designing a pedestrian plaza. Specifically, Newark Avenue between Grove Street and Barrow Street and Erie Street from Newark Avenue to Bay Street would be closed to vehicular traffic allowing restaurants to set up outdoor dining and create additional performance spaces.

The area hosts more than a dozen outdoor concerts and performances annually through the Historic Downtown Special Improvement District's 'Groove on Grove' concert series, JC Fridays and the Creative Grove Arts Market. These are all expected to grow with the creation of the new pedestrian plaza on Newark Avenue.

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“We are exploring the concept of pedestrian plazas at Newark Avenue first, due to the high volume of residents who pass through this area and the already vibrant outdoor scene due to Restaurant Row and markets at Grove PATH plaza,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “If successful, we will consider implementing in other areas of the City as we work to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors.”

"It's always good for cities to try out new ideas," said **Ward E Councilwoman Candice Osborne**. "I think the Newark Avenue pilot will prove itself a win-win for small businesses, a win for pedestrians, and a win for the neighborhood."

The ordinance establishing the Pedestrian Plaza on Newark Avenue was authorized by the City Council on July 16, 2014.

Beginning Tuesday, August 19, 2014, the following changes in traffic patterns and parking restrictions will take effect on the streets in the downtown neighborhood:

Barrow Street from Newark Avenue to Christopher Columbus Drive will change from a two-way street to a “one way” street, traveling south and Bay Street from Newark Avenue to Erie Street will be reversed from a “one way west” to a “one way east.”

To accommodate the disabled, a reserved parking space has been designated on the southeast corner of Barrow Street at Newark Avenue and at 333 Grove Street. The reserved parking spaces will be open to any disabled person with the proper Disabled ID from the Motor Vehicle Commission displayed on their vehicle. The parking restriction will be in effect daily, 10 a.m. to midnight.

To accommodate deliveries to and from Newark Avenue, a loading zone has been designated on the east side of Barrow Street, south of Newark Avenue, and at 339-341 Grove Street. Both loading zones will be in effect daily, 10 a.m. to midnight.

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