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***Mayor Fulop Announces Package of Ordinances to Expand Healthy Food Access Throughout the City; Law Department & Department of Health & Human Services Collaborate on Farmers' Market Ordinance and Festival Vendors Ordinance***  
***Jersey City Farmers' Markets Continue to Grow with 60 Percent Increase this year***

JERSEY CITY – **Mayor Steven M. Fulop** announced today that the administration will present to City Council at their meeting tomorrow night a package of ordinances to expand access to healthy food options for residents by revising the City's **Farmers' Market policies** to make seasons and hours of operation uniform across the City, provide an easier permitting process, and expand the locations where farmers' markets can operate.

A fourth ordinance for food vendors who operate at festivals and events throughout the City will be introduced at the following City Council meeting.

The demand for farmers' markets continues to grow in Jersey City, reflecting a national trend for an urban/farm linkage due to the growing interest by consumers for local and farm-grown products. According to the USDA, as of August, there were 8,144 farmers' markets listed in the National Farmers' Market Directory, a 3.6 percent increase from 2012.

In Jersey City, the number of farmers' markets grew this year from five to eight – a 60 percent increase. The Department of Health and Human Services is looking to add two new markets in the coming year, one in Ward A and one in Ward F.

The ordinances before the Council are a collaboration between the Law Department and the Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Department worked closely with the market organizers, farmers, the Special Improvement Districts and community groups, as well as researching how other farmers' markets operate in other major cities, to develop the new Farmers' Market ordinances.

"Our farmers' markets provide residents with healthy, affordable access to fresh produce and have been growing throughout the City," said **Mayor Fulop**. "To address the demand for these markets, we are streamlining the permitting process, expanding the locations where markets can be held and establishing the Health Department as the point of contact for creating a new market."

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**Famers’ Market Hours of Operation Ordinance:**

This change amends the existing City ordinance within the Department of Public Works code to reflect more accurately the nature of farmers’ market management groups and how parks are utilized for these events. This ordinance removes a codified presumption that all Jersey City farmers’ market managers belong to the NJ Council of Farmers and Communities and changes it simply to “a non-profit organization.”

The season will now be from April 1 to Dec. 31st and the hours are 4 to 8 p.m. on weekdays and anytime between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. on the weekend. The focus is to ensure that all markets are open between July 1 and Nov. 30<sup>th</sup> to ensure the highest redemption of the Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program benefit vouchers to Jersey City that total approximately \$105,000 a year.

**Farmers’ Market Permitting Process Ordinance:**

This change will streamline the process for obtaining a farmers’ market license. Currently, market managers must obtain licenses through the Department of Public Works as well as the Department of Health and Human Services. Furthermore, existing code stipulates that only certain designated parks in the City are permissible places for farmers’ market operations. Under the existing code, markets at Grove Street, Journal Square, and NJCU are all operating illegally since they are not located in one of the designated parks listed.

This ordinance moves the permitting process entirely under the purview of the Department of Health and Human Services and only requires markets to seek permission, not a separate permit, from the Department of Public Works to operate in a City park. It also removes the list of designated parks, opening up the licensing process to market managers wishing to operate in a parking lot, pedestrian plaza, or other non-park public space.

**Farmers’ Market – A True Focus on the Farm Ordinance:**

This change puts a focus on local food procurement at Farmers’ Markets and creates incentives for residents to purchase food using federal food subsidies. Currently, farmers’ markets are required to be licensed through two City Departments (both HHS & DPW), with licenses that are no different than those required for a flea market, parade, festival, or any temporary festival or market on city property. By creating a special definition and guidelines for farmers’ markets, the City will be more likely to be eligible for grant money and funding from the state and federal government.

Specific guidelines for Jersey City farmers’ markets under this ordinance are as follows: markets must be run by a non-profit entity; at least 55 percent of the goods sold must be locally-grown farm produce; at least 25 percent of vendors must accept WIC, FMNP, and/or EBT benefits; the markets may only operate between April 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup>; and market managers must apply for a license at least 30 days before their opening date.

**Festival Fast Pass Ordinance:**

This ordinance is to create a license for vendors who operate at multiple markets, festivals, fairs, parades, and/or other outdoor temporary events. Currently, for each event where a vendor participates, a new license must be obtained. However, because license fees were recently revised upwards, this has become financially burdensome for vendors who wish to operate at multiple locations. Therefore, this ordinance creates a license with its own fee that would allow a vendor to operate at as many locations as they want throughout without accruing massive licensing fees. This would require annual renewal and the annual fee is \$400 as opposed to \$150 per event.

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