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**** Press Release ****

City Transforms Vacant Lot into Entrepreneur Incubator using Repurposed Shipping Containers

Mayor Fulop Expands Efforts to Support Small Businesses with continued Investment in Bergen-Lafayette

Jersey City –Mayor Steven M. Fulop will host a press conference today at 2 p.m. where he is unveiling the first city-run, micro-entrepreneurship venture dubbed “Container Village” which has transformed an unused lot along Martin Luther King Drive into a creative temporary popup venue by converting four shipping containers into a community-centered retail and art hub, at no cost to the small business owner.

The entrepreneur incubator is the latest step as part of the city’s continued investment into the Bergen-Lafayette area. Container Village is located just cross the street from the largest public investment in decades - the \$188 million Jackson Square hub. The second of four buildings within the Jackson Square campus will open its doors at **an official ribbon cutting event being held today, November 20th, at 2 p.m. outside the building located at 342 MLK Drive.** The newest building will expand the presence of public-facing city offices along MLK Drive, enabling greater access for residents in need of city services.

“Container Village is a cost-effective initiative to not only bolster our efforts supporting new and growing small businesses, but also expanding upon our investment to revitalize the area, bringing tangible change, stimulating the local economy, and ultimately encouraging future business opportunities as well,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “Our investment into this area along MLK Drive, is an investment that will benefit the community as a whole.”

Under the Fulop Administration, Jersey City continues to work towards strengthening neighborhood business districts citywide by offering supportive services and guidance for new and growing small businesses: from business formation to build out, and training to marketing. By working in partnership with the Jackson Hill Special Improvement District (SID), the MLK Container Village serves as the latest opportunity for local entrepreneurs by providing the small business owners with no-cost storefronts that are easily accessible to the shoppers during normal business hours.

“We have partnered with the city to create a unique and innovate support system for local residents looking to launch their business ventures,” said **Michele Massey, Executive Director, Jackson Hill SID**. “We’re also working to offer mentoring and educational elements for the participants with the help of the city’s Office of Diversity Inclusion, the Hudson County Office of Minority and Women-owned Enterprises, and the Economic Development Corporations on both the city and county level.”

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The shipping containers' conversion into usable space was completed by various city departments to include lighting, electricity, heating and air conditioning, as well as pleasing aesthetic aspects for an inviting storefront appearance such as windows, greenery, signage, and more. Beyond the recycled nature of the containers themselves, this site will be a model for multiple kinds of sustainable practices including rainwater absorption elements and green roofing.

“I’m very excited, this entire project along MLK Drive is good for the community,” said **Councilwoman at Large Joyce Watterman**. “This was part of our objective from day one, to get things moving in the right direction with more foot traffic here and various business interests going on as we work to revitalize the area.”

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