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

Mayor Fulop Announces 3rd Major Streetscape Upgrade; Newark Avenue Pedestrian Plaza will have \$6.7 Million Overhaul to make it One of NJ's Premier Business Corridors

Newark Ave Pedestrian Plaza Permanency Follows Major Streetscape Upgrades to West Side and Central Avenues that Commenced in 2021

JERSEY CITY - Mayor Steven M. Fulop and the Municipal Council announced today a \$6.7 million upgrade to the Newark Avenue Pedestrian Plaza, finally giving it the permanency to create one of New Jersey's premier destinations.

The Pedestrian Mall was first closed to vehicles in 2015 as an experiment to limit traffic and create a pedestrian destination. The plaza was expanded to a second block in 2018. Then, during the Covid-19 pandemic, it was expanded further to Grove Street between Montgomery Street and Christopher Columbus Drive as well as 1st Street and Newark Avenue.

“The creation of the Pedestrian Plaza was a risk our administration took when first elected as there was significant pushback, but I think over time it has become clear to everyone that the changes we made there have attracted more people, allowed more businesses to open, and created a destination spot for visitors and residents,” Mayor Fulop said.



The Newark Avenue Pedestrian Plaza upgrade comes after two other major investments in main streets throughout Jersey City on Central Avenue and West Side Avenue. The community-driven Central Avenue improvement project includes a 400-spot parking deck along with a 10,000 square foot pedestrian plaza, promoting efforts to revitalize the commercial corridor and develop open public space for community events. This project will include curb ramp reconstruction at all corners, curb extensions, ADA compliant ramps, new sidewalks, new lighting, drainage improvements, and signage upgrades. Other miscellaneous enhancements include installing iron benches and trash receptacles, and additional tree plantings.

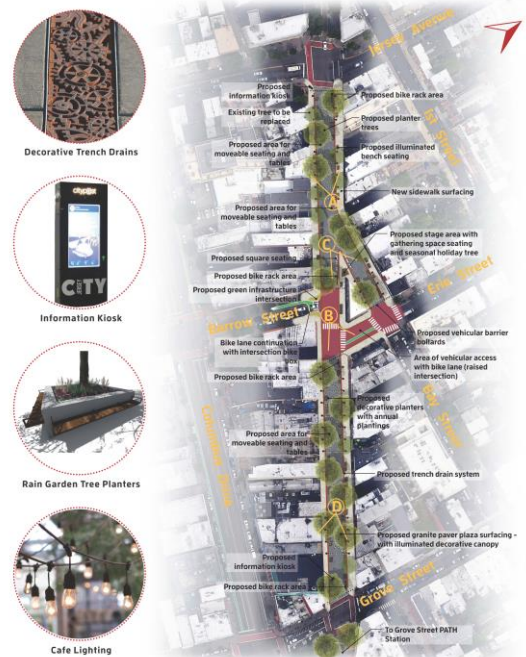
The West Side Avenue improvement project includes new underground sewer infrastructure to reduce pollution in our local waterways and alleviate localized flooding. On the ground level, the streetscape design will get a significant facelift spanning from Broadway to Sip Avenue with additional tree plantings and various green infrastructure installations for stormwater absorption and beautification throughout the shopping district. Future phases of the project will extend the improvements further south into Ward A.

“This is a great move on the Mayor’s part. This is a win-win for all involved, and the quicker we start, the better,” said **Rachel Sieg, Executive Director of the Historic Downtown Special Improvement District**. “We’re looking forward to construction start, with the pandemic this is only going to help our local businesses. I’m thankful that the Mayor pushed this through so that our struggling restaurants and businesses can benefit and recover more quickly.”

Following a thorough design process, which included several public meetings to incorporate community input, the project was openly public bid, and a resolution will go before the City Council at this week’s meeting to award a contract to JC Contracting Inc. in the amount of \$6.7 million. The upgrades include granite pavers to replace the green painted asphalt and elevate the street level to match the sidewalk for a more cohesive structure with greater stroller and wheelchair accessibility. Decorative trench drains will line the existing curb, rain garden tree planters will be installed, and café lighting will be added for improved visibility. A stage area will also be constructed for community events.

“These are extremely challenging times for so many of us business owners, and so I’m especially grateful to have this type of support from the city because this is what is going to make the difference for us,” said **Kenny Caulfield, Co-owner of The Ashford**. “This makes us more of a destination. What has happened over the past few years here is breathing new life into Jersey City, and this permanency will bring us to a new level as a sought-after destination, with businesses attracting more businesses.”

The next City Council meeting will be held tomorrow, February 10, 2021. Construction on the new permanent upgrades is scheduled to begin in April 2021.



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