



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



STEVEN M. FULOP
MAYOR OF JERSEY CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 11, 2022

Contact: Kimberly Scalcione
Press Secretary
KScalcione@jcnj.org

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

Mayor Fulop Announces \$7M Transformation of Exceedingly Successful Pedestrian Plaza along Newark Ave to Establish Permanent Community Hub and Economic Driver

New Concert Stage, Wheelchair & Stroller Accessibility, Beautification, and Green Infrastructure for Flood Mitigation

JERSEY CITY - Mayor Steven M. Fulop will join the **City Council, the Historic Downtown Special Improvement District, and community members today at 4 p.m.** for the official ribbon-cutting highlighting the completion of \$7 million in improvements within the Newark Avenue Pedestrian Plaza to give “restaurant row” the permanency it deserves and creating one of New Jersey’s premier destinations for shopping, dining, and community events. Upgrades include an outdoor concert stage for community events, bike racks, benches, planters with built-in seating, tree plantings, and leveling of the street to remove curb drop-off for safer stroller and wheelchair accessibility.

“In 2015, we had the vision to maximize this space by creating a pedestrian-friendly plaza and establishing a sought-after shopping and dining destination and overall economic driver that has since exceeded our expectations,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “Today’s ribbon-cutting is the final piece to accomplishing a permanent, community-driven pedestrian mall that boosts local business, attracts investment, and, most importantly, establishes a premier location to foster community with various free public events throughout the year, weekly entertainment on the new concert stage, and daily foot traffic where residents and visitors can enjoy all the plaza has to offer.”



The City hosted multiple community meetings to garner public input and incorporate feedback throughout the design. A stage area has been constructed for regular live music and performances that will be free and open to everyone. Granite pavers have replaced the original painted green asphalt and elevated the street level to match the sidewalk for a more cohesive structure with better stroller and wheelchair accessibility.

Decorative trench drains now line both sides of the plaza alongside rain garden tree planters and café lighting for improved visibility. Dozens of tree plantings, underground utility work, drainage elements, and other green infrastructure elements will also help with stormwater absorption and beautification throughout the area.

To create a more aesthetically pleasing environment throughout the plaza, additional permanent structures installed include:

- 24 new trees planted
- 20 planter boxes with shrubs and landscaping
- 14 large square planters with built-in seating under trees
- 30 recycling and garbage combination units
- 16 bike racks
- 40 Benches



“Today marks the culmination of many years of hard work. The pedestrian mall has become a vital point in the area, and I couldn’t be happier,” added **Rachel Sieg, Executive Director of the Historic Downtown Special Improvement District**. “From holding meetings with business owners to fielding calls from property owners and City officials, this process was not easy but so worth it. I feel an immense sense of pride and accomplishment with the conclusion of this project, and I hope that visitors and residents of Jersey City will enjoy the Mall for many years to come.”

The Pedestrian Mall was first closed to vehicles in 2015 as a pilot program to limit traffic and create a pedestrian destination. The plaza was expanded to a second block in 2018. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the plaza was lengthened to Grove Street between Montgomery Street and Christopher Columbus Drive, as well as 1st Street and Newark Avenue. The expanded outdoor capacity helped restaurants and small businesses stay afloat and safely reopen sooner.

“It was important to us on the City level that our design incorporated the community’s input, and we are proud of the finished product seen here today. The new plaza delivers rich elements that have a cohesive feel. The environment is unique and creates an aesthetic oasis of open space in a busy city for all to enjoy for decades to come,” said **Paul Russo, Director of Engineering**.

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. Each project incorporates community input to focus not only on beautification and functionality, but also on the unseen aspects such as stormwater absorption to mitigate flooding and other environmental enhancements.

“Restaurant and business owners have been through a lot the past two years, and knowing that the Mayor is pro-business and always has our backs has allowed many of us to keep our doors open for business. Thanks to the City’s support, we have a thriving corridor of shops and restaurants that attracts local residents and visitors alike. By making this a permanent plaza, we can further demonstrate that we remain open for business and all are welcome,” said **Kenny Caulfield, Co-owner of The Ashford**.

“Now that the finishing pieces are in place, the excitement about the plaza improvements can really be felt. People are using the space as it was designed to be enjoyed, and these welcomed upgrades are being completed just in time for Jersey City Restaurant Week starting next week, July 17-31!” said **Carmen Mendiola, President of the Jersey City Restaurant Association**.

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