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Mayor Fulop and Open JC Announce Pilot 'Smart' Crime Alert System for Jersey City Residents; System Will Send Alerts to Mobile Devices Based on Crime Data from Police 911 System

Program to be Funded Through a $250,000 Grant as the Fulop Administration Continues to Expand Open Data Access to Make Local Government More Transparent

JERSEY CITY – **Mayor Steven M. Fulop** announced today that **Open JC**, a project of Friendship Ambassadors Foundation, has been awarded just over $**250,000 from a Google Ideas grant** made through the Tides Foundation, to **pilot a 'smart' crime alert system for Jersey City residents** in partnership with the City. Through the pilot system, residents in the selected areas will receive alerts on their mobile devices about crime incidents from the Jersey City Police Department's open data from the 911 system.

"Sharing information with the public is something our administration is committed to and the new platform we are developing with Open JC is a great resource to enhance communications and improve public safety," said **Mayor Fulop**. "Google has recognized and is supporting this innovative project, which can be a model for other cities to share information with residents across multiple departments."

Open JC is working hand-in-hand with the City of Jersey City, the Jersey City Police Department, and local residents to develop the alert system, which will enable community members to receive and share relevant and timely messages on their mobile device based on trends and spikes from open data. Through the pilot system, residents in the selected areas will receive alerts based on analysis of crime incidents from the Jersey City Police Department's 911 call data.

The alerts will also include preventative measures to keep residents safe and informed and will reduce the reliance on anecdotes and increase the importance of data in shaping perceptions of crime in a neighborhood.

In November, the Fulop administration launched the City's first ever data portal, where a variety of municipal data is made available to the public at jerseycitynj.gov/data. The City's new data portal makes finding data easier and streamlines the transfer of information by actively publishing a variety of data sets in a single easy to navigate location on the city website.

(more)

"Transparency is not just about access, it is also about proactively sharing information, to which the City is demonstrating an active commitment," said **Akisia Grigsby and Emmanuel A. Simon, Founding Partners and Co-Executive Directors, Open JC**. "We hope that through this technology we can strengthen the police-to-resident relationship in Jersey City by providing residents with insights based on crime data, increase community engagement, and improve the overall quality of life for residents."

The idea for the "smart" crime alert system was developed through discussions between the Jersey City Mayor's Office and Google Ideas. The City empowered Open JC to manage the project, who in the summer of 2014 conducted a study of the South Greenville Neighborhood Association, the Bayview Park Neighborhood Association and the Historic Paulus Hook Association to develop the pilot program. The study revealed that although the majority of residents learn about major crimes from formal news sources, they hear about local area thefts and robberies via word of mouth. Residents expressed a desire for a "smart" solution to this issue, specifically stating a preference for text and email alerts.

"Right now the community uses lots of back-and-forth emails and Facebook messaging to share information, so we are really looking to the crime alert system to provide accurate and current updates," said **Martha Larkins, President of the South Greenville Neighborhood Association**. "Through this system, the City and Open JC are expanding how data is shared with the public and we are eager to see this pilot launch and further expand as it will be a great tool for residents."

The crime alert system is set for a beta release in Fall 2015. Upon completion of the system, Open JC will make the source code available to anyone as an open source project. After the pilot program, Open JC envisions a widespread uptake of the system by anyone concerned about crime in Jersey City.

Future enhancements to the program are projected to include a web and free mobile app for browsing historical data and a feedback mechanism for residents to directly alert the police of new crimes.

ABOUT FRIENDSHIP AMBASSADORS FOUNDATION (FAF):

FAF is a recognized fiscal agent fund agency that has handled millions in the past decade alone. FAF has the accounting skills, transparency, auditing and reporting acumen and media relations to enable donors to feel assured their funds are in the hands of trusted and honest stewards, while the civil society can focus on what they do best: their valuable programming aimed at the specific constituencies that donors want to serve.

ABOUT OPEN JC:

Open JC is a small, woman and minority-owned, non-profit organization whose mission is to empower residents to improve their quality of life using technology-driven solutions. Its goal is to create and implement sustainable civic technology initiatives and introduce business and technology education to youth and adults in local communities.

To learn more information about this project, or to schedule an interview with Open JC, please call Jeanina Casusi at (203) 542-0652 or email jeanina@faf.org. Visit open-jc.org for more information.

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