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Fulop Administration Expands Urban Agriculture & Adopt-A-Lot Program Through the Partnership for a Healthier JC Citywide Initiative Includes Urban Gardens, Healthy Food & Farmers' Markets

JERSEY CITY – Mayor Steven M. Fulop, and the **Department of Health and Human Services, (HHS)** in conjunction with the **Partnership for a Healthier JC**, are expanding urban agriculture to Jersey City residents through a citywide initiative that includes increased resources for Adopt-A-Lot programs, a streamlined farmers' market process, and earth box gardens in several sites around the city.

“As we enter the spring gardening and farmers' market season, we have implemented several programs that will support local urban agriculture and increase access to healthy food for residents,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “We are committed to expanding our Adopt-A-Lot and gardening programs further, and are grateful for the volunteers who are working with the City to accomplish these goals.”

This initiative is part of Mayor Fulop's commitment to providing access to healthy foods and increased urban gardening opportunities for residents. Jersey City is currently home to eight farmers' markets and nine Adopt-A-Lot programs in all wards of the city.

Over the past year, the City has collaborated with farmers' market managers to streamline the permitting process for markets throughout Jersey City. New legislation was formulated and passed by the City Council, which provides guidelines insuring that farmers markets' are more accessible to all Jersey City residents -- all Jersey City farmers' markets are now required to accept SNAP, WIC and FMNP. In addition, the legislation calls for more locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables, aligning us more closely with USDA standards.

“As the manager of the Van Vorst Park Farmers' Market, I'm very pleased that the City has passed an ordinance clarifying what constitutes a farmers' market, and at the same time simplifies the permitting process,” said **Marc Wesson, Manager of Van Vorst Farmers' Market**.

In addition, the City has expanded its efforts with Jersey City's Adopt-A-Lot organizations by providing sheds and tools to all Adopt-A-Lots, along with mulch and other supplies in an effort to sustain their efforts to beautify Jersey City.

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“I am so proud to be participating in the Adopt-a- Lot and community gardens initiative,” said **Elizabeth Perry “Alajwanje” of UMMI Garden Adopt A Lot**. “I eagerly anticipate this year’s growth of Jersey City’s Adopt-a-Lot garden initiatives!”

The City has also launched Jersey City’s First Earth Box Farms, an initiative in which 125 Earth Boxes were donated by Garden State Urban Farms (GSUF) and distributed to the Maureen Collier Senior Center on Bergen Avenue, the Jersey City Health and Human Services Campus at 199 Summit Avenue, and the Berry Gardens Public Housing complex on Danforth and Ocean Avenues. Earth Boxes make it possible to garden anywhere, including paved parking lots and patios. Devices like this are crucial to expanding urban gardening initiatives throughout Jersey City.



“The people who I have worked with from Jersey City, from local government offices to non-profit organizations, are eager and devoted to healthy collaborations,” said **Lorraine Gibbons, CEO of Garden State Urban Farms**. “Garden State Urban Farms benefits from partnerships such as these with communities like Jersey City. We learn so much and are grateful for this fulfilling collaboration.”

The Maureen Collier Senior Center Garden

Garden State Urban Farms collaborates with schools, nonprofit organizations and government groups to provide employment opportunities and educational programming, as well as low-cost, healthy food in urban areas throughout New Jersey. GSUF also provided training for the gardeners, along with the guidance of Master Gardeners from the Jersey City Parks Coalition.

“Our partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services is a natural extension of the work that the Jersey City Parks Coalition does throughout our city parks as we work to beautify Jersey City,” said **Laura Skolar, President of the Jersey City Parks Coalition**. “We look forward to building upon our success from last year, sharing our respective expertise and working towards a healthier community across Jersey City.”

Last month, the Department of Health and Human Services hosted an Urban Agriculture Appreciation Night Awards Dinner, presenting proclamations to both the Jersey City Parks Coalition and Garden State Urban Farms.

The **Landscaping Award** was presented to **Ogden Community Garden**; the **Civic Achievement Award** was presented to **Living Village Community Garden**; the **Conservation Award** was presented to **Dig It! Community Garden**; the **Historic Preservation Award** was presented to the **Brunswick Community Garden**; the **Horticulture Award** was presented to the **Urban Action Community Garden**; the **Innovation Award** was presented to **Riverview Community Garden**; and the **Landscaping Award** was presented to **Ogden’s End Community Garden**.

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Adopt-A-Lot Award Winners



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