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City to Close Playground Area at Mary Benson Park as a Precautionary Measure Soil Testing Results Show Elevated Lead Levels

JERSEY CITY – City officials announced today that the **playground area at Mary Benson Park** (on Merseles Street between Third Street and Newark Avenue) is being closed for precautionary measures after soil testing showed lead levels that exceed the state requirements for residential areas.

“We are taking precautionary measures and will take the necessary steps to begin the remediation process,” said **Public Works Director Rodney Hadley**, who noted the City was notifying the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

The **Department of Public Works** and the **Division of Architecture** discovered the slightly elevated levels as part of the preparation process for installing new playground equipment through a possible grant from Kaboom.

Subsurface soil tests for metals analysis resulted in two (2) of the four (4) tests exceeding the maximum allowed New Jersey Residential Soil Remediation Standards (SRS) Soil Cleanup Criteria for lead.

Test results for lead are as follows:

test S-1 14.5 mg/Kg

test S-2 410 mg/Kg

test S-3 157 mg/Kg

test S-4 563 mg/Kg

These samples were taken by an outside geotechnical and environmental materials testing consultant and were taken in four distinct locations within the playground area.

The New Jersey Residential Direct Contact Criteria standard for lead is up to 400 mg/Kg and the Non-Residential Direct Contact Criteria for lead is up to 600 mg/Kg.

Once a timeline for the remediation is established with DEP, the City will notify the public.

All media inquiries should be directed to Jennifer Morrill, Press Secretary to Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy at 201-547-4836 or 201-376-0699.///