

CITY OF JERSEY CITY

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Second Public Meeting on Morris Canal Greenway Announced ***Design Includes a Bicycle and Pedestrian Greenway on former right-of-way of the historic Morris Canal***

JERSEY CITY – Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy and city officials announced today that the second public meeting for the Morris Canal Greenway Plan will be held from **5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 15, 2013** in Council Chambers, 280 Grove Street. The format of the meeting will be an open house during which the public will be able to view exhibits and talk one-on-one with members of the project team. At 6 p.m., the project team will make a 30-minute presentation, which will include presentation of the proposed route for the greenway, greenway design, and a strategy to advance the greenway.

The Morris Canal Greenway Plan has identified a bicycle and pedestrian greenway that is, to the greatest extent possible, on the former right-of-way of the historic Morris Canal in Jersey City. The future greenway is envisioned to be a continuous facility that will enhance bicycle and pedestrian opportunities, increase the amount of recreational space, and celebrate the history of the Morris Canal. Products of the fifteen-month study include short-term and long-term alignments for the greenway, Design Guidelines, recommendations for interpretation of the Morris Canal, and an implementation strategy.

Most of the six-mile greenway will be off-road, which would make it only the second such facility in Jersey City. (Currently, the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway is the only off-road facility for bicyclists and pedestrians.) The Morris Canal Greenway will support walking and bicycling for both circulation and recreation. A survey conducted by the City of Jersey City in 2008 found that 26% of respondents who live and work in Jersey City either walk or bike to work. Furthermore, the study recommends that the design of the greenway incorporate low-maintenance and “green” techniques, another way the Morris Canal Greenway is consistent with the City’s multiple efforts to create a more sustainable urban environment.

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Other municipalities and counties in the region have prepared plans and created public spaces along the path of the former Morris Canal. The ultimate goal is to connect Jersey City and Phillipsburg, NJ with a 102-mile greenway across northern New Jersey. Locally, the greenway will connect parks, schools, neighborhoods, and businesses and build on the City's multi-modal transportation network. The greenway will also connect to regional facilities, such as the East Coast Greenway, Hudson River Waterfront Walkway, and public transportation. A greenway on the former Morris Canal is consistent with the Circulation Element of the Jersey City Master Plan as well as the City's Recreation and Open Space Master Plan.

Beginning in 1836, the Morris Canal carried goods across New Jersey from Pennsylvania to the Hudson River Waterfront, bringing new business and industries to Jersey City. As the use of rail to transport cargo increased, commercial activity on the Morris Canal decreased, until it was abandoned in 1924. The Morris Canal is listed in the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places. The former Morris Canal right-of-way links the Hudson and Hackensack Rivers and travels around the upland Palisades formation in the southern half of Jersey City.

The City of Jersey City was awarded a grant from the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority to complete the Morris Canal Greenway Plan. The City hired a consultant team led by The RBA Group to prepare the plan. A Steering Committee consisting of representatives from City, County, and State agencies; transportation professionals; and local advocacy groups convened several times. The first public meeting was held in October 2012.

For more information, please visit the study website: www.jcmcgreenway.org

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