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

Mayor Fulop Brings Residents' Ideas to Life as Participatory Budget Pilot Program Exceeds Expectations

Jersey City Funds Multiple Community Projects Chosen 100% by Residents, Ranging from Family Literacy & Computer Workshops to Park & Playground Improvements

JERSEY CITY – Mayor Steven M. Fulop announced today the successful implementation of *Jersey City's first Participatory Budget Pilot Program, resulting in multiple community projects created in every corner of Jersey City, chosen entirely by residents.* The Participatory Budget establishes a transparent process where residents propose ideas for neighborhood improvements to be constructed by the City. Residents in all six wards then vote on which community initiatives to fund with the \$50,000 allotted by the City.

"With this Participatory Budget Pilot, our goal was to engage residents and get them more directly involved so that we can best meet the community's needs while simultaneously giving them the tools to understand the entire process better. The results exceeded our expectations," said **Mayor Fulop**. "Now that residents in each ward have chosen, we are moving forward on implementing all 14 projects citywide."

In addition to idea submissions, the pilot program also provided shared context as to how the municipal budget works, how much things cost, and what lies within the City's range versus other government entities.

In March 2022, applications opened online for idea submissions, and residents were encouraged to get creative. Each application explained how the project benefits the community and its location. As a result, residents from each ward submitted and voted to approve the following projects for the City to implement:

Ward A

- \$32,000 to create family literacy, writing, and computer workshops.
- \$10,000 in Martiniak Enright park improvements.
- \$8,000 to construct a water fountain in Bayside Park.

Ward B

- \$50,000 to plant trees along West Side Avenue and multiple other Ward B locations, as decided by residents.

Ward C

- \$50,000 to plant trees along Newark Avenue and additional locations throughout Ward C.

Ward D

- \$40,000 to plant trees in the Heights and other locations throughout Ward D.
- \$5,000 to build a bus shelter at the intersection of Palisade Avenue and Congress Street.

Ward E

- \$30,000 to include more planters at crosswalks throughout downtown for added safety and beautification purposes.
- \$15,000 to improve the playground on Merseles Street near Firehouse 5.
- \$5,000 to add water fountains in J. Owen Grundy Park.

Ward F

- \$30,000 to plant more trees in various locations, as chosen by residents of Ward F.
- \$15,000 to support the Big Brother, Big Sister Program.
- \$5,000 to construct a water fountain in Ercel F. Webb Park.



“The Participatory Budget gives residents information on our budgeting process and a better understanding of the inner workings of our capital and operating budgets. We got really great suggestions from all across the City, which helps us to understand what our residents’ priorities are,” said **Ward B Councilwoman Mira Prinz-Arey**. “At my quarterly community meeting, we received really great feedback from residents, and I look forward to including that input to expand the program even more next year. “

Under the pilot program, the City offered multiple tutorials and educational materials ahead of the voting period to encourage more residents to participate.

“We were pleased to see that our interactive voting tools encouraged participation from community members who would not have engaged in our typical outreach processes,” concluded **Barkha Patel, Director of the Department of Infrastructure and former Assistant Business**

Administrator. "We look forward to working with the community as we implement these projects over the next few months to continue building more transparency into this process."

"Jersey City's participatory budgeting pilot has given residents more hands-on control of the City's budget. I am excited to see these projects built in our City and for the program to grow with more engagement in the coming years," said **Ward E Councilman James Solomon.**

All media inquiries should be directed to Kimberly Scalcione at KScalcione@icnj.org.