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

Mayor Fulop Revives One of America’s Oldest Town Squares, Transforming Parking Lots into Public Green Space in the Heart of Jersey City

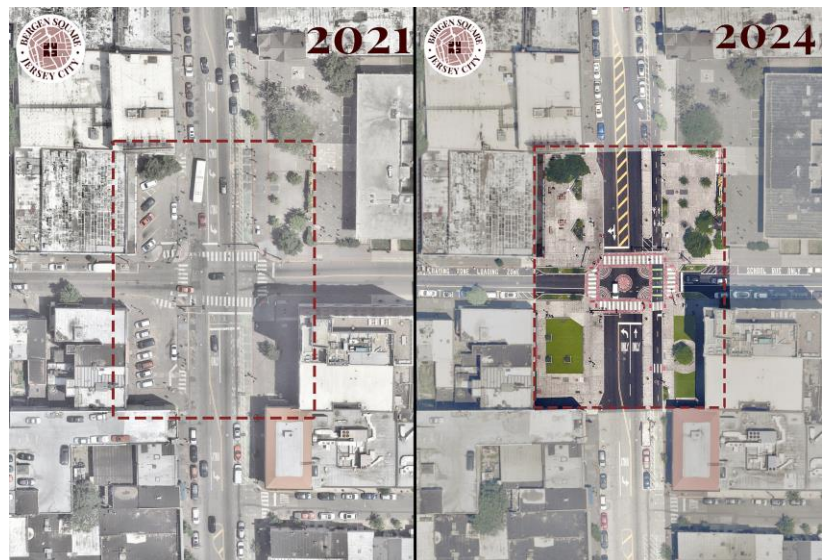
Jersey City Revitalizes 360-year-old Bergen Square to Former Glory

JERSEY CITY, NJ — Mayor Steven M. Fulop joined the **City Council, local dignitaries, and community members** today to cut the ribbon on the newly revitalized Bergen Square, one of the oldest established town squares in America, dating back to 1660.

After years of working closely with Jersey City residents and neighborhood organizations, the **Department of Infrastructure** led the community-driven project, highlighting the area’s rich history while transforming surface parking lots into 5,400 square feet of pedestrian plaza and park space with carefully designed aesthetics. The result is a vibrant and inviting urban area for residents, visitors, and patrons of the nearby small businesses.

“Our vision for Bergen Square is to build a usable outdoor public space in the heart of Journal Square for everyone to enjoy, with an important emphasis on the valuable role this area and Jersey City has played in our nation’s history going back thousands of years,” said **Mayor Fulop**.

"The Journal Square community has been working closely with the city for years to realize the redesign of Bergen Square, and we are all thrilled to have this ribbon cutting take place. In addition to being an ancient, critical



crossroads for the native Leni Lenape for over a thousand years, Bergen Square is the first permanent European settlement in Jersey City and New Jersey. Since 1660 and before, Bergen Square has been the site of community exchange and cross-cultural interaction," added **Dr. James Dievler, Bergen Square Committee Member, Lead Organizer of Bergen Square Day, and Chairman of the Journal Square Community Association History Committee.**

By relocating public parking, the city is not only increasing the number of available parking spots and raising the intersection for pedestrian safety but is also upgrading one of the busiest public bus stops in the city and creating a safer, more streamlined drop-off area for nearby Pre-K through 8th grade students attending the Martin Luther King, Jr. School, P.S. #11.

Situated along Bergen Avenue between McGinley Square and Journal Square, the redesigned public space boasts an area for community events, traffic safety upgrades, a newly planted 30-foot oak tree, and native greenery. Additional improvements include:

- 14 additional on-street parking spaces
- Improved traffic flow
- Relocation of school bus drop-off for P.S. 11 to Academy Street
- Removal of surface parking lots while creating more parking opportunities
- Native landscaping and green infrastructure
- Public transit stops with bus shelters
- Historic signage

In 2018, Mayor Fulop formed the Bergen Square Committee, launching an effort to strengthen the area's historical identity and activate it as a vibrant public space. As a result, this interdisciplinary vision became a reality through collaborative action involving city staff from the Department of Infrastructure (Engineering, Traffic, Transportation, Sustainability), Division of Planning, and Historic Preservation working together with the community.

The Journal Square Special Improvement District will partner with the city to clean and maintain the plaza amenities daily. **Chris Bernardo, who leads the Journal Square Special Improvement District,** expressed excitement about the public investment in Bergen Square. "The city's commitment to developing open and accessible public spaces is on full display at the renovated Bergen Square plaza. The thoughtful design and amenities will enable us to program the space with activities for customers, residents, and students."

A half mile from Bergen Square, the Fulop Administration is moving forward with plans to build a brand new 3-acre Courthouse Park, which will soon be the first large park in Journal Square. While there are no public parks currently within walking distance, a 30-foot tall oak tree was planted in the southeast quadrant of Bergen Square to establish immediate benefits of shade and greening the space, as the primary goal of the project is to bring a welcoming, green space in the heart of the bustling urban center.

"With the Bergen Square revitalization project, we are introducing outdoor recreational space to the rapidly growing Journal Square area with the creation of a welcoming public space that celebrates the past, present, and future of Jersey City," concluded **Barkha Patel, Director of the Department of Infrastructure.**

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