



STEVEN M. FULOP  
MAYOR OF JERSEY CITY

## CITY OF JERSEY CITY OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY HALL | 280 GROVE STREET | JERSEY CITY, NJ 07302  
P: 201 547 5500 | F: 201 547 5442



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**Contact:** Kimberly Scalcione

KScalcione@jcnj.org

**\*\*\*Press Release\*\*\***

## **Jersey City 1st in NJ to Tackle Prolonged Pollution by Creating Extensive, Multi-Layered Approach to Greatly Reduce Combined Sewage Overflows while Promoting Green Building Initiatives**

*1st Initiative under new Resiliency Master Plan uses Innovative, Cost-Effective Flood Reduction and Pollution Solutions*

JERSEY CITY –Mayor **Steven Fulop**, the **Municipal Utilities Authority (MUA)**, the **Division of City Planning**, and the **Office of Sustainability** announce an innovative approach to expand the city’s efforts to drastically reduce pollution while promoting sustainable development. The dual-pronged approach enables properties outside designated flood zones and requires those within to incorporate green infrastructure to promote the soundest of sustainable construction and pollution reduction practices, implementing localized flooding controls, while improving overall quality of life for community.

“We’re setting the tone for development around the state and the region by promoting green building initiatives for all projects that ultimately impacts the overall health and benefit of our community and our residents,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “This is a cost-effective and resilient way to significantly reduce flooding along with flood-related health and safety hazards posed during storm events, while simultaneously delivering environmental benefits and incorporating more green landscaping citywide.”

The first green initiative is the ***Sustainability Incentive Program*** which introduces a multi-level approach for new and existing development to divert storm water from the sewer system by installing green infrastructure and also meeting strict energy and water conservation standards provided in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) guidelines. The Incentive Program is a voluntary option open to all public projects to earn discounts on water and sewer connection fees due to new or expanded use.

“Stormwater runoff is a major cause of water pollution in urban areas. Our approach to use green infrastructure components will not only ensure the most sustainable construction practices and serve as a

model for other cities to follow, but will also reduce city costs involved in the monumental task of ultimately eliminating combined sewage discharge into local waterways,” said **Jose Cunha, Executive Director of the JCMUA.**

Taking the city’s sustainable approach one step further is the second initiative being introduced, the ***Flood Overlay Zone Program***, which will require new developments in FEMA-designated flood hazard zones to incorporate green infrastructure to help control localized flooding and minimize pollution runoff into local waterways by implementing green infrastructure - such as rain gardens, green roofs, bioswales, and permeable pavement - to absorb and filter stormwater runoff and therefore avoid combined sewage overflows where domestic sewage and other wastewater overflow and pollute local waterways.

As is typical in cities, Jersey City’s current stormwater infrastructure relies on piped drainage to move rainwater away from the area, whereas green infrastructure uses vegetation, soils, and other water absorbing elements and practices to restore some of the natural processes required to manage water and create healthier urban environments. The result: an attractive aesthetic look, coupled with the environmental benefits of serving as a filter-like system, cleaning the water, and reducing harmful runoff into the sewers and local waterways.

“Cities like ours typically struggle with flood-prone areas due to the lack of water retention capabilities, which these efforts will help solve,” said **Tanya Marione, Director of the Division of City Planning.** “Adding these green elements is an easy lift for developers and a no-brainer for the betterment of the city.”

The Flood Overlay Zone Program is the first initiative under the city’s new Resiliency Master Plan, implemented in March 2020 to create a blueprint for the most effective flood intervention efforts. The city’s previous efforts to address localized flooding and storm water management include the installation of sensors in the sewer system to better understand the impact of rain on our local waterways. These new sustainability programs will complement work already being done on the city-level, including the successful implementation of green elements which are proven effective, such as bioswales, rain gardens, a green roof on the new West District Police Precinct building, and flood absorbing elements incorporated inside Vision Zero’s curb extensions which will also enhance visibility for pedestrian safety.

“Jersey City continues to set the bar high for implementing creative solutions to various challenges that urban areas like us often face - in this case, we’re maximizing sustainable planning to combat pollution to our local land and waterways,” said **Kate Lawrence, Director of the Jersey City Office of Sustainability.** “These programs further our commitment to implement sustainable infrastructure and provide significant environmental benefits to the Jersey City residents for generations to come.”

Under the Incentive Program, buildings that further address stormwater will also receive additional credit for every 500 gallons of stormwater diverted from the sewers, up to a 40% total credit. That equates to a max of 20,000 gallons stormwater diverted per property. The City and MUA are partnering

to install green infrastructure in a variety of public areas along streets and sidewalks with 10 locations across all six wards to begin in the first phase this year.

The LEED certification uses a point-scoring system based on how well a construction project incorporates environmentally responsible standards, and the stormwater diversion incentive calculation is based on estimated gallons of water diverted from sewers.

If the building is built to LEED certifications, it will receive a discount on water and sewer connection fees based on the level of LEED accreditation:

1. LEED Platinum: 60% credit
2. LEED Gold: 45% credit
3. LEED Silver: 30% credit
4. LEED certified: 15% credit

**All media inquiries should be directed to Kimberly Scalcione at [kscalcione@jcnj.org](mailto:kscalcione@jcnj.org).**