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PERTH AMBOY LOOKING FOR COMMUNITY INPUT ON NEW CITY PARK

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(Perth Amboy, N.J.) The City of Perth Amboy is working collaboratively with the Middlesex County Improvement Authority (MCIA) and Rutgers University to gather feedback from the community on what they would like to see in a new park at the site of the former Harry S. Goldberg Scrap Metal Yard on Second Street across from the Wilentz Elementary School. The MCIA received a grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to advise on environmental issues, perform site testing and plan the process for cleaning up the site. Rutgers will be conducting community outreach efforts to solicit input for the park design.

The Perth Amboy Second Street Community Park will be located on a 6-acre Brownfield site on Second Street stretching from Paterson Street to the Raritan River waterfront. The City acquired the property and is presently working with Goldberg on a remedial action plan. Once remediation has been completed, the park will be developed with guidance from the community outreach process.

Community outreach efforts include development of a BlogSpot where Perth Amboy residents are invited to take an on-line survey about their park interests and needs as well as post comments about proposed park designs. The bi-lingual BlogSpot and Survey are available now at www.2ndStreetPark.BlogSpot.com. Paper copies of the survey in both English and Spanish are available at four locations throughout the city:

- Alexander F. Jankowski Community Center at 1 Olive Street
- City Hall at 260 High Street
- Brighton Avenue Community Center at 56 Brighton Avenue
- Puerto Rican Association for Human Development, Inc. (PRAHD) at 100 First Street

The Rutgers team will also conduct a number of open houses where the general public can (1) learn about the Brownfield clean-up activities on the site, (2) discover other recreation and open space opportunities in the area, (3) give feedback on draft concepts for the park, (4) see designs for the park developed by students in Vienna, Austria, and (5) participate in designing the new park.

In June, project team members met with students at the Robert N. Wilentz Elementary School and the William C. McGinnis Middle School to conduct an exercise that introduced the students to the concepts of brownfields and recreational redevelopment, helped to identify the student's vision for the new recreational space, and then involved the students to suggest improvements for their ideal recreational space within Perth Amboy. The students were very engaged and interested, providing the project team with some great ideas.

The Perth Amboy Second Street Community Park is also the subject of international attention. Dr. Wolfram Hoefer, a member of the Rutgers team and professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture at the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, taught a class of landscape architecture students in Vienna, Austria during July of 2014. One of the objectives of the class was to

study the Perth Amboy Second Street site and to design concepts for a new community park. The Austrian students found Perth Amboy to be an inspiring model for their studies and designed innovative and impressive concepts that Dr. Hoefer will share with the residents of Perth Amboy at the open houses.

The first of the community outreach workshops will take place September 23 from 6:00 to 9:00 pm and the second workshop is on Saturday, September 27 from noon to 3:00 pm. Both events will take place in the Brighton Avenue Community Center at 56 Brighton Avenue. Both events are open house format so participants are invited to drop by anytime during the event. Refreshments and snacks will be served.