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**CITY OF PATERSON HOLDS GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY FOR
OVERLOOK PARK REHABILITATION AND IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT**

“\$3.2 Million project includes rehabilitation, environmental remediation”

Paterson - - Today, Mayor Jose ‘joey’ Torres joined by Congressman Bill Pascrell and representatives from a broad coalition of government agencies, including the City of Paterson, Passaic County, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJ-DEP) and the National Park Service held a ground breaking ceremony to initiate rehabilitation and improvement projects in Overlook Park.

“Our past and our future is intertwined with the Great Falls and working towards the improvement of this land is a demonstration of respect and admiration of our industrial past,” said Mayor Jose ‘joey’ Torres. “It also allows us to offer residents and the region, with a prime visitor’s experience, where they have access to the beauty of the landscape in the middle of our city.”

Following three years of design development and reviews, the \$3.2 million project will consist of site wide rehabilitation, improvements and environmental remediation.

“Overlook Park is a gateway to our Great Falls Historic National Park,” said Congressman William Pascrell III. “These improvements offer the region with possibilities of recreation, and tourism all within the backdrop of our city jewel, the Great Falls in the Passaic River.”

"This is a partnership park and there's no greater example of what that means on the ground than what's happening here today," said Darren Boch, Superintendent of the Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park. "From the funding, to the design, planning and approvals, the state, local and federal governments played an integral role in moving this project forward. We are serving record numbers of visitors here in this national park, most of whom start their visit right here in Overlook Park. By this time next year, the welcome mat will be even grander."

“Preserving this land is very important to enhancing the Paterson Great Falls Historical Park and preserving another aspect of the site’s important heritage,” New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bob Martin said. “The preservation of this beautiful landscape would not be possible if not for

the shared vision of all the partners in this project and their commitment to preservation of this land. The Christie Administration remains committed to preserving historic sites that are important to people in the state and in cities like Paterson.”

An ADA-compliant visitor pedestrian access is one of the top priorities of the project, with the construction of a new paved pathway and stairs to connect Overlook Park with Mary Ellen Kramer Park.

Construction plans also include the installation of an open-air earthen and stone seat amphitheater on the lower terrace of the park, thus offering the public the opportunity to appreciate interpretive/cultural programs and performances.

The project also includes the installation of a new viewing plaza along the central axis and the best viewpoint of the falls, where group photos and wedding photos can be taken comfortably; as well as the complete rehabilitation of the asphalt parking lot and new plantings in the parking area.

“As a resident of Paterson, I take great pride in the fact that our city has its very own National Park,” said Freeholder Assad Akhter. “The Great Falls are not only a natural wonder but a living testament to the birth of industry in our nation. This is why the Board of Chosen Freeholders was proud to provide \$516,933 through our Open Space Trust Fund for this project which will completely remake Overlook Park as a worthy gateway to the Great Falls National Historical Park.”

Funding sources for this \$3.2 project was provided by the City of Paterson, \$150,000.00; \$516,993.00 from the Passaic County Open Space & Farmland Preservation Trust; and \$655,000.00 from the National Park Service for site improvements.

As well as, \$1,418,00.00 from the NJ-Department of Environmental Protection’s (NJDEP) Green Acres program; an additional NJDEP funding of \$100,000.00 for a bio-retention basin, and \$420,000.00 for site-wide environmental remediation.

The City of Paterson also received \$1,500.00 from the Passaic County Board of Realtors in donation of a park bench.

Overlook Park is across from the Great Falls Welcome Center on McBride Avenue, and offers visitors the opportunity to get the best spectacular views of the Great Falls.

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