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**FINGER LAKES REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, FRIENDS OF THE
GARDENAERIAL AND THE CITY OF ROCHESTER HOLD FLOURGARDEN GROUND
BREAKING**

*Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development awarded project to create an Urban Ecological
Greenway in High Falls*

March 20, 2014 (Rochester, N.Y.) - - The Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council (FLREDC), Friends of the GardenAerial and the City of Rochester today held a ground breaking for the FlourGarden in High Falls. FlourGarden is a 300-foot long new urban ecological greenway in the High Falls District of downtown Rochester. It is part of the first phase of the GardenAerial project, which will revitalize the historic Genesee River Gorge/High Falls area through a sustainable and innovative approach that enhances the unique, world-class site through a series of projects around the gorge.

As part of round two of Andrew M. Cuomo’s Regional Economic Development Council initiative, The Friends of the Garden Aerial was awarded \$500,000 from the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation’s Environmental Protection Fund, which assists in the development of parks and recreational facilities or historic preservation projects. The City of Rochester also contributed nearly \$134,000 toward the project and the FLREDC named the project one of its Five-Year Pipeline Initiatives, demonstrating municipal, regional and state planning priority.

“This project blends history with green space and infrastructure, and will have a tremendous impact on the High Falls neighborhood,” said Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council Co-Chairs, University of Rochester President Joel Seligman and Wegmans Food Markets CEO Danny Wegman. “Projects like the FlourGarden are supported by the FLREDC because they

make vital contributions to the region's economic vitality by stimulating commerce and strengthening the region's high quality of life."

"The FlourGarden is the first physical manifestation of a restoration project that continues to be realized through public and private donations and is expected to be completed in the Spring of 2015," said Friends of the GardenAerial Board Chair Lisa Baron.

This re-imagination of an interpretive 300-foot-long millrace, constructed in 1992 as an education tool for the High Falls Heritage Area, will dynamically change the streetscape of the Browns Race Historic District.

The FlourGarden serves as a model of sustainability in center city Rochester and will function as the first completed leg of Friends of the GardenAerial's proposed ¾ mile hub trail around the Genesee River Gorge at High Falls. The FlourGarden showcases innovative design, including an ecological gardenscape within an historic interpretation of a millrace, as well as rain gardens designed to mitigate storm water runoff from Browns Race.

"The Friends of the GardenAerial's innovation, stewardship and community outreach is important for this city and our future," said City of Rochester Mayor Lovely Warren said. "Their plan to complete this first leg of the project and create a ¾ mile destination hub trail connecting the Genesee Riverway Trail, the El Camino Trail, the future JOSANA trail, as well as the St. Paul Quarter, 14621, JOSANA and Browns Square neighborhoods, is a collaboration and plan that will help reshape our city and neighborhoods."

"FlourGarden is a completely unique public space that will attract new business and visitors to this historic neighborhood," said New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Commissioner Rose Harvey. "I am pleased that New York State Parks, through Governor Cuomo's Regional Council initiative, could assist with this important project in the Rochester High Falls Heritage Area."

The FlourGarden also represents the beginning of a journey to revitalize the High Falls district and JOSANA neighborhood as part of the first EcoDistrict in New York State.

Assembly Majority Leader Joseph D. Morelle said, "I am delighted to be taking these first steps toward realizing the full vision of the GardenAerial project at High Falls. As part of this exciting initiative, the FlourGarden greenway will create new opportunities for recreation, public health, sustainability and economic growth. I applaud Governor Andrew Cuomo, each member of the Regional Council, and all of our local partners for their tireless dedication to ensuring a strong future for the City of Rochester."

Senator Joe Robach said, "The FlourGarden is an innovative project that will help to increase business and attract people to the High Falls neighborhood. I applaud the collaboration and dedication of the Friends of the GardenAerial, the City of Rochester and New York State in

seeing this project come to fruition so more Rochester-area residents can enjoy the beauty of High Falls.”

The GardenAerial project is comprised of three phases. Phase 1 includes creating and preparing new trails and gardens on the east and west sides of the Gorge; Phase 2 plans for construction of a new pedestrian bridge across the top of High Falls and a downtown connection “system” completing the ¾ mile trail hub around the Gorge; and Phase 3 envisions creation of a stunning suspended arboretum, floating high above the Genesee Gorge on the Pont de Rennes bridge, as well as a new Wintergarden the east side of the Gorge.

About Friends of the GardenAerial (FoGA)

Friends of the GardenAerial is a visionary project to transform High Falls into a world-class showcase of sustainable, sensitive development in harmony with the natural and built environment (where possible) and the re-habilitation of the land, water and eco-systems. FoGA works to preserve, protect and improve natural and historic resources, cultivating High Falls’ transformation into a world-class public green space, through stewardship, innovative design and community outreach. For more information, visit www.gardenaerial.org.

About NYS Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Initiative

The Regional Economic Development Council initiative (REDC) is a key component of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo’s transformative approach to State investment and economic development. In 2011, Governor Cuomo established 10 Regional Councils to develop long-term strategic plans for economic growth for their regions. The Councils are public-private partnerships made up of local experts and stakeholders from business, academia, local government, and non-governmental organizations. The Regional Councils have redefined the way New York invests in jobs and economic growth by putting in place a community-based, bottom up approach and establishing a competitive process for State resources. For more information on the Regional Councils, visit www.regionalcouncils.ny.gov.

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