

THE CITY OF SUMMIT

N E W J E R S E Y

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News Release

For immediate release

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Donna Goggin Patel Receives 2026 Volunteer of the Year Award

SUMMIT, N.J., December 18, 2025 – At the December 16 Common Council meeting, Mayor Elizabeth Fagan presented the 2026 Volunteer of the Year award to Environmental Commission Chair Donna Goggin Patel.

"This award is presented annually to a resident volunteer who has shown exceptional dedication and commitment to the City of Summit. It is a testament to the importance of volunteerism in our community and the impact that individuals can make when they give their time and talents to support worthy initiatives," explains Mayor Fagan.

Donna has been a dedicated city volunteer for eight years, volunteering countless hours of her time with the city's Environmental Commission to tirelessly champion environmental initiatives and projects that help to protect natural resources throughout Summit and improve residents' quality of life.

Since becoming chair of the Environmental Commission in 2019, Donna has been the driving force behind numerous projects including the Tiny Forest, the annual Earth Day clean-up, the Community Energy Plan, and the revision of the city's Environmental Resource Inventory, among many others. She spearheads the renewal process for the city's Sustainable Jersey certification, an enormous undertaking that requires detailed cataloging of the city's sustainability actions and policies. Under her leadership, the city continues to achieve an impressive silver level certification that it has held since 2010.

"We are incredibly fortunate to have Donna as a city volunteer," says Mayor Elizabeth Fagan. "The impact of her work in Summit will last for many years into the future, and our city is undeniably a better place to live, work, and visit because of her efforts to enhance our environment and natural resources."

In her comments after receiving the award, Donna thanked elected officials, city staff, and other resident volunteers for their collaboration and support of the Environmental Commission's projects over the years. "Thank you, Mayor Fagan, for this honor. It's my privilege to serve on the Environmental Commission. I feel fortunate to live in a community that focuses on sustainability and the environment to the extent that Summit has for decades now," said Donna at the meeting.

A full clip of the award ceremony is available on the City of Summit [YouTube channel](#). To learn more about the Tiny Forest, visit cityofsummit.org/tinyforest or watch two short videos produced by [CBS](#) and the [City of Summit](#). More information on the Environmental Commission is available at cityofsummit.org/ec.

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