



PRESS CONTACTS:

For Fairmount Park Conservancy: Cari Feiler Bender
610-416-1216, cari@reliefcomm.com

Sharene Azimi

646-784-5547, sharene@missioncomms.com

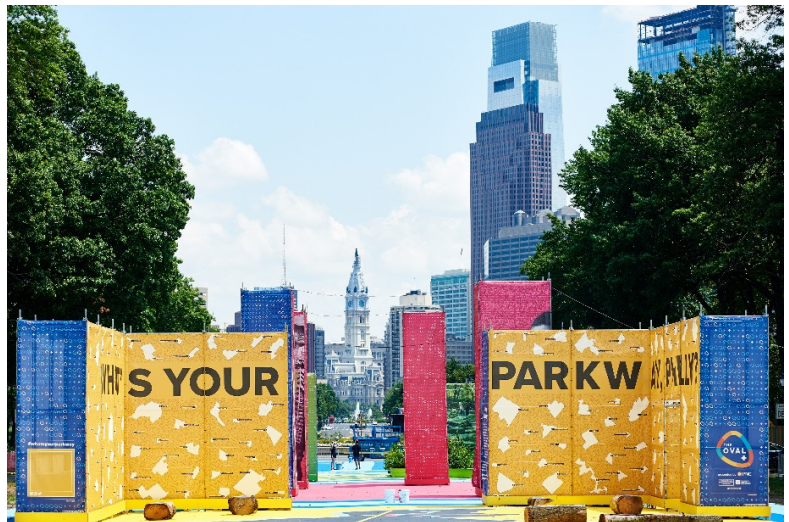
For Philadelphia Parks & Recreation: Alain Joinville
267-886-3032, alain.joinville@phila.gov

THE OVAL+ LAUNCHES SUMMER SEASON WITH EXPANSION Installations Invite Visitors to Answer, “What’s Your Parkway, Philly?”

July 19, 2017 – Philadelphia, PA – Today, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation and its nonprofit partner Fairmount Park Conservancy unveiled the latest version of summer at The Oval: now called The Oval+ (Plus) because it includes installations and activities at two other parks along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. Public events begin on July 20 and run through August 20. This year, the schedule of events at The Oval+ will include programming by The Free Library of Philadelphia at the newly renovated Shakespeare Park and by the Franklin Institute and the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University at Aviator Park.

In addition to all the fun, food, and entertainment that visitors have come to expect, this year’s design will include three-dimensional installations encouraging visitors to imagine how much more fully the Parkway could be used as a public space.

“The Oval+ is an example of what a vibrant public space the Parkway could become, from Love Park to the entrance to Fairmount Park,” said **Kathryn Ott Lovell, Commissioner of Philadelphia Parks & Recreation**. “We are eagerly considering how this beautiful 100-year-old boulevard could be energized for our times.”



Photos by Albert Yee for Fairmount Park Conservancy

“When you bring art and culture into the open, you create a different kind of connection with people from what happens in a museum or concert hall,” said **Jamie Gauthier, Acting Executive Director of Fairmount Park Conservancy**. “The Oval+ is designed to get people interacting with the installation and with each other in ways that are both fun and thought-provoking.”

Inspiration for this year’s design came from a 2013 study performed by PennPraxis recommending “more park, less way” along this important thoroughfare, which runs from City Hall around Logan Circle to the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The partners retained PORT Urbanism of Chicago and Philadelphia to build on The Oval’s success at bringing people

onto the Parkway. Instead of a single ground mural across most of Eakins Oval, this year's design features a series of open-air "rooms" atop graphic areas painted by Mural Arts Philadelphia as well as a maze winding through the trees on one side and a beer garden called Eakins Tavern on the other side. At night, the two-story-high installations will be illuminated from within to create a glowing effect.



Seeking an answer to the question, "What's Your Parkway, Philly?", Fairmount Park Conservancy and Philadelphia Parks and Recreation will be collecting data on how The Oval+ is used and what Philadelphians want their Parkway to be. One data collection method will capture overhead photographs of the chalk drawings people make onto a ground map of the city; these ideas will be aggregated for analysis. Another method will use smart benches by Soofa, an MIT Media Lab spinoff, that provide free, solar-powered charging for mobile devices; the benches also track foot traffic numbers and patterns by measuring the passage of Wi-Fi enabled devices as they pass. There will also be a comment form on theovalphl.org for anyone to submit ideas. The data from all of these sources will be used to inform future plans for Eakins Oval.

"I'm encouraged to see my colleagues in city government and our partners at Fairmount Park Conservancy devising innovative ways of capturing public input into the use of public space," said **Mayor Jim Kenney**.

The Oval+ will have food, fun, and entertainment for a month between July 20-August 20, Wednesdays through Sundays from 11 am - 11 pm. Highlights at the main Eakins Oval site include:

- Eakins Tavern, a beer garden serving Meltkraft sandwiches, local wine from Blair Vineyards, craft brews by Yards, and "Adult Water Ice," a vodka-spiked slushy.
- A rotating line-up of food trucks including these that were ranked in the top 101 in the country in April: Chewy's, The Cow and the Curd, Surf and Turf Truck, Foolish Waffles, and Cupcake Carnivale.
- A brand-new drinking fountain with water bottle refill station, a wheelchair accessible nozzle, and dog bowl station; free water bottles will be provided by sponsor PNC.
- Wellness Wednesdays with CKO Kickboxing, Philly Dance Fitness, Power Yoga with Yoga Habit, CoreFitness, and Dance Boot Camp.
- Arts & Culture Thursdays featuring Hip Hop Fundamentals and dancing with DJs lil'dave, Skipmode, Mike Nyce, Rich Medina, and Matthew Law from 7pm-11pm.
- Food & Flicks Fridays with free screenings of the movies *Clueless*, *Hidden Figures*, *Up, Spaceballs*, and *Invincible* at 9pm.

- Game Day Saturday featuring live kids' music jams and the trivia game Quizzo by Johnny Goodtimes in Eakins Tavern.
- Family Fun Sundays with an afternoon-long, kid-friendly dance party called "Let's Rock Recess."
- At Aviator Park, the Free Library will host a jazz series on Thursday evenings, storytelling on Saturday mornings, and improvisational theatre (involving kids from the audience) on Sunday mornings.
- Also at Aviator Park, the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University will present "Wild Wednesdays" at 1pm, a learning session about birds, butterflies, small mammals, and other creatures in our neighborhoods.

The Oval+ is created by a partnership of Philadelphia Parks & Recreation and Fairmount Park Conservancy. Summer at The Oval+ is presented by PNC and supported by funding from ArtPlace America and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

For an interactive calendar of events, please visit <http://theovalph.org/> or see all events at-a-glance, plus high-resolution images, in the Conservancy's online press room <http://bit.ly/ConservancyPressKit>.

About the Designer

PORT Urbanism is a Philadelphia and Chicago-based design consultancy comprising architects, landscape architects, urban designers and strategic thinkers. Led by Christopher Marcinkoski, Megan Born, and Andrew Moddrell, the firm's expertise is in the analysis, visioning, design, and implementation of new formats of urban space and public realm, ranging in scale from streets, plazas, parks, and public waterfronts, to the regeneration of industrial districts, long-term framework plans, and regional development strategies. PORT is recognized for its capacity to leverage latent civic, environmental, and cultural potentials within a given context to imagine fresh, compelling, memorable, and culturally-relevant design solutions.

About The Oval+

Philadelphia Parks & Recreation, in partnership with the Fairmount Park Conservancy, revealed the City of Philadelphia's new "Park on the Parkway" in July 2013. The eight acres of public space located on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway known as Philadelphia's own "Avenue des Champs-Élysées," Eakins Oval (2451 Benjamin Franklin Parkway) became The Oval, a park with community programming, events, and activities. Designed to promote the Parkway as a neighborhood park for all Philadelphians, The Oval offers a wide array of activities and amenities, and features park spaces that all ages can easily access and enjoy. In 2017, The Oval+ was expanded down the Parkway to include two nearby parks adjacent to Logan Circle: Aviator and Shakespeare.

About the Partners

Fairmount Park Conservancy exists to champion Philadelphia's parks. We lead capital projects and historic preservation efforts, foster neighborhood park stewardship, attract and leverage investments, and develop innovative programs throughout the 10,200 acres that include Fairmount Park and more than 100 neighborhood parks around the city. Philadelphia has one of the largest urban park systems in the world, providing residents with extensive health,

environmental, social, economic and cultural benefits – including access to some of the region’s most famous attractions. For more information, please visit myphillypark.org, join us at facebook.com/fairmountparkconservancy, and follow on Instagram and Twitter @myphillypark.

Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (PPR) advances the prosperity of the city and the progress of her people through intentional and sustained stewardship of nearly 10,200 acres of public land and waterways as well as through hundreds of safe, stimulating recreation, environmental and cultural centers. PPR promotes the well-being and growth of the city’s residents by connecting them to the natural world around them, to each other and to fun, physical and social opportunities. PPR is responsible for the upkeep of historically significant Philadelphia events and specialty venues, and works collaboratively with communities and organizations in leading capital projects and the introduction of inventive programming. To learn more about Philadelphia Parks & Recreation, visit us at www.phila.gov/parksandrec, and follow @philaparkandrec on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or Tumblr.

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