



**PRESS CONTACTS:**

For Fairmount Park Conservancy: Cari Feiler Bender  
610-416-1216, [cari@reliefcomm.com](mailto:cari@reliefcomm.com)

Sharene Azimi  
646-784-5547, [sharene@missioncomms.com](mailto:sharene@missioncomms.com)

For Philadelphia Parks & Recreation: Alain Joinville  
267-886-3032, [alain.joinville@phila.gov](mailto:alain.joinville@phila.gov)

**THE OVAL+ EXPANDS INTO A PEDESTRIAN HAVEN FOR THIS YEAR’S THEME  
“MORE PARK, MORE PLAY”**

*The Oval+ is back with new large-scale murals, new public furniture including an 800-square-foot sandbox, an active lineup of family-friendly programming, and a rotating lineup of food trucks*

**June 27, 2018 – Philadelphia, PA** – For four weeks this summer, from July 20 to August 19, a portion of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway will be transformed into a grand promenade with the theme, More PARK, More PLAY as part of The Oval+.

This year’s season of [The Oval+](#) builds directly on the public feedback and data that **Fairmount Park Conservancy** and **Philadelphia Parks & Recreation** collected as part of 2017’s “What’s Your Parkway, Philly?” More than 40 percent of visitors said they wanted to see more family-related activities at The Oval+. This input, added to ongoing safety concerns about crossing multiple lanes of traffic, especially with small children, led the partners to build on the popularity of last year’s installations beyond the perimeter of Eakins Oval.

“This year, we’re making the Oval more family-friendly than ever before,” said **Mayor Jim Kenney**. “In recent years, the Oval has grown to become a meeting place for all Philadelphians during the summer to watch a movie, grab a drink or a bite to eat, and enjoy some of the wonderful, free programming that is offered. Parks & Recreation and Fairmount Park Conservancy have worked hard to incorporate community feedback to make the Oval even safer and more enjoyable for everyone.”



With More PARK, More PLAY at The Oval+, Philadelphians will have the opportunity to experience alternative uses of the Parkway that emphasize “more park” and “less way.”

“By building on the ideas raised in the 2013 *More Park, Less Way* study, and by listening last summer to how people want to use their Parkway, the creators of The Oval+ have come up with

something that feels like a true celebration of summer in Philadelphia,” said **Managing Director Michael DiBerardinis**.

For the second year in a row, Fairmount Park Conservancy and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation have retained Philadelphia-based urban design firm **PORT** to develop the plan and installations for The Oval+.

“This year’s expansion of the Oval+ will not just make the Parkway more accessible—it will also invite people to interact with the Parkway in ways they’ve never been able to before,” said **Jamie Gauthier, Executive Director of Fairmount Park Conservancy**. “We’re excited to see how residents and visitors alike use this seasonal gem.”

**Kathryn Ott Lovell, Commissioner of Philadelphia Parks & Recreation**, said, “Whether you live near Center City or are coming in for the day, we see The Oval+ as an oasis where you can catch some shade and watch the world go by.”

### **Large-Scale Mural Installations**

Each closed intersection stretch of road will be graced by a large-scale mural designed and installed by **Mural Arts Philadelphia** with the award-winning design and illustration studio **The Heads of State**. The goal for both Mural Arts and the design studio was to visually represent the idea of the Parkway being a unifying element between Fairmount Park and the city’s core. From kayaks on the Schuylkill to the soaring arches within the Wissahickon to the growing towers of Center City, each crosswalk illustrates the transition from park to city and back again.

“We are so excited to expand The Oval+ this year, with an additional 22,000 square feet of artwork—one of the largest ground paintings anywhere,” said **Jane Golden, Executive Director of Mural Arts Philadelphia**. “Over 30 artists will work with our Guild re-entry program and summer interns to create this new work of public art on the Parkway. We are honored to be a partner once again on this massive and inspiring undertaking.”

### **New Public Furniture and 800-Square-Foot Sandbox**

This year’s installation offers a collection of playful, over-scaled urban furnishings anchoring the Oval’s midway. This public furniture includes an 800-square-foot sandbox, a four-tiered seating platform with views of the Philadelphia Museum of Art and City Hall; a spectacular ribbon pavilion that creates fantastic patterns of sun and shadow throughout the day; and Mr. Mister—a 800-square-foot misting pavilion that the kid in all of us will be drawn to.



### **Active Programming & Food Trucks**

The Oval+ will also feature active programming between the hours of 11 a.m. and 11 p.m., Wednesdays through Sundays. Eakins Tavern, a beer garden serving Meltkraft sandwiches, will return along with a rotating line-up of food trucks. Dozens of free activities and events are planned around the themes “Wellness Wednesdays,” “Arts & Culture Thursdays,” “Friday Food & Flicks,” “Game Day Saturdays,” and “Sunday Family Fundays.”

For an interactive calendar of events, please visit <http://theovalphl.org/> and find high-resolution images in the Conservancy's online press room <http://bit.ly/ConservancyPressKit>.

### **Limited Road Closure Details**

Philadelphia Parks & Recreation and Fairmount Park Conservancy worked with City agencies and partners to develop a traffic protection and maintenance plan and to implement safety measures that correspond with the closure and detour schedule outlined as follows:

From July 5 to August 26 vehicle traffic will be redirected in the following ways:

- The outbound outer lanes (north side of Parkway) will be closed to vehicles between 20th street and Art Museum Drive;
- The outbound Parkway bike lane will remain open;
- N. 20th St, N. 21st St. and N. 22nd St. will remain open;
- Vine St. traffic will be directed to the Parkway inner lanes or to make a right onto 20th St.

### **About the Project**

**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 Knight Foundation. The first version of Philadelphia's summer-only "Park on the Parkway" was launched by Fairmount Park Conservancy and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation in 2013. It transformed the eight acres of Eakins Oval (mostly used as a parking lot) into a public space with community programming, events, and activities. In 2017, The Oval expanded down the Parkway to include two nearby parks adjacent to Logan Circle. The 2018 version consists of the largest footprint to date.

**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.

**Mural Arts Philadelphia** is the nation's largest public art program, dedicated to the belief that art ignites change. For over 30 years, Mural Arts has united artists and communities through a collaborative and equitable process, creating 4,000 artworks that have transformed public spaces and individual lives. Mural Arts aims to empower people, stimulate dialogue, and build bridges to understanding with projects that attract artists from Philadelphia and around the world, and with programs that focus on youth education, restorative justice, mental health and wellness, and public art and its preservation. Popular mural tours offer a firsthand glimpse into the inspiring stories behind Mural Arts' iconic and unparalleled collection, which has earned Philadelphia worldwide recognition as the "City of Murals." For more information, call (215) 685-0750 or visit [muralarts.org](http://muralarts.org). Follow along on social media: @muralarts on Twitter and Instagram, MuralArtsPhiladelphia on Facebook, and phillymuralarts on YouTube.

**The Heads of State** has been creating award-winning posters, book covers, branding, and illustration for a diverse list of clients since 2002. Founders Jason Kernevech and Dustin Summers helped usher in a new wave of American poster art with their screen-printed show posters and handbills. Today, the studio effortlessly shifts between national branding campaigns, local projects, personal experiments, and illustration. They are frequent visual contributors to the *New York Times* Opinion Page. They've won awards from Communication Arts, American Illustration, the Type Directors Club, and Print Magazine. They have lectured nationally about their work and process and have taught graphic design and illustration at Tyler School of Art, The University of the Arts, and MICA. Selected clients include Apple, The United States Postal Service, *The New Yorker*, *Wired*, Nike, New Balance, Penguin Books, Knopf, Abrams, Columbia University, and The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

**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 200 neighborhood parks around the city. For more information, please visit [myphillypark.org](http://myphillypark.org), join us at [facebook.com/fairmountparkconservancy](https://facebook.com/fairmountparkconservancy), and follow us 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](http://www.phila.gov/parksandrec), and follow @philaparkandrec on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or Tumblr.

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Image Credit: PORT

For more information, visit <http://theovalphl.org/> and find high-resolution images for media usage in the Conservancy's online press room <http://bit.ly/ConservancyPressKit>.