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THE OVAL+ 2019 SEASON DOUBLES THE FUN ON THE PARKWAY

The Oval+ returns with even more family-friendly programming along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, including a double-decker bus turned into a snack stand, a pop-up basketball court, and a shipping container converted to a maker space

JUNE 24, 2019 – Philadelphia, PA – For four weeks this summer, from July 19 to August 18, The Oval+ presented by PNC Bank will return to Eakins Oval and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, bringing more fun for all ages than ever before. A **partnership of Fairmount Park Conservancy and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation**, The Oval+ will expand with more installations and programming down the Benjamin Franklin Parkway with an initiative that began in 2018, in addition to creating the pop-up park on the Parkway in Eakins Oval.

Three new features will help to “Double the Fun on the Parkway” and encourage visitors to spend more time playing, creating, and hanging out both at Eakins Oval and along the Parkway:

- A block with the theme “MAKE,” located in front of the Barnes Foundation, featuring outdoor reading and music rooms as well as a shipping container transformed into a public space for art + design.
- A “HEAR” block, in front of the Rodin Museum, featuring an array of art installations, stadium seating, and a retrofitted double-decker bus that will function as a music venue and snack stand.
- A block for “PLAY,” located in front of Von Colln Park, featuring a pop-up basketball court, tether ball, badminton, ping-pong tables, and bleachers.



“After last year’s successful expansion down the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, the seventh year of The Oval+ is going to bring even more family-friendly and free events and activities to Philadelphians and visitors alike,” said **Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney**. “Philadelphia Parks & Recreation and Fairmount Park Conservancy work hard to make The Oval+ bigger, better, and accessible to all of Philadelphia every single summer. I can’t wait to see folks out on the Parkway enjoying everything The Oval+ has to offer for 2019.”

Ongoing Oval Programming: food trucks, beer garden, and themed activity days

Along with new installations and activities down the Parkway, fan favorites will return to Eakins Oval, including the PORT-designed Ribbon Garden, Mr. Mister spray garden, and oversized sandbox. In addition, food and beverages will be provided by The Oval+ Beer Garden and 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>.**

For the third year in a row, Fairmount Park Conservancy and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation have retained Philadelphia-based **PORT Urbanism** to develop the overall plan and installations for The Oval+. PORT collaborated with **Mural Arts Philadelphia** on the graphic elements of the plan, including a series of bright, playful sculptures by the artist NDA that encourage passersby to engage with the objects in a personalized way and a ground mural by Mural Arts Philadelphia artist Felix St. Fort titled “Vector 2” that was inspired by sculpture. The double-decker bus has been retrofitted by the architectural design firm FK.

With the theme, “Double the Fun on the Parkway,” this year’s season of The Oval+ presented by PNC Bank builds on public feedback and data that Fairmount Park Conservancy and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation collected as part of 2018’s More PARK, More PLAY, which transformed the grand promenade into a pedestrian haven for the first time in the history of pop-up park. Of the visitors surveyed, 80 percent said they wanted lanes of the Parkway closed in the future. In addition, the majority of visitors said they wanted to see kid-friendly activities along the Parkway. This input led the partners to increase the variety of programming and events beyond the perimeter of Eakins Oval.

“We are thrilled to bring back the OVAL+ for another year with more fun programming than ever before,” said **Parks & Recreation Commissioner Kathryn Ott Lovell**. “This year’s celebrations will bring countless new offerings for a wide, diverse audience. Kids, teens, and adults of all backgrounds and interests are guaranteed to find something to enjoy.”

“Each year The Oval+ offers new and innovative ways to experience the Parkway, the gateway to Fairmount Park,” said **John Gattuso, Board President of Fairmount Park Conservancy**. “We’re excited to see how residents and visitors alike enjoy The Oval+ this year, whether it’s enjoying a

drink and a meal at the beer garden, live music along the Parkway, or a splash under the spray garden.”

Along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway

MAKE: art-making for all

The “MAKE” block in front of the Barnes Foundation along the Parkway will feature outdoor reading and music rooms as well as a shipping container transformed into a maker space. Children will be able to borrow books donated from PNC’s Grow Up Great and the Free Library’s Read by 4th initiatives and musical instruments from the Free Library’s music library. Storytelling series will include Nature readings by Philadelphia Parks & Recreation and Drag Queen Story Time, plus Mad Beatz will be on hand for music and singing sessions. Partners such as DesignPhiladelphia will host design workshops from the shipping container and works from the Village of Arts & Humanities youth programming will be presented. A special tape provided by [HARU - stuck on design](#), via DesignPhiladelphia, will be used to create abstract landscapes inspired by the natural beauty of Philadelphia. The art + design container will be designed by fashion designer Desiree Negron, with support from artist Najeeb Sheikh. Sundays will feature a street market in partnership with the Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians’ [Global Craft Market](#) and other vendors selling local and global goods.

HEAR: free performances and installations

The “HEAR” block will be located in front of the Rodin Museum and will feature an array of art installations by the artist NDA and Mural Arts Philadelphia. In addition to stadium seating, a double decker bus retrofitted by the architectural design firm FK will function as a music venue and snack stand. Thursdays will feature a live performance series, featuring groups like Ballet X and KYL/D. Visitors will be able to hang out inside and on top of the double decker bus while enjoying live and radio music, Rita’s Water Ice, Philly Pretzels, and beverages by Mainstay Brewing Company and La Colombe. Radio partners such as Philly CAM will be doing double-decker bus “takeovers” with DJs and live broadcasts.

PLAY: ball games for every age

The “PLAY” block will be located in front of Von Colln Park and will feature a pop-up basketball court, tether ball, badminton, ping-pong tables, and bleachers. Visitors can participate in a ping-pong tournament hosted by SPIN every Friday; the tournament winner will receive a grand prize and participate in SPIN’s final match at LOVE Park in September. Saturdays will have play activities from [Fab Youth Philly’s Play Captains](#) and [Pop Up Play](#).

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 25 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 was The Oval+'s largest footprint to date with the expansion of the pedestrian haven down the Parkway.

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, join us at 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, and follow @philaparkandrec on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

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 nearly 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 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. Follow us on social media: @muralarts on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), [MuralArtsPhiladelphia](#) on Facebook, and [phillymuralarts](#) on YouTube.

For more background on the project's creative partners – PORT Urbanism, Mural Arts Philadelphia, NDA, Felix St. Fort, and FK – please visit the Conservancy's online press room: <http://bit.ly/ConservancyPressKit>. The press room also contains renderings of the 2019 design and high-resolution photographs from the 2018 season.

Image Credit: Rendering of The Oval+ 2019 by PORT Urbanism