

Dear Conservancy Friends and Supporters,

The loss of Black lives, both in recent weeks and throughout a long history of racial injustice, saddens and outrages us. We condemn, unequivocally, these racist acts and the social structures underlying them.

Parks should be our most democratic spaces, and at their best they are. This week thousands of people gathered in the Emerald Necklace's Franklin Park to speak out against racism and violence, to protest, to mourn the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and too many others, to exercise democracy and to demand justice.

We at the Emerald Necklace Conservancy stand in solidarity with you.

We commit to hearing and amplifying the voices of the Black and Brown communities we serve. We commit to advancing our parks as spaces for belonging and healing. We commit to listening and learning how we can be allies and advocates.

Our commitments will be guided by the following question: How can the Emerald Necklace Conservancy best connect, nourish and serve the diverse communities of the City of Boston and beyond? The public park can be a site for the change we seek. In our work we regularly convene, collaborate, discuss, fund and influence policy, programs and investment with elected representatives, government officials, community organizations, institutions, businesses, neighbors and families. We commit to reviewing our programs, partnerships, staff, board, practices and beliefs to identify how we can change, diversify and be better. We commit to using our privilege, position and platform to facilitate progress and to help create a more equitable future. I welcome your feedback and ideas, your comments and criticism.

The act of assembly is one of the most important freedoms protected by the First Amendment. Being together in park spaces can change us, change how we view others and make us better Americans. More than a decade before he started creating the Emerald Necklace parks, Frederick Law Olmsted wrote that parks were places where we must "come together... and be seen coming together." Olmsted stated this in 1866, but today we continue to suffer many of the same injustices that plagued our nation when he wrote these words. The fight continues for equitable access to the promises, privileges and benefits of our nation. Only then will these parks — these 1,100 acres — truly be common ground.

In hope and solidarity,



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