



Connecting People and Parks and Conserving the Emerald Necklace

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Emerald Necklace Conservancy Honors City of Boston Mayor with the 2020 Olmsted Award of Excellence**

*Signature biennial fundraiser will be celebrated virtually as “An Emerald Evening In”*

**15 September, 2020 Boston, MA** – In celebration of its advocacy and improvements in and for the Emerald Necklace, the [Emerald Necklace Conservancy](#) will host its signature biennial fundraiser virtually on October 14, 2020. *An Emerald Evening In*, previously *Emerald Evening*, will recognize City of Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh with the prestigious 2020 *Olmsted Award of Excellence* for the Walsh administration’s significant capital investments in the Emerald Necklace, representing historic funding for parks. The evening will be hosted by award-winning GBH TV and Radio personality Jared Bowen.

“Mayor Walsh’s tenure has seen unprecedented capital commitments to Boston’s parks – \$114 million has been spent by the Boston Parks Department on 170 construction projects and \$60 million allocated to the 1,100 acre Emerald Necklace, the largest-ever capital funding for Boston Parks. These projects include Improvements to Jamaica Pond Pathways and Perimeter, Liff Park restoration, Olmsted Park enhancements, projects funded by the Community Preservation Act and many more. The Boston Parks Department is projected to spend \$330M in the 2014-2024 decade, ensuring a huge leap forward for Boston in restoring and improving our important urban parks,” shared Karen Mauney-Brodek, President of the Emerald Necklace Conservancy.

In addition to capital improvements, Mayor Walsh has made several other transformative investments in the Emerald Necklace and beyond as follows:

- Allocated \$23M with a \$5M maintenance endowment in perpetuity for Franklin Park improvements. The Boston Parks and Recreation Department has convened a diverse cross-disciplinary team to develop a community-driven Franklin Park Action Plan for an engaging and welcoming Franklin Park.
- Invested over \$200M in the Muddy River Restoration Project, currently in Phase 2. This critical restoration will protect the City from future major storm events by increasing the River’s flood capacity by 90,000 cubic yards (equivalent to 27 Olympic size swimming pools).
- The City of Boston has been a dedicated partner to the Conservancy’s Olmsted Tree Society, working with us to collaboratively prune, water and care for the Emerald

Necklace tree canopy. Thanks to this program, the more than 9,000 trees in the Conservancy's tree inventory are now being tracked for ongoing care for the first time.

Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903) had a clear vision for urban parks. He believed that parks are democratic – and democratizing – spaces that should be accessible to all. Today, the need to work together toward a just, inclusive and equitable society, starting with common spaces, remains as true as it did in Olmsted's time. Olmsted also knew intuitively that access to nature has physical and mental health benefits for park users. The current pandemic has shined a new light on the universality of parks and their critical role in individual and collective health. Olmsted's design philosophy centered on the idea that nature and engineering can work together to create naturalistic recreation spaces that also serve as green infrastructure, making safe, functioning and sustainable cities. Olmsted's Muddy River in the Emerald Necklace is one of the country's first examples of green infrastructure; 125 years after its completion, it is still protecting our City from flooding, providing valuable habitat for local wildlife and serving as a backbone to a park system that offers respite and tranquility amid a continually growing and changing cityscape.

Mauney-Brodek continues, "In addition to these investments in our green space, we applaud Mayor Walsh's forethought with *Climate Ready Boston*, Boston's *Climate Action Plan* and as a member of *Climate Mayors* and *C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group*. We are thankful for these important programs and commitments to lead Boston into a sustainable future. Much like Olmsted's, Mayor Walsh's vision for Boston is not for our generation alone, but for the generations to come who will call our City home. We are proud to recognize Mayor Walsh's achievements and planning for the enduring importance of green space in Boston."

"The Emerald Necklace is one of Boston's most-loved outdoor spaces, and as we continue to respond to and recover from this ongoing public health crisis, green spaces and parks are vital for residents' mental and physical health," said Mayor Martin J. Walsh. "I'm grateful to the Emerald Necklace Conservancy for their partnership, and we will continue to ensure all Bostonians have access to safe, clean and beautiful parks in their neighborhoods."

At this year's virtual *An Emerald Evening In*, guests will be treated to a networking cocktail reception and an exciting program highlighting the work of the Emerald Necklace Conservancy and the vital role parks play as green infrastructure, vibrant public spaces and essential elements of healthy living. Jared Bowen, Emmy award-winning host of the weekly television series [Open Studio with Jared Bowen](#) on GBH-TV, will facilitate the evening as the emcee. The evening will also feature a raffle, trivia questions, a special musical performance and a custom meal curated by Curds & Co. and The Urban Grape.

Proceeds from *An Emerald Evening In* benefit the Conservancy's work to restore, activate and advocate for the Emerald Necklace, shining a spotlight on these 1,100 acres of green space that have been serving Boston and Brookline residents for over 100 years. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit [www.emeraldnecklace.org/events/an-emerald-evening/](http://www.emeraldnecklace.org/events/an-emerald-evening/) or contact Jamie Santuccio, Events Manager, at [jsantuccio@emeraldnecklace.org](mailto:jsantuccio@emeraldnecklace.org). For more information

about sponsorship, visit [www.emeraldnecklace.org/events/an-emerald-evening/purchase-tickets](http://www.emeraldnecklace.org/events/an-emerald-evening/purchase-tickets) or contact Veronika Trufanova, Director of Development and External Relations, at [vtrufanova@emeraldnecklace.org](mailto:vtrufanova@emeraldnecklace.org). Alternatively, please call the office at 617.522.2700.

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### **About the Olmsted Award of Excellence**

The *Olmsted Award of Excellence* is presented to an individual or organization who demonstrates an unwavering commitment and service to carrying out Frederick Law Olmsted's vision for urban parks through exemplary and enduring work on behalf of our local parks and the Emerald Necklace in particular. Prior *Olmsted Award of Excellence* recipients include long-time Conservancy volunteer and Olmsted Tree Society founder Janet Atkins (2018), Conservancy Board Chair Benjamin Taylor (2016), former Massachusetts Governor and Conservancy Life Trustee Michael Dukakis (2014) and parks advocate Sarah Freeman (2013).

### **About the Emerald Necklace Conservancy**

The Emerald Necklace Conservancy is a non-profit organization founded in 1998 to steward and champion the Emerald Necklace, Boston's largest park system. The Conservancy protects, restores, helps maintain and promotes the Emerald Necklace's six distinct parks designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, and comprises 1,100 acres of meadows, woodlands, paths and waterways. In collaboration with its public partners, the Conservancy provides maintenance of the parks and capital restoration projects, free cultural events, visitor services and environmental education. The parks serve as a respite from the city, a valuable commuting corridor and a community convener for more than one million residents and tourists each year. Learn more at [www.emeraldnecklace.org](http://www.emeraldnecklace.org).

### **For more information, please contact:**

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