

Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy names Chris Cook as next Executive Director

*Cook has extensive experience in public parks to continue the momentum of The Greenway.
He will start in May 2021.*

March 31, 2021 – Boston, MA – The [Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy](#) today announced the selection of Chris Cook as its next Executive Director.

“Chris’ deep local experience in open space, parks, and community engagement is a tremendous asset for both the Conservancy’s and The Greenway’s next chapter,” said Doug Husid, Chair of the Greenway Conservancy Board. “We are delighted to have Chris at the helm as we emerge from the pandemic and continue to strengthen our community connections, world-class horticulture, and remarkable art programs that are the hallmarks of The Greenway.”

“The Greenway represents one of the greatest transformations of urban space in American history,” said Cook. “I am honored to join the Conservancy to continue to contribute to and expand on The Greenway’s success and thrilled by the opportunity to focus deeply on such an important public park and resource.”

The Greenway is a park like no other. It has transformed downtown Boston and delivered on the promise of the Big Dig to create a vibrant green space that is filled with thought-provoking experiences and connections. The nonprofit Greenway Conservancy has sole responsibility for managing all aspects of The Greenway and utilizes that responsibility to create year-round beauty, robust and inclusive programming, and artistic experimentation. Cook is a local expert with deep community connections who can hit the ground running; under his leadership, the Conservancy is well-positioned to engage with and lift up the diverse communities across Boston and the Commonwealth as we emerge from the pandemic. The Greenway epitomizes the future of our cities and the ongoing importance of public parks to a thriving urban landscape.

Cook brings extensive experience working in parks throughout Boston, as the past Commissioner of the City’s Parks and Recreation Department and current Chief of Environment, Energy & Open Space for the City. He has spent his career working to strategically position open spaces to foster community, adapt to climate change, and promote public health and wellness through design excellence and management. In his time as Commissioner, Cook comprehensively worked on initiatives to make Boston’s open spaces more equitable and accessible. As the former Director of the previous Mayor’s Office of Arts, Tourism, & Special

Events, Cook also played a key role in advancing cultural tourism and fostering the growth of the cultural community.

"Chris has been a steward of Boston's parks throughout his career, and there's no one more dedicated to making sure our city's open spaces are inviting and inclusive for all to enjoy," said Mayor Kim Janey. "While we'll miss his leadership at City Hall, I have no doubt he'll bring the same passion, creativity, and collaborative spirit to charting the future of the iconic Rose Kennedy Greenway. We wish Chris the best and look forward to partnering with him in his new role."

A five-member Executive Director Search Committee was formed in October 2020 and began the months-long search process that included input and feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders. They utilized the search firm [Isaacson, Miller](#), which sought a talented candidate pool for the position, engaging with more than 250 sources and prospective candidates.

"The Executive Director Search Committee is delighted to welcome Chris to lead the organization as its new Executive Director. We had an accomplished pool of candidates with varied and impressive professional experiences that reflected the strong reputation of the Greenway Conservancy," said Search Committee Member Karen Johnson. "We are thankful to everyone who was involved in our selection process and are looking forward to working with Chris."

Cook will begin in May 2021, succeeding Jesse Brackenbury, who has been named President and CEO of [The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation](#) in New York. Cook is looking forward to working with MassDOT Acting Secretary Jamey Tesler, Mayor Kim Janey, the abutters who comprise the Greenway Business Improvement District (BID), the Conservancy's partners in local and state government, and the adjacent neighborhoods throughout Boston.

"We look forward to working alongside Chris in championing and enlivening this free and open public park," said Greenway BID Board Chair Stephen Faber. "In addition to providing \$1.5 million in annual funding to the Conservancy, the Greenway BID provides support in thoughtful placemaking through enhancement funds, consensus building, and civic engagement that is critical for the future of The Greenway."

Cook joins the organization at an interesting inflection point for the future of what cities can be and will continue the work of the Conservancy as a standard bearer for excellence in park management. The Greenway played an important role as an essential respite and gathering space in 2020, and will begin the 2021 season celebrating joy, resiliency, and vibrancy in Boston and the Commonwealth.



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About The Greenway and the Greenway Conservancy (www.rosekennedygreenway.org)

The Greenway is the contemporary public park in the heart of Boston. The Greenway welcomes millions of visitors annually to gather, play, unwind, and explore. The Greenway Conservancy is the non-profit responsible for the management and care of The Greenway. The majority of the public park's annual budget is generously provided by private sources.

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