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Lee Kennedy Co. breaks ground on Charlesbank on the Esplanade - anchored by the Smith Family Pavilion

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Boston, MA Lee Kennedy Company has officially broken ground on Charlesbank on the Esplanade – a transformative campus anchored by the Smith Family Pavilion. In partnership with the Esplanade Association (EA) and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), this initiative will help reconnect the city with one of its most cherished green spaces.

Shown (from left) are: Jim McIntyre and George McCarron of Lee Kennedy Co.; Dick Thuma of Tom Goemaat Project Management; Jesse Nicholson and Kara Gadecki of Michale Van Valkenburgh Associates; Jen Mergel, Ali Badrigian and Margo Newman of Esplanade Association; Louise Giannakis and Peter Kochansky of Goulston & Storrs;

Katie Moniz of FPA; Esplanade Association Projects Committee Board chair Tony Pangaro; Maryann Thompson and Zac Cardwell of Maryann Thompson Architects; and FPA's Katie Moore. Photo by Melissa Ostrow

Closed off to the public for decades, the Charlesbank area is now being reimagined as a universally accessible, inclusive, active, and sustainable space that serves a broad spectrum of Bostonians –from healthcare workers at nearby hospitals seeking a peaceful break outdoors, to city residents and families looking for an urban backyard that inspires and energizes.

Lee Kennedy Company will be utilizing mass timber construction – using prefabricated solid wood panels and beams – in combination with traditional steel. This hybrid approach supports sustainability goals, accelerates the construction schedule, and delivers a visually striking, natural aesthetic.

The reimagined space is designed with community in mind and includes a rich mix of indoor and outdoor amenities such as:

- Play areas for children;
- Reservable community rooms for gatherings and educational programs;
- Multipurpose sports courts;
- A welcoming café for casual meetups and refreshments;
- Roof deck providing unique views of the Charles River;
- Free public Wi-Fi for flexible work and play; and
- Universal restrooms open year-round to support accessibility.

Alongside EA, DCR, Maryann Thompson Architects, and Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, LKCO is excited to help bring this new public space to life. Charlesbank isn't just a project – it's a commitment to the city's future, offering a place to play, connect, and build a more resilient city.