

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS KENDRA LARA, KENZIE BOK & GABRIELLA COLETTA, ARROYO, BAKER, BREADON, FERNANDES ANDERSON, FLAHERTY, LOUIJEUNE, MEJIA, MURPHY AND FLYNN



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS ESTABLISHING A WALKING CITY TRAIL CONNECTING URBAN GREEN SPACES ACROSS BOSTON NEIGHBORHOODS

WHEREAS, Every resident of Boston lives within half a mile of a public park, thanks to targeted investment and development of green spaces through the City of Boston's 10-Minute Walk to a Park Campaign; *and*

WHEREAS, The City is still suffering from structural segregation, historical barriers that include redlining and inequitable transportation planning have kept many of Boston's residents siloed and alienated from more than 7,200 acres of public green space within the city limits; *and*

WHEREAS, Cities such as San Francisco, Worcester, Edinburgh, and Paris have improved public knowledge of municipal green spaces by establishing and promoting urban hiking trails that visit immersive green spaces as well as City neighborhoods and have augmented these urban trails with physical trail signage and digital navigation tools such as GPS maps and written directions; *and*

WHEREAS, Boston has established a precedent for codified urban trails that spotlight the city's history, including the Freedom Trail, the Black Heritage Trail, the Women's Heritage Trail, and the Harborwalk; *and*

WHEREAS, This framework of urban trail-making could also be applied to public green spaces as a means of connecting more Boston residents to the city's great ecosystem of green space as the Parks and Recreation Department has done with Hike Boston; *and*

WHEREAS, Urban hiking trails offer recreational benefits to residents and visitors alike by taking hikers through not just green spaces but also adjacent Boston neighborhoods where hikers can explore small businesses, public art, and cultural institutions; *and*

WHEREAS, Researchers have extensively documented the physiological and psychological health benefits of foot travel, especially within public green spaces, urban trails can advance the idea of the City as a legitimate venue for exploration and recreation on foot, with green spaces positioned as the leafy gateways to Boston's business districts and residential neighborhoods; *and*

WHEREAS, In 2022, residents of Boston worked together to connect 27 miles of Boston green spaces and neighborhood streets to form the Walking City Trail, establishing a formalized urban hiking route that takes trail explorers from the Neponset River to Bunker Hill Monument through 15 neighborhoods and more than 30 green spaces; *and*

WHEREAS, Installing physical signage along the Walking City Trail offers Boston residents and visitors new doorways to experience the full spectrum of Boston's green spaces. These signs will illustrate how each green space featured along the Walking City Trail is just one piece of a vast ecosystem of public greenery that residents can readily explore; **and**

WHEREAS, The City of Boston can embrace the social power of urban trail-making by creating a new position within the Parks and Recreation Department, whose foundational purpose will be cultivating and supporting the creation of more urban trails across Boston green spaces and communities, which would be led by Boston residents and aided by the city parks department; **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT**

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss establishing an urban trails program and that representatives from the Parks Department, Boston Transportation Department, Office of Civic Engagement, and Office of Tourism, Sports, and Entertainment, as well as other relevant and interested parties and members of the public, shall be invited to attend.

Filed on: January 20, 2023