

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS ENRIQUE J. PEPÉN, JOHN FITZGERALD,
BREADON, COLETTA ZAPATA, FLYNN, LOUIJEUNE, MEJIA, MURPHY,
SANTANA, WEBER AND WORRELL



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS ALTERNATIVE SIDEWALK OPTIONS THAN CONCRETE

WHEREAS, Within the past three years, nearly 4,000 reports have been made to Boston 311 about the damage that tree roots have been causing to sidewalks across the city, especially in predominantly low-income neighborhoods; *and*

WHEREAS, In 2006, former City Councilor Rob Consalvo held a hearing for the installation of rubber sidewalks to manage the tree roots. Now, in 2024, many constituents continue to report about tree roots uplifting the sidewalks' concrete slabs creating inaccessible and hazardous passages for pedestrians; *and*

WHEREAS, Aside from repairing the sidewalk; one other solution to handling tree uprooting is to cut the tree down, which would cause a major decline in our urban forests and tree canopy that provide tremendous environmental benefits; *and*

WHEREAS, Concrete is a heavy, non-porous material forcing the tree roots underneath it to expand and break through the sidewalk to access water as a means of survival. Repeatedly covering the concrete is an ineffective solution as tree roots will continue to need water; *and*

WHEREAS, Rubber is an efficient alternative solution due to its flexibility, porousness, non-skid surface, and long-lasting properties making it more cost-effective than concrete. Other natural materials with similar properties to be considered are hempcrete, mycelium, and other porous materials; *and*

WHEREAS, Rubber sidewalks have been installed in nearly one hundred cities in the United States and multiple cities throughout Canada, and have had successful results;
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee hold a hearing on the possibility of installing rubber/semi permeable sidewalks repairs in areas destroyed by tree roots. Representatives from appropriate departments of the administration will be invited, and members of the public are encouraged to attend and testify.

Filed on: July 10, 2024