

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS HENRY SANTANA, GABRIELA COLETTA ZAPATA,
BENJAMIN WEBER, BREADON, FERNANDES ANDERSON, FITZGERALD
FLYNN, PEPÉN, WORRELL, LOUIJEUNE AND MURPHY



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS BOSTON'S WALKING CITY TRAIL, AN URBAN HIKING ROUTE CONNECTING 27 MILES OF BOSTON PARKS, GARDENS, URBAN FORESTS, AND STREETS THROUGH 17 BOSTON NEIGHBORHOODS

WHEREAS, Beginning in 2022, Boston residents have worked together to form the Walking City Trail, a 27-mile urban hiking route connecting 17 Boston neighborhoods from the Neponset River Reservation to Bunker Hill Monument, journeying through some of Boston's most scenically immersive parks, gardens, urban wilds, gardens, and residential neighborhoods; *and,*

WHEREAS, The trail route is the result of thousands of hours of community participation by hundreds of people in group hikes, wayfinding explorations, and dozens of collaborative trail planning meetings, reflecting how the "Instant Urban Trail" method pioneered in cities like San Francisco and Worcester fosters grassroots opportunities for community members to create urban hiking trails without the barriers of construction or investment in physical infrastructure required; *and,*

WHEREAS, The Walking City Trail has captured the imagination and interest of Boston residents and visitors alike, yielding collaborations with many Boston-area organizations, including the Appalachian Mountain Club, the Emerald Necklace Conservancy, Family Nurturing Center Massachusetts, Northeastern University, and Boston Birding Festival; and recognition by many media publications, including an *Outside Magazine* article naming Boston as a top hiking destination in America, *The Boston Globe*, *WBUR* and *NPR*, *Chronicle*, *Boston.com*, *Men's Health*, *NewEngland.com*, *Streetsblog Massachusetts*, *Mass Live*, *Mountain Gazette*, *The Seattle Times*, and several other local and national publications; *and,*

WHEREAS, On March 2, 2023, the Boston City Council held a public hearing to discuss how the City of Boston could embrace the lessons from the development of the Walking City Trail to establish additional walking routes connecting Boston neighborhoods and recreational spaces, and the benefits that physical signage could provide for increasing the number of Boston residents and visitors exploring interconnected city green spaces and neighborhoods by foot; *and,*

WHEREAS, With encouragement during the Boston City Council hearing, particularly by Councilors Lara and Bok, volunteer organizers subsequently undertook a signage pilot by creating and installing 60 homemade laminated paper trail signs with scannable QR codes leading to the trail website with maps and directions, which were scanned by curious passersby over 1,200 times from August 2023 through March 2024; excited by this initial success, dozens of community members crowdfunded \$4,200 to replace the initial paper signs with 70 weatherproof signs, expand the Trail's website and maps, and undertake additional projects.
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to discuss Boston's Walking City Trail, the momentum and accomplishments since the March 2023 City Council hearing, and opportunities for the City of Boston to be directly involved with furthering the demonstrated success of the trail. Representatives from the Office of Civic Organizing; Community Engagement Cabinet; Parks and Recreation Department; Boston Transportation Department; Tourism, Sports, and Entertainment Department; Meet Boston; the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation; and community advocates will be invited, and members of the public are encouraged to attend and testify.

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