

WALKING CITY TRAIL

The Walking City Trail: Section 3

Jamaica Pond boathouse to Esplanade Park entrance on Mass. Ave

Hiking distance: 6.1 miles

Elevation gain: 190 feet

- Section 3 of the Walking City Trail begins at the **Jamaica Pond boathouse**, which is just a 0.2 mile walk from the Centre Street at St. John Street bus stop via the 39 or 41 bus. You can also walk to the pond boathouse from the **Green Street station**, which is serviced by the Orange Line. From the subway, it's a 0.7 mile walk to the boathouse.
- As you stand before **Jamaica Pond** and the boathouse, turn right onto a paved path and walk north along the shore of the pond. You'll see many benches along the path on your right, including a strange u-shaped bench that was installed here by a mischievous art professor.
- Turn left as the paved path splits to continue walking along Jamaica Pond. Stay on the path as you pass a set of stairs and some push-up bars on your right.
- Upon reaching a second set of stairs, turn right and climb the stairs to the grassy lawn of the **Pinebank Promontory**, where a mansion used to loom over the pond in the 19th Century.
- From the top of the stairs, turn left onto another paved path and then turn right as the path circles the lawn. Pass a historic plaque and a small brick wall on your right. Then take a left turn as the path leaves the promontory lawn behind and emerges from the trees into a big clearing.
- At a T-intersection, turn left onto a final stretch of paved pathway and follow it to the crosswalk at Perkins Street. Cross Perkins and then take a slight left onto a gravel path that leads into

the darker forest of **Olmsted Park**. Descend several sets of stairs into the shadowy woodlands.

- Make a left turn at the bottom of the stairs onto another gravel path that transitions into a boardwalk along the reedy shore of Ward's Pond.
- After passing a small cascade on your left, keep right at a fork and continue walking alongside Ward Pond on the path. Cross a small wooden footbridge over the beginnings of the Muddy River, ascend a small rise, and then turn left onto a wider gravel path.
- Continue through the woods of Olmsted Park along this gravel path, and keep right at the first junction. Upon reaching a second junction, take a left onto a narrower and rootier dirt path.
- Keep left as you pass some thin side paths branching off to the right and continue through the woods. You'll see the Muddy River rippling away on your left.
- As you pass a junction with a footbridge on the left, keep right. Then, as you reach a T-intersection, make a left onto a wider gravel path. Follow this path past an entry gate with yellow stripes to reach the shoulder of Willow Pond Road.
- Look both ways and cross Willow Pond Road. Pick up the gravel path on the opposite side as you pass by another entry gate and then make an immediate right turn onto a thinner dirt path that passes a small parking lot. Continue past the parking lot to another Jamaicaway crossing.
- Continue across the Jamaicaway and keep straight as you climb out of the Olmsted Park area on Bynner Street, passing several residential buildings and a veterinary hospital.
- Turn left onto Day Street and then make another left turn onto Arcola Street.
- At the end of Arcola Street, continue up a small set of stone stairs to enter the **Nira Rock Urban Wild**. Veer left onto a rough dirt path that climbs a grassy slope to reach a sunnier clearing atop a house-sized rock formation with views of Parker Hill (which you'll soon be summiting.)

- Look for a dirt path on the south edge of the clearing and continue down the south slope of Nira Rock. The path is initially rather rough with lots of exposed rocks and roots, as well as a few stairs. But it soon transitions into a much smoother and meandering gravel path that winds alongside some impressive Roxbury Puddingstone rock faces on your right.
- Keep left as a cobblestone path enters from the right and follow the gravel path to its terminus at two entry/exit pillars. Continue straight onto a paved path to reach Grotto Glen Road and walk east on this road, alongside Jefferson Playground (which will be on your left.)
- As you reach the end of the Jefferson Playground fence on your left, turn left, walk across a grassy lawn, and then turn right onto a dirt path that will take you through an opening in the Jefferson Playground fence.
- Follow the dirt path across the playground green, past some large chunks of stone that have been placed on the path as a vehicle deterrent. Continue onto a paved path that runs beneath the overpass of an adjacent school building to arrive at Heath Street.
- Cross Heath Street and ascend several sets of concrete stairs to begin your climb to the top of **Parker Hill**. From the top of the stairs, continue up Hayden Street and then turn right onto Fisher Avenue.
- As you approach a school bus sign with flashing lights, look to your left and you'll see the leafy entrance to another set of stairs. Turn left and climb these stairs as they pass into the woods between several houses on the steep hillside. At the top of the stairs, turn right onto a dirt path and continue through the woods of the **Parker Hilltop/McLaughlin Woodlands Urban Wild**.
- As the path emerges from the woods onto a grassy clearing atop Parker Hill, walk straight onto the paved path in front of you. Turn left onto this path and then make a right turn as the path splits and follows the perimeter of a broad athletic green.
- Keep left as you pass two sets of stairs on your right. Turn right as the path splits, and then continue straight through a four-way intersection. Pass through a Stonehenge-esque sculpture before taking a final right turn down some stairs to Parker Hill Avenue.

- Turn right onto Parker Hill Avenue and as you reach the entry gate to McLaughlin Playground on your right, take a left turn onto the Judge Street Path, a short gravel path that descends between houses to arrive at Judge Street (a very brief street.)
- Continue down Judge Street to a four-way intersection and continue straight onto Calumet Street as it descends the north side of Parker Hill.
- Upon reaching **Kevin W. Fitzgerald Park** on your left, turn left through the park entry gates. Continue on a paved path as it ascends a grassy rise speckled with puddingstone boulders.
- Turn right as the paved path splits atop the rise. Keep right as you pass two junctions and follow the path around a grassy lawn. You'll soon get a stunning view of downtown Boston!
- Continue along the path as it curves back in the direction from whence you came. Keep right at three junctions. Then, at a fourth junction, turn right and descend three sets of wooden stairs to a large parking area below.
- At the bottom of the stairs, turn right onto a paved path and exit the park into the parking area. With a Stop & Shop supermarket on your right, walk northwest across the parking lot toward a Walgreens and just as you're approaching the Walgreens entrance, turn right and descend a set of stairs to arrive at Brigham Circle.
- Turn left at the bottom of the stairs, cross Calumet Street and then Huntington Avenue, and continue along Francis Street through the Longwood medical area.
- After crossing Brookline Avenue, turn left and continue across the Jamaicaaway. After crossing the Muddy River on a bridge, turn right onto a gravel path to enter the **Riverway**. (The river should be on your right.)
- Continue along the Riverway path as it crosses Netherlands Road and becomes a paved path.
- Follow the Riverway path past the MBTA's Longwood subway station and keep left as you pass a beautiful stone footbridge on your right.

- As the Riverway path emerges from the woods and ends at Park Drive, turn right onto the sidewalk here, pass the first crosswalk on your left, and then turn left onto a second crosswalk to cross the Riverway road and Park Drive. Turn left on the other side of the crossing and continue along Park Ave. The Muddy River will still be on your right.
- Cross Park Drive again as the road splits and cuts through the greenway. Then turn right over a bridge with an impressive Puddingstone facade. Make a left onto a gravel path alongside the river to approach **The Fens** wetlands. **NOTE:** If this riverside path is temporarily closed due to river maintenance projects, there's another gravel path that runs near-parallel to this one, closer to the Fenway road. Use that path as an alternative if needed.
- Keep right and stay on the gravel path as you pass a footbridge on your left. Then turn left onto a second footbridge and cross the Muddy River again.
- Veer right as the path approaches an authentic Japanese Temple Bell and continue past the monuments of Veterans Memorial Park.
- Upon reaching a T-intersection, turn right and walk along Park Drive again.
- Keep left as the sidewalk forks. Cross Agassiz Road. As you approach Peterborough Street on your left, turn right onto a gravel path and proceed into the **Fenway Victory Gardens**.
- At the moment, a significant portion of this gardenside path (which runs along the interior edge of the gardens) is partially fenced off due to Muddy River maintenance projects. But you can still keep going along the partial path. Also, feel free to branch off and explore the garden plots.
- Continue along the gravel path along the garden's south edge until the fencing cuts off the path entirely. Once you reach this point, turn left onto a wider paved path, follow it past a few garden plots, and then turn right onto another gravel path that's marked with a sign reading "Q1-7." (Many of the garden paths have these alphabetized/numerical markings.)
- As the gravel path hits a T-intersection, turn left. Continue along this path with the gardens on your left and the marshes of the Fens on your right.

- With the Muddy River widening on your right, you'll soon see a bridge ahead. Around here, the path becomes paved and reaches a T-intersection. Turn right and arrive at Boylston Street.
- Cross Boylston Street three times via crosswalks and then turn left onto the pedestrian walkway that descends an off-ramp to the west endpoint of the **Commonwealth Avenue Mall**.
- Continue straight across Commonwealth Avenue twice, then turn right to cross Charlesgate East. Continue along Commonwealth Avenue with the wooded median of the mall on your right. There are no crosswalks to reach the median in this westernmost section of the mall, unfortunately. The only option is to dash across the road when there's a gap in the traffic.
- Cross Massachusetts Avenue and turn left to continue walking along Massachusetts Avenue.
- As Massachusetts Avenue arrives at the watery expanse of the Charles River, you'll reach a pedestrian ramp on your right which descends to **Esplanade Park**. This ramp marks the beginning of the trail's final fourth section...which means that **you just finished Section 3 of the Walking City Trail!** From here, I recommend doubling back to a Newbury Street restaurant and unnerving those posh diners with your cocky stride and musky odors.

TRANSIT, TOILETS, AND TREATS

MBTA PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE SERVICE POINTS

Bus and train service is available at many points on Section 3 but these points offer the most options.

- Jamaica Pond boathouse (Section 3 trailhead): Bus lines [39](#), [41](#). Orange Line subway at [Green Street station](#).
- Brigham Circle: Bus lines [39](#), [66](#). Green Line subway at [Brigham Circle station](#).
- The Riverway: Green Line subway at [Longwood station](#).
- The Fens: Bus lines [8](#), [19](#), [47](#), [60](#), [65](#), [CT2](#). Green Line subway at [Fenway station](#).
- Esplanade Park entrance on Mass. Ave (Section 4 trailhead): Bus lines [1](#), [57](#), Green Line subway at [Hynes Convention Center station](#).

SUGGESTED BATHROOM STOPS

Section 3 has more public restroom access than the prior two trail sections and it passes plenty of businesses that may allow you to use their bathroom without making a purchase. Also, note that any porta-potty locations listed here are liable to change.

- Porta-potty at Jamaica Pond boathouse
- Porta-potty at the parking lot on Willow Pond Road
- Porta-potty at Jefferson Playground
- Stop and Shop at Brigham Circle
- Longwood Galleria ***
- Time Out Market at the Landmark Center

*Any bathroom affixed with *** requires an off-trail detour of 0.1-0.5 miles. All of the other suggested bathrooms are located along the trail.*

WHERE TO STOP FOR PROVISIONS

Consider stocking up on snacks and other provisions at Centre Street before you hit Jamaica Pond because for the first few miles of Section 3, you'll be sticking to parks, urban wilds, and residential areas. Your first real hub for food, drink, and supplies mid-trail will be Brigham Circle, after you've climbed and descended Parker Hill. Your next re-supply point will be the Landmark Center near the Fens and the adjacent Fenway neighborhood: a bustling entertainment district. When you wrap up Section 3 at the Mass. Avenue pedestrian ramp to Esplanade Park, you can walk Mass. Ave back toward Newbury and Copley Streets, where you'll find mountains of grub and gallons of booze.