

WALKING CITY TRAIL

The Walking City Trail: Section 4

Esplanade Park entrance on Mass. Ave to Bunker Hill Monument

Hiking distance: 5.4 miles

Elevation gain: 102 feet

- Section 4 of the Walking City Trail starts at the **Esplanade Park entrance on Massachusetts Avenue**—a switchback ramp that descends from the Mass. Ave bridge to the riverside park. You can get here by taking the 1 bus to Massachusetts Avenue at Beacon Street. Your other option is the Green Line subway, which stops at **Hynes Convention Center station** (a 0.3 mile walk from the Esplanade Park entrance.)
- From Massachusetts Avenue, turn right onto the ramp to descend to Esplanade Park. As you reach the bottom, turn left past a bench onto a thin dirt path and walk along the Charles Riverbanks. (There will be a paved bike and pedestrian path on your right side.)
- As the dirt path merges with a paved pedestrian path, continue up a few stairs and walk through a terrace-like structure, passing a dock on your left and continuing onto another paved path.
- Keep left as a bike trail merges from the right. Then turn left over a bridge and continue on a paved path alongside the Charles River (on your left) and Storrow Lagoon (on your right.) You can also take the waterside dirt path on your left, to give your soles a break from the pavement. Look across the river to the north for a glimpse of Bunker Hill Monument, the end of the trail!
- Keep left as you pass a bridge on your right and stick to the left as the trail reaches two more junctions. Finally, as you approach another public dock, take a right turn and pass a gigantic bust of Arthur Fiedler, the late conductor for the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Pops.

- Continue straight over a bridge and keep straight as you hit a four-way intersection on the other side. Follow yellow median lines on the paved path to the Arthur Fiedler Footbridge over Storrow Drive. Cross the hectic expressway by taking this futuristic-looking bridge.
- Once you've crossed Storrow Drive, turn left onto Beacon Street and then turn right to cross over to the corner of Beacon and Arlington Streets, where the **Boston Public Garden** awaits.
- Turn left as you approach the corner of the garden gates and then turn right to enter the public garden through an entryway. Continue straight along a paved path, passing several side paths on your left (which you should feel free to branch off and explore, of course!)
- Upon reaching a rotary with sculpted hedges, enter the rotary walking counter-clockwise and take your third "exit" onto a paved path flanked with gumdrop-shaped hedges. Follow this path toward the garden pond and Duck Island.
- Continue straight through a four-way intersection and then turn right onto a paved path along the pond. As you approach a suspension bridge over the pond, turn right to climb two sets of stairs. At the top of the stairs, turn left and continue straight across the suspension bridge.
- Keep walking straight past several side paths to the garden entry/exit gate. Cross Charles Street and continue straight into **Boston Common** on another paved path.
- As you pass two junctions, keep right. Shortly after passing an entrance to Boston Common Garage on your left (the garage is located under the common) turn right at the next junction.
- Veer left as the path splits and becomes a brick path. Continue straight toward the Parkman Bandstand ahead of you, passing several side paths on both sides.
- When you arrive at the bandstand, walk around it on either side, and continue along the brick path as it heads away from the bandstand in the same direction from which you approached it. Dead ahead through the trees, you'll see Tremont Street and an AMC movie theater marquee.
- Continue straight through 3 four-way intersections and turn right at a T-intersection as you reach the edge of Boston Common. Then take your first left across Tremont onto Avery Street.

- Turn right onto Washington Street and then make a left turn onto Essex Street.
- Continue along Essex Street, cross Harrison Avenue, and make an immediate right onto the last section of Chauncey Street, which has been converted into a little pedestrian space with benches, tables, and a pair of guardian lion statues—marking your arrival to Chinatown. Walk through this space as it merges with Harrison Avenue and then turn left onto Beach Street.
- Pass through Chinatown Gate and then turn left to enter **Auntie Kay & Uncle Frank Chin Park**. You'll pass a small playspace made of geometric structures on your right. Walk toward a pair of red bamboo support frames ahead of you, where you'll see plenty of bamboo growing. Pass between these red structures and continue on a wide paved path, passing some small waterfalls on your right.
- As you exit the park, continue across Essex Street and then Lincoln Street.
- Continue straight along Surface Road, cross Summer Street, and then make an immediate right turn to cross Purchase Street and arrive at Dewey Square.
- Look to the left for a large mural on the side of a building and walk across the square toward this building, picking up a gravel path flanked by greenery that marks the start of the **Rose Kennedy Greenway**. Continue on this path as it reaches the building with the mural. Follow the path as it turns right—in front of the building—and then turn left onto Atlantic Avenue.
- Cross Congress Street and take a slight left onto a paved path that enters the next section of the greenway. Keep right at a junction and follow the paved path to its end at Pearl Street.
- Cross Pearl Street and make a slight right onto a gravel path as it enters the next greenway section, where the trees thicken into a leafier corridor. Turn left as the path hits a four-way intersection and continue across Seaport Boulevard onto another tree-lined greenway path.
- Continue straight across a brick patio, past a beer garden on the left, and cross High Street. Stay straight and pick up another paved path that enters a more spacious grove of trees.
- Keep right at two junctions and pass some robotic-looking sculptures that emit cooling steam!

- Stick to the right at one more junction and continue across India Street. Turn left after crossing and then make an immediate right to continue across an open lawn flanked with towering “light blade” sculptures.
- Cross Milk Street and continue straight past a splash fountain on your left. After crossing State Street, keep straight as you pick up another paved path. Once you’ve reached an information center for the Boston Harbor Islands (on the left) take a right to cross Atlantic Avenue and continue straight into **Christopher Columbus Waterfront Park**.
- Continue straight up some stairs and pass through a long archway wrapped in vines. After descending stairs at the other end of the archway, turn left onto a brick walkway. You’ll pass a restaurant patio on your right as the brick walkway ends at the sidewalk along Atlantic Avenue.
- Turn right—crossing Commercial Wharf—and walk along Atlantic Avenue. Look for a building on your right with silver letters spelling “One Lewis Wharf.” After passing this building, make a right turn onto a cobblestone drive that juts out toward Boston Harbor. As the cobblestone drive ends, continue onto a brick path past a little parklet with evergreen conifers on your right.
- As the brick path ends at a T-intersection, turn left onto a paved driveway and walk straight across a parking lot toward an iron entry gate ahead. There’s a sign on this gate for the Boston Sailing Center. Upon reaching the gate, you should be standing on a strip of pavement that’s painted bright green. Turn left onto this painted path to merge with the **Boston Harborwalk**.
- Follow the short painted path to its terminus and then turn right onto a gravel path. Continue straight onto another brick path ahead and follow it to **Pilot House Park**.
- Walk the brick path as it hugs the edge of the harbor, keeping right at a junction. As the brick path ends, turn left onto a wooden boardwalk path and head toward Boston’s North End.
- Turn right onto Commercial Street and then turn left onto Battery Street. Make another left on Hanover Street shortly thereafter.
- Turn right to cross Hanover Street and enter the **Paul Revere Mall**. Walk straight across the mall past a fountain and continue straight across Unity Street to pass through the grounds of

Old North Church, where you'll climb some stairs to arrive at Hull Street. **NOTE:** If the gate to Old North Church is closed, turn left onto Unity Street, make a right onto Tileston Street, and take another right onto Salem Street to arrive at the church entry/exit at Hull Street.

- Continue straight along Hull Street, passing Copp's Hill Burying Ground on your right. Then turn left onto Snow Hill Street. Descend deeper into the North End past a multi-level playground and dog park on your right.
- At the bottom of Snow Hill Street, turn left onto Prince Street and then make an immediate right onto Thatcher Street.
- After crossing North Washington Street (look to your right here for another view of Bunker Hill Monument), continue straight onto Valenti Way and then turn right onto Beverly Street. Just up ahead, you'll see the Leonard P. Zakim Bridge and North Station.
- Turn left onto Causeway Street and make an immediate right to cross Causeway. Turn right, continue past Portal Park, and then veer left onto Lovejoy Wharf.
- Continue straight across a small parking lot toward the State Police Marine Section building. Here, you'll find the entrance to the **Gridley Locks pedestrian path**. This path is built atop the gates of the river locks and they're liable to move when boats are passing through! While crossing the locks, look to your right and you'll see many people walking the Freedom Trail along the North Washington Street Bridge, which doubles as a busy roadway. The lack of car traffic around the locks path makes this a much more pleasant way to cross the Charles River.
- Follow the paved and fenced-in walkway on the other side of the locks to enter **Paul Revere Park**. Continue straight on a paved path toward a small stone wall and then turn left.
- Pass a playground on your left and continue straight through a four-way intersection. Follow the path as it slopes upward and keep right as another path enters from the left to arrive at the corner of North Washington Street and Chelsea Street.
- Cross both streets and pass through the entry columns of **City Square Park**.

- As you enter the park, veer left as you arrive at a fountain decorated with fish sculptures. Follow signs for the **Freedom Trail** to reach the intersection of City Square and Park Street. For the final leg of the Walking City Trail, you'll be walking the Freedom Trail. Look for a continuous strip of red bricks running down the sidewalk and across some streets. This is the trail marker.
- Cross City Square, turn left, and then turn right onto Main Street.
- Turn right onto Winthrop Street and begin the ascent up Bunker Hill.
- After passing Winthrop Square on the right, continue along Winthrop Street as it curves northwest to the hilltop and becomes Monument Square. You should now see **Bunker Hill Monument** straight ahead, looming above you like one of J.R.R. Tolkien's two towers.
- As you reach the intersection of Monument Square and Monument Avenue, turn right and pass through the Massachusetts entrance gates of Bunker Hill.
- Climb a set of stairs and continue straight up a paved path to reach the base of Bunker Hill Monument. Congratulations, young grasshopper. **You just finished the Walking City Trail!** If your legs can manage, climb the 294 stairs inside the monument for an unbeatable view of the city you just hiked through. From there, eat, imbibe, sleep, and brag about this to your friends.

TRANSIT, TOILETS, AND TREATS

MBTA PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE SERVICE POINTS

Bus and train service is available at many points on Section 4 but these points offer the most options.

- Esplanade Park entrance on Mass. Ave (Section 4 trailhead): Bus lines [1](#). Green Line subway at [Hynes Convention Center station](#).
- Boston Public Gardens and Common: Bus line [43](#). Green/Red Lines subway at [Park Street station](#), Orange/Red Lines subway at [Downtown Crossing station](#).

- South Station: Bus line [7](#). Red Line subway at [South Station](#). Commuter rail ([Fairmount](#), [Framingham/Worcester](#), [Franklin](#), [Greenbush](#), [Kingston](#), [Middleborough/Lakeville](#), [Needham](#), or [Providence/Stoughton](#) lines)
- North Station: Bus line [4](#). Green/Orange Lines subway at [North Station](#). Commuter rail at North Station ([Fitchburg](#), [Haverhill](#), [Lowell](#), [Newburyport/Rockport](#) lines)
- Bunker Hill Monument (end of the trail): Bus lines [92](#), [93](#). Orange Line subway at [Community College station](#).

SUGGESTED BATHROOM STOPS

Section 4 has more access to free public restrooms than any of the other three trail sections. There are also countless businesses with bathrooms that you can sometimes use without buying anything. Also, note that any porta-potty locations listed here are liable to change.

- Storrow Lagoon restrooms at Esplanade Park ***
- Boston Common Visitor Center ***
- South Station commuter rail terminal restrooms
- Boston Marriott Long Wharf ***
- North Station commuter rail terminal restrooms
- City Square Park Interpretive 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

With the exception of the occasional beer garden or snack cart, you won't find much food or drink in Esplanade Park or Boston Common. Thankfully that changes dramatically as you reach Chinatown and pass a smorgasbord of restaurants and markets. There are often food trucks servicing the Rose Kennedy Greenway, and you can always make a brief detour to Downtown Crossing or the Financial District for some sustenance. The North End, which you'll briefly hike through to get from the Boston Harborwalk to the Gridley locks, is a historic hotbed of Italian cooking. And once you've had your fill of views from Bunker Hill Monument, consider backtracking toward City Square Park if you fancy some Charlestown pub fare and/or ice cream to celebrate your completion of the Walking City Trail.

