

# WALKING CITY TRAIL

## The Walking City Trail: Section 4

### Esplanade Park to Bunker Hill Monument

Hiking distance: 7.3 miles

Elevation gain: 144 feet

Section 4 of the Walking City Trail starts at the **Esplanade Park entrance on Massachusetts Avenue**—a switchback ramp that descends from the Massachusetts Avenue bridge to the riverside park (this bridge is sometimes called the Harvest Bridge.) If you'd prefer to split Section 4 into two shorter hikes, **Section 4A** runs from Esplanade Park to the **Evelyn Moakley Bridge** (3.4 miles) and **Section 4B** runs from the Evelyn Moakley Bridge to **Bunker Hill Monument** (3.9 miles).

For public transit options, flip to the last page of these directions.

If you're meeting people at the Esplanade Park trailhead, consider meeting at a nearby transit stop or at the Gloucester Street Dock, which is reached in the first 0.2 mile of Section 4. The Mass. Ave ramp to the Esplanade is an active thoroughfare for cyclists and pedestrians and not an ideal meeting place.

- 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 river bank. (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 the Gloucester Street Dock on your left.
- 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.)

- As you reach another dock on the left, turn right. You'll pass a large metal sculpture of Arthur Fiedler.
- Continue straight over a bridge and head straight toward the white concrete Arthur Fiedler Footbridge over Storrow Drive. Cross the 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. Then turn right to enter the Public Garden through a gate. Walk toward the tall Ether Monument with a large figure atop red and gray columns. Then continue onward toward a large statue of George Washington on a horse.
- As you reach the George Washington statue, turn right and walk around the front of the statue. When you reach the horse's butt, turn right and cross a long bridge over the Gardens' lagoon.
- Cross Charles Street to enter **Boston Common**. As you pass a parking garage entrance, turn left and follow another paved path up through the Common's sloped lawn.
- When you reach a five-way junction, take the right turn closest to you, heading up the hill to Soldiers and Sailors Monument. Turn right and walk around the monument. When you reach a black sculpture of an old sea mine, make another right and descend the back of the hill.
- As you hit a junction, turn right and walk toward The Embrace, a large bronze sculpture that you'll see ahead, toward the right. **You have now reached Mile 1.8 and completed roughly 1/3 of Section 4.**
- From The Embrace, walk south across the Common to the corner of Tremont Street and Boylston Street. As you arrive, you'll pass between two buildings that are headhouses of the MBTA's Boylston Street Green Line Station.
- You want to get to the diagonally opposite corner of the intersection. Cross both streets and once you reach the southeast corner, continue by walking east along Boylston Street, which soon becomes Essex Street as you cross Washington Street.

- After passing a sign for Interstate 93, turn right past some bamboo plants and enter **Auntie Kay & Uncle Frank Chin Park** by passing beneath a red sculpture that marks the entrance. Continue straight through the park past waterfalls and more bamboo plants. If the park is seasonally closed, you can walk on the exterior, along John F. Fitzgerald Surface Road.
- As you exit the park, continue straight across a plaza. Turn left, cross John F. Fitzgerald Surface Road, and continue straight along Beach Street into the Leather District.
- Turn left onto South Street, cross Essex Street and walk around the right side of the large circular planter that's ahead of you. Up ahead, slightly to the right, you'll see a narrow pedestrian walkway between a building and a tunnel entrance for cars. Follow this path. You'll see a big mural on a building looming ahead.
- As the pedestrian path ends, turn right and walk between some planted trees and a bank building to reach the southwest corner of Summer Street and Atlantic Avenue. South Station, a major transit hub, is across the road from you.
- Cross both Atlantic Avenue and Summer Street to the diagonally opposite corner. Then continue along Summer Street, past the Federal Reserve building on your left, through a street park with abundant granite and sculptures, and across a bridge over Fort Point Channel into The Seaport.
- As you reach the other side of the bridge, turn left and descend two flights of wooden stairs to a waterside boardwalk that veers beneath buildings and offers a nice Downtown Boston view.
- As the boardwalk ends at Congress Street, cross Congress Street. Walk across a small plaza past the 40-foot tall Hood Milk Bottle building (on the left) and pass through a grove of trees along a stone path. From here, continue along another stretch of waterside boardwalk.
- After passing a wooden sitting area and more trees, turn right. You'll see an elevated bridge ahead. But instead of going under the bridge, make another right and open a short chain-link gate to enter **Martin's Park**. (If the gate is locked, stick to the paved path beneath the bridge.)
- Follow a paved figure-eight path through Martin's Park past slides, musical trees, and a play-sized ship. After crossing the elevated bridge you saw earlier, you have an option to take

a shortcut down some rugged stone steps to the right. Or you can stick to the paved path. Either option will deliver you to an exit gate on the other side of the bridge underpass.

- Exit Martin's Park and turn left. (If you skipped the park and passed under the bridge, keep straight along this same path.) Walk to the southwest corner of Sleeper Street and Seaport Boulevard, where the Evelyn Moakley Bridge crosses Fort Point Channel. **This is the end of Section 4A and the start of Section 4B, roughly halfway through Section 4 (3.4 miles). Restaurants and buses are available along Seaport Boulevard.**
- Cross the Evelyn Moakley Bridge back over Fort Point Channel. On the other side of the bridge, turn right and continue along Atlantic Avenue.
- As you walk alongside a brick building, look ahead for the corner entrance to the Rowes Wharf Bar. Turn right here, into a pedestrian alley. Ahead, you'll see the waters of Boston Harbor.
- Turn left at the end of the alleyway onto a waterside brick path that's a piece of the **Boston Harborwalk**, a near-contiguous trail that traces the harbor outline. You'll see blue signs for the Harborwalk posted along this path.
- Follow the brick Harborwalk path as it hugs the water and snakes around the exteriors of big buildings that jut out into the harbor.
- As you reach a highrise with four giant angled metallic panels next to it, installed by the artist David von Schlegell and called "Untitled Landscape," look for a short ramp on the other side of the panels with a blue Harborwalk sign posted by it. Follow this ramp and continue along the Harborwalk.
- Follow the Harborwalk around the exterior of the New England Aquarium. Here, the path starts to utilize boardwalk elements before taking you back inland toward Downtown Boston.
- Continue straight onto a metal ramp with rails. Then turn right onto a dock (you'll see Boston Harbor Island ferries here.) Turn right as you approach Long Wharf. You'll pass three small buildings operated by cruise companies on your right. As you pass the third building, turn left and continue straight onto a brick walkway beside the Boston Marriott Long Wharf Hotel.

- Turn left to walk along the north edge of the Marriott building. Up ahead you'll see the greenery of **Christopher Columbus Waterfront Park**. The Marriott is an excellent stop for bathrooms.
- As you stand outside the Marriott entrance (on your left) look toward Columbus Waterfront Park and at 2 o'clock, you'll see a reddish-colored paved path that enters the park. Walk toward this paved path, follow it into the park, and then turn right into the park archway.
- You'll arrive at a bare pedestal that once held a bust of Christopher Columbus. Turn left here and walk to the park exit at the intersection of Atlantic Avenue and Richmond Street.
- Cross Atlantic Avenue and continue along Richmond Street into the North End. After crossing an overpass that allows you to gaze down at cars entering the Callahan Tunnel to East Boston, cross North Street and then turn right onto North Street.
- Keep left as North Street branches off to the right and continue along Garden Court Street past North Square. As Garden Court Street ends, make a left turn onto Fleet Street and then a right onto Hanover Street. Continue walking along Hanover Street.
- After crossing Clark Street, turn left across Hanover Street and continue through the **Paul Revere Mall** past a Paul Revere statue and a fountain to reach the other end at Unity Street.
- Immediately after exiting the Paul Revere Mall, make a right turn onto Unity Street, continue straight to cross Charter Street, and walk around a chain slung across the entrance to **Charter Street Park**. Continue straight through the park.
- At the back end of Charter Street Park, continue through a narrow alleyway between several buildings. As the path emerges from the alleyway at Commercial Street, make a left turn.
- As you walk along Commercial Street, turn left and climb the zig-zag stairs to **Copp's Hill Terrace**. **You have now reached Mile 5.4 and completed roughly 2/3 of Section 4.**
- Climb a final flight of stairs to reach Charter Street, carefully cross the street and turn right to continue walking downhill along Copp's Hill Burying Ground.

- Cross Snow Hill Street and make a left to begin re-ascending Copp's Hill. (The cemetery will be on your left now.) After reaching the modest hilltop, continue down the other side along Snow Hill Street, past a multi-terraced dog park and playground on your right.
- At the bottom of Snow Hill Street, turn left onto Prince Street and then make an immediate right onto Thatcher Street. Then bear left to continue down North Margin Street.
- Cross Cooper Street and turn right to continue along Cooper Street. Cross the aptly-named Cross Street to reach a pedestrian median island. Turn right here and cross North Washington Street to reach **North Meadow on the Greenway**.
- Take the baby boardwalk across North Meadow on the Greenway. Cross Valenti Way and then continue straight along Beverly Street. You'll see the Leonard P. Zakim Bridge ahead of you.
- Turn left onto Causeway Street and then make an immediate right to cross Causeway. Turn right on the other side, continue past Portal Park, and then pop a 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!
- Follow the paved walkway on the other side of the locks to enter **Paul Revere Park**. Once you reach a small stone wall, turn left and begin walking around the park's circular green lawn.
- After passing some stone pillars and a terrace, turn left and then make another left onto a paved path that will take you away from the park. As you approach Warren Avenue, turn right and cross beneath North Washington Street via an underpass with ample sidewalk.
- As you pass a parking lot on your right, make a right turn onto a short crosswalk across the lot. Turn left onto a paved path on the other side and enter another small piece of the Boston Harborwalk. (You'll see a blue Harborwalk sign ahead, past some small evergreen trees.)
- Follow the Harborwalk around the watery perimeter of Constitution Plaza and enjoy a wistful view of Downtown Boston. You'll also see the **Bunker Hill Monument** tower looming ahead.

- As the Harborwalk approaches a richly-hued red brick building, turn left onto a paved path. Pass a small parking lot on your right and make a right turn to reach Constitution Road.
- Turn right and walk along Constitution Road toward Boston Naval Shipyard Gate 1. (The strip of red bricks running down the sidewalk is Boston's Freedom Trail!) Stick to following the road as it curves left, away from the naval yard, and arrives at Chelsea Street.
- Turn left to cross Constitution Road and then make a right to cross Chelsea Street. Walk straight through a pedestrian underpass beneath Route 1 and on the other side, make a slight left onto Chestnut Street to begin climbing Bunker Hill.
- Turn left onto Adams Street and continue past (or through) **Winthrop Square** to the corner of Adams Street and Winthrop Street.
- Cross Winthrop Street and turn right to continue along Winthrop to the summit of Bunker Hill.
- As you reach the intersection of Monument Square and Monument Avenue, turn right to cross Monument Square, 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 4/4A trailhead): [1](#) bus. Green Line subway at [Hynes Convention Center station](#).
- Boston Public Gardens and Common: [43](#) bus. Green/Red Lines subway at [Park Street station](#), Orange/Red Lines subway at [Downtown Crossing station](#).
- South Station: [7](#) bus. Red Line subway at [South Station](#). Commuter rail ([Fairmount](#), [Framingham/Worcester](#), [Franklin](#), [Greenbush](#), [Kingston](#), [Middleborough/Lakeville](#), [Needham](#), or [Providence/Stoughton](#) lines)
- Evelyn Moakley Bridge (Section 4B trailhead): [4](#) bus, Silver Line bus at [Courthouse Station](#)
- North Station: [4](#) bus Green/Orange Lines subway at [North Station](#). Commuter rail at North Station ([Fitchburg](#), [Haverhill](#), [Lowell](#), [Newburyport/Rockport](#) lines)
- Bunker Hill Monument (end of the Walking City Trail): [92](#), [93](#) buses. 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.*

- Storrow Lagoon restrooms at Esplanade Park \*\*\*
- Boston Common Frog Pond restrooms \*\*\*
- 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. Nearby South Station offers fast food and across the street in Dewey Square, there are often food trucks during business hours. You can also make a brief detour to Downtown Crossing or the Financial District for some sustenance. After passing through Martin's Park, you'll find more restaurants and shops on Seaport Boulevard. From there, your next best bet is The North End, which you'll meander through to get from the Boston Harborwalk to the Gridley locks. It's a historic hotbed of Italian cooking. And once you've had your fill of views from Bunker Hill Monument, consider following Boston's Freedom Trail toward Water Street if you fancy some Charlestown pub fare and/or ice cream to celebrate your completion of the WCT.