



The Walking City Trail: Section 3 (northbound)

Jamaica Pond boathouse to Esplanade Park

Hiking distance: 6.1 miles

Elevation gain: 210 feet

Section 3 of the Walking City Trail begins at the **Jamaica Pond boat house**. If you'd prefer to split Section 3 into two shorter hikes, **Section 3A** runs from Jamaica Pond boat house to **Brigham Circle** (2 miles) and **Section 3B** runs from Brigham Circle to **Esplanade Park** (3.7 miles).

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

- As you stand in front of **Jamaica Pond** and the boat house, 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.
- Turn left as the paved path splits to continue walking along the shore of Jamaica Pond.
- Not long after passing a set of stairs on your right, you'll reach a second staircase. Turn right and climb the stairs to the lawn of **Pinebank Promontory**, where a mansion once loomed.
- Turn left and walk around the lawn. You'll pass a historic plaque and a small brick wall on your right. Then take a left turn and walk through some trees into the **Sugar Bowl**, a vast clearing.
- At a junction, turn left and continue to the crosswalk at Perkins Street.

- Cross Perkins Street and then take a slight left onto a gravel path that leads into the darker forest of **Olmsted Park**. Descend several sets of stone stairs into the shadowy woodlands.
- Make a left at the bottom of the stairs and continue onto a boardwalk along the reedy shore of Ward's Pond. Veer right as you pass a cascade (on your left) to keep walking around the pond.
- 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 the Muddy River. Keep right at the first junction. Upon reaching a second junction, take a left onto a narrower and rootier dirt path.
- As you pass a fork with a footbridge (on the left), keep to the right. You'll soon reach another junction. Turn left here and continue to a gate on Willow Pond Road.
- Carefully cross Willow Pond Road and then turn right onto a thinner dirt path on the other side. Walk along the road past a small parking area to reach a crosswalk over the Jamaicaway.
- 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**. Climb a grassy slope to reach a sunny clearing atop a house-sized rock, with views of Mission Hill, which you'll soon be summiting.
- As you stand in the clearing, look south for an opening in the trees. Here you'll find a rugged and rocky path down the wooded side of Nira Rock. Follow this path as it transitions to wooden stairs and level gravel, wrapping around the impressive cliff faces of Nira Rock.
- Keep left as a cobblestone path enters from the right. Continue through two entry/exit pillars and past a playground to Grotto Glen Road. Walk east on this road, past Jefferson Playground (which will be on your left.) While it's called a playground, it looks more like an athletic field.

- As you reach the end of the Jefferson Playground fence, turn left, walk across a small lawn, and then turn left onto a narrow dirt path that will take you through an opening in the fence.
- Follow the dirt path across the field to arrive at Heath Street. Cross Heath Street and climb several sets of concrete stairs to begin your ascent of **Mission 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. Across the road, you'll see the leafy entrance to another staircase. Turn left and climb these forested stairs as they pass between several houses. At the top of the stairs, turn right onto and continue through the woods of the **Parker Hilltop/McLaughlin Woodlands Urban Wild**. (Mission Hill was formerly known as "Parker Hill" and the two monikers are still interchanged.)
- As the path emerges from the woods onto a grassy clearing atop Mission Hill, turn right and walk toward the nearby vista of Boston Harbor. You'll reach a lookout area with benches.
- Turn left and walk straight through Ben's Circular Tower, a small Stonehenge-esque sculpture. Then descend a small set of stairs and make a right turn onto Donna Summer Avenue.
- As you reach an 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 a four-way intersection. From here, continue straight onto Calumet Street and begin descending the hill.
- Turn left through the entry gates and pillars of **Kevin W. Fitzgerald Park** and climb a small rise along a paved path flanked with Roxbury Puddingstone boulders. As the path levels out, turn right and walk around the edge of the park lawn for an excellent view of Downtown Boston.
- 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 walking around the park lawn and then turn right to descend three sets of wooden stairs to a parking area below. Make another right at the bottom of the stairs. Pass through the park gate the large parking area and walk alongside a Stop & Shop supermarket on your right.

- As you approach a Walgreens entrance, turn right and descend another set of stairs to arrive at Brigham Circle. **This is the end of Section 3A and the start of Section 3B, roughly halfway through Section 3 (2.9 miles). Restaurants, buses, and trains are available here.**
- Turn left at the bottom of the stairs, cross Calumet Street and Huntington Avenue, and walk along Francis Street through the Longwood medical area.
- Cross Brookline Avenue and turn left to continue walking along Brookline Avenue. Once you cross the Muddy River on a bridge, turn right onto a paved path to enter the **Riverway**. (The river should be on your right.)
- Continue along the Riverway path as it crosses Netherlands Road.
- Turn right to cross the Muddy River over a beautiful stone footbridge. On the other side, make a left turn to continue walking along the river, which will now be on your left. **NOTE:** If this part of the Riverway is closed due to river maintenance work, skip the bridge crossing and continue walking with the Muddy River on your right. The paths on each side lead to the same place.
- As the Riverway path emerges from the woods at a busy intersection, cross the Riverway road and Park Drive. Then turn left and continue along Park Ave, with the river on your right side.
- After another Park Drive crossing, turn right over a bridge with an impressive Puddingstone facade. **You have now reached Mile 4.6 and completed just over 2/3 of Section 3.**
- Cross the bridge and make an immediate left onto a path alongside the river. **NOTE:** If this riverside path is temporarily closed due to river maintenance projects, you can follow another nearby path that practically runs parallel to it. (This path is a bit closer to the road.)
- Stay on the path as you pass a footbridge on your left. When you reach a second bridge, turn left 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 junction, turn right and walk along Park Drive again.

- Keep left as the sidewalk forks. Cross Agassiz Road and shortly after, turn right onto a gravel path and proceed into the **Fenway Victory Gardens**.
- Walk along the garden's south edge on a gravel path, but feel free to branch off and explore the maze of garden paths. Eventually you'll start to see **The Fens** wetlands on your right.
- As the Muddy River comes into view again, look for a bridge up ahead. Make a right at a junction to ascend a small rise to this bridge, across which Boylston Street runs.
- Cross Boylston Street then turn left onto a roadside pedestrian walkway that descends an off-ramp to the west end of the **Commonwealth Avenue Mall**.
- At the bottom of the off-ramp, turn right to cross Charlesgate East. Then make a left and walk straight across Commonwealth Avenue. Pass the Leif Erickson statue, cross Comm. Ave a second time, and veer right. Walk along Comm. Ave until you reach Massachusetts Avenue.
- 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, we recommend doubling back to a Newbury Street restaurant and captivating the streetside diners with your confident 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 3/3A trailhead): [39](#), [41](#) buses. Orange Line subway at [Green Street station](#).
- Brigham Circle (Section 3B trailhead): [39](#), [66](#) buses. Green Line subway at [Brigham Circle station](#).
- The Fens: [8](#), [19](#), [47](#), [60](#), [65](#), [CT2](#) buses. Green Line subway at [Fenway station](#).
- Esplanade Park entrance on Mass. Ave (Section 4 trailhead): [1](#), [57](#) buses. Green Line subway at [Hynes Convention Center station](#).

SUGGESTED BATHROOM STOPS

Section 3 has public restroom access at multiple points and it passes plenty of businesses that may allow you to use their bathroom without making a purchase. You're also likely to find porta-potties.

- Jamaica Pond boat house
- Stop and Shop at Brigham Circle, Mission/Parker Hill branch of the Boston Public Library, and nearby businesses ***
- 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 fine elixirs.