



## City of Northampton

MASSACHUSETTS

*In the City Council,  
June 15, 2023*

Upon the Recommendation of Councilors Marianne LaBarge and Rachel  
Maiore

**R-23.336**

### **A RESOLUTION In Support of An Act Expanding Access to Trails for People of all Abilities**

WHEREAS, Universally accessible recreation trails provide safer, easier access to nature for seniors, people with various disabling and mobility limiting conditions, and small children who may need strollers or who are just learning to walk, and

WHEREAS, nearly half of the population of Massachusetts are included in the categories above that would benefit from greater access to universally accessible trails<sup>1</sup>, and

WHEREAS creating accessible recreational areas is a stated goal in Northampton's Climate and Regeneration Plan<sup>1</sup>, and

WHEREAS, being outdoors in green spaces can support a physically active lifestyle, which is positively linked to physical health benefits such as reduced risk of chronic illness and increase in life expectancy, and

WHEREAS, access to green spaces can improve mental health, including social connection, ability to focus, and reduced stress,

WHEREAS, people living with disabling conditions and seniors are more likely to experience issues with physical and mental health than the general population, and

WHEREAS, people who need universally accessible trails have extraordinarily limited opportunities to access natural green spaces, as only approximately 7.5 of the

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<sup>1</sup> [Northampton Climate and Regeneration Plan, p.30](#)

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation's 4,000 miles of unpaved hiking trails are universally accessible<sup>2</sup>, and

WHEREAS, S.446 and H.769 "An Act Expanding Access To Trails For People Of All Abilities"<sup>3</sup> will help to make a more equitable trail system, address some of the environmental and social justice issues in outdoor recreation, improve public health, and increase access for people with disabling conditions to public land,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that our parks and conservation lands are beautiful natural resources that everyone in Massachusetts should be able to enjoy, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Northampton recognizes the importance of ensuring equitable access to our parks and trail systems, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Administrative Assistant of the City Council shall send a copy of this Resolution to Senator Joanne Comerford, Representative Michelle Ciccolo, Senator Rebecca Rausch, Senator James B. Eldridge, Senator Edward J. Kennedy, Senator Michael O. Moore, Senator Michael F. Rush, Senator Bruce E. Tarr, Representative Daniel Cahill, Representative Dylan Fernandes, Representative Kristin E. Kassner, Representative Jennifer Balinsky Armini, Representative David Allen Robertson, Representative Carmine Lawrence Gentile, Representative Jessica Ann Giannino, Representative Daniel R. Carey, Representative Norman J. Orrall, and Representative Nicholas A. Boldyga.

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<sup>2</sup> This includes 17% of the population as seniors 65+, between 11-25% of the population under age 65 living with a disabling condition, and 5% of the population as children under 5. Data compiled from The Census, Center for Disease Control, and the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities.

<sup>3</sup> An Act Expanding Access To Trails For People Of All Abilities", <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/193/S446>