

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 15-0267R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Middleton, Scott, Costello, Henry, Stokes, Holton, Kraft,
Spector, Welch, Clarke, Reisinger, Mosby, President Young, Councilmember Curran
Introduced and adopted: September 21, 2015

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING

“Step it Up” to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities

FOR the purpose of supporting the U.S. Surgeon General’s call to “Step it Up” and promote walking and walkable communities, and asking representatives from the City agencies most capable of promoting walking and walkability in Baltimore to report on the tangible steps that the City is taking to do so.

Recitals

Regular physical activity has been consistently shown to alleviate many chronic conditions, lengthen lives, and improve mental health. Yet, despite these many benefits, the Surgeon General has found that “only one-half of all U.S. adults and about one-quarter of high school students meet the guideline for aerobic physical activity”.

In an effort to increase the number of Americans benefitting from regular physical activity, Surgeon General Vivek H. Murthy recently issued a call to action to “Step it Up” and promote walking and walkable communities. In this call to action, he states “walking is an excellent way for most people to increase their physical activity. It is a powerful public health strategy for the following reasons:

- Walking is an easy way to start and maintain a physically active lifestyle.
- Walking is the most common form of physical activity for people across the country.
- Walking can serve many purposes. It can be a way to exercise, have fun, or get to school, work, or other nearby destinations.
- Making walking easier can help communities by improving safety, social cohesion, and local economies and reducing air pollution.”

In order to get more Americans walking, the Surgeon General calls for both increased outreach and education to encourage individuals to make walking a regular part of their lives and for all levels of government to take tangible steps to increase the walkability of our communities.

According to the National League of Cities, “studies show that when cities implement design solutions to promote walkable communities and active transportation, such as sidewalks, curb cuts and more green spaces, they have greater potential to reap significant public health, economic, environmental and social benefits. These benefits can include improved health of residents and an increase in property values, tourism, and economic investment. Walking also

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter deleted by amendment.

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1 provides opportunities for people to build stronger relationships with neighbors and supports
2 stronger overall community bonds among residents.”

3 It is important that Baltimore join in this national effort to improve our citizens’ health and
4 well-being by encouraging and enabling more people to walk on a regular basis. Not only can
5 the impact on individuals’ lives be profound, these efforts can also breathe new life into
6 neighborhoods by making them more attractive and welcoming for both current residents and
7 potential newcomers.

8 Again, according to the National League of Cities, “the Urban Land Institute found that 50
9 percent of people consider walkability a high or top priority when choosing a place to live. In a
10 survey done by the National Association of Realtors and the Transportation Research Center at
11 Portland State University, 79 percent of respondents indicated that being within walking distance
12 of amenities, such as parks and shops, was an important factor in the decision of where to buy a
13 home, and 85 percent indicated sidewalks were also important. Furthermore, this survey found
14 that although all generations like to walk, Millennials (people ages 18-34) prefer walking over
15 driving by 12 percent, the largest margin than any other generation.”

16 Baltimore has taken steps to improve our City’s walkability in line with the Surgeon
17 General’s call to action, but much more can and should be done. Encouraging walking and the
18 development of walkable communities can greatly improve the health of both Baltimoreans and
19 Baltimore as a whole. It is an effort that we must all join Surgeon General Murthy in pursuing.

20 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
21 Council supports the U.S. Surgeon General’s call to “Step it Up” and promote walking and
22 walkable communities and asks that representatives from the City agencies most capable of
23 promoting walking and walkability in Baltimore report on the tangible steps that the City is
24 taking to do so.

25 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
26 Director of Transportation, the Director of Planning, the Director of Recreation and Parks, the
27 Health Commissioner, the Chair of the Commission on Sustainability, the CEO of Baltimore
28 City Public Schools, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.