



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



**Prairie
Duneland
Trail**
Indiana



Prairie Duneland Trail

Indiana

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Prairies and dunes are just two of the natural features you'll experience on the Prairie Duneland Trail, located just a few miles south of the Lake Michigan shoreline and the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. You will have views of ponds and wood lots but will also see some pockets of suburban sprawl, which become more frequent and dense as you travel westward from Chesterton to Hobart.

The flat, 10.3-mile rail-trail follows a straight branch of the former Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway that served as a bypass around the busy Chicago rail yards between Gary, Indiana, and Waukegan, Illinois, for more than 100 years. The first section of the rail-trail opened in 1996. Chesterton still gets its share of railroad traffic, however, and you can watch trains pass from the vintage 1914 New

York Central Railroad passenger depot and freight terminal a mile off-trail at 220 Broadway.

Beginning at the Chesterton trailhead, you'll pass a trailside skate park and cross South Jackson Boulevard. A wide sidewalk on the right serves as a junction with the [Dunes Kankakee Trail](#), which runs on- and off-street through the town of Porter to Indiana Dunes State Park.

Continuing southwest on the Prairie Duneland Trail, you'll leave behind the sights and sounds of town life in less than 2 miles. It's lightly forested here, interspersed with farm fields. You'll also encounter remnants of tallgrass prairie that at one time dominated the landscape. Elsewhere, a dense forest canopy creates a lush passageway.

A trail junction at 3.5 miles marks the [Iron Horse Heritage Trail](#) that leads into the town of Portage, a former farming community that underwent explosive growth in the second half of the 20th century. The 5-mile trail passes just south of Imagination Glen, a 276-acre park that's popular with mountain bikers for its 10 miles of dirt trails.

After you cross the CSX railroad tracks at 4.4 miles and pass beneath I-80, you'll begin to see backyards and residential subdivisions. Numerous side paths connect these neighborhoods, often screened from the path by trees, to the trail.

The route goes beneath two busy streets, Willowcreek Road and West 37th Avenue/US 6, before you arrive at a trailhead on County Line Road. The trail's end is just a little farther at North Hobart Road. From here, you can travel a short distance on-road to reach the beginning of the [Oak Savannah Trail](#), which heads west from Hobart to Hammond. If you travel both trails, you'll understand why these two are considered the backbone of the Northwest Indiana regional trail network.



Prairie Duneland Trail

Indiana

States: Indiana

Counties: Lake, Porter

Length: 11.2 miles

Trail end points: 198 South Jackson Blvd,
Chesterton to 4 North Hobart Rd, Hobart

Trail surfaces: Asphalt

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike, Inline

Skating, Wheelchair Accessible, Walking, Cross

Country Skiing

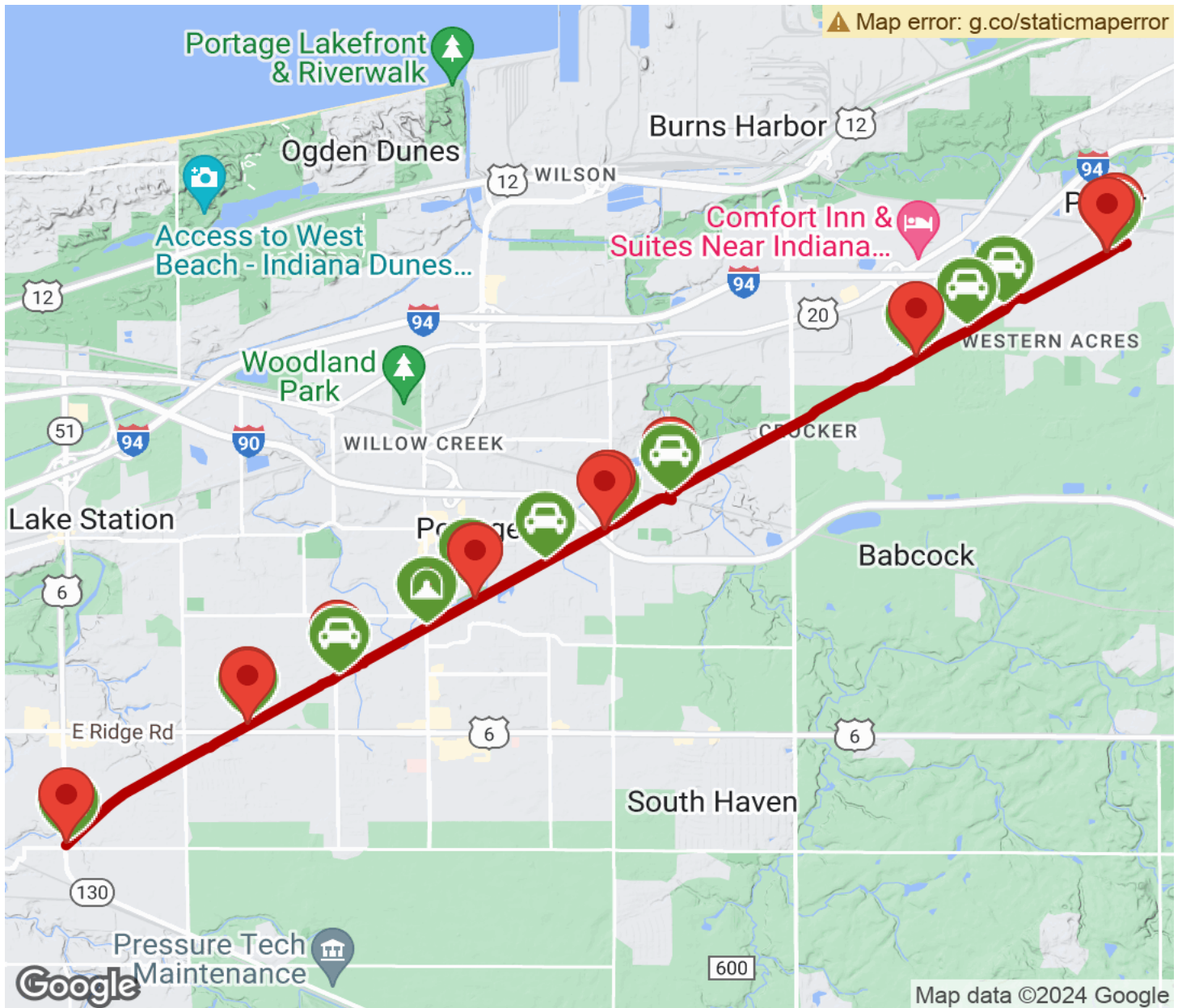
Parking & Trail Access

Parking is available at a number of locations along the trail.
Visit the [TrailLink map](#) for all options and detailed directions.



Prairie Duneland Trail

Indiana



Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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