



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



**Tommy  
Thompson  
Trail**  
*Washington*



## Tommy Thompson Trail

Washington

*Though relatively short at 3.3 miles, the Tommy Thompson Trail stands tall in the ferry port of Anacortes for its notable 2,000-foot-*



Though relatively short at 3.3 miles, the Tommy Thompson Trail stands tall in the ferry port of Anacortes for its notable 2,000-foot-long paved trestle spanning picturesque Fidalgo Bay.

Enjoyed locally for family outings, sightseeing, and bird-watching, the rail-trail is also significant for its proximity to a Washington State Ferry Terminal (4 miles west of the trail). Those ferries to and from the San Juan Islands or Victoria, British Columbia, often carry bicyclists whose travels include the trail on the first leg of their journeys.

The rail-trail follows the inactive corridor of the short-lived Seattle and Northern Company line, which was built in 1890 when Anacortes boomed as a promised hub of a transcontinental railway. When investors ran out of

money, the boom turned to bust. What's more, the railroad realized that a cross-country route from Anacortes wasn't feasible. The Great Northern Railway bought the short line, built the depot in 1911, and eventually merged into the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, which discontinued service along the Anacortes branch.

The route is named for Tommy Thompson, a passionate local railroad hobbyist who hand-built the Anacortes railway. He operated the popular six-block narrow-gage railway for some 25 years until his death in 1999.

The tourist train and steam locomotive puffed within a couple blocks of today's northern endpoint for the Tommy Thompson Trail at 11th Street and Q Avenue. That's also just a few blocks from The Depot Arts & Community Center (611 R Avenue) and a block from the Port of Anacortes and waterfront. Heading south, the flat trail continues past boatyards, marinas, and other maritime businesses as it passes trailheads and parking at 22nd, 30th, and 34th Streets. A bus stop, water, and restrooms are available at 22nd Street and R Avenue.

Continuing south, the path rolls along the shoreline below some bluffs and then crosses Fidalgo Bay on the long trestle that connects Weaverling Spit and March's Point. Along the way, visitors are treated to murals, trailside sculptures, and more than a half-dozen turnouts with interpretive signs that describe the local history, economy, flora, and fauna. In that final mile, the forest of firs and madrones gives way to mudflats at low tide. The shallow waters expose eelgrass beds and habitat for salmon, other fish, and marine animals. Snowcapped Mount Baker can be seen in the distance on clear days, while great blue herons and bald eagles fly overhead.

When a mysterious fire damaged the trestle in 2009, local boosters quickly raised the money to repair it. Another local fundraising effort is under way to complete the [Guemes](#)



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**States:** Washington

**Counties:** Skagit

Length: 3.3miles

**Trail end points:** 11th St & Q Ave to March's Point Rd (Anacortes)

**Trail surfaces:** Asphalt

**Trail category:** Rail-Trail

**Trail activities:** Bike, Inline Skating, Wheelchair Accessible, Walking

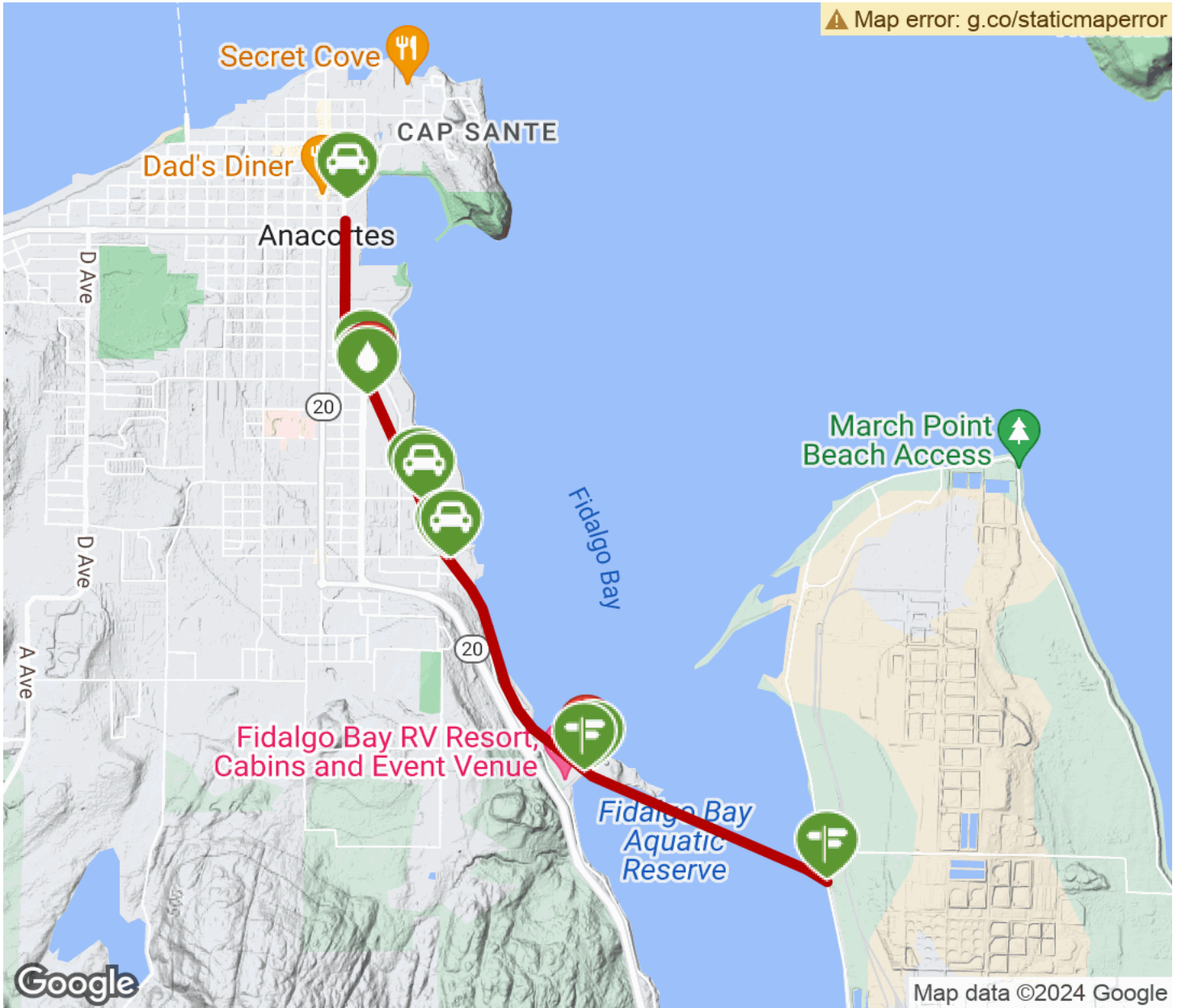
## Parking & Trail Access

Parking is available in lots at the northern end, at the 2nd Street and R Avenue trailhead, and next to the trail on 30th Street. Street parking for the northern endpoint is available in the vicinity of 11th Street. There is no parking at the March's Point Road endpoint. Visit the [TrailLink map](#) for all options and detailed directions.



# Tommy Thompson Trail

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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



**TrailLink**  
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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