



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



Burke-Gilman Trail

Washington



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Spanning nearly 19 miles between Seattle and Bothell, the Burke-Gilman Trail is as much a thoroughfare for commuting to work and the University of Washington as it is a staple for social recreation and fitness. Built in the 1970s, the trail was among the first rail-trails in the country and helped inspire dozens of similar projects around the nation.

Golden Gardens Park and the [Sammamish River Trail](#) mark the boundaries of the Burke-Gilman Trail, once a line of the Seattle, Lake Shore and Eastern Railway (SLS&E). Created in 1885 by two prominent Seattle residents, Thomas Burke and Daniel Gilman, the SLS&E was purchased by the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1901. Heavy traffic by the logging industry sustained the line through 1963, and the corridor became inactive in 1971.

The heavy traffic continues as trail users make their way from Puget Sound to Lake Union and Lake Washington.

You can start your journey at Puget Sound at the Golden Gardens Park entrance, on the east side of Seaview Avenue NW. Reach the NW 60th Street Viewpoint by traversing the waterfront and marina for just over a mile. Signs direct you to cross Seaview Avenue and head 0.7 mile to the Ballard Locks. The sidewalk along Seaview Avenue, now NW 54th Street, connects to NW Market Street in downtown Ballard.

To reach the 1-mile on-road portion of the missing trail link, turn right at Shilshole Avenue NW. Turn left onto NW Vernon Place, and then turn right onto Ballard Avenue NW. A right onto 17th Avenue NW returns you to Shilshole Avenue, where the road is painted for cyclists and becomes NW 45th Street after crossing under the Ballard Bridge. Return to the sidewalk and trail at 11th Avenue NW and 45th.

Leaving Puget Sound, you will find yourself in a park beside the Fremont Canal that connects the sound to Lake Union. Past the steps waits Fremont, a great area for food, gelato, a glimpse of the famous Fremont Rocket, a Vladimir Lenin statue, and an infamous troll statue. This brings you to Lake Union, 5 miles from Golden Gardens Park. The trail turns right onto N. Northlake Way at N. 34th Street, guiding you to the historic waterfront of a former coal gasification plant, [Gas Works Park](#), where kite flying is popular. Next stop: University of Washington, but not before the orange Wall of Death (an art installation representing a motorcycle velodrome).

Circling around the U District (so named for the University of Washington) and retail area at mile 7 will put you on a secluded path of maples, dogwoods, and occasional firs. You'll then pass above the waterfront Magnuson Park at NE 70th Street, a former naval station next to the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration. At mile 13, a bridge crosses Sand Point Way NE. To your right lies Seattle's largest freshwater



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States: Washington

Counties: King

Length: 18.8miles

Trail end points: Golden Gardens Park at Seaview Pl NW (Seattle) to 102nd Ave NE near Woodinville Dr/SR 522 (Bothell)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike,Inline

Skating, Wheelchair Accessible, Walking

Parking & Trail Access

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



Burke-Gilman Trail

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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

TrailLink.com