



2025

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides



Lost Bridge Trail

Illinois



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The Lost Bridge Trail, jointly managed by the Springfield Park District and the village of Rochester, is one of the area's earliest and most popular multiuse trails—even for locals taking a weekday break on their lunch hour. Well-maintained, the trail's starting point is located behind the Illinois Department of Transportation building in Springfield. This portion of the trail is not actually on a former rail corridor but wraps partway around a beautifully landscaped and tree-lined lake near the complex.

At the lake's northern end, the trail joins the former Baltimore and Ohio Railroad corridor, an obvious change, as the trail becomes straight and flat, traveling through a dense tree canopy. Almost immediately, you reach a clearing and pass under Interstate 55 then plunge back

into the forest. The heavy vegetation along the route makes it easy to forget how closely the trail parallels busy State Route 29.

The original railroad corridor had two historic railroad bridges, one over Sugar Creek and the other over the South Fork of the Sangamon. When the abandonment went through and the contract was given to salvage the steel, "there was a misunderstanding as to what that exactly meant". So, before anyone noticed, along with all the tracks, the Sugar Creek bridge was also removed for recycling. The park district had to pay for a new bridge, but at least they got a name for the trail out of the mishap.

Just beyond a mile from the start, the trail crosses the "new" Sugar Creek Bridge, which offers great views of Sugar Creek and the lush vegetation hugging its banks. At mile 2, the trail passes beneath Hilltop Road, and at mile 3 it reaches the South Fork Bridge over the South Fork of the Sangamon River. This old trestle-style span is another important remnant of the trail's railroading history; its excellent condition today is evidence of the remarkable engineering and artistry it took to build the structure.

After the bridge, look closely for a paved trail connector on the south side that gives you the option of making a quick loop through Rochester Community Park. For the final 2 miles after South Fork Bridge to the trail's end in Rochester, you will pass through a short stand of trees before the landscape opens into some beautifully manicured grass fields behind one of Rochester's school facilities.

The trail may one day extend southeast from its terminus at Walnut Street to the towns of Taylorville and Pana. Until then, you must be content to walk, ride, roll, run, skate or ski back to Springfield on this suburban rail-trail gem.



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States: Illinois

Counties: Sangamon

Length: 5.6miles

Trail end points: IL Dept of Transportation,
South Dirksen Parkway (Springfield) to Walnut
St. at SR 29 (Rochester)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike,Inline

Skating, Wheelchair Accessible, Walking, Cross
Country Skiing

Parking & Trail Access

To access the Springfield trailhead on Rielly Drive, take Interstate 55 to Route 29 (S. Grand Avenue east) and head west for a half mile. Turn left on S. Dirksen Parkway and go about 1 mile. Turn left on Rielly Drive and look for the trailhead at the far end of the parking lot.

To reach the Rochester trailhead, take Interstate 55 to Route 29 (S. Grand Avenue east) and head east for 4 miles. Turn right on Walnut Street and look for the trailhead directly on the right.

Parking is also available along Wild Rose Lane on the trail spur that travels through Rochester Community Park on the eastern end of the trail.



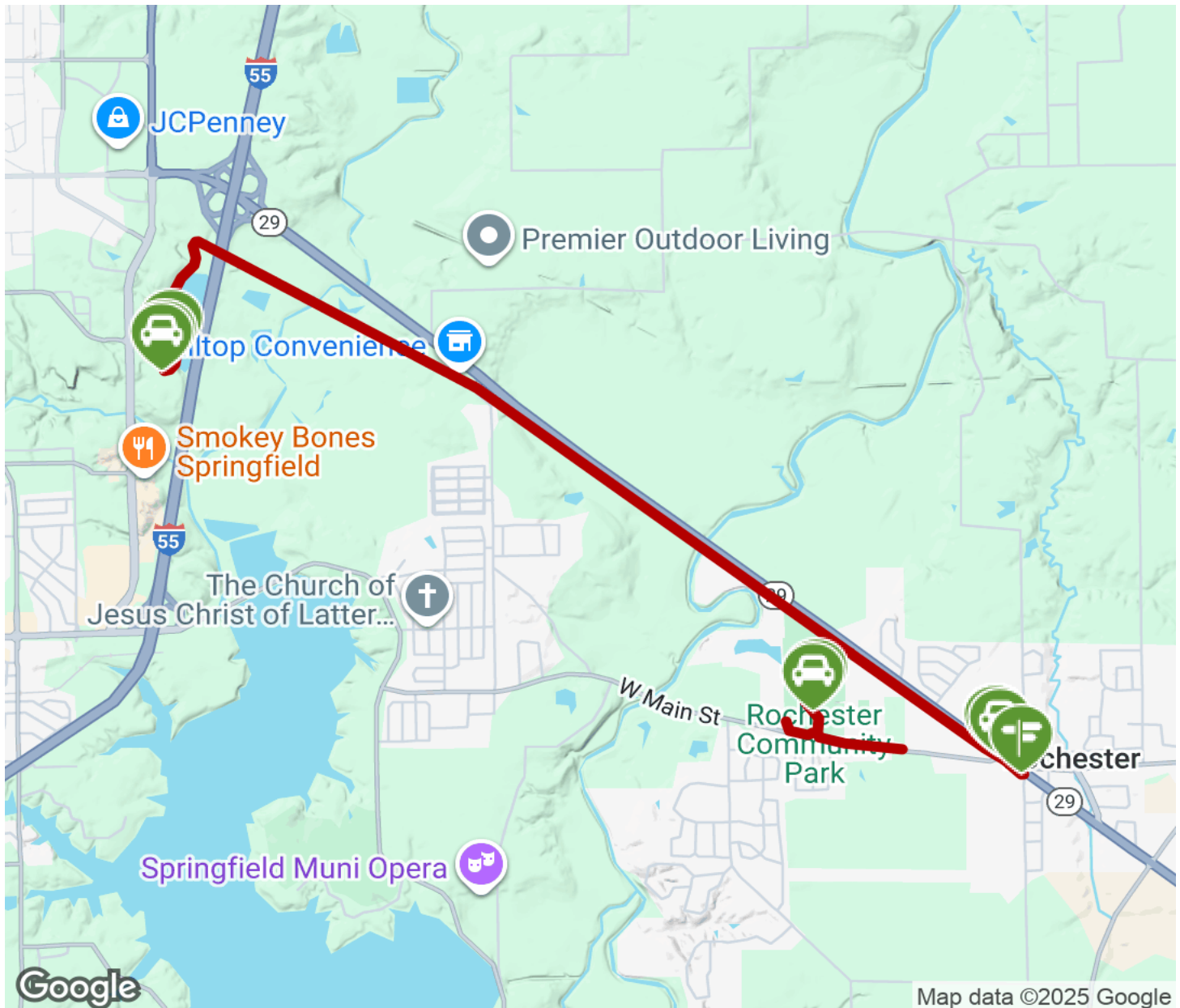
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by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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- Trailhead
- Restroom
- Parking
- Water Fountain
- Tunnel