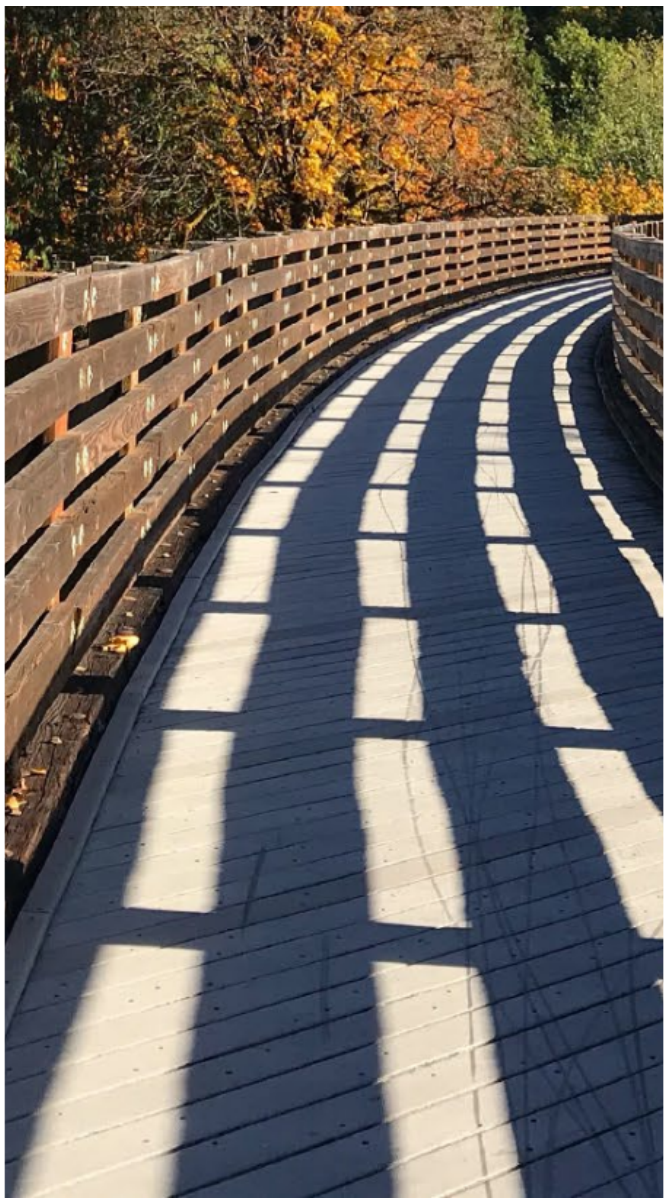
TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

2025

TrailLink Unlimited

Guides



Rock River Recreation Path

Illinois

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The paved Rock River Recreation Trail winds throughout downtown Rockford and environs, following the east bank of the Rock River

The paved Rock River Recreation Trail winds throughout downtown Rockford and environs, following the east bank of the Rock River through Shorewood Park and Martin Memorial Park. Officially, the trail begins at Davis Park on the west bank of the river; you can cross the river just about anywhere but the trail segments on this side are short and disconnected. There are about 6 miles of paved trail, while another 10 miles (depending on where you begin) follow along roads. The best place to begin is at Whitman Street bridge. Head north along the east bank until the trail is interrupted at the neighborhood Illinois Street. To pick up the next trail segment, take Illinois then go left at Ransom Place, north (right) on Arlington, east (left) on Snow, and take an immediate right on Forest Grove, which dead-ends where the trail picks up.

After passing through Shorewood Park, in a short distance you'll reach Evelyn Avenue; go east (left) then north (right) on East Drive to River Lane; turn east (left) and pick up the trail again.

At E. Riverside Boulevard, the trail crosses the river on the south side of the bridge. Just over the bridge, you'll cross to the other side of Riverside Boulevard at the intersection (use caution) and continue north on the trail along the west bank.

For part of its route the trail parallels active railroad tracks, and some segments of the trail are linked via road. At the bend in the river, the trail crosses the tracks and enters Sportscore One, where it does a 0.75-mile loop around the playing fields. Continue north on the trail from Elmwood Road to Harlem Road (about 0.5 mile), crossing under Harlem to loop around the Winnebago County Forest Preserve.

Cross over the Harlem bridge via a pedestrian/bike path to pick up the Bauer Memorial Path.

Rock River Recreation Path

Illinois

States: Illinois
Counties: Winnebago
Length: 10miles
Trail end points: Davis Park (Rockford) to Harlem Rd. (Loves Park)
Trail surfaces: Asphalt
Trail category: Rail-Trail
Trail activities: Bike,Fishing,Inline Skating,Walking,Wheelchair Accessible,Cross Country Skiing

Parking & Trail Access

Parking for the trail is available at any of the parks, at Machesney Park Mall or the lot adjacent to the YMCA. Ample parking is available at Sportscore One and in downtown Rockford near State and Madison. Power chair users will find several electrical outlets along the path.

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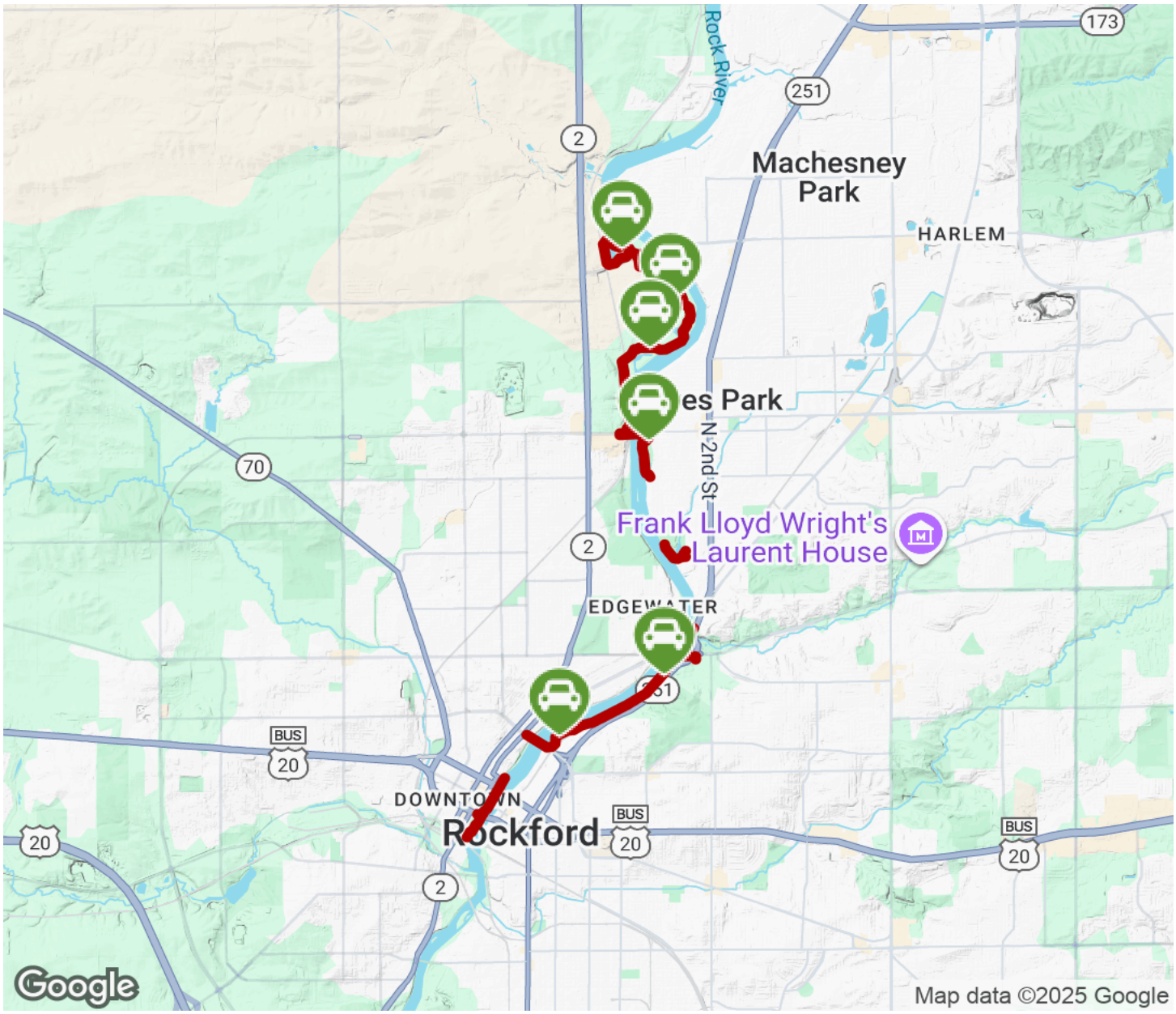

Trailhead Restroom Parking Water Fountain Tunnel

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TrailLink.com