



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail

Vermont



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Saint Albans used to be called Rail City for all the train traffic it saw, but it could be known as Rail-Trail City now. The town sits at the front door of the Missisquoi Valley Rail-Trail, among the longest and most scenic in the state. The 26.3-mile trail rolls past the dairy farms and cornfields of northwestern Vermont to within a couple of miles of the state's border with Québec.

The crushed-stone trail follows the railbed of Central Vermont Railroad's Richford Branch. The line between Saint Albans and Richford was chartered as the Missisquoi Railroad in the late 1860s, and the much larger Central Vermont leased it in 1872. Eventually, the Central Vermont came under control of the Canadian National Railway. A train derailment on a trestle near Sheldon in June 1984 spelled the end of the line but raised an

opportunity to build a rail-trail. One span was so badly damaged that the railroad decided it wasn't cost effective to repair due to dwindling traffic. Local traffic on either side of the bridge continued sporadically for a few years, but the railroad discontinued use on it in the early 1990s.

The trail starts on the north side of Saint Albans, in the midst of chain restaurants and mini-marts, although parts of town reflect its former life as a flourishing railroad junction. Heading northeast, within 2 miles you're riding past cornfields, dairy farms, and red barns. About 9 miles down the trail, you'll cross a bridge over the Missisquoi River at Sheldon Junction; this is where the previously mentioned trail derailment occurred. The replacement span doesn't match the other two here. At 523 feet, it's the longest bridge on the trail.

The next few miles are known as Corn Alley, as the corn grows right next to the trail. In 7.6 miles, you'll arrive at Enosburg Falls, historically the center of the dairy industry in the area. The June Dairy Days festival relives those days the first weekend of the month. You'll see a red caboose and freight depot; both house museum artifacts and local railroad memorabilia. They're open June–October, Saturday, 10 a.m.–2 p.m. There's shade at Lincoln Park a couple of blocks south on SR 108, and you'll also find cafés, coffee shops, and an ice cream parlor in the vicinity.

It's mostly cornfields and pastureland for roughly the last 10 miles to Richford. The last bridge on the trail is about 3 miles before Richford. The Historic District of Richford is less than a mile away from the trailhead; to get there turn left onto Troy Street and right onto Main Street. Most of the historical buildings are concentrated near or at the junction with River Street just across the Missisquoi River. The river powered the mills here in boom times more than a century ago, but prosperity has abandoned the commercial district. Two blocks left on River Street you'll see an example of a prominent businessman's mansion built in 1890, now a bed-



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States: Vermont

Counties: Franklin

Length: 26.3miles

Trail end points: US 7/Main St at Rewes Dr (St. Albans) to Troy St/SR 105 (Richford)

Trail surfaces: Crushed Stone

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Horseback Riding, Mountain Biking, Snowmobiling, Walking, Cross Country Skiing

Parking & Trail Access

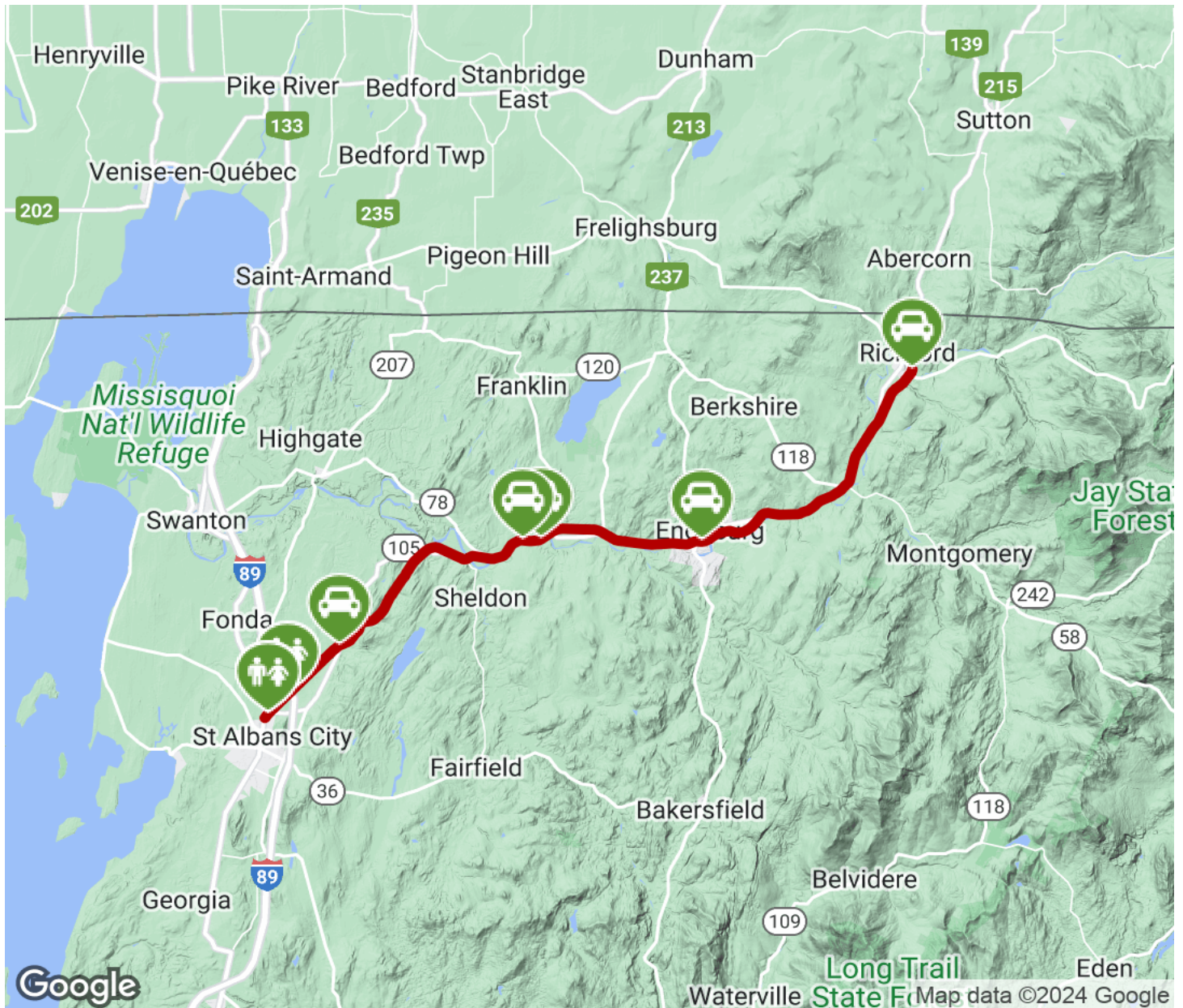
To reach the trailhead in Saint Albans from I-89, take Exit 20 onto SR 207/Highgate Road toward Saint Albans. Head southwest on SR 207, go 0.4 mile, and turn left onto US 7/Swanton Road. Go 1 mile, and turn left onto SR 105/Seymour Road. Go about 500 feet, and turn right into the parking area. The trail endpoint is 0.2 mile south.

To reach the trailhead in Richford from I-89, take Exit 21 onto SR 78. Head east on SR 78, go 7.2 miles, and turn left to remain on VT 78. Go another 2.8 miles, and turn left onto SR 105. In 7.3 miles, turn left onto VT 108, and go 0.5 mile. Veer right to continue on SR 105, go 9.5 miles, and turn right onto SR 105/Troy St. In 0.4 mile look for parking at the trailhead on the right.



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- Trailhead
- Restroom
- Parking
- Water Fountain
- Tunnel