



2025

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



**Illinois
Prairie Path**
Illinois



Illinois Prairie Path

Illinois

The Illinois Prairie Path (IPP) was one of the nation's first rail-trail conversions. The 58-mile trail consists of five connected trail



The Illinois Prairie Path (IPP) was one of the nation's first rail-trail conversions. The 58-mile trail consists of five connected trail segments with three main branches that converge at 300 S Carlton Ave in Wheaton.

Main Branch (16 miles)

The Illinois Prairie Path's 16-mile Main Branch is the most urban of its corridors. Leaving off the trail's convergence in Wheaton, the IPP's Main Branch follows city streets on extra-wide bicycle-friendly sidewalks. Distinct green trail markers shepherd trail users eastward through the lively shopping district. As the trail leaves downtown Wheaton, Metra commuter rail tracks share the corridor, contributing to 2 miles of rail-with-trail.

The trail maintains a distinct urban ambiance, passing through the heart of the western suburbs. In Villa Park, about 8 miles from the trailhead, a restored train depot houses historical displays and offers water and restrooms.

7 miles east of Wheaton, the trail crosses First Avenue (IL 171) in Maywood, and a short trek along Maybrook Drive leads to a bicycle-pedestrian bridge over the Des Plaines River. The Main Branch eastern terminus is shortly thereafter in Concordia Cemetery, adjacent to the Forest Park Transit Center. Trail users should note that free parking is spotty at this end of the trail.

Aurora Branch (13 miles)

The 13-mile-long Aurora Branch also leaves off from the trail junction in Wheaton and travels south from there along a hard-packed crushed stone trail that makes up a majority of the branch until reaching a commercial section and the older neighborhoods of Aurora, where the trail turns to asphalt. Along the rural and crushed stone portion of the trail, wildlife find refuge on the trail; deer, rabbit, and many bird species are the most common. This spur comes to its western endpoint along a junction with the Fox River Trail in Aurora.

Batavia Spur (6 miles)

The 6-mile Batavia spur leaves off from its junction with the Aurora spur near US-88. From here, the trail heads northwest to Batavia. This spur is largely similar to the Aurora Branch, traveling along a wooded rail corridor through the Batavia suburbs until reaching the Fox River Trail.

Elgin Branch (14 miles)

The 14-mile Elgin spur also leaves off from the trail junction in Wheaton. The surface of the trail is almost entirely hard-packed crushed stone. The easternmost section of this spur travels through small forests and residential developments



Illinois Prairie Path

Illinois

States: Illinois

Counties: Cook, Du Page, Kane

Length: 58.52 miles

Trail end points: CTA Forest Park Station
(Forest Park) to Fox River Trail (Elgin)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt, Concrete, Crushed
Stone

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike, Horseback

Riding, Mountain Biking, Inline

Skating, Walking, Wheelchair Accessible, Cross

Parking & Trail Access

The Illinois Prairie Path runs between CTA Forest Park Station (Forest Park) and Fox River Trail (Elgin), with additional spurs reaching the Fox River Trail in Geneva, Batavia, and Aurora, all of which offer parking.

Parking is available at:

- Reed Keppler Park, 251 W National St (West Chicago)
- St. James Farm Forest Preserve, 2S541 Winfield Rd (Warrenville)
- Walnut Glen Park, 860 Walnut St (Glen Ellyn)

See [TrailLink Map](#) for all parking options and detailed directions.

