

Historic South Portland



4.7 miles

9926 steps

difficulty

45,503, -122.682

HISTORIC SOUTH PORTLAND

This long walk explores historic South Portland, site of immigrant Jewish and Italian communities in the early 1900s, and then loops back along the Willamette River Greenway Trail and into the evolving South Waterfront District. Along the way are parks, beautiful 19th century homes, quiet streets and views of Ross Island.

Begin at SW Barbur Boulevard and Sheridan Street at Duniway Park, a park built in 1918 on landfill over a creek valley that had become the city dump. Walk to the south end of the running track, next to the YMCA, and take the hiking trail climbing into the woods. At a T intersection, keep left to continue climbing the steep trail, which emerges onto Terwilliger Boulevard, a roadway/walking path dedicated in 1912 as part of the city's intended chain of scenic parkways.

Turn left on Terwilliger and walk past OHSU. Make what will be the first of four passes under the aerial tram. Turn left on an asphalt path marked with a SW Trails 1 sign. Follow it downhill to Barbur, passing private homes. Turn left on Barbur, which follows a railroad alignment from the 1860s. In the 1930s, the rail line was abandoned. Walk to the stoplight at Hooker and cross Barbur. Walk east on Hooker. On the right is Lair Hill Park, once the site of a large mansion that became the first county hospital. A Carnegie library sits at 2nd and Hooker behind a heritage copper beech.

Turn left on 2nd and right on Meade. In the southeast corner, Kesser Israel was the last of the original Jewish synagogues that served newly immigrated eastern European Jews from the 1890s onward. It left South Portland in 2006.

From Meade, turn right on 1st, route of the city's first horse-drawn trolley. Walk south to Grover, turn left, walk under the elevated Naito Parkway and then turn right on Water Avenue. Pass the Water/Gibbs

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Community Garden and many fine old Queen Anne homes. Turn left on Curry, then right on Corbett. Walk south about 0.8 mile on this street where homes range from the earliest days of South Portland to the newest 21st century condominiums.

From Corbett, turn left on Boundary. Cross Macadam at a stoplight, then turn left on Landing Drive, using caution as there is no sidewalk here. Turn right onto a sidewalk marked by two concrete stanchions. It leads to the Heron Point Wetland on the Willamette Greenway Trail. Watch for bicyclists as you turn left to walk along the river. Ross Island views are superb here.

Just past the lovely Cottonwood Bay Natural Area, the trail ends. Turn left and then right to walk on a multiuse path along railroad tracks. At Bancroft Street is the Willamette Shore Trolley station. During warm weather, an excursion train runs south to downtown Lake Oswego. North of Bancroft, walk along Moody Avenue in the South Waterfront District. Sidewalk bioswales catch and filter street and roof run-off through the soil rather than directing it into the sewer system. In 2010, a pedestrian bridge will connect this area with South Portland along the Gibbs Street alignment.



Cyclists on the Willamette Greenway

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Turn left off Moody onto Sheridan, under the soaring approach to the Marquam Bridge. From Sheridan, turn left onto Water (which becomes Corbett), then right at Arthur. Old homes here are remnants of the once thriving immigrant Italian and Jewish neighborhood, much of which was razed for roadway and urban renewal projects.

At a ramp for Naito Parkway, turn left and descend stairs to a New York style underground passage that runs under Arthur. (If the passageway is beyond your comfort level, walk west one block to the light at 1st Avenue and then back east along the south side of Arthur.) Once on the south side of Arthur, walk south along Kelly/Naito. In one block, turn right at Hooker, walk half a block and climb the ramp to a pedestrian walkway over Naito. Formerly called Front Avenue, this is a street turned into an expressway in the 1940s, following recommendations of New York urban planner Robert Moses, a proponent of highways over mass transit. Once off the walkway, continue west on Hooker. Cross Barbur at the light, turn right and return to Duniway Park.



1886 apartment building

