

Seattle Olmsted 50 Trail – Section 5

S1 9.4km, 159m

S2 10.3km, 110m

S3 10.7km, 228m

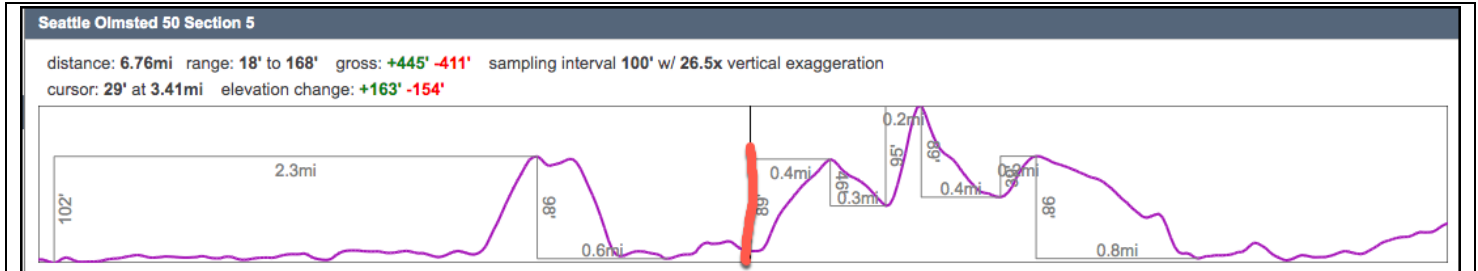
S4 9.7km, 178m

S5 10.8km, 139m

Stan Sayres Memorial Park to Rainier Beach Community Center & Playfield

Walking distance: 10.8 km (6.8 miles)

Elevation gain: 139 m (445 ft)



Section 5 of the Seattle Olmsted 50 trail begins at Stan Sayres Memorial Park, served by Bus #7 (walk from Rainier Avenue S).

You can split Section 5 into two shorter walks. Section 5 North runs from Stan Sayres Memorial Park⁴ to Seward Park³ 5.5 km, (3.4 mi) and Section 5 South finishes at the Rainier Beach Community Center beside South Shore PreK-8 School (5.4 km, 3.3 mi).

For public transit options, public bathrooms and treats see directions, last page.

Section 5 North

Walking distance: 5.5 km (3.4 miles)

Elevation gain: 49 m (163 ft)

Walkers are responsible for their own safety on Seattle Olmsted routes

Note: The route is stroller friendly along the standard route with no sandy beach transits.



Towards Seward Park – Photo Peter Hendrickson

- Take the shore path south between **Lake Washington Boulevard S²** and Lake Washington, a walker's delight.
- At the S Adams Street intersection you may in summer find a paddle livery (and Honey Buckets) on the shore side.
- **Ohler's Island** now hosts gated Lakewood Marina & Moorage and a grand lily pad bloom.
- At Ferdinand Street Boat Launch (hand carry, seasonal) frequent sightings of stand up and kayak fleets makes sense.

*We are on the traditional land of the **Coast Salish** peoples who live here and steward these lands and waters as they have for time immemorial.*

- Proceed south to curl left (east) to checkout the Torii Gate, then into **Seward Park³** (toilets).
- The interior loop is shorter than the Shore Loop Road . Our route is about 2.3 km, (1.4 mi) along Seward Park Rd.
- From the toilet blocks head north, clockwise, uphill on the paved path.
- Pass by Park Shelter 3 and cross the road from one information kiosk to the other. Take the Bald Eagle Trail right to the Sqabaqsed (Upper) Trailhead.
- Move onto paved Seward Park Rd, then bear left down the restricted **Authorized Vehicles** Seward Park Rd to Seward Park Trail on the Lake.
- Keep an eye out for the **Poison Oak** advisory signs. National Park Service reports: *Toxicodendron diversilobum*,

otherwise known as Pacific or western poison oak, is a perennial, deciduous shrub—sometimes growing as a vine—that dons its leafy cloak in February and March. Its stems grow quickly over the next 2 months, innocently dangling over your favorite trail.

- Right on the footpath back to the Birds Connect Seattle (Audubon) Center.
- FYI, Bus #50 is up S Juneau Street.

You have completed Section 5 North. No public transport service along the lake.

Section 5 South

*Walking distance: 5.4 km (3.3 miles)
Elevation gain: 85 m (282 ft)*

Note: The final Section elevation gain is twice 5 North but generally easy grades. Section 5 South is also stroller friendly.

- After exploring the Japanese stone lanterns inside the traffic circle, exit **Seward Park**³ west up S Juneau St to turn left (south) on Seward Park Avenue S.

Winter Home. *Duwamish people had a permanent winter camp just south of Bailey Peninsula (Seward Park) with several longhouses.*

- Bear left onto Lakeshore Drive S to S Eddy Street and up (right) two blocks to 57th Ave S.
- Left (south) on 57th Avenue S to **Martha Washington Park**. The waterfront was, perhaps, enjoyed by the young Wards-of-the-Court women housed at Seattle School District's **Girls Parental School** (later Martha Washington School), which closed in 1965 and was demolished in 1989.
- Exit right up pavement to the sandstone pavers along S Holly Street back to Seward Park Avenue S.
- Turn left staying on Seward Park Avenue S. After several blocks you pass Kline-Galland Home (Jewish retirement center) and the gated, 5-acre estate of philanthropists, the late James D & Sherry Raisbeck 7536 Seward Park Ave

S). James was a brilliant aerospace innovator. Can you see the statues through the fence?

Sephardic Community *The 3rd largest U.S. community of Sephardic Judaism is in this area. And an eruv (continuous, high wire) circles the enclave to give it "our home" status for observant Jews on the Sabbath. Ladino, a Spanish dialect, remains a second language for many.*

Ancestors came from Portugal and Spain, cast out during the 1490s Spanish Inquisition. Choices were, "Convert or die." World War II was also devastating to the Sephardim around the Mediterranean. These Turks and Rhodes citizens came to Seattle in the early 20th century. Be'er Shiva is a sister city in Israel.

- Turn left (east) on S Grattan Street leading into **Pritchard Island Beach**⁴. No public bathrooms at the bathhouse.

Brighton Beach Parkway⁵ *was to go north to Seward Park and connect west to Dunlap Canyon Parkway towards Beacon Hill, West Seattle and South Park, two of several parkways that were never built.*

- With bathhouse at your back walk slowly down the path to the beach. Did you find the old lake shoreline?
- Turn right (south) on the graveled footpath leaving from the parking area. This forested former wetland, and Seattle City Light nursery was restored starting in 2014. The amphitheater announces **The Wetland At Pritchard Beach Park's** role as an ecological classroom for local schools.
- You just traversed the former Dunlap Slough, Loon Place to the Native People. Pritchard Island was to the east. When Lake Washington was lowered 9 feet, the island was no more.

Rainier Beach Urban Farm & Wetlands *Seattle Parks and Recreation re-imagined the former Atlantic Street Nursery to create a farm-to-table site with classroom, commercial*

kitchen, office space and improved access from Be'er Shiva Park.

There's picnic space in this new park managed by Seattle Tilth and the Friends of RBUFW.

Target: *More than 20,000 lbs of fresh fruits and vegetables annually – primarily for Rainier Valley residents. This is Seattle's largest urban farm.*

- At S Cloverdale Street, look left across the street to see if the gate is open to the **Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands**. [*If not open, head right (west) down Cloverdale Street to enter Be'er Sheva Park farther west.*]
- If open, take some time and walk south past the Tilth Alliance Farm Stand (on your left) through the gardens. You may wish to explore in the wetlands, but the main route turns right to exit.



Rainier Beach Urban Farm – Photo P Hendrickson

- A splendid gateway in the SW corner of the farm garden reveals the way into 25.5-acre **Be'er Sheva Park**².

Be'er Shiva Park location was a trolley line terminus, part of the Atlantic City Addition for new homes. Seattle Parks completed a \$2.5 million upgrade of the park and adjoining boat ramp in 2024.

- Cross Seward Park Avenue S heading west along S Henderson St. **Rainier Beach High School** and sports field are revered by the local community. A \$300 million replacement is under construction, due to greet the freshman class of 2029 in fall 2025.
- Worth a visit on the south side of S Henderson is **Mapes Walkway**. Mapes

creek drains into Lake Washington but is undergrounded here. Remarkable bas-relief sculptures show the seasons and **Galactic Travel** street art by Ikeeo.

- The HS and South Shore PreK-8 School remain neighborhood beacons of promise and hope. And the Rainier Beach Community Center (pool, basketball, services) hosts the local and newer Ethiopian and Somali communities and many others.
- Cross Rainier Ave S and turn right up the sidewalk to the Community Center. **Rainier Beach Playfield**⁴ is a favorite recess and recreation venue.

Congratulations, you completed the Seattle Olmsted 50!

Return to Stan Sayres by Light Rail or Bus #7 along Rainier Ave S to S Alaska St, then east through playfields and **Genesee Park**⁴.

Columbia City, just north up Rainier Avenue S, is a proper urban village. Served by light rail and bus, it boasts cafes, pubs, bakeries, jazz clubs, cinema ... A favorite is Columbia City Bakery. Third Place Books nearer Seward Park offers bagels, beer and literary browsing.

Note: The Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks map display gives five park categories. Our superscripts show: **1**)Pre-1903, **2**)1903-09, **3**)1909-13, **4**)Post 1913, and **5**)Unrealized.

Seattle Olmsted Circuit loops 120km (75 miles) via more easterly parks and boulevards (5 Sections, October 2023) connecting with more westerly Seattle Olmsted 70 (7 Sections, June 2024).

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Seattle Urban Walk Committee
The Mountaineers, Founded 1906

(Rev 30May2024/PH)

Navigation Tip: Staple, then fold these two sheets the long way. You can then easily hold them in one hand to follow the turn-by-turn. Some walkers keep their thumb on the bulleted text for their current position.

TRANSIT, TOILETS and TREATS

King County Metro Transit Service Points

Public transport is available at several locations on Section 5 but these points offer the most options.

Light Rail schedule [Light Rail](#)

State Ferry Schedule [State Ferries](#)

Metro Water Taxi [Foot Ferry](#)

Bus Routes [Metro Bus Routes](#)

- **Rainier Ave S & S Genesee St #7, #9**
- **Seward Park Ave S & S Juneau St S #50**
- **MLK Jr Ave S, Columbia City Light Rail Station**
- **Seward Park Ave S & S Holly St #50**
- **Rainier Ave S & S Henderson St #7, #106, #107**
- **MLK Jr Ave S & S Henderson St Rainier Beach Light Rail Station**

Suggested Bathroom Stops

Free public bathroom access is very good on Section 5 during park and business hours. Stops are listed in order of travel from Stan Sayres Memorial Park.

- Stan Sayres Memorial Park
- Genesee Park Playfields
- S Adams St Boat Ramp
- Ferdinand St Boat Launch?
- Seward Park Public Toilets
- Martha Washington Parking?
- Pritchard Beach Bath House (rarely)
- Rainier Beach Urban Farm & Wetlands
- Be'er Sheva Park
- Rainier Beach Community Center & Play Field

Where to Buy Provisions

Section 5 and nearby have a modest mix of residential, parks and local cafes, bakeries, ice cream parlors, and pubs.

- Seasonal Beach Snack bars
- Columbia City

- Seward Park along Bus Route #50
- Rainier Beach Ave S & S Fisher Place Safeway

Other Items of Interest

- **Stewards** for Section 5 are to be named.
- **Stan Sayres** (1896 to 1956) broke the world water speed record in 1950 in Slo-mo-shun IV – 178.49mph. "Sayres Pits" is HQ for the annual Seafair Hydroplane Races. Mount Baker Rowing and Sailing Center hosts other activities.
- **Genesee Park** was possible with lowering of Lk Washington in 1916. It devastated some 1000 acres of wetlands and the shoreline shrunk ~ 10 miles. The park was a large marsh, leading to the Wetmore Slough, which led almost to Rainier Avenue. Columbia City's dreams of becoming a seaport – ever a dream.
- **Seattle Audubon** offers field trips, neighborhood bird outings, classes, optics, nature shop, library
- **Duwamish People** live along these shores and waterways. See [Duwamish](#)
- **Neighborhoods** near or on this route are Mount Baker, Columbia City, Seward Park, Brighton, Dunlap, Rainier Beach and South Beacon Hill.
- For more complete Olmsted Parks information, consult **Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks**, partners in development of this trail. Local link is [FSOP](#). The national Olmsted Network is [National](#)
- **Seattle ranks** among the top 10 park systems in the country [Top Ten](#)