

Loops Crossing Burrard Inlet



Harry Jerome and the Vancouver Skyline over Coal Harbour - Photo by Dave Turner

Distance: 42 km plus 8 km if Stanley Park Seawall is included.

Starting and end point: For the purpose of this description the start is New Brighton Park where there is free parking and washrooms. Other suggestions would be along First Street West on the North Shore, and along the Adanac and Portside Bikeways. The suggested direction is counter-clockwise allowing for a downhill on the fairly steep grade in Stanley Park.

Connecting Roads – These are designated bikeways (about 10 km at this time) mainly on the east end of Loop A on the North and South shore of Burrard Inlet. For walkers there are sidewalks where it is not a greenway or designated multi-use pathway.

Trails and Pathways – 25 km (add 8 km if going around Stanley Park)

Mode of travel: Well maintained Mountain or hybrid bike

Level of Difficulty: Easy to Intermediate due to long distances

Altitude – Highest point is 72m/236ft

Fitness level: Should be in good physical condition and have experienced cycling over 30k to do the full loop.

Features and Description

New Brighton Park

From this vantage point it is a great place to appreciate the north shore Mountain views and that of grain elevators along with industrial activity across the inlet. New Brighton Park is considered the birth place of Vancouver - read the interpretive bronze plaque at the monument near the washrooms. Head east on the Trans Canada Trail up to the Second Narrows Iron Workers Memorial Bridge. Walkers take the left pathway on the bridge and cyclists take the right pathway in the same direction as the flow of traffic.

East North Shore

Getting off the bridge, take the Main Street off-ramp and turn left on a pathway that heads west to meet with Cotton Road.

Spirit Trail – North Vancouver Section – 10 km

The first part of the Spirit Trail Starting at Mountain Equipment Coop is presently still under construction. Just past Park & Tilford are the Park & Tilford Gardens accessed from Gladstone Avenue, a worthwhile visit.

At this time carefully study the map to follow the route through Seylynn and Brigman Parks on each side of Lynn Creek.

Head south along the Creek. It is a pleasant wooded area giving refuge from the neighbouring commercial activity. Be aware that this is an off-leash area for dogs. At one point get off the trail at 3rd St. next to MEC leading to the Park & Tilford Mall and go through the mall Kennard Ave.

Just past Park & Tilford are the Park & Tilford Gardens accessed from Kennard Avenue, a worthwhile visit. Turn right and take the finished east end of the Spirit Trail that takes you to a pedestrian overpass off Heywood St. This part of the trail, through a wooded area, overlooks the grain elevators and Burrard Inlet and comes out on 2nd St E. Follow 2nd St. (part of the Spirit Trail) and turn left on 1st St, the very next street to your left. Watch for a zig-zag pathway soon on your left and take it. This section of trail comes out on Esplanade and follow the Spirit Trail to the Lonsdale Quay market.

The market is a great spot to eat and stroll around. Also the Quay is the access to the SeaBus where there is the option to shorten or experience the loop in different ways.

Past the Quay is Waterfront Park along the water. It has washrooms. Do enjoy its interesting sculptures, interpretive signs, and the national aboriginal theme Trans Canada Trail Pavilion with its welcoming totem Sculptures by Darren Yelton.

Past the BCIT Marine Building the Spirit Trail and Trans Canada Trail must follow Forbes, 3rd St, 2nd St and Bewicke Ave for now. On the left are the Mission Squamish Lands with its National Heritage Site, St. Paul's Catholic Church -the oldest in Vancouver.

The finished Spirit Trail Path begins again shortly after the railroad tracks on Bewicke Ave. Follow the trail by taking a right fork towards the waterfront. This greenway goes around an Automall area along the waterfront taking in Mills Walk and Mackay Creek over a delightful pedestrian overpass to First Street.

Continue on the Spirit Trail along 1st and Welch Streets past the former Pemberton Train Station into Welch Strip Park then through the Capilano Squamish Nation lands reaching the Capilano River under the Lions Gate Bridge. Note the Squamish Nation's Long House on your right along way.

Cyclists must take the right pathway on the bridge and it is recommended that walkers do the same for easier access to Stanley Park once across the inlet.

Stanley Park

The main loop leaves the Lions Gate Bridge and Stanley Park Causeway at Prospect Point. It's worth taking in the views from here and then proceed on the Prospect Point pathway that soon joins the Bridle Path followed by the Rawlings Trail off the Bridle Path. Follow these forested paths up to the edge of Second Beach. At this point there is the option of going around Stanley Park, adding 8 km, by first crossing over past Lost Lagoon. The pathway around Stanley Park for cyclists is counter-clockwise. It is also the junction for the shortest loop past Coal Harbour to the SeaBus.

Sunset Beach/English Bay

From Second Beach proceed along the paths passing English Bay and Sunset Beach. Take the bike route before the Burrard Bridge to get you on the right side of the Burrard Street Bridge. Note that there is a choice at this junction to continue on the northside of False Creek up to the Carrall Street and Union Street bikeways thus shortening the loop.

South False Creek (Seaside Bikeway)

Once across the bridge continue on the pathway on Cornwall and immediately take another right on Cypress Street. At the totem pole watch for a pathway on the right that will head to the Seaside Bikeway and also the route for the Trans Canada Trail. Take the Seaside Bikeway all the way to Granville Island, a great place to explore. The loop continues under the Granville Street Bridge past the False Creek Community Center (washrooms here) and a Trans Canada Trail Pavilion sitting at the head of Alder Bay.

Continue on this superb pathway past several parks taking in views of the Vancouver skyline and the north shore mountains. Eventually the seawall goes under the Cambie Street Bridge and then passes the former Olympic Village to Science World.

From Science World stay on the path going around False Creek up to the Carrall Street bikeway. Take it to Keefer Street and turn right and head past Chinatown into Strathcona. At this junction

there is the option to head for Gastown and take the SeaBus on a shorter loop. A second option is to go straight to the Union Street bikeway.

Adanac and Portside Bikeways

Turn right at Maclean Park (washrooms here) to Union Street (or just continue on if already Union Street). This is the Adanac Bikeway and the continuation of the Trans Canada Trail. Follow the Trans Canada Trail signs past Commercial Street, the Italian Quarter, to Templeton Secondary School. Take the Lakewood bikeway through the Schoolyard following the Trans Canada Trail to Wall Street, the Portside Bikeway. Take Wall Street to Renfrew and continue still following the Trans Canada Trail. Cross to an overpass and follow the sidewalk on its right to New Brighton Park.