

Seattle Waterfront Trail / Elliott Bay Trail

Seattle, Washington

STATUS Existing, opened 1989

DESCRIPTION These two contiguous trails combine for a total length of approximately 2.7 km (6 mi). They run along the waterfront from the heart of downtown Seattle north to the Interbay area. The City of Seattle owns the right-of-way, which it purchased in the late 1980s. The BNSF Railway operates up to 60 passenger and freight trains daily on the street right-of-way, parallel to the trails. Train speeds vary from 64 km/h (40 mi/h) for passenger and 56 km/h (35 mi/h) for freight trains.



The highly utilized Elliott Bay Trail parallels the BNSF switching yard along a portion of the waterfront, Seattle, WA

DESIGN The trail has three distinct sections. The southern third, downtown, is close to a rail line that carries four slow-moving trolleys per hour. This section is an area dominated by bicycles and pedestrians. Much of the trail traffic consists of tourists and downtown workers getting exercise or simply taking in the views.

The middle section is in Myrtle Edwards Park. It is directly on the waterfront, surrounded by landscaping, set back from the tracks by about 30 m (100 ft), and separated by a 3 m (10 ft) high chain link fence and landscaping. The trail surface is old, bumpy, and curvy.

The northern section runs through the rail yards. In most parts, chain link fences and tracks closely border the trail on both sides, with almost no landscaping. The path is so narrow at several points that multiple warning signs are needed to help avoid collisions between users. The trail is lighted and has night use.

PROBLEMS Officials report few significant problems with trespassing or vandalism. However, motorists sometimes drive on the