

# Northeast Quadrant Bike Map

## John Charles Olmsted and the Seattle Park System

This complete loop is 10 miles long, with several alternate options. Most of the loop follows paved pedestrian/bike trails or designated bike lanes. The most confusing section goes from Green Lake up to Woodland Park Zoo—follow the Inset Map carefully.

In 1903, landscape architect John Charles Olmsted proposed a 20-mile-long series of parks and parkways that stretched across Seattle from Seward Park to modern day Discovery Park. This route covers the northern part of Olmsted's plan. Unfortunately, the parkways connecting Woodland Park with Magnolia and Golden Gardens were never built. The plan did not extend further north because city limits were at 85<sup>th</sup> Street.

### Numbers Below Correspond to Numbers on Map

1. Because trolley tracks ran along the edge of the lake, Olmsted suggested lowering Green Lake by four feet to create a "lake within a park." Not content with this suggestion, the city eventually dropped the lake seven feet, creating almost 100 acres of additional land. Over 150 tree species grow in the park.
2. Citizens objected when the city purchased this land for \$100,000 in 1900 from the estate of Guy Phinney because the property was too far from populated areas. Olmsted proposed mostly grass in the lower portion, a menagerie for "hardy wild animals," and wilder ravines and ridges. Aurora Avenue cut through in 1932.
3. Olmsted originally proposed that the city acquire and protect this land. Those plans died in 1906 when the Seattle Lighting Company constructed a gas plant. The city acquired what was essentially a waste site in 1966. It became a park in 1972, designed by Richard Haag.
4. The Lake Washington Ship Canal opened on July 4, 1916. It dropped the elevation of Lake Washington nine feet. The Alternate Route leads to the Museum of History and Industry, a splendid space illustrating much of Seattle's history. A bike route from MOHAI leads to the Arboretum and eventually to the Southeast Quadrant Olmsted Bike Trail.
5. The University of Washington campus was the site of the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exhibition of 1909. The Olmsteds designed the grounds and made a plan for the campus but it was never utilized. The alternate loop through the campus does follow a road system designed by Olmsted.
6. Originally owned by William Beck, who named his private park after the Italian resort town. Beck built paths, mineral springs, and water falls. He charged \$.25 to enter. Acquired by condemnation for \$122,000 in 1911. It once contained some of the areas largest Douglas firs. Recent work has improved the trail system and cleared out vegetation around the creek.

For more information on biking and Olmsted in Seattle:

City of Seattle Bike Maps  
[www.cityofseattle.net/transportation/bikemaps.htm](http://www.cityofseattle.net/transportation/bikemaps.htm)

Bicycle Alliance - 224-9252  
[www.bicyclealliance.org](http://www.bicyclealliance.org)

Cascade Bicycle Club - 522-3222  
[www.cascade.org/](http://www.cascade.org/)

Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks  
[www.seattle.gov/friendsofolmstedparks/](http://www.seattle.gov/friendsofolmstedparks/)

Seattle City Parks - 684-4075  
[www.cityofseattle.net/parks](http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks)

