

City Loop Trail tour

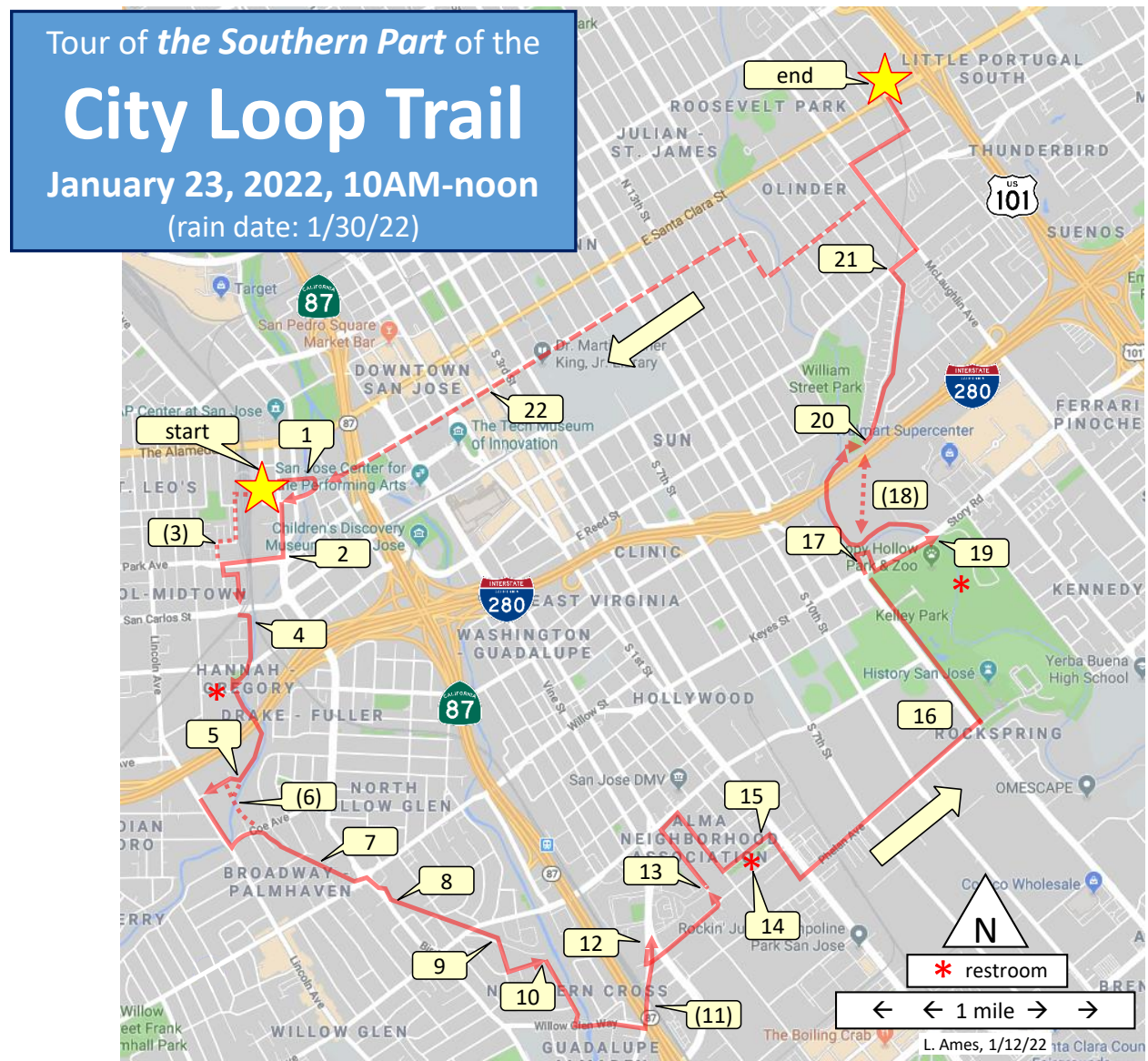
[These are Larry Ames' talking points and step-by-step >N,E,S,W directions for the Jan. 23, 2022 tour.]

Welcome! I'm your guide & longtime volunteer trail advocate. [LGCT '84; Coyote '90; Guad '04; 3CT '09]

The purpose of today's tour is to get an on-the-ground feel for what we're calling "the City Loop Trail." Some of this all-SJ, 25-mile loop (<http://wgbackfence.net/CityLoopTrail.jpg>) is already built; some will need community support to implement. This tour today is of the mainly yet-to-be-built southern part.

route map: <https://ridewithgps.com/trips/81178866>

(you can download the route to your cell-phone so you won't get lost: click the orange "share to phone" button.) Today's tour starts at the Diridon Station and goes to the Five Wounds Church, after which we'll have an optional stop at McDonalds and then return to our starting point.



Rules of the road

- wear helmet; sign liability release form; obey traffic laws. Covid masks when close or indoors.
- stop for red lights; we'll wait for you
- total trip is about 12 miles (incl. return to start), mostly level. There are some busy streets that we'll cross: we'll dismount and cross some on foot.
- We'll go at a leisurely pace: including breaks and an optional lunch, expect about 3 hrs total. (don't forget to bring your lunch money!)
- Our tour involves mostly on-street and paved trail riding, but there will be some off-street unpaved trails and sidewalks.

Start: Diridon Station

Major transit hub: CalTrain, Amtrak, ACE & Capitol Corridor, Light Rail, Bus

Big plans: BART & High Speed Rail; connection to SJC Airport? Google!

Historic structure (1936) – needs to be enlarged; can it be saved?

Note about trains and the Western Pacific Railroad

Trains first came to SJ in 1864, and soon the area was connected to SF, Oakland, LA, and the East.

Area was agricultural “The Valley of Heart’s Delight” with valley filled with plum and apricot orchards.

Trains provided means to get produce to market.

Area served only by one company: Southern Pacific, which exercised its monopoly on the region.

Local agriculture interests got T.S.Montgomery, one of the richest people in SJ, to get on the Board of a rival railroad, Western Pacific (WP), and to get them to bring their service to SJ.

In 1922, WP tracks connected their depot (1 block W of here) to their main line at Nilas Canyon w/ connections to Oakland and also the East, and thereby broke the monopoly held by Southern Pacific.

We'll be following the former WP alignment for much of this tour. But first, let's go to the Los Gatos Crk.

Diridon has a Broad plaza / walkway at main entrance; only extends 1 block: can it be extended to Downtown & SJSU? We'll do enough biking today: let's walk a couple blocks first.

> walk E on plaza.

Cross Obama Blvd. Note Sharkie riding a bike in the green pavement. (Kudos to SJ DoT for bike lanes!)

1. Los Gatos Crk

Natural riparian (“stream-side”) habitat.

Chinook salmon swim in from the Bay, past here, and up to Campbell to spawn. (dozens! 3-ft long!)

Opportunity to enhance area as it develops; work w/ Google & the City: create trails and trailside park w/ amenities/attractions. Part of regional amenity: connect N to Guadalupe Trail → SF Bay; connect S to LG Crk Trail → Campbell & LG. Trail connections improve access to trains & get commuter to jobs.

> back W on San Fernando;

S on Montgomery.

2. Park/Montgomery

The LG Crk is in a pair of culverts, each 17' × 22-1/2', beneath this intersection: it was buried a half-century ago in order to ease traffic flow. The community tried to work with Google, city, and water

district on concepts for “daylighting” the creek and re-creating a more natural creek channel (with trail continuity!) as part of the area’s redevelopment; didn’t succeed. (At least we tried!)

Q: how *does* trail cross? Bike/ped bridge? Reuse CalTrain bridge when Diridon goes for elevated tracks?
[3. shortcut to Diridon

Not part of this tour, but, on other side of railroad undercrossing, if you’re taking the trail to Diridon, there’s a shortcut: cross Park to Laurel Grove, cross the Light Rail Tracks and enter the Diridon Station via the track-access tunnel from the west side.]

> W on Park

S on McEvoy, S on Dupont, under the San Carlos bridge (***admire the murals!***), E on Dupont

4. CalTrain Bridge

CalTrain recently replaced their train bridge over the LG Crk. It was to have been designed to have adequate clearance for the planned extension of the LG Crk Trail: it is to ramp down near San Carlos and under the northern end of the bridge. Plans now call for a rainy-season bypass trail along the east bank.

> S on LG Crk Trail. (Careful crossing Auzeais!)

5. Los Gatos Creek Trail

The Los Gatos Creek Trail ends at the junction with the 3-Crks Trail. LG Trail is planned to loop on a creekside embankment behind the commercial lot.

[6. 3-Creeks Trail and Site of the former WG Trestle]

The Western Pacific crossed the WG Trestle, built in 1922, to reach WP’s San José Depot on The Alameda at Bush St. (just west of the Diridon Station) and thereby break Southern Pacific’s monopoly on San José. The trestle was listed in the California Register of Historical Resources, but the courts ruled that the City could demolish it and replace it with this modern steel prefab bridge.

The bridge has been open to the public for a year, but now it is closed so that the trail to it can be improved: we’ll need to take a detour.]

> W on Lonus; **<stop and regroup to cross en-mass>** S on Lincoln; E on Coe; S on 3-Crks Trail.

7. Iris Garden

We’re on the Three Creeks Trail, so named because it (hopefully!) someday will connect which will connect the Los Gatos Creek Trail (here), the Guadalupe River Trail, and the Coyote Creek Trail (by Kelley Park).

This patch of iris is to remember the Maryott’s Iris Garden, which, a quarter-century ago, bred bearded iris. Land was later developed into housing.

[8. Bird/Willow zigzag]

The WP tracks cut an awkward diagonal across at next intersection. Pedestrians should cross both Willow and Bird at the lights, then follow the (narrow!) sidewalk on the E side of Bird S to the trail; solo cyclists can zigzag, utilizing the left-turn lane on Bird;

> Since we have a large group, we’ll dismount, walk across both Bird and Willow at the light, walk S on the narrow eastside sidewalk, and then continue S on 3-Crks Trail.

9. Three Creeks Trail

Falcon Place Townhomes were built on a wide segment of the WP Right of Way (ROW). The Three Crks Trail SE of here is the oversized sidewalk on the south side, but presently dead-ends a 1/4 mile ahead.

> Cross Falcon and go SW on Hervey Lane / Padres Dr..

10. Access?

Where Padres bends to W become Creek Dr is a SCVWD parcel, the other side of which is the eastern dead end of the presently-built Three Creeks Trail: a gate would connect to the trail. Just E of there is the railroad crossing of the Guadalupe: the bridge is not fancy: it could be adapted or replaced as may be easier.

[We'll continue S, then E on WG Way & N on Almaden. We won't stop, but look as we pass through:

11. Old Almaden Rd. undercrossing

This is a section of the old Almaden Rd, prior to the expressway. It features one of the original 1936 Southern Pacific grade separations. (See "Touring Historic Willow Glen" for how Town of Willow Glen sued Southern Pacific for grade separations -- a battle that went to the US Supreme Court.)]

> S on Creek; E on Willow Glen Way; N on Old Almaden

12. WP ROW at 87

Look W and see Fwy 87, w/ bridge over former WP tracks.

CalTrain (and future High Speed Rail) tracks run parallel to Fwy at grade level: need some way for Three Creeks Trail to cross 87 and train tracks. One option: a fancy elevated fly-over structure. Another option: from other side, cross under 87, head S and ramp up the embankment, have short bridge across tracks, and then head N and ramp down to grade within the CalTrain ROW.

Look E and see why Stucco Supply wanted ROW for access. (There may be sufficient room for both driveway and a future trail.)

> S on Old Almaden; E on San José Ave; cross Almaden Expy at light; N on Little Orchard St.

13. Stucco Supply

Stucco Supply bought a portion of the WP ROW in 2009 to enlarge their operations: improved access from Almaden on the west, and larger parking area.

They also constructed a storage facility. Upon pressure from trail community, city required that the building be designed to be cheap and easily removed so that it might be feasible to develop a trail alignment at some future time.

Note: this portion of the Three Creeks Trail goes thru an industrial area, but there is a residential area quite nearby. Also, while some of the current industrial buildings do not now enhance the ambiance of the trail, they are likely to be replaced over the years, and the new buildings can be configured to have employee patios and not the waste bins facing the trail.

Need for trail: SJ Ave is miserable; Alma is awfully busy, and next through E/W street is Curtner 0.8 mi S.

> N on Little Orchard;

E on sidewalk of Alma (Note how busy and crowded; city-listed truck route: not suitable bike route);

S on Pomona; E on Bellevue

14. Bellevue

A small, new park in an underserved area. The WP ROW could contribute significantly to the park, increasing both its size and its accessibility.

(Restroom stop) we're about midway on route, but 2/3rds through the talking (!)

> E on Bellevue; stop at light

15. Monterey Hwy

busy street: stay in right bike lane; stop at Phelan, cross at light.

>E on Phelan; go to Senter Rd.

16. SJ Giants Stadium

WP ROW wraps around stadium and heads NW. Large triangular plot of land is being developed: I believe City has preserved an easement for future trail.

> cross Senter; bike N on sidewalk; cross Story

17. Coyote Creek Trestle

Trestle is 260' long and 36' high, built in 1922; after loss of WG Trestle, this is the last remaining trestle on SJ's WP alignment; has withstood the flood of 2017 and the fire of March 2021 virtually unscathed.

Trestle crosses over the Coyote Creek Trail, which we'll see in a few minutes.

Just to the E is "The Jungle" – the infamous former homeless encampment.

This marks the end of the Three Creeks Trail;

and also the start of the

[18. Five Wounds Trail: future trail will follow former railroad ROW.]

> turn around; cross Story Rd as pedestrian at light and go E on Story Rd.

19. Kelley Park

Home to Happy Hollow Zoo, Japanese Tea Garden, History Park, fields, trails, and picnic gardens.

Newly opened trail heads S to Phelan on E side of Coyote – but no connection yet to W side.

Trail soon will connect to Tully Rd & existing continuous 20-mile trail to Anderson Dam in Morgan Hill.

Landfills, placed in clay pits, where clay was mined in the early 1900's to make bricks.

Remillard brickyard; house being restored – some weekends there are free midway tours.

We'll cross N into what we're calling "Coyote Meadows": a 50 acre city-owned site would make a great park! (For more information, see www.coyotemeadowssj.org)

we'll pass The Jungle; cross under the trestle;

and we'll pass more landfills and former clay pits that could be capped and would provide great overlook views of downtown and the valley's surrounding mountains. The antenna array is soon to be upgraded, replacing the guywire-supported structures with freestanding unipoles – thereby freeing up future parkland. This area is not suitable for other development as it is in the floodplain, and was underwater during the Feb 2017 floods.

> Continue N on trail; cross under I-280 and cross E at dog park.

20. Olinder Dog Park

The Coyote Crk Trail continues a few blocks up to Williams St and then comes to an “unbuildable” section of the creek: houses right up to top-of-bank; no room for trail.

Here at Olinder dog park is a convenient crossover to the Five Wounds Trail:
the dirt trail S goes along the WP ROW under I-280, through Coyote Meadows, and to the trestle.
Note the width of the undercrossing: the freeway was built over a then-operational WP switchyard;
fascinating area w/ interesting possible future uses?

We’re going to go N:

This section of the Five Wounds Trail is the oversized sidewalk on the east side of 22nd St.

This housing complex and an adjacent but unconnected development to the west were both built on the former WP rail switchyard.

> Follow trail N on sidewalk.

21. Future Five Wounds Trail

City now owns the ROW and has been working w/ community on plans for trail design.

> *careful: busy streets!* E on Williams; N on 24th; E on San Fernando; N on 28th

End: Five Wounds Church, Santa Clara St. at 28th.

We end at the heart of this area, the “Little Portugal” Community, and the namesake for the trail.
Future “Urban Village” centered around a soon-to-be-built BART Station.

[I’m tired and thirsty! – and am going to the McDonalds next door: you’re welcome to join me!]

22. return to start:

When ready, return to the Diridon Station:

> S on 28th; W on San Fernando; S on 24th; W on San Antonio; N on 17th; W on San Fernando to Diridon Station.

Thank you and goodbye.

~Larry Ames: Larry@L-Ames.com

For further information:

Save Our Trails: <https://www.saveourtrails-scc.org/>

Coyote Meadows: www.coyotemeadowssj.org

Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful: <https://www.keepcoyotecreekbeautiful.org/>

Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition: <https://bikesiliconvalley.org/>

Friends of the Five Wounds Trail: <https://fivewoundstrailsj.org/>

a map of the complete City Loop Trail: <http://wgbackfence.net/CityLoopTrail.jpg>

and a link to this guide (so you can share w/ friends): <http://wgbackfence.net/CityLoopTour-Jan'22.pdf>