

Dockton Road Heritage Corridor

Location: Vashon-Maury Island
Length: 4.7 miles
Begins: Chautauqua Beach Road
Ends: 99th Avenue SW in Dockton

Includes the upper portion of Dockton Road (between Ellisport and Portage) along Tramp Harbor, continues as Dockton Road SW proper (from Portage to Dockton), and continues as Dock Street to 99th Avenue SW (in the village of Dockton).

Road history in local context

One of the earliest detailed road maps of Vashon-Maury Island (Anderson 1907) depicts a rudimentary trace through the woods above the western shoreline of Vashon, from the Chautauqua grounds at Heyer Point to the isthmus at Portage. From the late 1880s, Chautauqua had welcomed hundreds of visitors to educational programs at its 600-acre site. The dirt road connected this popular destination to Portage, a strategic shipment point and important island crossroads.

South of Portage, the dirt road angled west through the woods and farmlands of Maury Island, toward the Pt. Robinson lighthouse and fog whistle. Another branch went south atop pilings, hugging the shoreline of Kingsbury Beach and crossing the lagoon on a trestle. A third branch (today's Dockton Road) struck due south on higher ground along the

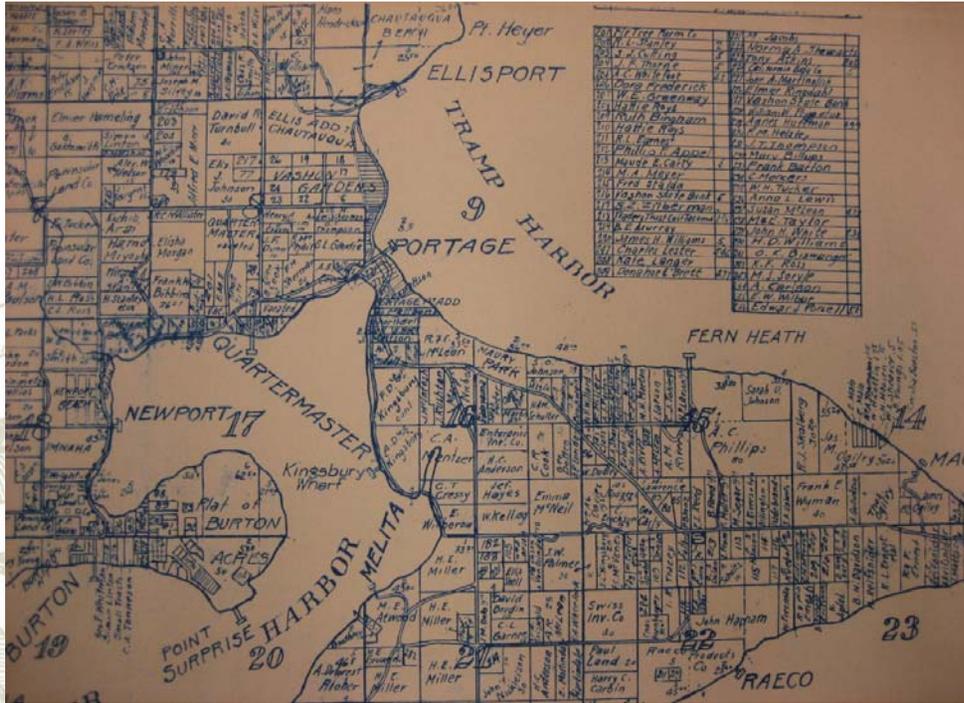
centerline of Section 16 and 21. Interestingly, it did not yet connect to the little settlement of Dockton on Quartermaster Harbor. Although, since the 1890s, Dockton had enjoyed a very active dry dock operation and fishing industry. In 1907, it was still accessed chiefly by water.

Island development spurred road improvements and extensions during the 1910s. When the first cross-Sound auto ferry service to Des Moines began in 1916, the county built a sturdy dock on Tramp Harbor, midway between Ellisport and Portage. The beachfront road of today was completed that year to serve the ferry dock. Growth of the Martinolich Shipyard at Dockton in the 1910s was no doubt a factor in completion of the road from Portage to Dockton, in place by 1913. It ran south along what is now 75th Avenue SW, and turned sharply right onto 260th Street SW, dropping down into Dockton.

King County road records trace the gradual realignment of Dockton Road through the 1920s and 1930s. Here, as elsewhere around the island, upgrades were made in increments. Early road segments, first established at right angles around section lines and property boundaries, were straightened by slicing through farm and forest.



Looking north from Portage, 1914. Used by permission of Vashon-Maury Island Heritage Association, img004-003



Kroll map showing Dockton Road, 1926



Piano Row in Dockton, ca. 1908. Used by permission of Vashon-Maury Island Heritage Association, img004-021

In 1923, the Quartermaster to Dockton Road was “declared a necessity” and scheduled for improvement under the Permanent Highway Act. This resulted in a good direct route from the main highway on Vashon to Maury Island. Soon afterward, the county declared Road No. 274 connecting Dockton to Portage a “main traveled road.”

A 1926 Kroll map shows the Dockton Road in much the same alignment it has today. It included the triangle configuration still seen at Pt. Robinson Road, where the KIRO Broadcasting Station now stands. The road veered to the southwest from SW 240th Street, following the terrain along the same general route it takes into Dockton today.

In 1936, the Dockton to Portage Road was ordered improved as a secondary road, and was paved for the first time. Further improvements came in 1947, 1955, and 1964. Quieter now than in the glory days of Chautauqua and the Mosquito fleet, the communities of Ellisport, Portage and Dockton remain key points of interest along the Dockton Road Heritage Corridor.

Sources: King County records: Assessor’s Property Record Cards, Land Use and Aerial Survey - 1936-1941, Historic Preservation Program HR database, *Index to Roads Records*, *Engineer’s Road Establishment Book – 1913*, Roads’ Map Vault database. Maps: Anderson – 1888, 1907; Kroll – 1912, 1913, 1926, 1930, 1936, 1938; Metsker – 1926, 1936; Washington Map & Blueprint Co. – 1900, 1905, 1908. *Ellisport Creek Watershed Stories* (Vashon-Maury Island Land Trust, 1999); “Dockton Historic Trail” interpretive text (2008).

Corridor signature

- Splendid water views
- Richly varied landscape
- Evidence of maritime history

Dockton Road Heritage Corridor is the only maritime-themed road in the Heritage Corridor system. Winding past beaches, farms, and woods, it offers surprising, unobstructed views across water, as well as direct access to the shoreline. From an early date, Dockton Road linked the small communities of Ellisport, Portage and Dockton. Each has a distinctive heritage and offers unique interpretive opportunities.

Contributing features

The following **roadway features** contribute positively to overall corridor character:

- Curvilinear alignment following lay of the land
- Unobstructed water view from right-of-way along Tramp Harbor
- Rural character of intersection at Portage (SW Portage Way)
- Minimal vegetation cuts through wooded stretches

The following **contextual features** contribute positively to overall corridor character:

- Multiple water vistas
- Public access points to water
- Mix of wooded and open settings
- Historic resources clustered in Ellisport, Portage, and Dockton
- Island ambiance

Non-contributing features

The following elements visually detract from overall corridor character:

- Chain-link fencing at Tramp Harbor fishing dock, mile 0.3
- Segments of galvanized steel guard rail
- Prominent power lines in right-of-way
- Large paved parking lot, unscreened, above Dockton Park

