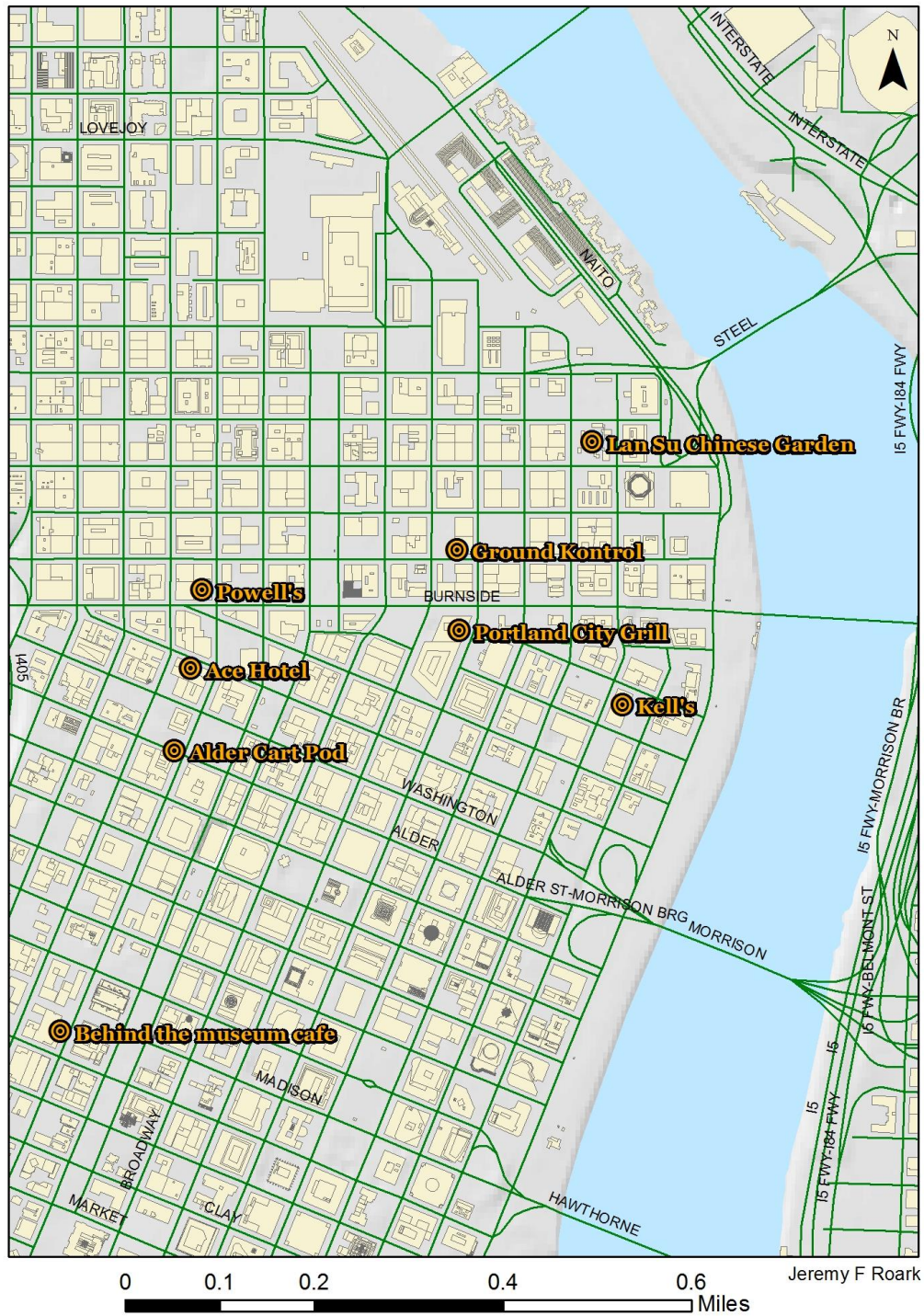


West Side Story



Here are a few places on the west side that I like.

Ace Hotel: You can get a decent latte from the Stumptown in the lobby and take it up one landing where there's a big table with stationery and pens and against the wall is a card catalog where people leave notes and parts of themselves. I got kicked off the second-floor fire escape where I was waiting for a friend to come back from somewhere over the Cascades.

From the Ace you could go north to Powell's City of Books which is the largest used bookstore in the world and definitely worth checking out. Although it tends to be a bit too packed on the weekends.

Just north of Burnside is Couch st. (pronounced cooch) and if you walk east for five or six blocks you'll come to Ground Kontrol which is a cool arcade where you can play video games and pinball while you drink because every cabinet has a cupholder.

Northeast of Ground Kontrol is Lan Su Chinese garden which is a very peaceful botanical garden where I occasionally volunteer. They have a room called the hall of a thousand windows and I've washed them all. Tickets are under ten dollars, I think.

South of Ground Kontrol is one of the tallest buildings in Portland, which I guess is officially called the US Bankcorp tower, but everyone just calls it Big Pink. If you enter the lobby you can take the elevator to the 30th floor which is home to Portland City Grill and arguably one of the best views of Portland available. It's a posh piano bar and it can take a while to get a table but happy hour is between 4-7 and 9-close

Southeast of Big Pink is Kell's which is an Irish pub serving good--if inauthentic--food and genuine Guinness. There's a cigar lounge in the cellar that used to be a cool secret but sadly the secret is out. For an even better pint try the driftwood room at Gracie's.

Two blocks south of Ace Hotel you'll find whatever you want to eat at the Alder street foodcart pod. If you keep walking south you'll come to the south park blocks which start at 9th ave and Salmon st and is a great place to go walking. Don't mind all the homeless people.

You will definitely be panhandled repeatedly in Portland. If you're okay with lying you can tell them you don't carry cash and that will usually end it. Or give them a dollar and maybe hear a good story. Either way if you walk down the park blocks you'll come to the Portland Art Museum and the Oregon Historical Society both of which are usually good for an afternoon of diversion if you are so inclined. Behind the art museum and across 10th ave is my favorite west side cafe. It's just called Behind the Museum Cafe. It's quiet and well-lit and the baristas know what they're doing.

Those are a few general ideas for structuring a west side exploration. I spend most of my time on the east side; map soon to follow.