



Petaluma Helen Putnam Regional Park; and McNear Park to Casa Grande Road via Petaluma Ring Trail

Sonoma County



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Distance: 7.1 miles:

1.2 miles: Helen Putnam Park

5.9 miles: section from McNear Park to Casa Grande Road

From: McNear Park

To: Casa Grande Road

Enjoy Helen Putnam Regional Park's grassy hillsides and groves of heritage oaks. Use the staging area on the south side to begin your stroll along a paved section, from which to enjoy a playground, picnic area, fish pond, and views of the surrounding hills and town.

The next section begins at McNear Park where you will travel through tree-lined neighborhoods to the historic downtown area--enjoy sampling the many lively shops and restaurants in the iron-front brick downtown commercial district.

Just before the historic D Street drawbridge, a new Ridge Trail segment adopted in 2016 turns northwest one block on 1st Street then continues on a pedestrian walkway beside an old railroad trestle (bikes dismount until the narrow path emerges on Water Street alley). Pass an arched foot-bridge (do not cross) and continue on the west bank of the tidal Petaluma River, now on Water Street behind downtown (watch for cars). Jog left 1/2 block to cross Washington Blvd. at the signal, then return to Water Street.

Immediately take the hiking/bicycle path, and go over the Copeland Crossing (bridge) to the east bank of the Petaluma River. Cross Lakeville Street and the SMART tracks, and follow the Petaluma River on a mix of natural-surfaced and paved trails. The Ridge Trail soon follows Lynch Creek upstream beneath busy US 101, and passes through Lucchesi and Fox Hollow Parks. At Castle Drive the trail turns sharply southeast. Prince Park, Sky ranch Road (bordering the municipal airport) and Wiseman Park mark the edge of Petaluma's dense subdivisions. Golf courses and airfield offer wide open views north toward Sonoma Mountain. The trail ends at a cul-de-sac of Hidden Valley Drive right before Casa Grande Road.

If you have the 2008 guidebook, you will notice the current route, adopted in 2016, replaces a mostly street-and-sidewalk route from D Street north and east via Payran Street, Caufield Lane, South McDowell Blvd. and Casa Grande Road. The new route is mostly off-street and connects many neighborhood parks and open spaces.

Another option from downtown: For another glimpse of Petaluma's waterfront, continue north from 1st Street across the D Street drawbridge then east on Copeland Street to Steamer Landing Park, and retrace your steps. Future plans are to connect eastward to Shollenberger Park then north along Adobe Creek to Casa Grande Road, and will someday connect to Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park (0.6 mile north of where the current trail ends).

Golden Gate Transit and Sonoma Transit stop in downtown Petaluma near Walnut Park; the SMART train will stop north of the river off D Street starting in early 2017.