



Napa-Solano Border Route Study

Edited for Public View
February 2025
Created By: Kyvan Elep

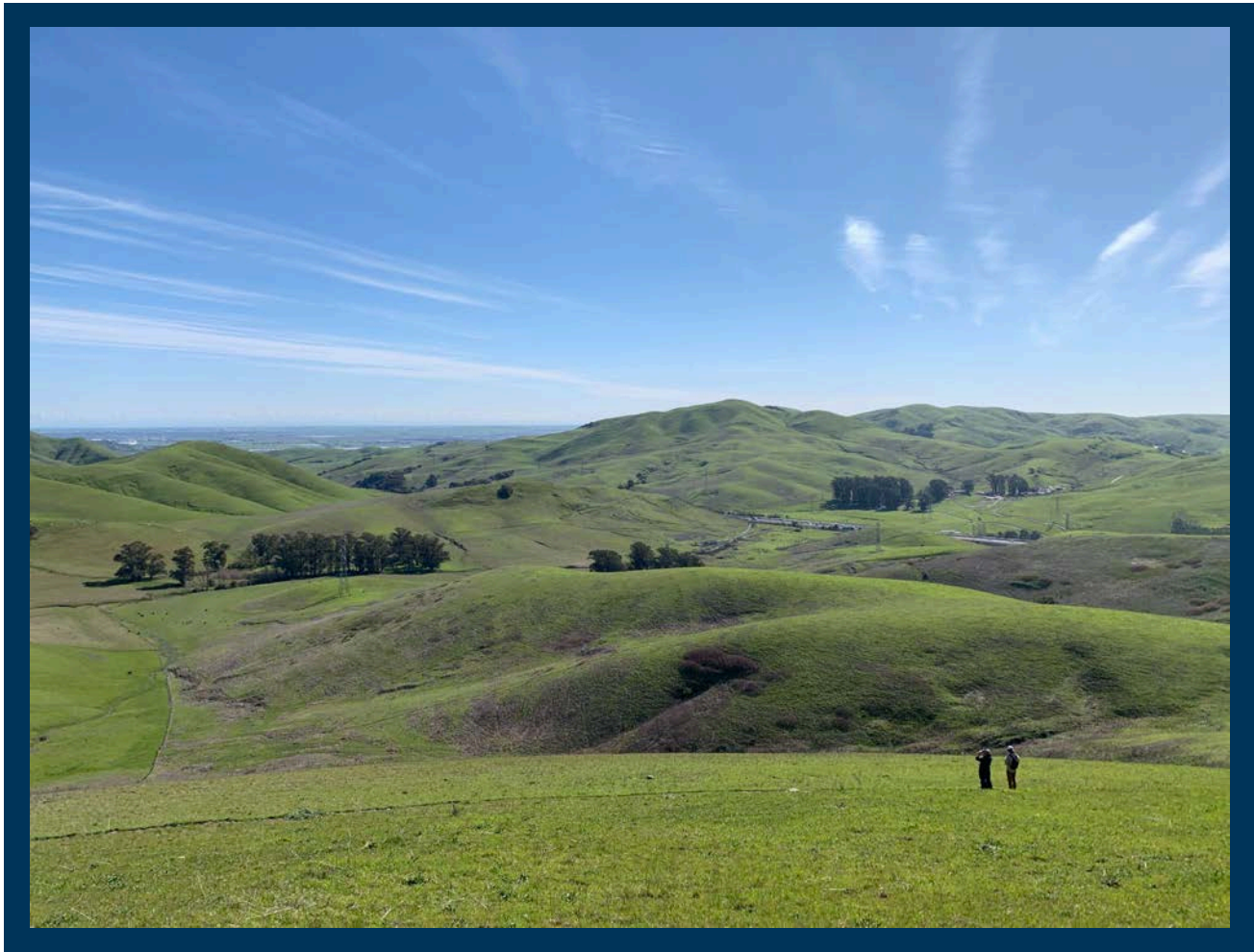


Table of Contents

Napa-Solano Border Route Study	1
Table of Contents	2
OVERVIEW	3
BACKGROUND	3
GAP A: SKYLINE WILDERNESS PARK TO LYNCH CANYON OPEN SPACE	5
Recommended Next Steps.....	6
Longer-Term Strategy.....	7
GAP B: VINTAGE VALLEY TRAIL TO MCGARY ROAD	8
Recommended Next Steps.....	9
Longer-Term Strategy.....	9
GAP C: LYNCH CANYON OPEN SPACE TO HIDDENBROOKE OPEN SPACE	11
Recommended Next Steps.....	11
Longer-Term Strategy.....	12
KEY TAKEAWAYS	12
STRATEGIC OUTLINE & SUMMARY	13

OVERVIEW

This study outlines critical steps for addressing current gaps in the Ridge Trail in Napa and Solano counties, leveraging short-term solutions while laying a foundation for long-term trail development. The recommendations strike a balance between interim trail usability and strategic opportunities to secure continuous Ridge Trail connectivity for future generations. This document intends to provide context and guidance to the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council staff and board as the organization pursues future projects in the focused planning area. The document outlines challenges, opportunities, and recommendations for three separate Ridge Trail (RT) gaps. Finally, the document provides maps summarizing recommended actions and long-term RT concepts for the study area.

BACKGROUND

In 2024, the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council decided to study the Ridge Trail gap bordering Napa and Solano Counties (Figure A). This report examines the gaps in the Ridge Trail's planned alignments from Skyline Wilderness Park to Lynch Canyon Open Space and from the Vintage Valley Trail in Fairfield to McGary Road. Since adopting the planned Ridge Trail alignment, various developments and changes have occurred in this area. These gaps face challenges related to mixed-use development, private property ownership, and being situated at the confluence of multiple road and rail systems. The Gap Analysis Report from June 2020 outlines these specific challenges and the current status, strategies, and next steps for each gap segment in the current alignment of the study area.

For this study, the RT staff met with Napa County Regional Parks and Open Space District (NCRPOSD), Napa Valley Vine Trail Coalition (NVVTC), Solano Land Trust (SLT), and local residents to review recent developments and changes within the study area. Ridge Trail staff then assessed and reviewed the current alignment and gap analysis notes using new information from conversations with partners and other planning documents. This report then synthesized all available information to create planning documents and strategy recommendations to guide future Ridge Trail work to close the gaps mentioned above.

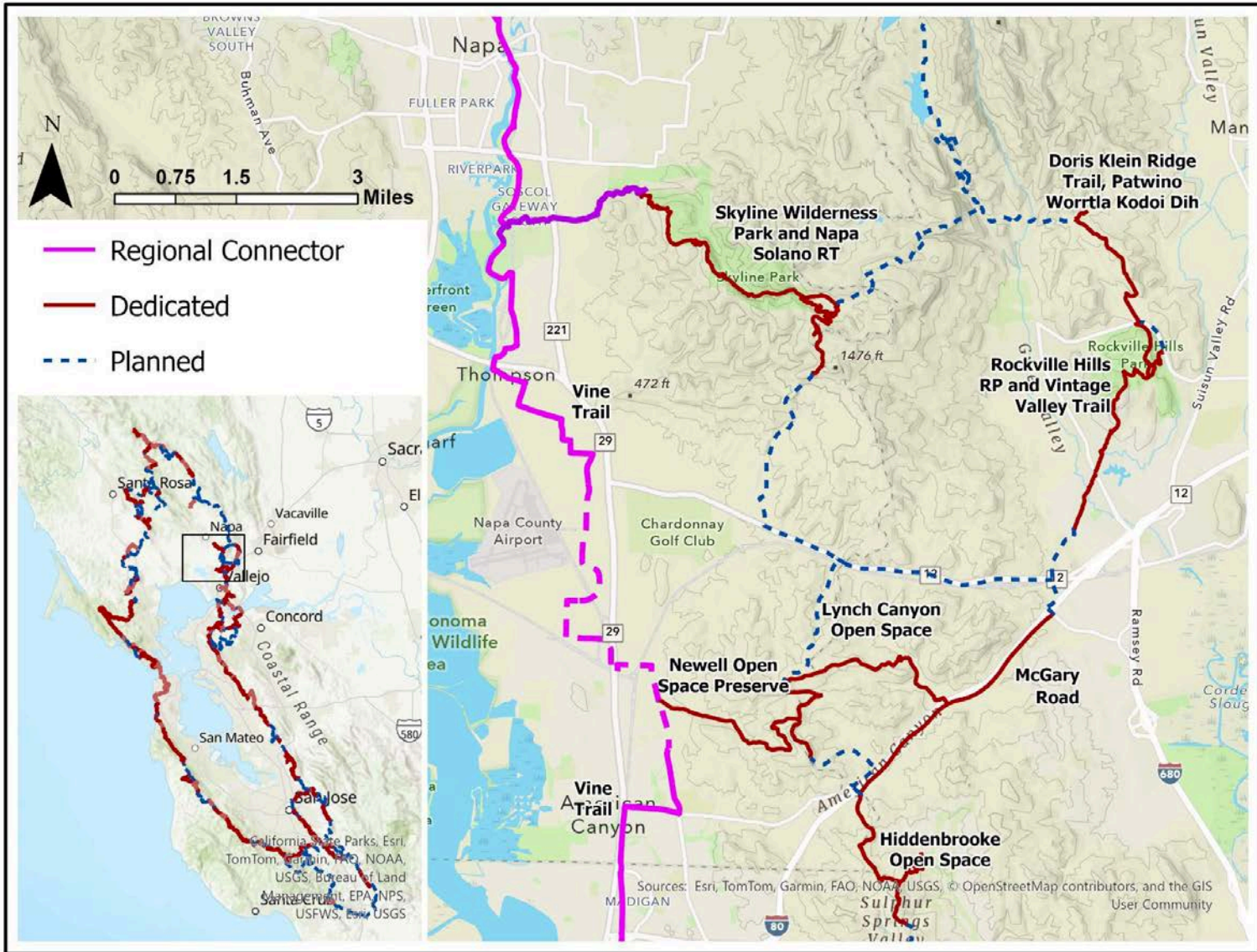
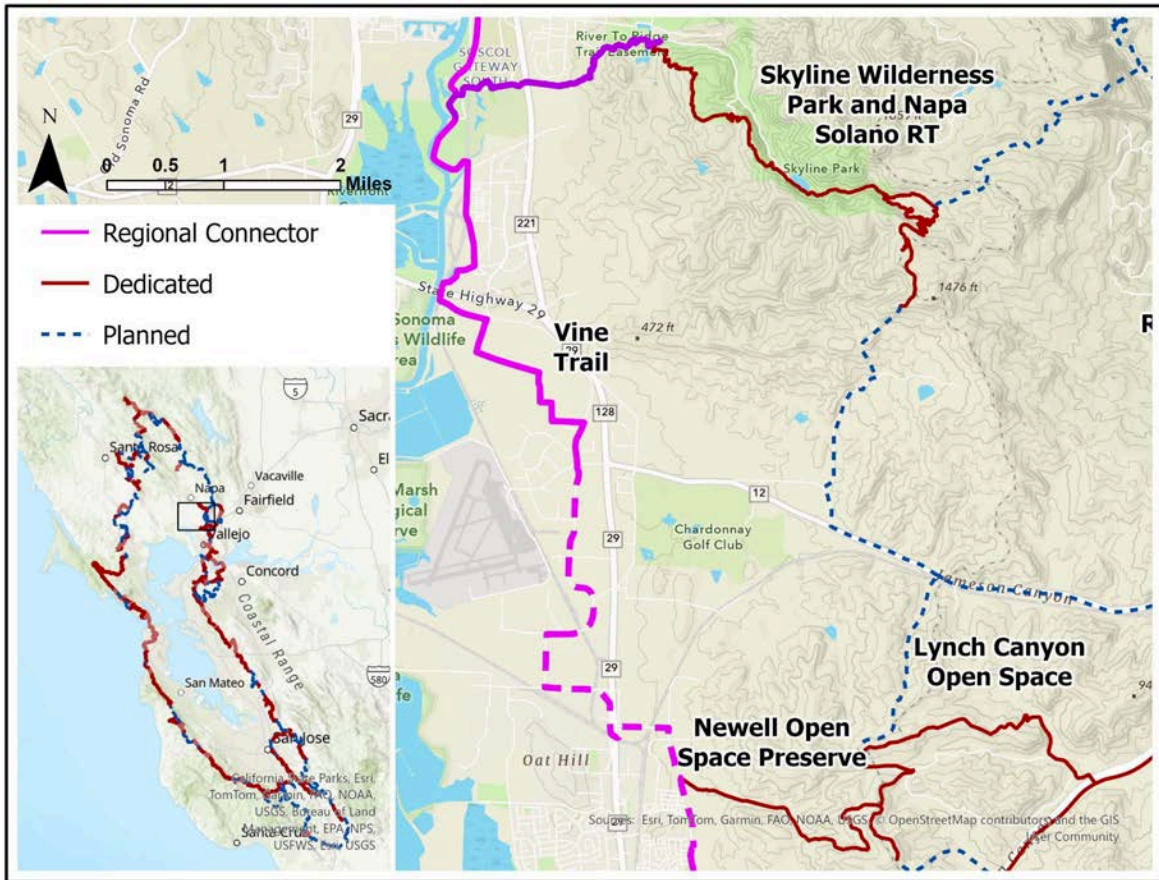


Figure A. Study area for Ridge Trail Gaps in Solano and Napa County.

GAP A: SKYLINE WILDERNESS PARK TO LYNCH CANYON OPEN SPACE



In the current planned alignment, the route connects Skyline Wilderness Park to Lynch Canyon Open Space by traveling south across private properties, crossing Highway 12 and the railroad, and then taking a narrow road (with no shoulder) and crossing several more private properties. This alignment assumed the Suscol Ridge Phase II project would extend the Ridge Trail South towards Highway 12, where users would travel on shared multi-use paths to cross the highway. After meeting with NRCOPSD for this study, RT staff received the final plans for the Suscol Ridge Phase II project. The planned trail system will extend the Ridge Trail south by ~1.4 miles and then travel ~2.9 miles west to the trail system's parking lot and trailhead on North Kelly Road. This route differs from the Ridge Trail's planned alignment, which assumed the trail would head more south to Polson Road and Kirkland Ranch Road to access Highway 12.

Pros to Current Alignment:

- Scenic and direct route
- Possible wildlife undercrossing under Hwy 12 would allow a quick and low-cost solution to crossing Highway 12
- Connections to existing bike lanes on Hwy 12
- Expressed interest from NCRPOSD to pursue private parcel acquisitions in the area

Cons to Current Alignment:

- Suscol Ridge Phase II Extension has changed
- Extended timeline (10+ Years)
- Private property acquisition likely to be expensive and not guaranteed
- If wildlife undercrossing Hwy 12 is not possible, the route would need to change to existing Hwy 12 pedestrian crossings
- Bike lanes on Hwy 12 need improvement and are not very hiker-friendly

Recommended Next Steps

Dedicate 1.4 miles of primary and 2.9 miles of access trail as part of the Suscol Ridge Phase II project, expected in late 2025 or early 2026. (Map 1, Item A).

- The primary trail miles are an extension of Suscol Ridge Phase I that follow the ridgeline.
- Plans for this NCRPOSD Open Space extension include a new parking lot on North Kelly Road and a trail system that connects to Skyline Wilderness Park.
- The access trail will connect to primary RT miles using the new trail system.

At Newell Open Space Preserve, update the alignment of 0.5 miles of the existing access trail to a new alignment on 0.6 miles of the existing River Trail (Map 1, Item C).

- There is no improved car or trailhead access at the current RT alignment of the Newell Open Space access trailhead.
- The existing River Trail would lead users to an existing accessible and managed trailhead.
- Once the Vine Trail and the development of Watson Ranch are complete, this trailhead will be a nexus for Watson Ranch, Ridge Trail and Vine Trail.
- The access trail and included trailhead would also make the Ridge Trail more visible in American Canyon.

Longer-Term Strategy

Continue coordination and reengage with the City of Vallejo to discuss accessing the watershed area between Napa Solano Ridge Trail and Patwino Worrtla Kodoi Dihi Open Space Preserve (Map 2, Item A).

- Coordinating with the appropriate partners and departments at the City of Vallejo will allow the Ridge Trail to understand the needs of this sensitive area.
- Accessing this watershed depends on a multitude of factors, including the status of the reservoirs and allowing public access near this resource.
- The Ridge Trail can leverage our good standing relationship with the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission at Fifield-Cahill and EBMUD to begin these conversations and provide examples of successful public access in restricted Bay Area watersheds.

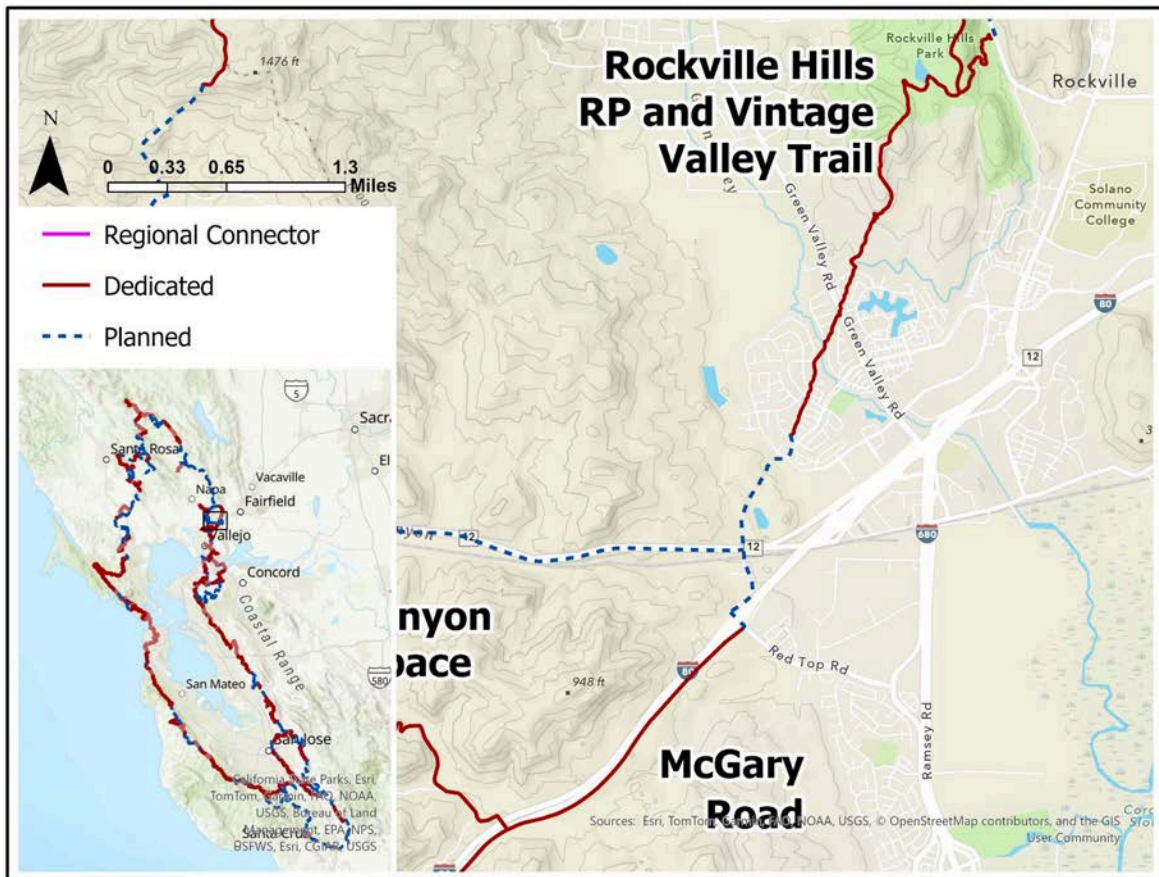
Continue ongoing support and promotion of the Napa Valley Vine Trail as a Regional Connector Trail. The Vine Trail will enable RT users to experience a continuous trail in the interim while RT staff and our partners develop more long-term solutions (Map 2, Item B).

- The section of Vine Trail that connects the cities of Napa and American Canyon is anticipated to open in the next few years. The Vine Trail's current alignment will connect Skyline Wilderness, Suscol Headwaters, and Newell Open Space Ridge Trail sections via a paved walking and biking trail.
- Support for the Vine Trail can include letters of support, general advocacy, and coordinated event planning. This regional connection and partnership would allow an interim, continuous route for RT users interested in longer routes.

Identify and monitor the statuses and conditions of privately owned land parcels, land acquisitions, parcel rezoning, and highway construction (Map 2, Item C).

- Developing relationships with regional partners and private landowners in the area can create advocates and champions of the Ridge Trail in Napa and Solano counties. Understanding the long-term route and strategy will enable us to capitalize on opportunities with landowners as the area evolves and develops.
- Continue coordination with Napa County Regional Parks and Open Space District (NCRPOSD), Napa Valley Transportation Authority (NVTA), and other local partners as developments and acquisitions happen.
- Coordinate efforts with local partners when approaching private landowners who own large parcels of adjacent land.

GAP B: VINTAGE VALLEY TRAIL TO MCGARY ROAD



The current planned route would use a shared multi-use path to connect McGary Road to the Vintage Valley Trail as part of Phase 5 of Solano Transportation Authority's [I-80/I-680/SR-12 Interchange Project](#). The Interchange Project has seven multi-year phases, with its most recent completion being Phase 2A in Fall 2022. There are plans for Phase 5 to include an improved shared multi-use (bike and pedestrian) path, extending west on Business Center Drive then South to cross Highway 12 and then ending on the North side of I-80. The City of Fairfield's current [General Plan](#) does note plans to improve access and visibility in this area to connect Northern and Southern Cordelia (North of Hwy 12 and South of I-80).

Pros for Current Alignment:

- Most direct route to close the gap
- Possibility to include this Class I trail connection in Phase 5 of the long-term I80/680/Hwy 12 Interchange improvement project

- City of Fairfield general plans note improving access in this area
- Easements for the interchange project has been acquired by the Solano Transportation Authority

Cons for Current Alignment:

- Expensive and long-term infrastructure project (10+ Years)
- This path would connect currently low-density areas with minimal active transportation
- Solano Transportation Authority and CalTrans need to incorporate the trail as part of the eventual freeway undercrossing.

Recommended Next Steps

Close the gap between Vintage Valley Trail and McGary Road by dedicating a ~3-mile urban route through the Cordelia Junction/Fairfield area in 2025 (Map 1, Item B).

- RT staff scouted this new route option in October 2024. This option meets most RT standards for trails and also passes through several parks and green spaces in the area.
 - Additional work will be needed to identify and upgrade sections of this route if it is to be considered primary RT
- This option does not need any large infrastructure projects for the RT to cross Hwy 12 and avoid I-80 undercrossing, unlike any other current route option to cross the highways.
- There are possible opportunities to partner with local groups to increase Ridge Trail visibility in the area.

Longer-Term Strategy

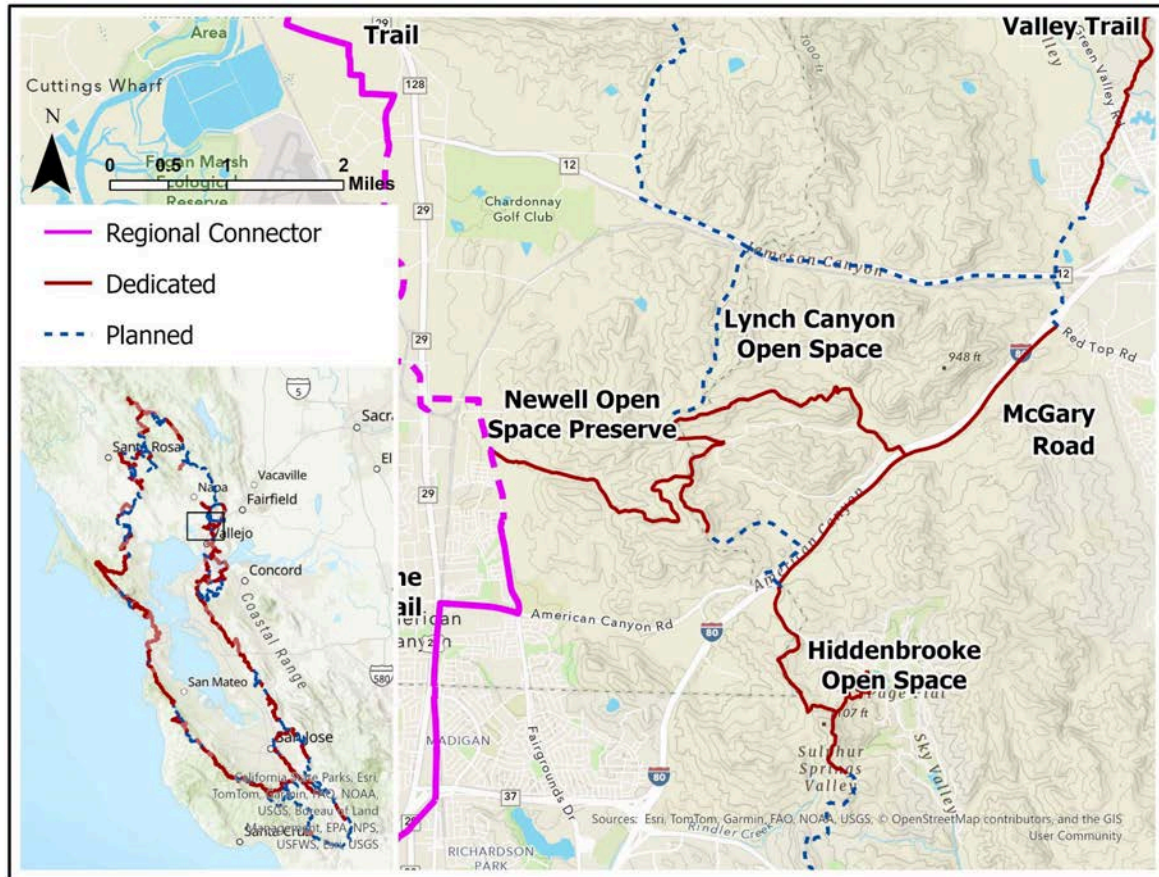
Assuming adoption of a reroute using streets and sidewalks through Cordelia Junction, the Ridge Trail can still advocate for multi-use paths to be included in Phase 5 of the Solano Transportation Authority's STA I-80/I-680/SR-12 Interchange project (Map 3, Item B).

- As the Interchange project progresses, Ridge Trail can check in with the appropriate partners to assess the feasibility of incorporating a multi-use trail in this area.
- If a multi-use path is feasible, RT in this section can be redesignated in the future.
- Leveraging the short-term strategy of adopting the on-street route while tracking the longer-term project would allow the RT to close a gap while at the same time still being able to advocate for the conservation of land if the opportunity presents itself.

Pursue opportunities at Eastern Swett and King Ranch Properties (Map 3, Item E)

- There could be potential opportunities to replace the McGary Road section by coordinating with Solano Land Trust to access their Eastern Swett and King Ranch properties.
- Continue to monitor and coordinate with SLT to understand priorities and possibilities as the project progresses.

GAP C: LYNCH CANYON OPEN SPACE TO HIDDENBROOKE OPEN SPACE



Lynch Canyon and Newell Open Space currently connect to Hiddenbrooke Open Space using McGary Road. The section of McGary Road between Hiddenbrooke and the eastern entrance of Lynch Canyon is a Class II (painted, on-road) bicycle lane that is not optimal for hikers on the Ridge Trail. The road is a high-speed, two-lane highway that lacks physical barriers or shoulders for pedestrian use. There is no dedicated landscape maintenance to this section, and thus the vegetation overgrows into the bike lane.

Recommended Next Steps

Continue collaboration with Solano Land Trust to secure an RT connection on the Brown and Souza property connecting Hiddenbrooke and Lynch Canyon (Map 2, Item D).

- Once this section is dedicated, a stronger case can be made to encourage a safe I-80 overcrossing to connect Newell Open Space and Lynch Canyon, rather than using McGary Road.
 - This portion of McGary Road can then be updated to an access trail.
- RT advocate and promote a multi-use path and widening project on the I-80 overcrossing to connect Lynch Canyon and Hiddenbrooke.
- RT will also work with SLT to host RT-specific outings on the Brown and Souza property to provide early access to this trail section.

Longer-Term Strategy

Ridge Trail is already coordinating with Solano Land Trust as the Brown and Souza property has become a priority for the land trust.

- RT staff are planning site visits and remaining in contact with appropriate SLT staff to participate in the development of the trail system at the property.
- As this project progresses, RT staff will need to understand and monitor the road section between this new trail and the Hiddenbrooke trail.
- There is currently no plan to improve pedestrian access on these roads except for the construction of roundabouts that could allow for future sidewalk installation.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The Bay Area Ridge Trail Gap Analysis and Action Plan is a comprehensive review of remaining gaps along the planned Ridge Trail alignment as of June 2020. It was created to assess and prioritize our efforts and strategies while identifying resources needed to complete the Ridge Trail. The ultimate goal of the analysis is to understand the needs, challenges, opportunities, and strategies of each RT gap segment, in order to estimate gap closure timelines and efficiently utilize resources to effectively work with partners and advocates to close Ridge Trail gaps.

Route studies, such as this one, build on the Gap Analysis and help synthesize the necessary resources and strategies to close the gaps. By creating detailed recommendations and outlining near-term and long-term strategies, route studies provide a more comprehensive blueprint that will enable the Ridge Trail Council to efficiently and effectively address the remaining Ridge Trail gaps.

STRATEGIC OUTLINE & SUMMARY

NEAR-TERM (0-2 YRS)

- Vintage Valley Trail to McGary Road:
 - Dedicate a 3-mile urban route through Cordelia Junction / Fairfield
- Newell Open Space:
 - Recategorize 0.5 miles of access trail
 - Dedicate 0.6 miles of the existing River Trail as an access trail
- Suscol Ridge Phase II (Late 2025/Early 2026):
 - Dedicate 1.4 miles of primary trail along the ridgeline
 - Dedicate 2.9 miles of access trail from the new parking lot to Skyline Loop Trail

MEDIUM-TERM (2-10 YRS)

- Vine Trail:
 - Collaborate with and support Napa Valley Vine Trail construction from American Canyon to Napa, estimated to be complete in 2028.
 - Recommend RT users to use the completed Napa Valley Vine Trail to connect Skyline Wilderness, Suscol Headwaters, and Newell Open Space Ridge Trail sections as an interim option
- Brown and Souza Property:
 - Continue work with Solano Land Trust to secure a route that connects Hiddenbrooke and Lynch Canyon
 - After the section is dedicated, recategorize half of McGary Road to access trail
- Coordinate with appropriate partners and jurisdictions regarding land acquisitions, parcel rezoning, and highway construction to inform planning for long-term trail goals

LONG-TERM (10+ YRS)

- Continue to monitor land acquisitions, parcel rezoning, and highway construction in the area to pursue viable Ridge Trail alignments
- Advocate for multi-use paths to be included in Phase 5 of the Solano Transportation Authority's STA I-80/I-680/SR-12 Interchange project

