

BAY AREA RIDGE TRAIL
GAP ANALYSIS AND ACTION PLAN
JUNE 2020

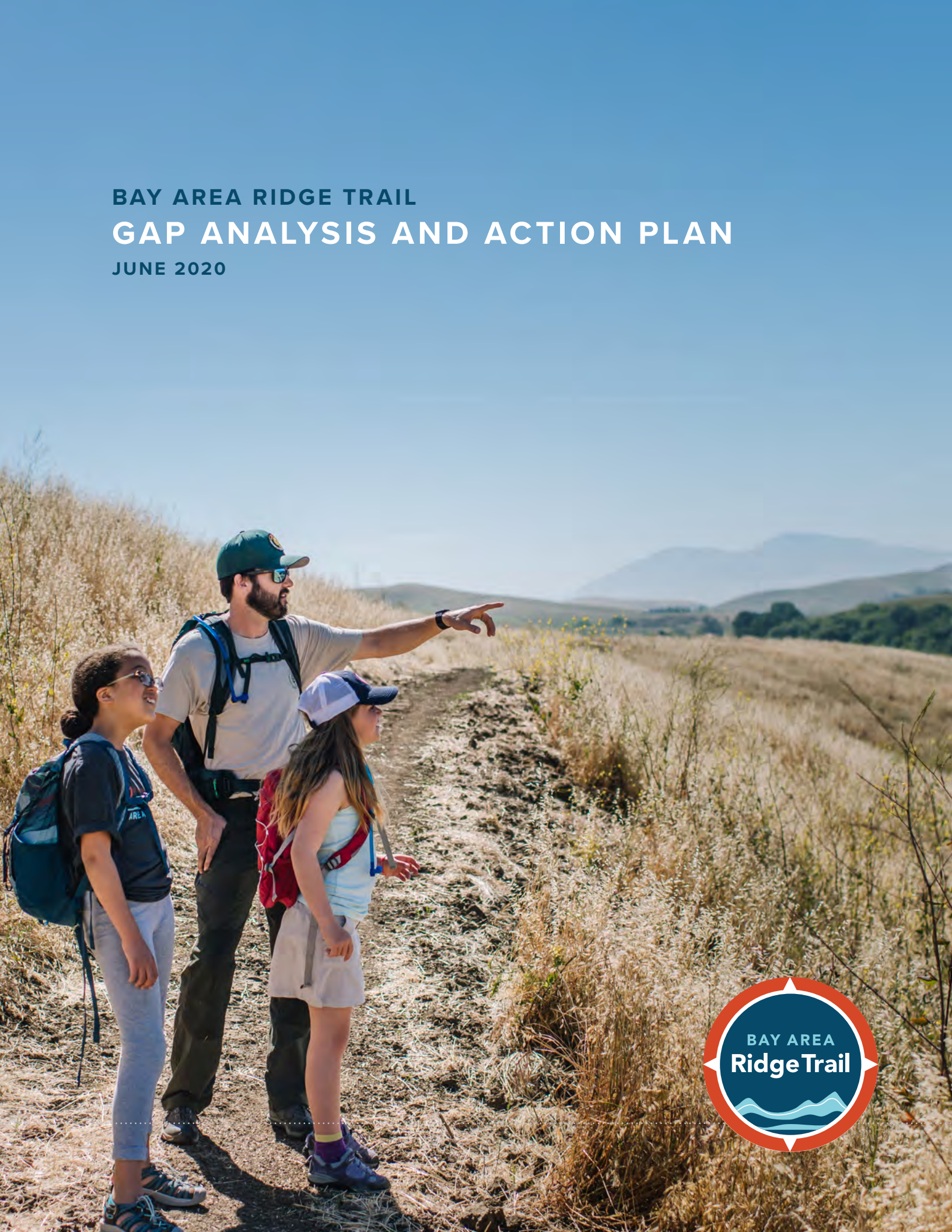


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Marin County Parks, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, Sonoma County Parks, Sonoma Ag + Open Space District, Peninsula Open Space Trust, East Bay Regional Park District, East Bay Municipal Utility District, John Muir Land Trust, Contra Costa County, Solano County Transportation Authority, City of Vallejo, Greater Vallejo Recreation District, Solano Land Trust, Napa County Parks and Open Space District, Pacific Union College, San Francisco Public Utility Commission, San Francisco Recreation and Parks District, Sutro Stewards, Santa Clara County Parks, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority, and San Mateo County Parks.

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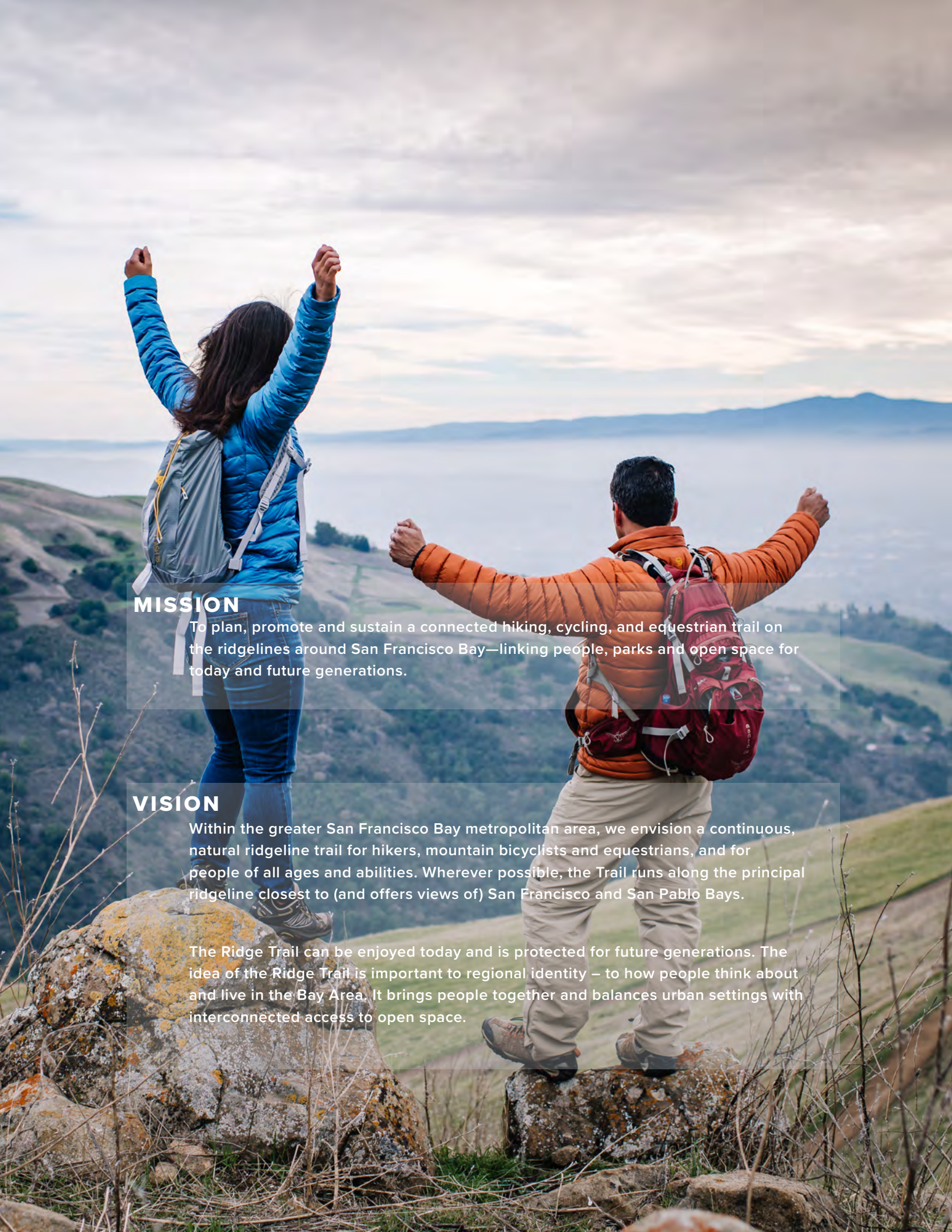
THE RIDGE TRAIL IN ADOPTED PLANS

The Bay Area Ridge Trail is recognized in the following State and regional plans:

STATE COASTAL CONSERVANCY'S 2018-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN | PRIORITY PROJECT [\(LINK\)](#)

CALIFORNIA RECREATIONAL TRAIL PLAN (2011) | CALIFORNIA TRAIL CORRIDOR [\(LINK\)](#)

PLAN BAY AREA 2040 | PRIORITY CONSERVATION AREA [\(LINK\)](#)



MISSION

To plan, promote and sustain a connected hiking, cycling, and equestrian trail on the ridgelines around San Francisco Bay—linking people, parks and open space for today and future generations.

VISION

Within the greater San Francisco Bay metropolitan area, we envision a continuous, natural ridgeline trail for hikers, mountain bicyclists and equestrians, and for people of all ages and abilities. Wherever possible, the Trail runs along the principal ridgeline closest to (and offers views of) San Francisco and San Pablo Bays.

The Ridge Trail can be enjoyed today and is protected for future generations. The idea of the Ridge Trail is important to regional identity – to how people think about and live in the Bay Area. It brings people together and balances urban settings with interconnected access to open space.



360° OF INSPIRATION

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It's been a little over thirty years since a group of visionary leaders and stakeholders from around the Bay Area first gathered, got inspired and decided to create a Bay Area Ridge Trail – and a Ridge Trail Council. The value they saw in a fully connected regional trail network lives on today, as the Ridge Trail connects people to local recreational and outdoor experiences, and fosters a new generation of environmental stewards.

Thanks to the extraordinary leadership of public, private, and nonprofit partners and the tireless work of advocates and volunteers, over 380 miles of the ultimate 550-mile route are now in place for close-to-home outings and epic multi-day adventures, ready to enjoy today and for generations to come.

We recognize the hard work and effort that went into securing each and every inch, and we re-dedicate ourselves to connecting the full Ridge Trail loop.

A focus on “closing gaps” in the Ridge Trail is always front and center to Council efforts. Staff, volunteers, and partners continually study problem gaps and consider strategies to make progress, so gap analysis is not really a discrete effort. However, as the decades pass the rate of opening new trail miles has slowed. The easy sections have (mostly) been dedicated and generally the more challenging ones remain. Routes that thread through private property, conservation lands, or across highways can be particularly daunting. In this report we've collected, updated, and mapped information on all the gaps around the region and have assessed near- and long-term strategies to expedite development. This report and the underlying data will serve many functions: data and mapping tools will continue to inform our work, serve as a guide to setting priorities, and act as a source of inspiration for our work with partners to create a fully connected 550+ mile Ridge Trail.

Thank you to all who worked so diligently on this study, and to all who have rolled up their sleeves and are a part of this inspiring journey!

Janet McBride

Janet McBride

Executive Director

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mission of the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council: to plan, promote and sustain a connected hiking, cycling and equestrian trail on the ridgelines around San Francisco Bay - linking people, parks and open space for today and future generations, has remained clear and steady since our founding three decades ago. Today over 380 miles are complete and we are dedicated to connecting a full 550-mile loop!

In the early years, we enjoyed rapid progress, quickly dedicating many miles of existing trails in established parks. We reached 100 miles in the first two years and 200 miles by 1995. It took another decade to reach 300 miles (celebrated in 2006) and we are still working to reach the 400-mile mark, hopefully by 2022. Going forward, the most challenging sections remain, so completion is likely to take another generation.

To assess progress to-date, review challenges and opportunities, and refresh plans, priorities and strategies to complete the Ridge Trail, the Council conducted a multi-year comprehensive review of all remaining gaps. The Gap Analysis and Action

Plan presents study findings in a strong graphic and map-heavy format to help tell the Ridge Trail story in a clear and compelling way to guide Council efforts and to inspire partners, decision-makers and advocates to prioritize Ridge Trail completion.

Overall, more than two-thirds (70%) of the ultimate Ridge Trail loop is dedicated (383 miles) and about one-third (30%) of the route remains (167 miles). About three-quarters of the dedicated route is open to all our user groups (hikers, cyclists and equestrians) and about one-quarter (94 miles) has a "use gap". Trail progress across the region has been variable, however, with higher completion rates and longer stretches of trail in the center of the region and more left to do in the far north and far south. Over time, the planned route has been extended significantly - reaching up to Mt St Helena in the north and down below Gilroy in the south, and adding many more miles to the ultimate "loop."

The Council tracks all Ridge Trail sections - both developed and future ("gaps") in a robust GIS database. We studied 152 individual gaps that traverse about 285 miles (note this includes over

100 additional miles of side trail loops linked to the main "spine"). Santa Clara County stands out as having the highest number of both planned and dedicated miles, due to the sheer size of the County, as well as the southern county extension.

Each area has its own unique geography, ecology, and planning framework which has shaped progress to date, and which will continue to influence trail completion going forward. The graph below highlights the overall status of existing (dedicated) and future (planned) Ridge Trail in each County:

DEVELOPMENT TIMING

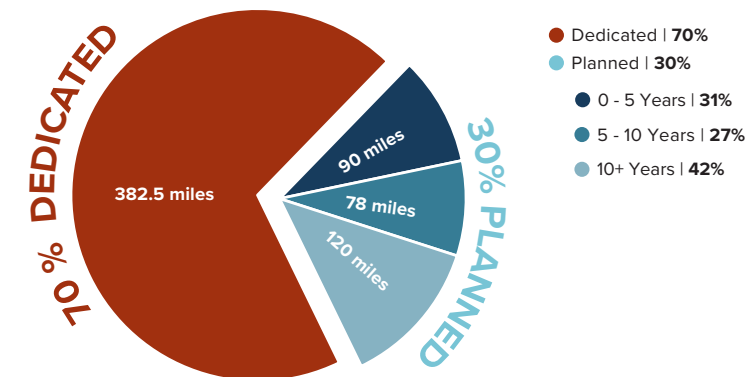
Our study reviewed and assigned potential trail opening or "dedication" timing in three categories: 0-5 years, 6-10 years and more than 10 years. Timing assignments represent a mix of expectations and partner input, and often represent the earliest possible opening, not necessarily a forecast or prediction. Just under a third of the gaps (representing 90 miles) could open by 2025, less than a third (78 miles) could open by 2030 and a little fewer than half the gaps (120 miles) are likely more than 10 years away from dedication.

will require securing public access rights; gaps on about 38 miles cross property with a mix of land ownership, which will need extra coordination and facilitation; and finally, 14 planned route miles traverse land trust or conservation lands. Other key challenges include: making the trail accessible to all user groups (closing multi-use gaps for cyclists and equestrians); and raising awareness to prioritize Ridge Trail completion, as well as the necessary funding.

In the course of this study, we reviewed and compiled a menu of possible actions to expedite trail development. We then matched up potential strategies for each individual gap or gap type. We also highlighted where and how the Ridge Trail Council can be most helpful such as leading multi-jurisdictional efforts, coordinating with partners, conducting planning studies, fundraising, and advocacy.

Finally, the report considers how several of the Council's ongoing Strategic Initiatives can be leveraged to address key trail progress challenges. Strategic Initiatives include efforts to support multi-day trekking and circumnavigation (traversing the full route); exploring ways to carefully and intentionally get people out to explore trails on properties that might require a special permit, a docent, or agency or private landowner permission; convening focused area planning studies and more.

DEDICATED AND PLANNED MILES BY TIMING



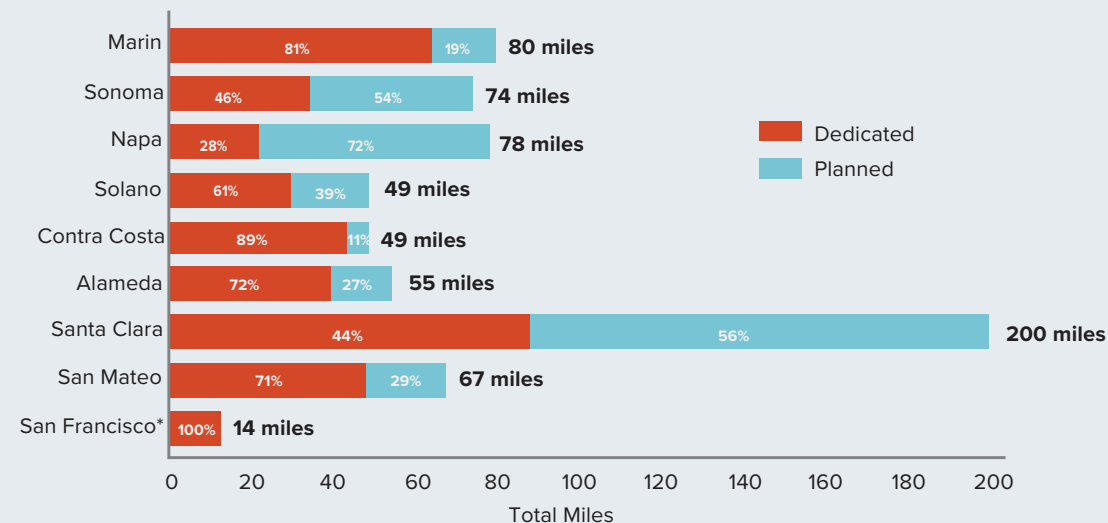
KEY CHALLENGES

Many remaining trail gaps have formidable challenges to solve before they can be dedicated. Key issues or challenges along the planned route include, in order of magnitude: nearly half of the planned route (124 miles) crosses publicly-owned land and will require partner prioritization and resources to advance; about one-third the planned route (91 miles) crosses privately-owned land which

COMPLETING THE RIDGE TRAIL

The updated database and maps, study results, and Gap Analysis and Action Plan offer powerful insights and will inform and guide nearly all of the Council's near- and long-term planning, advocacy, outreach and communication, and fundraising. They are also tools that will support additional analysis and ongoing trail tracking. We look forward to sharing study findings, exploring next steps, and cutting the ribbon on more miles of trail, along with partners and advocates across the Bay Area.

DEDICATED AND PLANNED MILES BY COUNTY



*NOTE: The original San Francisco 14-mile route is 100% dedicated but the planned San Francisco reroute, which will move the trail from sidewalks to iconic open spaces, still has 3 planned miles to complete.

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

A multi-year study was conducted to identify the path forward for the next 30 years, to complete the outstanding gaps along the Ridge Trail and to realize our shared vision of a continuous world class regional trail.

This report includes a comprehensive review of all remaining gaps along the planned Ridge Trail alignment in order to assess and prioritize our efforts and strategies and to identify resources needed to complete the Trail. The ultimate goal is to gain an understanding of: gap-specific challenges, needs, opportunities and strategies; how long it is going to take to complete; and funding and resource needs and priorities so our organization can strategically and effectively work with partners and advocates to achieve our mission.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

Gaps were analyzed according to several thematic, geographic and timing lenses, including land use and ownership, current site conditions, challenges, development timing and project phasing, Ridge Trail priority, and funding needs. Strategies that leverage opportunities to advance the gap closures, both near-term and long-term, were then developed for each gap. Ridge Trail role and, when applicable, our Strategic Initiatives were also considered for each gap.

The Council maintains a GIS database with detailed information on each trail section (both existing and future). Over the last 18 months, we compiled and reviewed gap details from the database; convened a Partner Summit; and held many meetings, listening sessions and calls to update and refine data, maps and strategy options to the greatest extent possible.

A full list of prioritization criteria and the assessment of each gap according to these criteria can be found in the *Gap Prioritization Criteria Appendix* and the *Comprehensive List of Gap Prioritization Analysis Appendix*.

INTENDED AUDIENCES

Primary intended audiences of this report include: Ridge Trail board, staff and committees; park, land trust and agency partners; and other key stakeholders, sponsors, and advocates. Private property owner names are generally not shown and each map has a disclaimer regarding the planned route. Nevertheless, there are areas, such as where the route runs across private property, where sensitivity is high and discretion is critically important.

This report attempts to accurately capture the latest information possible, and with the expansive regional geography, ever-evolving local land and development issues, and scores of partners and stakeholders inevitably means that coverage is sometimes uneven and information will change. While this report captures a moment in time, the underlying data will be continually tracked, updated, and repurposed for various planning, advocacy, fundraising and communication needs. One conclusion is clear: more resources need to be secured to support the actions and effort required to increase the pace of new trail dedications.

TRAIL TERMINOLOGY



Dedicated Ridge Trail refers to sections that are built, open to the public and formally approved by the Ridge Trail Board as meeting the following conditions: follows the Ridge Trail alignment, meets minimum design standards, has Ridge Trail signs installed, is approved by the landowner and a managing entity (if different).

Planned Ridge Trail refers to areas where the route is not yet dedicated either because a trail does not exist or it is not ready, pending property control, site access or improvements, or a designated manager or other reasons discussed in more detail in the body of this report.

See *Trail Terminology* in the appendices for expanded definitions of all trail types.

RIDGE TRAIL MILEAGE

The Ridge Trail Council typically refers to ~168 “planned route” miles to be part of the main ultimate 550-mile Ridge Trail loop. Note, however, that the full regional network will actually be longer, potentially including over 100 additional miles, consisting of areawide inner trail loops.

Existing and future significant inner loop (totalling ~ 110 miles) include:

- Sugar Hood Loop, adding ~14 miles (Sonoma)
- Suscol/Rockville Loop, adding ~10 miles (Napa, Solano)
- Carquinez Strait Scenic Loop, adding ~6 miles (Solano, Contra Costa), and
- South Bay’s southern county loop to Gilroy, adding ~85 miles (Santa Clara)



HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

Below are the tools used to present the information from the analysis.

MAPS, TABLES & GAPS

MAP STRUCTURE AND TYPE

This report displays the trail on three types of maps which provide details at the regional, county, and area-levels. These include: (1) regional overview, (2) county overview, (3) passage maps, and (4) county summaries (with tables summarizing every gap within a county).

PASSAGE MAPS

The passage maps (32 total) are sub-regional maps organized by county with adjacent tables that house the most detailed information about the gaps. Each gap is called out on the map showing the gap number, name, length in miles, current status, and challenges/obstacles - shown on the sample map box below.

The tables on the facing page provide information on the landowner or manager, strategies, Ridge Trail Council role, dedication, timing and priority. See sample Table.

SAMPLE MAP BOX

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| GAP # NAME MILES | 441 ROSE DR .1 MILES |
| CURRENT STATUS | Planned route is designed to be a natural surface multi-use trail through the City open space. Passable route exists along sidewalk and street without bike lane. |
| CHALLENGES/ OBSTACLES | Open space trail is delayed due to lack of funding and low priority for the City. |

SAMPLE GAP TABLE

| 434 | VALLEJO SWETT | TIMING 2020-2024 | PRIORITY HIGH |
|---|--|--|-------------------|
| LANDOWNER: Greater Vallejo Recreation District (GVRD), Solano LT | STRATEGY: Next Step: Continue to host Restricted Access outings. Work with Solano LT to determine how to expedite trail construction. Consider dedicating interim route as Restricted Access. | RT ROLE/STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: Advocacy, trail planning and design | Restricted Access |

MAP SYMBOLOGY

The focus of this report is the main spine or "Primary" Ridge Trail route and the map symbology is reflected on the adjacent legend. The "non-primary" route (e.g. parallel, alternate, spur, community access, and regional connectors, which are defined in the *Trail Terminology Appendix*) are also shown on the maps as the lighter-color red when dedicated and as a narrow blue dash when planned non-primary.

GAP NUMBERING

Each gap is assigned a 3-digit number that relates to the county and travels in a clockwise orientation around the region. The numbers begin with 100s in Marin at the north end of the Golden Gate Bridge and travel clockwise around the region ending with 900s in San Francisco.

REPORT TERMS

Following is a quick explanation of key terms used in this report:

TIMING - refers to the potential dedication (formal opening) timing for each gap in three time frames: 0-5 years, 6-10 years, and 10+ years (symbology is described in legend on adjacent page). This is a combination of expectations, partner suggestions and educated best guesses. Generally, the timing reflects when each gap could be dedicated, not necessarily when it will.

PRIORITY - (High, Medium, Low) Based on the responses to the *Gap Prioritization Criteria Appendix*, each gap was assigned a priority. Gap priorities do not necessarily indicate which gaps WILL be addressed and completed first, rather the ranking system assesses which gaps provide the most opportunity for development, and where the Ridge Trail and partners should focus efforts.

STRATEGY - Both near-term and long-term strategies for closing gaps were considered for each gap. Strategies were developed both at the individual gap level and regional level to address challenges and needed responses. We compiled a menu of strategies that run the gamut from tried and safe to untried, hypothetical and even controversial, and can be found in the *Menu of Strategies Appendix*.

RT ROLE - Roles for the Ridge Trail Council and staff were broadly defined for each gap based on the challenge and strategy identified. Roles include but are not limited to advocacy, planning, funding, monitoring and partner coordination.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE - Gaps that are candidates for one of the Council's key Strategic Initiatives were labeled under RT Role/Strategic Initiative. These include Restricted Access, Focused Planning Area, or Transportation Crossings. See the Strategic Initiatives Chapter for more details.

CONCEPT ROUTE - In some of the Passage Maps, a wide indeterminate "concept route" swath, symbolized as a blue arrow, calls out the need (or in some cases opportunity) to identify a new route for some or all use groups.

LEGEND

- Dedicated Ridge Trail
 - Multi-use
 - Use Gap
 - Non-primary
- Planned / Potential Ridge Trail
 - 2020-2024
 - 2025-2029
 - 2030+
 - Planned, Non-primary
 - Other Trails
 - Public/Protected Land (Fee)
 - Conservation Easement
 - Urban
 - Campground
 - Campground (Planned)
 - BART Station
 - Gap Endpoint
 - Gap Midpoint
- Timing
 - TIMING 2020 - 2024
 - TIMING 2025 - 2029
 - TIMING 2030+
- Priority
 - PRIORITY LOW
 - PRIORITY MEDIUM
 - PRIORITY HIGH



GAP ANALYSIS

As it stands today, the Bay Area Ridge Trail is a 383-mile network traversing the nine counties of the Bay Area, and is an integral part of life the Bay Area, serving almost 5.7 million residents within 5 miles of the trail¹. There are 167 more miles planned to complete a contiguous loop around the Bay Area, with an additional 118 miles of planned route to complete the regional loops and other connecting trails. While a majority of the trail has been dedicated, there is still a lot of work ahead to complete the entire Ridge Trail loop.

In this chapter we will take a closer look at the trail gaps in increasing detail, starting with a Bay Area-wide overview, then diving into each county and the smaller subregions within each county (shown in the passage maps). We include details about each gap, including landowner; challenges; strategies that could be used to close trail gaps; and what we envision as the Council's role moving forward. After taking a detailed look at all the gaps, we then step back to analyze the data, looking for patterns and similarities among the gaps. New connections may come to light that reveal how we can leverage funding, partner relationships, and public support in new ways to complete the trail faster than we otherwise would be able to. The ultimate goal of this analysis is to aid us in developing work, funding and strategic plans and above all support our land managing and agency partners in completing the Ridge Trail.

THIS CHAPTER INCLUDES

- REGIONAL OVERVIEW
- COUNTY BY COUNTY SUMMARIES
- KEY FINDINGS, CHALLENGES & STRATEGIES
- STRATEGIC INITIATIVES



¹ 5.7 million total residents will live within 5 miles of the Ridge Trail route (based on the American Community Survey 2013-2017, and population by Block Group).



REGIONAL STATS

Overall, the number and timeline for completion of the remaining 152 Ridge Trail gaps vary greatly based on patterns in land use, presence of trail advocates and governance. Today, 71% of the Ridge Trail is complete; however, at the county level the completion rate varies greatly.

550*
TOTAL MILES



70% complete

383 dedicated miles

167* planned miles

LAND USE & OWNERSHIP

Much of the reason for the variation in gap mileage by county is due to the differing land use patterns and ownership along the trail. Currently, over 90% of the dedicated trail is on public lands, primarily on park and open space district lands, and only 7% of the existing trail crosses private land. Conversely, approximately one-third of the remaining planned trail miles (91 miles) cross private lands, primarily in Sonoma and Napa counties. Just over 40% of the trail gaps lie on publicly owned lands, mostly managed by city governments and park and open space districts. A portion of the planned route (15%) lies in areas with multiple owners, which often require extensive coordination to complete.

DEDICATION TIMING & PRIORITY

After identifying the challenges and strategies for completion, we have identified anticipated timing for completion (using 'best case' scenarios) and prioritized each gap. In the best case scenario, 60% of the gaps (167 miles) will be dedicated over the next 10 years. Accordingly, about 40% of the gaps are deemed high priority and are actively being addressed by the Council. Another 40% of the gaps are deemed medium priority and require active monitoring so they may be completed within the 10 year timeframe.

*The Ridge Trail Council typically refers to ~167 "planned route" miles to be part of the main ultimate 550-mile Ridge Trail loop. Note, however, that the gap analysis covers 285 miles which includes over 100 additional miles, consisting of areawide inner trail loops.

COMPLETION RATE & MILEAGE

Counties in the central parts of the Ridge Trail loop experience both higher completion rates and longer continuous stretches (Marin, Contra Costa, Alameda, San Mateo, and San Francisco) while counties on the northern and southern extents have lower rates (Napa, Sonoma, Santa Clara) with Solano somewhere in the middle. Santa Clara County experiences the lowest completion rate as well as the largest total miles as it is home to a Central and South County Loop.

LAND OWNERSHIP - DEDICATED

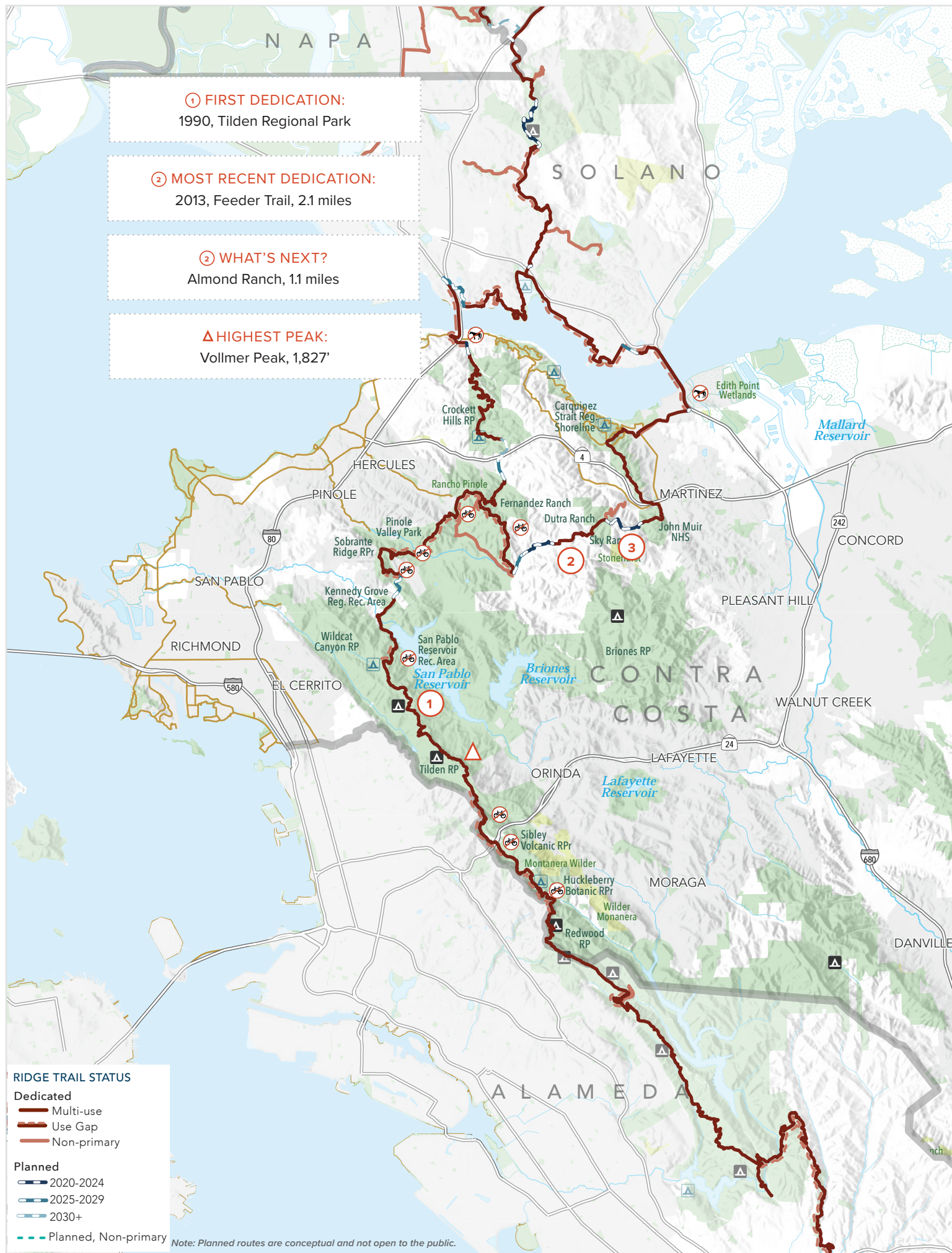


- Public | 350 miles | **92%**
- Private | 27 miles | **7%**
- Land Trust/NGO | 6 miles | **1%**

LAND OWNERSHIP - PLANNED



- Public | 124 miles | **43%**
- Private | 91 miles | **32%**
- Land Trust/NGO | 14 miles | **5%**
- Utility | 18 miles | **6%**
- Multiple | 38 miles | **13%**



- ① **FIRST DEDICATION:**
1990, Tilden Regional Park
- ② **MOST RECENT DEDICATION:**
2013, Feeder Trail, 2.1 miles
- ③ **WHAT'S NEXT?**
Almond Ranch, 1.1 miles
- ▲ **HIGHEST PEAK:**
Vollmer Peak, 1,827'

CONTRA COSTA

48
TOTAL MILES



89% complete
43 dedicated miles
5 planned miles

LAND USE/OWNERSHIP PLANNED:



● Public **59%**
● Private **41%**

DEDICATED MULTI-USE

43 miles open to

41 miles

34 miles

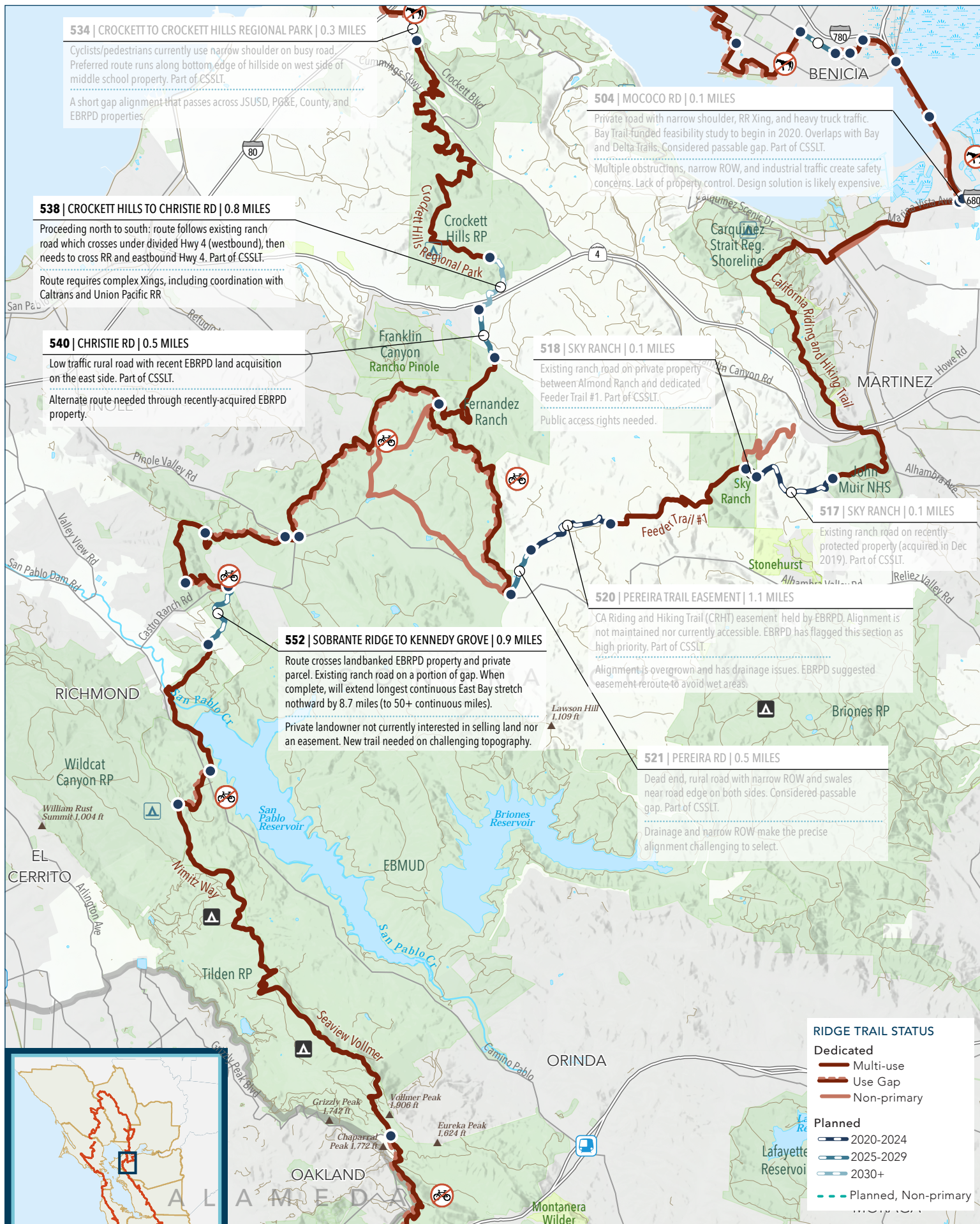
31 miles full multi-use

HIGHLIGHTS

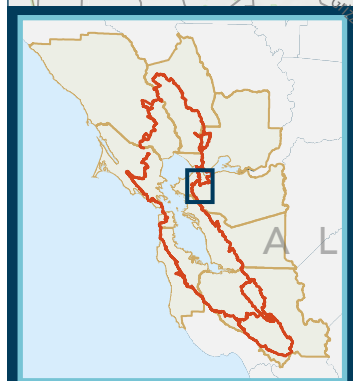
- Contra Costa enjoys one of the highest completion rates (89%) in the region, thanks to strong partnerships with East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) and John Muir Land Trust (JMLT).
- The Carquinez Strait Scenic Loop Trail (CSSLT) in Solano and Contra Costa Counties is a unique convergence of the RT, San Francisco Bay Trail, Great California Delta Trail, and Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail with 2 bridge crossings and a route through 5 historic downtowns.
- JMLT's campaign to purchase Almond Ranch could close a key 1.1-mile gap in the loop between Mt. Wanda and Sky Ranch.
- EBMUD recently adopted a Watershed Master Plan Update that will allow two key bicycle gaps (7.5 miles) to be closed.
- Planned RT route is featured on the 2013 EBRPD Master Plan Map.
- Opposition to multi-use on single-track trails will make it challenging to close the remaining 6 miles of multi-use gaps.
- The gaps between Crockett Hills and Fernandez Ranch and from Sobrante Ridge to Kennedy Grove will require complex crossings of private properties and roads/highways.
- Overnight facilities exist in Wildcat and Tilden RPs, with plans to build additional facilities in Crockett Hills and Carquinez Strait RPs.
- Contra Costa will ultimately host 7% of the full RT route.
- For Contra Costa's 5.4 miles of planned RT, 48% (2.6 miles) could be dedicated as early as the next 5 years, 37% (2 miles) in 5-10 years, and 15% (0.8 miles) after 2030.

CONTRA COSTA - 14

FROM CITY OF BENICIA TO TILDEN REGIONAL PARK

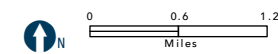


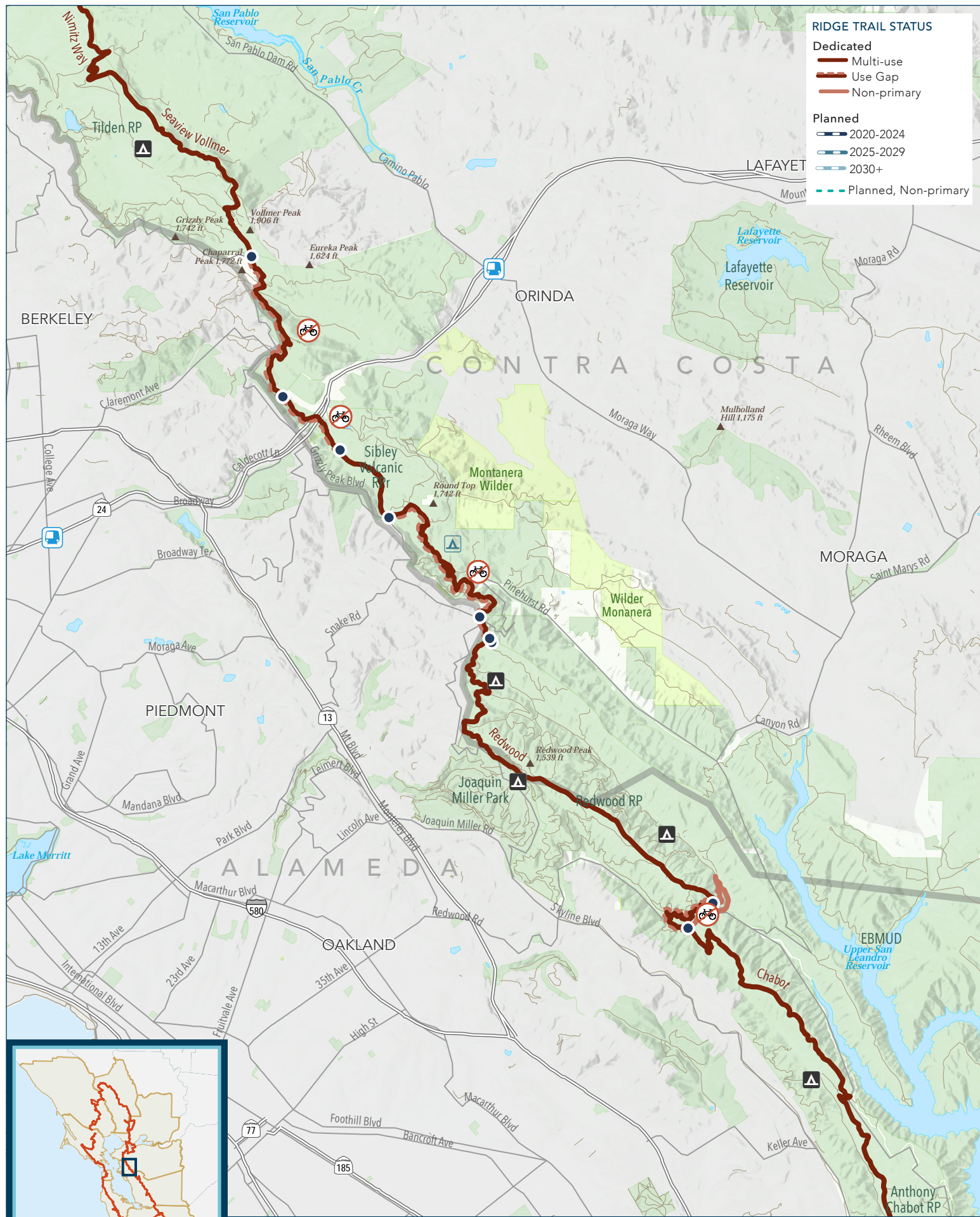
| | | | |
|--|--|--|---------------------------|
| 538 | CROCKETT HILLS TO CHRISTIE RD | TIMING 2030+ | PRIORITY MEDIUM |
| LANDOWNER: Caltrans, Union Pacific RR. | STRATEGY: Next Step: Work with EBRPD, County, JMLT, and other stakeholders to study alternative route options. Planning, funding, and advocacy for complex crossings and coordination with partners. | RT ROLE/STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: Advocacy, trail planning Transportation Crossing, Focused Planning Area - CSSLT | |
| 540 | CHRISTIE RD | TIMING 2025-2029 | PRIORITY HIGH |
| LANDOWNER: EBRPD, Contra Costa County (County) | STRATEGY: Next Step: Meet with EBRPD and JMLT to discuss alternative alignments to connect to Crockett Hills. | RT ROLE / INITIATIVE: Advocacy, funding support (design, construction) Focused Planning Area - CSSLT | |
| 552 | SOBRANTE RIDGE TO KENNEDY GROVE | TIMING 2025-2029 | PRIORITY MEDIUM |
| LANDOWNER: Private, EBRPD | STRATEGY: Next Step: Advocate for EBRPD's landowner negotiation with landowner. Track County Planning for development of private parcel. | RT ROLE / INITIATIVE: Advocacy, funding support (acquisition) | |



CONTRA COSTA - 14

Martinez - Mt Wanda - FT#1 - Pinole Watershed - Kennedy Grove





RIDGE TRAIL STATUS

Dedicated

- Multi-use
- Use Gap
- Non-primary

Planned

- 2020-2024
- 2025-2029
- 2030+
- Planned, Non-primary

CONTRA COSTA/ALAMEDA - 15

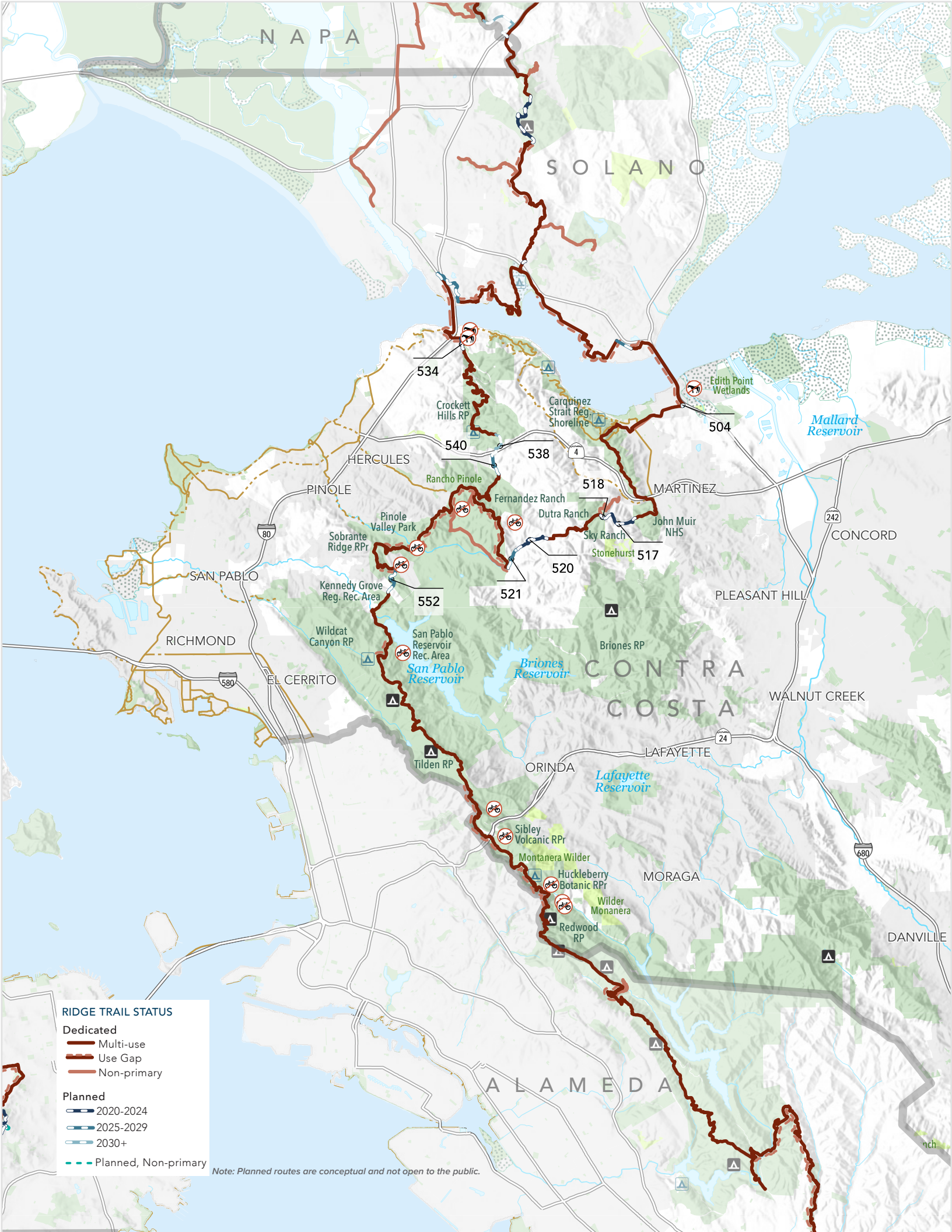
FROM TILDEN REGIONAL PARK TO ANTHONY CHABOT REGIONAL PARK

NO PRIMARY ROUTE GAPS ON THIS MAP.

CONTRA COSTA/ALAMEDA - 15
Eagle's Nest - Tilden - Fish Ranch - Sibley - Redwood

Planned routes are conceptual and not open to the public.





SUMMARY

CONTRA COSTA

| GAP # | GAP NAME | MILES | LANDOWNER/MANAGER | TIMING | CURRENT STATUS | STRATEGY |
|----------------------------|--|------------|--|-----------|---|---|
| 504 | Mococo Rd | 0.1 | Private, City of Martinez | 2025-2029 | Private road with narrow shoulder, railroad crossing, and heavy truck traffic. Bay Trail-funded feasibility study to begin in 2020. Overlaps with Bay and Delta Trails. Considered passable gap. Part of CSSLT. | Monitor and track feasibility study. |
| 517 | Almond Ranch | 1.1 | John Muir Land Trust (JMLT) | 2020-2024 | Existing ranch road on recently protected property (acquired in Dec 2019). Part of CSSLT. | Install signs and dedicate on May 2, 2020. |
| 518 | Sky Ranch | 0.1 | Private | 2020-2024 | Existing ranch road on private property between Almond Ranch and dedicated Feeder Trail #1. Part of CSSLT. | Monitor and support JMLT's acquisition negotiations. |
| 520 | Pereira Trail Easement | 1.1 | EBRPD | 2020-2024 | CA Riding and Hiking Trail (CRHT) easement held by EBRPD. Alignment is not maintained nor currently accessible. EBRPD has flagged this section as high priority. Part of CSSLT. | Meet with EBRPD to prioritize next steps: pursuit of trail easement or reroute negotiations. - Explore Restricted Access opportunities. |
| 521 | Pereira Rd | 0.5 | Contra Costa County | 2025-2029 | Dead end, rural road with narrow ROW and swales near road edge on both sides. Considered passable gap. Part of CSSLT. | Schedule a site visit with County and EBRPD to discuss short-term and long-term alternatives. - Advocate with County and EBRPD for interim improvements (e.g., install trail signs or Class II bike lane). |
| 534 | Crockett to Crockett Hills Regional Park | 0.3 | John Swett Unified School District (JSUSD) | 2020-2024 | Cyclists/pedestrians currently use narrow shoulder on busy road. Preferred route runs along bottom edge of hillside on west side of middle school property. Part of CSSLT. | Work with JSUSD and EBRPD on trail design and implementation. Support JSUSD's RT partner grant (\$50K) planning and construction (SCC review June 2020). |
| 538 | Crockett Hills to Christie Rd | 0.8 | Caltrans, Union Pacific RR. | 2030+ | Proceeding north to south: route follows existing ranch road which crosses under divided Hwy 4 (west-bound), then needs to cross railroad and eastbound Hwy 4. Part of CSSLT. | Work with EBRPD, County, JMLT, and other stakeholders to study alternative route options. |
| 540 | Christie Rd | 0.5 | EBRPD, Contra Costa County | 2025-2029 | Low traffic rural road with recent EBRPD land acquisition on the east side. Part of CSSLT. | Meet with EBRPD and JMLT to discuss alternative alignments to connect to Crockett Hills. |
| 552 | Sobrante Ridge to Kennedy Grove | 0.9 | Private, EBRPD | 2025-2029 | Route crosses landbanked EBRPD property and private parcel. Existing ranch road on a portion of gap. When complete, will extend longest continuous East Bay stretch northward by 8.7 miles (to 50+ continuous miles). | Advocate for EBRPD's landowner negotiation with landowner. Track County Planning for development of private parcel. |
| TOTAL PLANNED MILES | | 5.4 | | | | |

ALAMEDA

55
TOTAL MILES



72% complete

40 dedicated miles

15 planned miles

LAND USE/OWNERSHIP PLANNED:



- Public **68%**
- Private **22%**
- Multiple **10%**

DEDICATED MULTI-USE

40 miles open to



40 miles



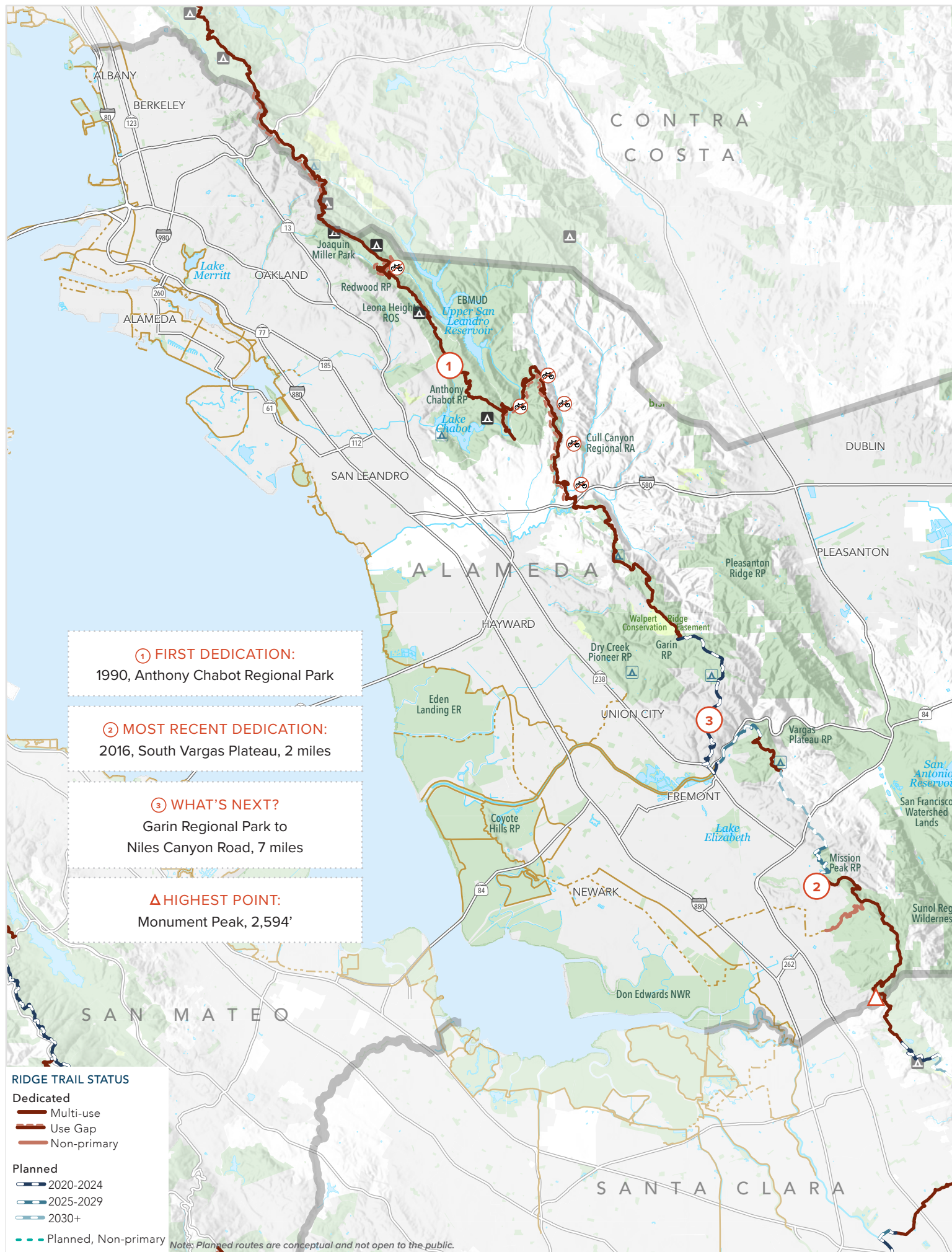
29 miles

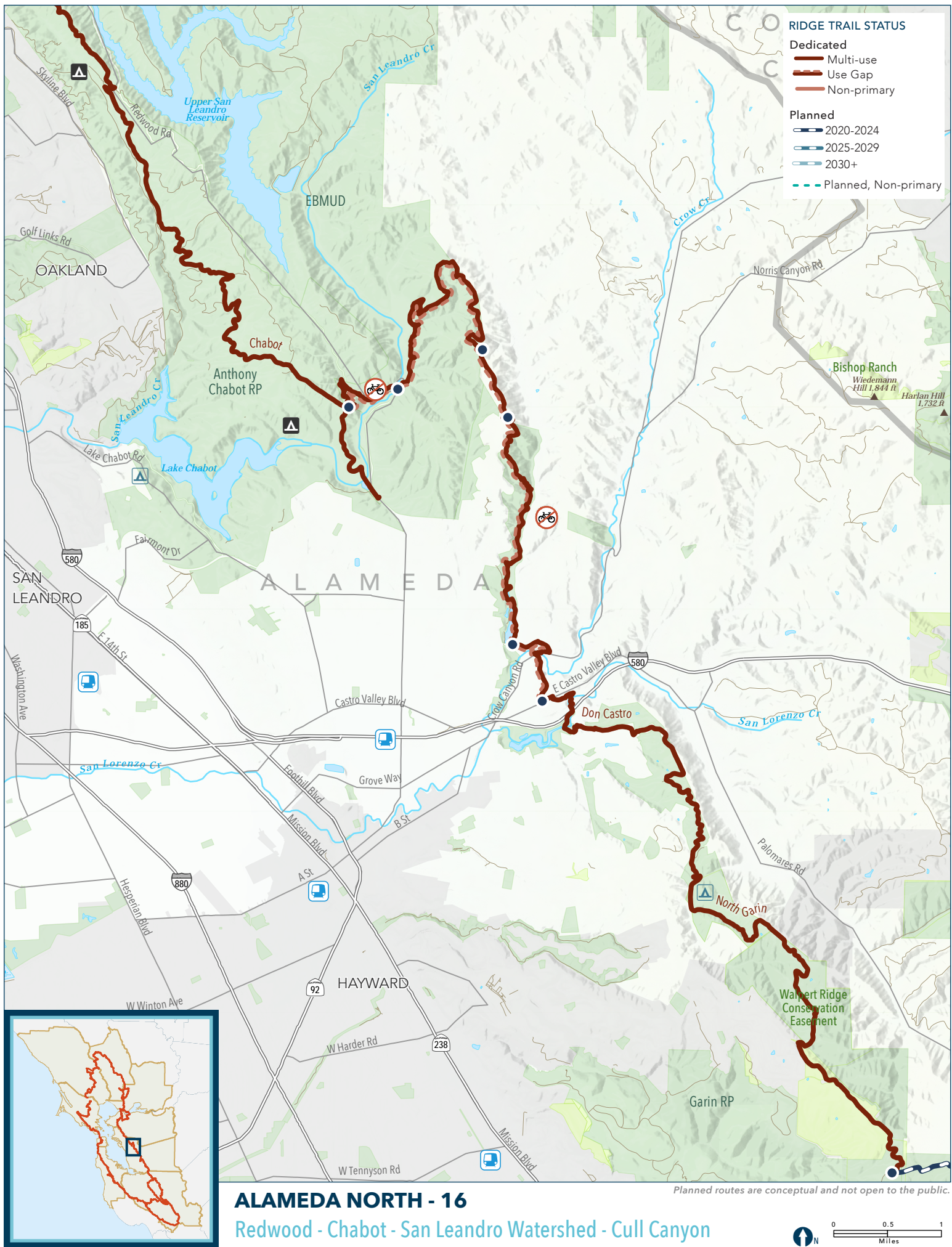


29 miles full multi-use

HIGHLIGHTS

- Alameda is almost three-quarters complete, thanks in large measure to leadership by East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), the largest urban regional park district in the U.S. and a champion of regional trails. EBRPD has completed over 34 miles in Alameda alone and almost 60 miles total in the East Bay.
- After 35 years of planning, advocacy, and private-public partnerships, EBRPD opened 3.5 miles of multi-use (MU) trail through Stonebrae and Garin regional parks in Hayward, connecting 3 properties and creating an almost 45-mile continuous stretch.
- A current 45-mile continuous stretch will extend to over 50 miles when the gap from Garin Regional Park to Niles Canyon Rd is completed in the next couple of years.
- Opposition to MU on single-track trails is a challenge for closing about 10 miles of mountain bike use gaps.
- Overnight camping facilities exist along the RT in Sibley, Anthony Chabot, and Mission Peak RPs, with more facilities planned further south in North Garin, Garin/Gelderman, and Vargas Plateau RPs.
- For over a decade, the RT and partners have hosted a 5-6 day supported Labor Day East Bay Hills hike and equestrian ride along a 45-mile continuous stretch of RT. Volunteers shuttle gear and cook hot meals for happy campers.
- Planned RT route is featured on the 2013 EBRPD Master Plan Map.
- Alameda will ultimately host 8% of the full RT route.
- For Alameda's 15 miles of planned RT, 47% (6.9 miles) could be dedicated as early as the next 5 years, 30% (4.4 miles) in 5-10 years, and 23% (3.3 miles) after 2030.





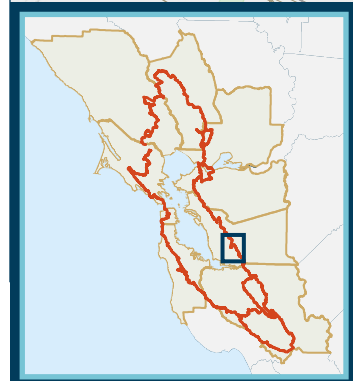
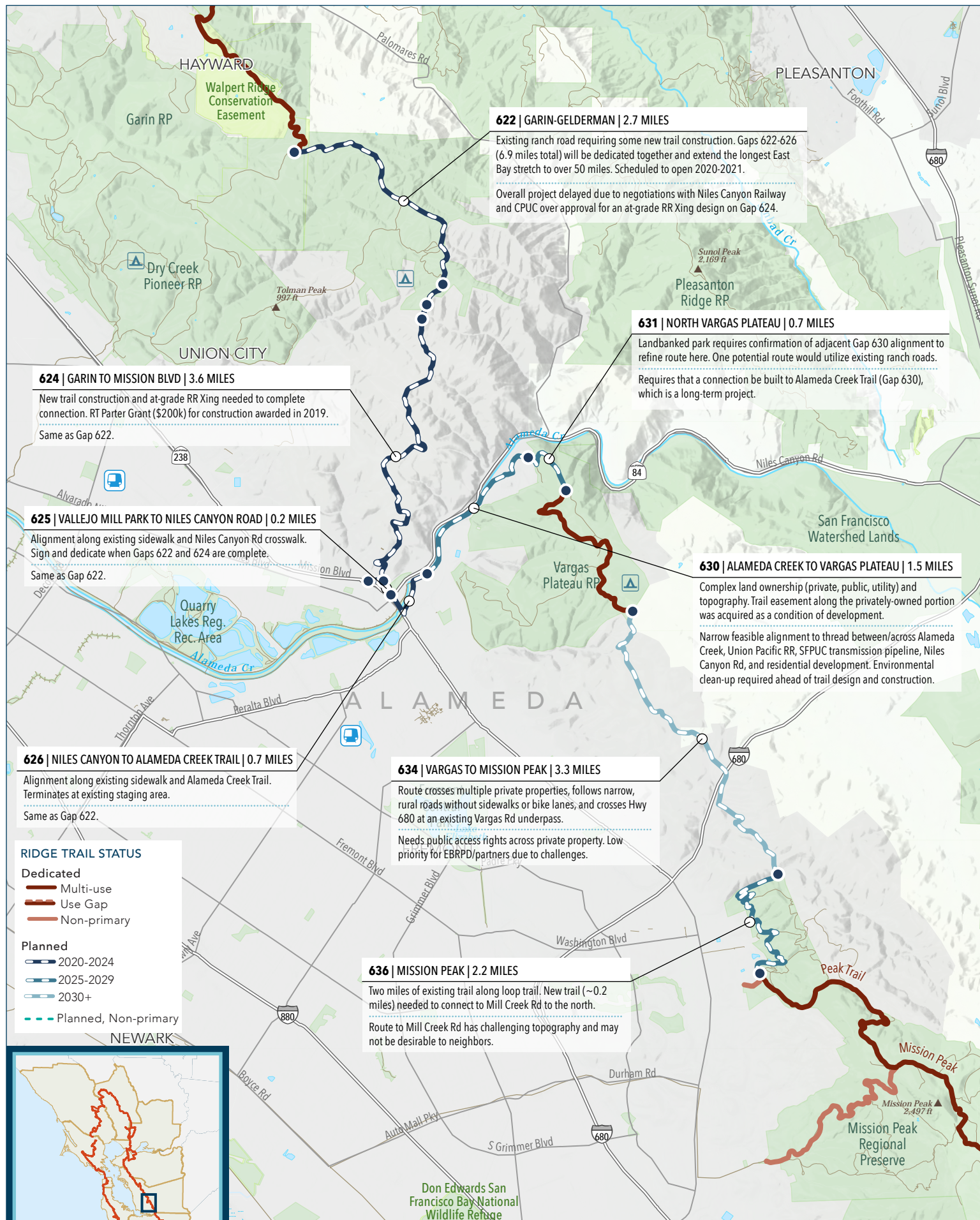
ALAMEDA NORTH - 16

FROM ANTHONY CHABOT REGIONAL PARK TO GARIN REGIONAL PARK

NO PRIMARY ROUTE GAPS ON THIS MAP.

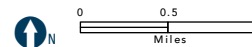
ALAMEDA CENTRAL - 17

FROM GARIN REGIONAL PARK TO MISSION PEAK REGIONAL PRESERVE



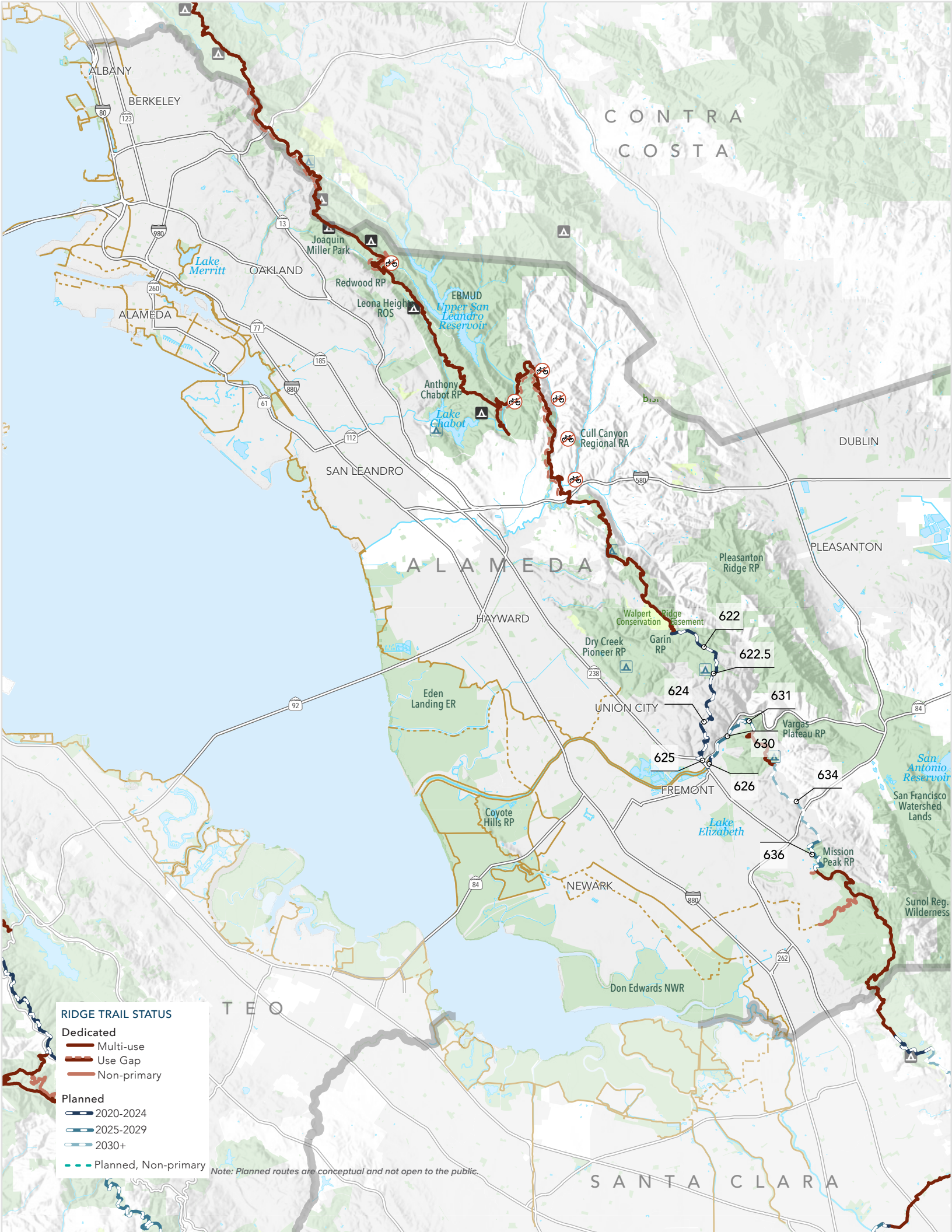
ALAMEDA CENTRAL - 17 Castro Valley - Stonebrae - Garin - Vargas

Planned routes are conceptual and not open to the public.



| Gap ID | Route Name | Timing | Priority |
|--------|--------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| 622 | GARIN-GELDERMAN | 2020-2024 | HIGH |
| 624 | GARIN TO MISSION BLVD | 2020-2024 | HIGH |
| 625 | VALLEJO MILL PARK TO NILES CANYON RD | 2020-2024 | HIGH |
| 626 | NILES CANYON TO ALAMEDA CREEK TRAIL | 2020-2024 | HIGH |
| 630 | ALAMEDA CREEK TO VARGAS PLATEAU | 2025-2029 | MEDIUM |
| 631 | NORTH VARGAS PLATEAU | 2025-2029 | LOW |
| 634 | VARGAS TO MISSION PEAK | 2030+ | MEDIUM |
| 636 | MISSION PEAK | 2025-2029 | MEDIUM |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| 622 GARIN-GELDERMAN 2.7 MILES Existing ranch road requiring some new trail construction. Gaps 622-626 (6.9 miles total) will be dedicated together and extend the longest East Bay stretch to over 50 miles. Scheduled to open 2020-2021. Overall project delayed due to negotiations with Niles Canyon Railway and CPUC over approval for an at-grade RR Xing design on Gap 624. | LANDOWNER: East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) STRATEGY: Next Step: Advocate and provide support to EBRPD to obtain approval from CPUC for RR crossing on Gap 624. Seek political support from elected County and City officials. | RT ROLE/STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: Advocacy, funding support (RT partner grant), coordinate dedication |
| 624 GARIN TO MISSION BLVD 3.6 MILES New trail construction and at-grade RR Xing needed to complete connection. RT Parter Grant (\$200k) for construction awarded in 2019. Same as Gap 622. | LANDOWNER: EBRPD, Niles Canyon Railway, City of Fremont STRATEGY: Next Step: Same as Gap 622. | RT ROLE/STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: Same as Gap 622. |
| 625 VALLEJO MILL PARK TO NILES CANYON ROAD 0.2 MILES Alignment along existing sidewalk and Niles Canyon Rd crosswalk. Sign and dedicate when Gaps 622 and 624 are complete. Same as Gap 622. | LANDOWNER: State Parks STRATEGY: Next Step: Obtain permission from City of Fremont to install signs. Dedicate with Gaps 622, 624, and 626. | RT ROLE/STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: Coordinate dedication |
| 626 NILES CANYON TO ALAMEDA CREEK TRAIL 0.7 MILES Alignment along existing sidewalk and Alameda Creek Trail. Terminates at existing staging area. Same as Gap 622. | LANDOWNER: City of Fremont, EBRPD STRATEGY: Next Step: Obtain permission from City of Fremont and EBRPD to install signs and dedicate with Gaps 622, 624, and 626. | RT ROLE/STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: Coordinate dedication |
| 630 ALAMEDA CREEK TO VARGAS PLATEAU 1.5 MILES Complex land ownership (private, public, utility) and topography. Trail easement along the privately-owned portion was acquired as a condition of development. Narrow feasible alignment to thread between/across Alameda Creek, Union Pacific RR, SFPUC transmission pipeline, Niles Canyon Rd, and residential development. Environmental clean-up required ahead of trail design and construction. | LANDOWNER: Private, SFPUC, Alameda Water, Union Pacific, EBRPD STRATEGY: Next Step: Work with EBRPD, SFPUC, and the City of Fremont to track creek trail planning, design, and construction. Partner with Niles Canyon/Alameda Creek stakeholders and advocate to expedite. | RT ROLE/STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: Advocacy, partner coordination, funding support (planning, construction) |
| 631 NORTH VARGAS PLATEAU 0.7 MILES Landbanked park requires confirmation of adjacent Gap 630 alignment to refine route here. One potential route would utilize existing ranch roads. Requires that a connection be built to Alameda Creek Trail (Gap 630), which is a long-term project. | LANDOWNER: EBRPD STRATEGY: Next Step: Monitor progress of Gap 630 with EBRPD during regular trail planning meetings. | RT ROLE/STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: Advocacy, funding (planning, design, construction) |
| 634 VARGAS TO MISSION PEAK 3.3 MILES Route crosses multiple private properties, follows narrow, rural roads without sidewalks or bike lanes, and crosses Hwy 680 at an existing Vargas Rd underpass. Needs public access rights across private property. Low priority for EBRPD/partners due to challenges. | LANDOWNER: Private (multiple), Caltrans, County Roads STRATEGY: Next Step: Host site visit with EBRPD to observe constraints in the field. Consider joint study of alternative routes. Explore Restricted Access opportunity. | RT ROLE/STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: Funding support (planning, feasibility study) Restricted Access, Transportation Crossing |
| 636 MISSION PEAK 2.2 MILES Two miles of existing trail along loop trail. New trail (~0.2 miles) needed to connect to Mill Creek Rd to the north. Route to Mill Creek Rd has challenging topography and may not be desirable to neighbors. | LANDOWNER: Ohlone College (managed by EBRPD) STRATEGY: Next Step: Explore with Ohlone College/EBRPD to install RT signs and treat as a quiet dedication on 2 miles of existing trail. | RT ROLE/STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: Advocacy, coordinate quiet dedication |



SUMMARY ALAMEDA

| GAP # | GAP NAME | MILES | LANDOWNER/MANAGER | TIMING | CURRENT STATUS | STRATEGY |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|--|-----------|--|--|
| 622 | Garin-Gelderman | 2.4 | East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) | 2020-2024 | Existing ranch road requiring some new trail construction. Gaps 622-626 (6.9 miles total) will be dedicated together and extend the longest East Bay stretch to over 50 miles. Scheduled to open 2020-2021. | Advocate and provide support to EBRPD to obtain approval from CPUC for RR crossing on Gap 624. Seek political support from elected County and City officials. |
| 624 | Garin to Mission Blvd | 3.6 | EBRPD, Niles Canyon Railway, City of Fremont | 2020-2024 | Planned Class I path between Larkmead Ln and Dunaweal Ln, part of ATP grant, 100K RT partner construction grant pending. CEQA doc expected to be adopted in Sept 2020; construction expected to start in 2021. | Same as Gap 622. |
| 625 | Vallejo Mill Park to Niles Canyon Rd | 0.2 | City of Fremont | 2020-2024 | Alignment along existing sidewalk and Niles Canyon Rd crosswalk. Sign and dedicate when Gaps 622 and 624 are complete. | Obtain permission from City of Fremont to install signs. Dedicate with Gaps 622, 624, and 626. |
| 626 | Niles Canyon to Alameda Creek Trail | 0.7 | City of Fremont, EBRPD | 2020-2024 | Alignment along existing sidewalk and Alameda Creek Trail. Terminates at existing staging area. | Obtain permission from City of Fremont and EBRPD to install signs and dedicate with Gaps 622, 624, and 626. |
| 630 | Alameda Creek to Vargas Plateau | 1.5 | Private, SFPUC, Alameda Water, Union Pacific, Trail Easement held by EBRPD | 2025-2029 | Complex land ownership (private, public, utility) and topography. Trail easement along the privately-owned portion was acquired as a condition of development. | Work with EBRPD, SFPUC, and the City of Fremont to track creek trail planning, design, and construction. - Partner with Niles Canyon/Alameda Creek stakeholders and advocate to expedite. |
| 631 | North Vargas Plateau | 0.7 | EBRPD | 2025-2029 | Landbanked park requires confirmation of adjacent Gap 630 alignment to refine route here. One potential route would utilize existing ranch roads. | Monitor progress of Gap 630 with EBRPD during regular trail planning meetings. |
| 634 | Vargas to Mission Peak | 3.3 | Private (multiple), Caltrans, County Roads | 2030+ | Route crosses multiple private properties, follows narrow, rural roads without sidewalks or bike lanes, and crosses Hwy 680 at an existing Vargas Rd underpass. | Host site visit with EBRPD to observe constraints in the field. - Consider joint study of alternative routes. Explore Restricted Access opportunity. |
| 636 | Mission Peak | 2.2 | Ohlone College (managed by EBRPD) | 2025-2029 | Two miles of existing trail along loop trail. New trail (~0.2 miles) needed to connect to Mill Creek Rd to the north. | Explore with Ohlone College/EBRPD to install RT signs and treat as a quiet dedication on 2 miles of existing trail. |
| TOTAL PLANNED MILES | | 14.9 | | | | |

Note: Planned routes are conceptual and not open to the public.

KEY FINDINGS

GAPS, CHALLENGES & STRATEGIES

This chapter provides a summary of the key findings and overarching themes resulting from the expanded gap analysis in the previous county-specific chapters. By stepping back and taking a higher-level view of the gaps and data, we aimed to find patterns both in the challenges, and in the strategies available, to close trail gaps.

The first part of this chapter reviews the key findings from a regional perspective including: (1) trail status: completion rates throughout the region; (2) land use/ownership type along the dedicated and planned route; (3) development timing for the remaining gaps; and (4) Ridge Trail prioritization of the gaps.

The second part sorts the gaps into the key challenges to complete the Ridge Trail and summarizes gap-specific strategies. The key challenges include: (1) route within park or publicly-owned land; (2) route across private property; (3) route across conservation or watershed lands; (4) transportation crossings (addressed in strategic initiatives chapter); (5) use gaps; (6) limited awareness/lack of leadership; and (7) financial need. Passable gaps are discussed last because they do not fit neatly into any of the challenges and are important to consider as a group.

The strategies discussed in this chapter encompass only a subset of the potential strategies one could use to close trail gaps. Only the gap-specific strategies discussed on the passage maps are summarized in the following sections. A more complete menu of potential strategies can be found in the *Menu of Strategies Appendix*. Additionally, the Ridge Trail's Strategic Initiatives (a set of unique approaches designed to overcome challenges and also to engage landowners and trail users), are covered in more detail in the next chapter.

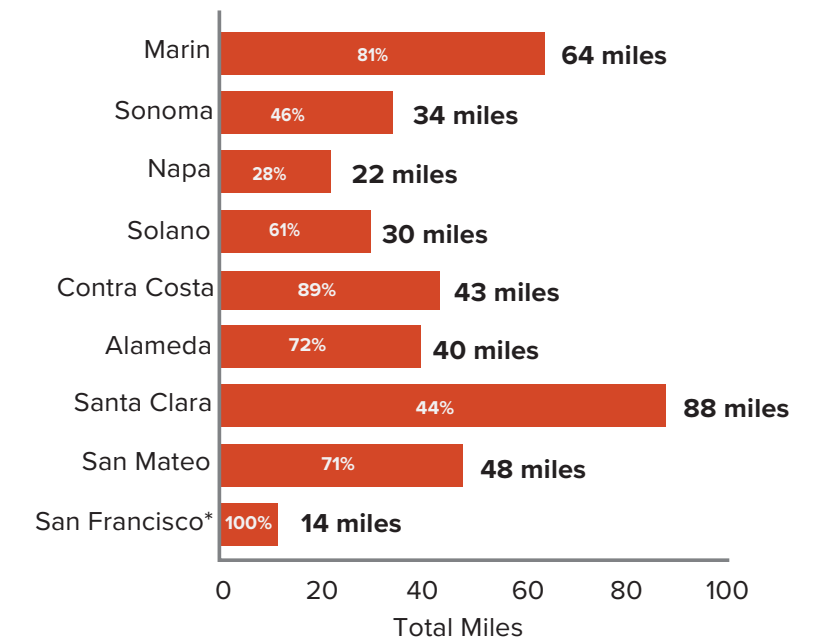
DEVELOPMENT STATUS, LAND OWNERSHIP & TIMING

DEVELOPMENT STATUS

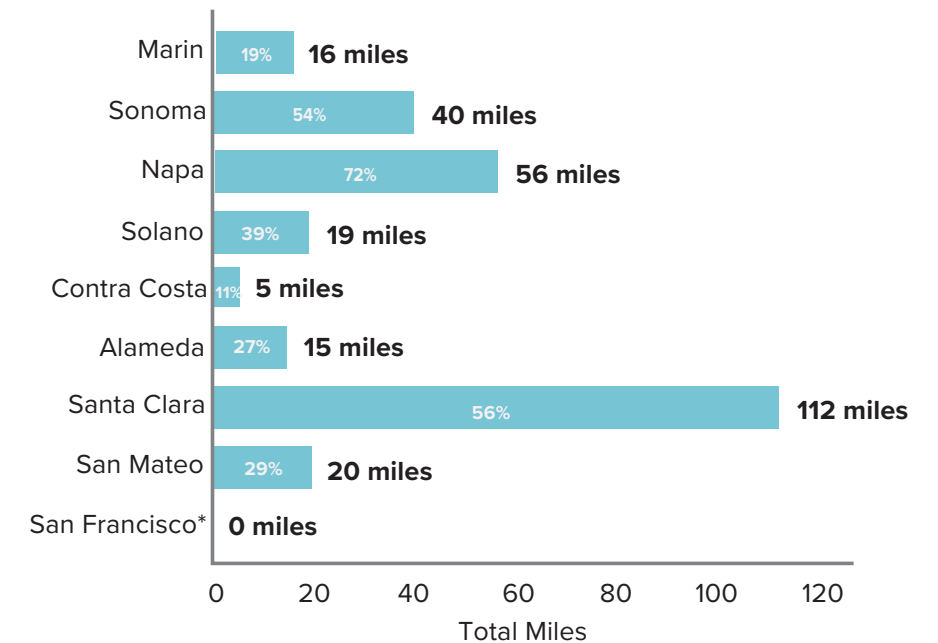
With more than 380 miles completed to-date, the rate of completion varies widely throughout the region. Counties with longstanding park and open space agencies (Marin, Alameda, Contra Costa, San Mateo, San Francisco) tend to have more protected land and trails and many of these partner agencies have been involved with the Ridge Trail from its inception. Similarly, the amount of private land ownership can be an indicator of Ridge Trail completion rates - counties with the largest amount of privately owned land also have the highest number of miles to complete (Napa, Sonoma, Santa Clara). These differences have resulted in a Ridge Trail route that is more complete in the central part of the region, with longer continuous stretches in place, and in a pattern of more planned miles remaining and shorter connected stretches in the northern and southern parts of the region (shown below).

Santa Clara County is unique and worthy of a separate call out. It has the largest number of dedicated miles as well as more than double the number of planned miles as compared to any other county. This is due to the County's large size and to the inclusion of two parallel routes: one that creates a "Central County Loop" reaching across the valley to connect Sierra Azul near Los Gatos with the hills south of San José (almost three-quarters complete) and a "South County Loop" that stretches along a series of ridgelines south of Gilroy (only one-quarter complete).

DEDICATED MILES BY COUNTY



PLANNED MILES BY COUNTY



*NOTE: The original San Francisco 14-mile route is 100% dedicated but the planned San Francisco reroute, which will move the trail from sidewalks to iconic open spaces, still has 3 planned miles to complete.

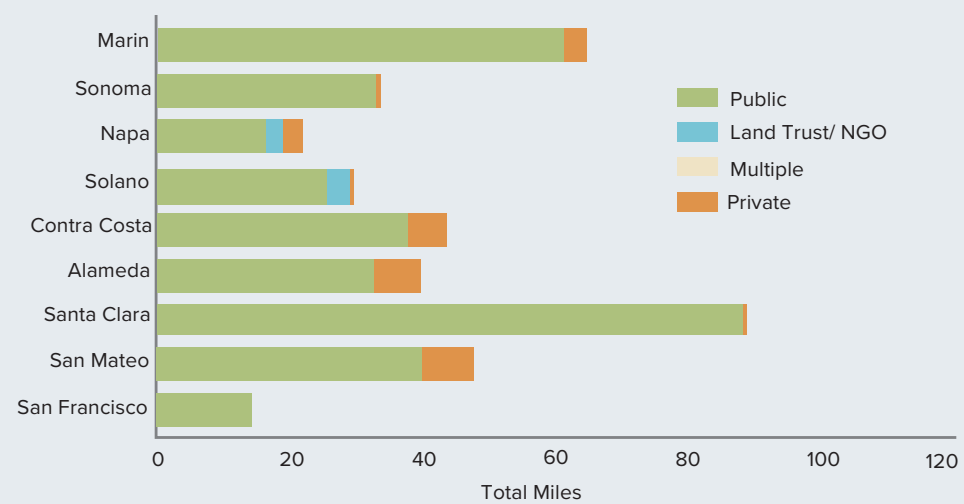
LAND OWNERSHIP

To determine dedication timing and strategies for the future route, we considered the role of public versus private land ownership, as well as land use patterns. Currently, over 90% of the dedicated trail is on public lands, primarily on park and open space district lands, and only 7% of the trail crosses private land. Conversely, approximately one-third of the remaining planned trail miles cross private lands (32%, 91 planned miles), primarily in Sonoma and Napa counties where the completion rates are some of the lowest. For the remaining gaps, a little less than half of the planned route is on public lands (43%, 124 planned miles) and non-profit-owned conservation lands (5%, 13.6 planned miles), which

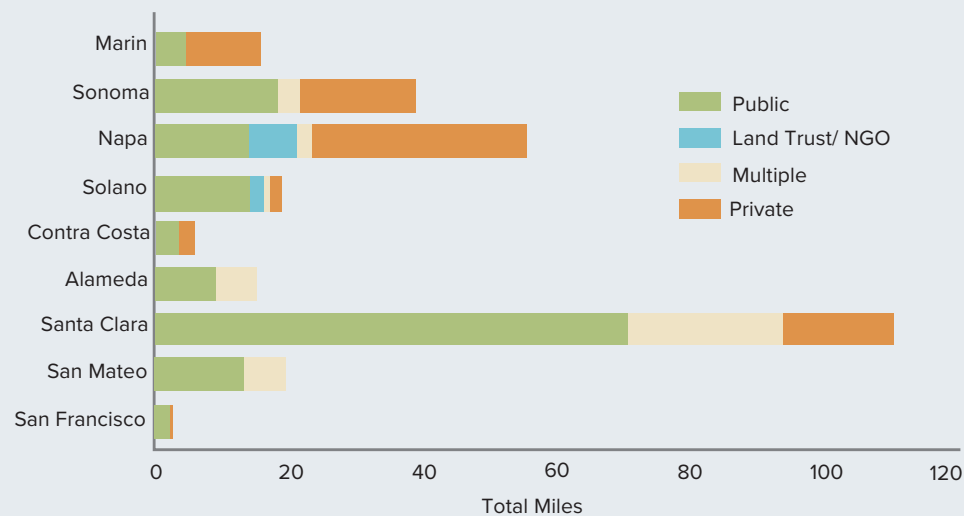
are highly variable in their policies and prioritization for public access. The remaining 13% (38 planned miles) of the gaps cross multiple land ownership types. These gaps are often challenging because they can be combined with other complex elements including highway crossings, utility right-of-ways, or multiple parcels of private and publicly-owned lands.

Each land ownership type presents unique challenges and opportunities but experience has shown that gaps crossing private lands and multiple landowners will be much more challenging to complete than those on public lands.

PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE LANDS - DEDICATED TRAIL



PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE LANDS - PLANNED ROUTE



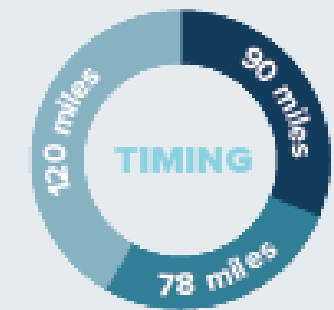
DEDICATION TIMING

Dedication timing was estimated for each gap based on expectations, partner suggestions or best guess in the event of no unforeseen challenges. About a third of the planned route could be dedicated as early as the next 5 years, with a quarter of the planned miles dedicated within 6-10 years and nearly half of all gaps closing after 2030. The Ridge Trail may reach the major milestone of 400 dedicated miles by 2022, when both the Garin to Niles and Southern Skyline Extension gaps are expected to open.

RIDGE TRAIL PRIORITY

At the regional level, setting priorities for individual gaps underlines the issue that for a regional trail like the Ridge Trail to be connected, all gaps - even the most remote and long-term trail sections - are essential. The nature of our mission means we need to actively track progress on all gaps, even those which might take over 10 years to complete, and we also need to make sure future options are not foreclosed and that, ultimately, each section is part of a continuous route. Overall, about 80% of the gaps were identified as high or medium priority. Ideally, resources and staffing would allow work and monitoring as part of the Council's annual Ridge Trail work plan.

DEDICATION TIMING



- 0 - 5 Year | 31%
- 6 - 10 Years | 27%
- 10+ Years | 42%

RIDGE TRAIL PRIORITY



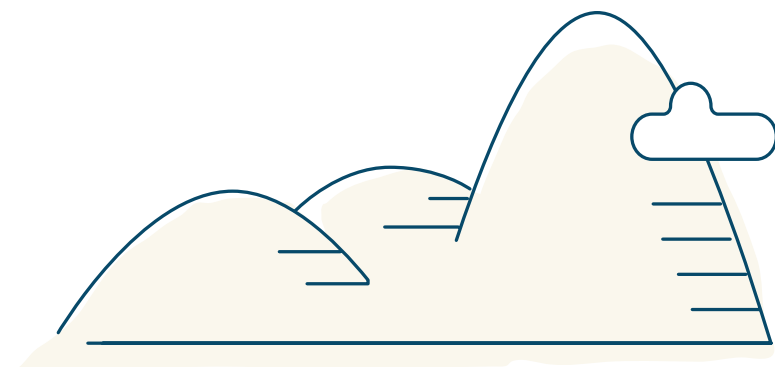
- High | 38%
- Medium | 42%
- Low | 20%



CHALLENGES & STRATEGIES

The following section organizes the gap strategies according to the major challenges to complete the Ridge Trail, including: (1) route within park or publicly owned land; (2) route across private property; (3) route across conservation or watershed lands; (4) transportation crossings (addressed in detail in the Strategic Initiatives chapter); (5) use gaps; (6) limited awareness/lack of leadership; (7) financial need; and (8) passable gaps.

Strategies were developed to address each of the greatest challenges. Note, there is overlap among the categories and most gaps would benefit from multiple strategic responses. For example, a particular gap could be: within a public open space, need funding to design or build, AND be a part of a strategic initiative such as a focused planning area.



CHALLENGE #1

ROUTE ACROSS PUBLIC LAND

Almost half of the planned Ridge Trail route is on publicly-owned land, of which almost two-thirds (63%) are park, open space, or city- or county-owned land. The remaining third are a mix of primarily institutional and educational landowners. Most of the open space properties are awaiting comprehensive management plans or significant restoration efforts and are often considered “land banked”.

Challenges identified with park or public land include: the route is undetermined or crosses difficult terrain; development of the route will be very expensive; and the route includes complex crossings of highways, roads or railroads. Additional concerns include the presence of sensitive cultural and/or natural resources along the route and lack of prioritization from partner agencies.

Publicly-owned gaps are generally considered easier to close because regional and county park agencies have public access mandates or have the Ridge Trail route formally adopted into their planning documents. These gaps still require maintaining active relationships with partners and closely tracking their available resources, priorities, and work plans so the projects will be funded, prioritized and completed.

PUBLIC LAND OWNERSHIP PLANNED ROUTE



- Park or Open Space District | 59 miles | **38%**
- City | 44 miles | **28%**
- Caltrans | 10 miles | **6%**
- Unknown | 42 miles | **27%**

NEAR-TERM STRATEGIES

- **Coordinate with Partner Agencies:** Monitor progress on closing gaps where RT is not leading the effort and provide support to partners as needed. Request notification of projects impacting the existing RT or RT route. Offer to provide briefing presentations to boards, commissions, legislators, etc.
- **Facilitate Planning and Coordination with Partners:** When route is not defined or multiple partners are involved the RT can initiate and facilitate the preliminary planning efforts and communicate RT priorities.
- **Provide advocacy and rally public support:** Lead or support public outreach and input process throughout the project phases. Recruit and train board and volunteers to participate in local planning efforts
- **Support fundraising efforts:** Leverage funding for partner’s efforts on RT projects through SCC Partner Grants, Trail Opportunity Funds or other grant opportunities to: bring additional funding to the table, to advance RT priorities, including expedited trail development, multi-use, increased RT awareness, etc.

OVERALL STRATEGIES

- **Explore restricted access opportunities:** See details in the Restricted Access section of the Strategic Initiatives chapter.
- **Assess alternate routes:** When current route is not feasible, consider route alternatives.
- **Support Park and Open Space Bond Measures:** Advocate for ballot measures that support funding or the creation of open space and park districts.
- **Advocate RT Incorporation into County Plans:** The placement of the planned and dedicated Ridge Trail route in active transportation, trail and general plans significantly relates to the ability to advocate for the prioritization of RT project. Work to include the RT in public plans in Sonoma, Napa, and Solano counties.

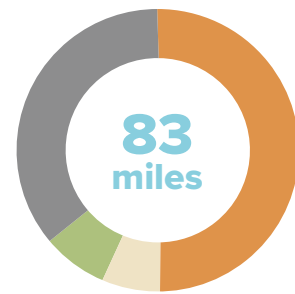
CHALLENGE #2

ROUTE ACROSS PRIVATE LAND

Almost one-third (29%, 82.5 miles) of the planned route crosses private property. Gaps across private property are often the most difficult to close - to date only 27 miles (7%) of the current dedicated Ridge Trail are on private property. About half the future route crosses private agricultural or grazing lands. Whereas, over a third of the planned miles are in mixed land uses, captured on the chart as "unknown".

Challenges identified with private land include: the need to acquire public access rights (in fee or easement); route is undetermined and requires further study; the land owner is uninterested and/or opposed to public access; and landowner concerns regarding liability, privacy, and trespassing. Additionally, more than half of the gaps cross grazing and agricultural lands where there may be concerns regarding interaction between people and active agricultural operations.

LAND USE ON PRIVATE PROPERTY- PLANNED ROUTE



- Grazing & Agricultural | 42 miles | 51%
- Developed | 6 miles | 7%
- Conservation/Recreation | 5 miles | 6%
- Unknown | 29 miles | 35%

NEAR-TERM STRATEGIES

- **Provide funding or acquisition support:** Leverage funding and/or provide landowner outreach materials (a list of materials can be found in the Outreach Materials Appendix). Work with potential funders, including the California Coastal Conservancy to ensure public access (ideally with a floating trail easement) on properties they help acquire along the Ridge Trail corridor. Also, consider requiring as a condition of grants the creation of interim public access along the Ridge Trail route until a property can be opened to the public.
- **Monitor County/City Development Plans:** When possible, integrate trails as a condition for development in new plans (include successful case studies).
- **Continue to Host or Pursue Restricted Access:** See details in the Restricted Access section of the Strategic Initiatives chapter.
- **Coordinate with Partner Agencies:** to prioritize RT land or easement acquisitions. See the *Menu of Strategies Appendix* for a list of acquisition techniques.

OVERALL STRATEGIES

- **Conduct route feasibility study:** Partner with lead agency to consider alternative routes.
- **Explore restricted access opportunities:** See details in the Restricted Access section of the Strategic Initiatives chapter.
- **Build/Maintain Relationship(s) with Private Landowners and Organizations:** to understand concerns related to public trail use and seek common interests to lay groundwork for obtaining future trail rights.

CHALLENGE #3

ROUTE ACROSS CONSERVATION LANDS

About 12% of planned route passes through lands with the primary objective to conserve habitat for sensitive species (7%) or preserve public watershed lands (5%). For these lands, the primary land use objective is to protect water quality or habitat value, rather than promote public access or trails, which have the potential to impact resource value. These gaps are challenging and resource-intensive to close as they can experience opposition and require extensive partner coordination to maintain momentum and interest.

Corridor planning for connectivity is key to achieving common goals in land and water conservation, wildlife protection, and trail recreation. Maximizing the multiple public benefits of these properties and reducing silos between natural resource groups (wildlife/habitat conservation versus parks) is essential to furthering sustainable conservation in the Bay Area.

NEAR-TERM STRATEGIES

- **Facilitate partner meetings:** Build relationships with Conservation and Utility partners to brainstorm public access opportunities via restricted access or other opportunities.
- **Explore Partnership with Conservation Land Network (CLN) and others:** Work to highlight the multi-benefit opportunities where RT route overlays or abuts essential conservation lands.

OVERALL STRATEGIES

- **Conduct route feasibility studies:** Partner with lead agency to consider alternative routes.
- **Explore restricted access opportunities:** See details in the Restricted Access section of the Strategic Initiatives chapter.

CHALLENGE #5

MULTI-USE GAPS

Approximately 94 miles of primary Ridge Trail do not meet the Ridge Trail standard of being open to all trail user groups (hikers, equestrians and cyclists). Challenges for creating a completely multi-use trail include: equestrians cannot cross the toll bridges; mountain bicyclists are prohibited in some areas; and the need to identify alternative and equally rewarding routes so that all user groups will ultimately have a continuous route. A table of all use gaps can be found in the *Comprehensive List of Multi-Use Gaps Appendix*.

DEDICATED MULTI-USE

383 miles open to



335 miles



347 miles



289 miles (76%) full multi-use

NEAR-TERM STRATEGIES

- **Classify use gaps based on significance:** Some use gaps are significant or problematic whereas others will either never be closed (e.g. equestrian access on the Golden Gate Bridge or in San Francisco) or do not significantly hinder the trail experience for that user group. Explore how to best address these distinctions in work plans, maps, and outreach materials.
- **Serve as an informational clearinghouse:** Stay up-to-date on multi-use trends and issues and continue to advocate for multi-use access. Share information through partner and membership channels.
- **Prioritize multi-use on new trails:** Experience shows that once a trail is dedicated with a use exclusion, it is very difficult to change to full multi-use. Work with partners to address all user groups early in the process.

OVERALL STRATEGIES

- **Identify alternative route(s) or acquisition needs:** When full multi-use on the primary route is not feasible, identify alternatives so all groups will have an equally rewarding experience and continuous route, to the extent possible.
- **Explore multi-use management strategies:** Where fear of user conflicts is high, or multi-use is otherwise not viable, explore best practices in management strategies including accessible days or directional restrictions.

CHALLENGE #6

PUBLIC AWARENESS & PARTNER PRIORITY

Limited awareness of the Ridge Trail among both the general public and key stakeholders is a significant challenge in securing needed resources. Limited awareness or partner support impact a Ridge Trail project's ability to be prioritized within a partner agency's work plan.

Cultivating a community of trail advocates and strengthening partner support is essential to completing the Ridge Trail.

NEAR-TERM STRATEGIES

- **Lead Planning Efforts in Complex Gaps:** Facilitate preliminary planning and feasibility work for complex multi-jurisdiction gaps where no lead managing entity has been identified. In priority areas without partner priority, conduct initial landowner outreach, route assessment, negotiation of a trail easement, etc.
- **Cultivate Local Champions:** Where there is limited awareness and public support, cultivate advocacy groups or partner to create annual events in the region.
- **Incorporate the Ridge Trail in Partner Plans:** Ensure the Ridge Trail route (dedicated and planned) is adopted in General Plans, Specific Plans and/or Master Trail Plans. This will strengthen the ability to require new development to mitigate impacts to loss of trail connections and open space.
- **Participate in focused planning area working groups:** Contribute or lead sub-regional working groups such as the Peninsula Working Group (PWG) or Carquinez Strait Scenic Loop Trail Committee to address multi-jurisdictional Ridge Trail gaps that need support and facilitation across many agencies.
- **Host periodic partner convenings:** Convene partners to highlight successful partnerships, accomplishments, current initiatives and demonstrate the leadership role for the Ridge Trail in trail planning and facilitation.

OVERALL STRATEGIES

- **Develop an Outreach and Marketing Plan:** Identify the best strategies for raising the visibility of high-priority gaps with agency staff and leadership and the public.
- **Promote the benefits of multi-use trails:** Create and promote case studies that show how trail management can prevent negative impacts on adjoining land and ensure compatibility with agricultural lands and watershed/conservation lands.
- **Expand the RT audience:** Create/nurture alliances and partnerships with environmental, outdoor, and recreational groups to expand our "reach."
- **Seek National Recreational Trail designation:** For continuous sections of completed trail, apply for National Recreational Trail designation. In the future, apply for National Scenic Trail status (a more arduous process).
- **Consider alternate routes:** Lead or convene parties to consider alternative routes when new routing opportunities arise or when the existing route is no longer viable.

CHALLENGE #7

FINANCIAL NEED

Above all, financial need is the biggest challenge facing the completion of the Ridge Trail. Property acquisition, trail construction and trail management are all incredibly expensive and resource-intensive. Availability of funding for individual projects, as well as stable institutional funding for land management agencies, is directly correlated with Ridge Trail success.

The gap analysis study identified funding needs on 128 miles of planned route, the vast majority of which were high and medium priority gaps. Creative and interim solutions, including the Ridge Trail Opportunity Fund, will be required to greatly accelerate the likelihood of completing the remaining gaps.

GAPS NEEDING FUNDING SUPPORT BY PRIORITY



- High Priority | 50 miles | 39%
- Medium Priority | 67 miles | 52%
- Low Priority | 11 miles | 9%

NEAR-TERM STRATEGIES

- **Build and leverage the Trail Opportunity Fund:** The goal is to create a Trail Opportunity Fund that would allow the Council to overcome obstacles or expedite trail progress by providing timely funding (or matching funds) for items including: feasibility studies, easement acquisitions, fee acquisitions, and management and maintenance support.
- **Seek transportation funding:** Support partner applications or directly apply for highway transportation funding for RT gaps expected to provide alternative transportation benefits including Vallejo Bluff Trail, Bailey Ave/North Coyote Valley and Highway 17 Crossing and trail connections.

OVERALL STRATEGIES

- **Advocate for Park and Open Space Measures:** The creation of and decent funding for open space districts tends to be directly related to the Ridge Trail's success in a region. Napa County and Solano Counties both have new or no regional open space districts with minimal funding. The Ridge Trail needs to invest in and provide support for the ballot measure related to improving the presence and financial health of these districts.
- **Advocate for land agency management and operation funding:** Advocate to secure stable funding for public land agencies for operations, management, and maintenance in order to expedite trail openings.
- **Expand public-private partnerships:** and other new fundraising opportunities: Identify gaps that might be of special interest to specific funders: corporate, foundation, agencies, or individuals. Develop customized case statements and marketing materials for specific gaps and special focused planning areas.
- **Support and develop funding initiatives for open space, parks and trails:** Participate in developing federal, state, regional, and local funding initiatives for open space, parks and/or trails, and support these initiatives. This could include increasing Council representation on conservation organization boards and committees involved with funding initiatives.

CHALLENGE #8

PASSABLE GAPS

Passable gaps are navigable gaps that are considered "passable" by trail users but not dedicated because they do not meet minimum trail standards, which can be found in the *Minimum Ridge Trail Standards Appendix*. Many of the passable gaps are within or along public streets or rights-of-way. These gaps are typically small in length and represent relatively few miles, but are large in terms of importance and connectivity. In total, there are 12 segments of passable gap trail covering

almost 5 miles along the planned route. These gaps are important because they link two completed sections to form a longer continuous stretch for trail users/ circumnavigators. There are also numerous longer-distance multi-use gaps along public roads that are considered passable by cyclists, but which are not included in this category.

OVERALL STRATEGIES

- **Identify barriers and solutions for access:** Identify concerns and barriers with the landowning entity and develop solutions to address.
- **Assess planning needs:** Coordinate with partners to identify dedication options and timing.
- **Promote safe navigation of passable gaps:** Where appropriate, install signs and information to help users navigate safely.

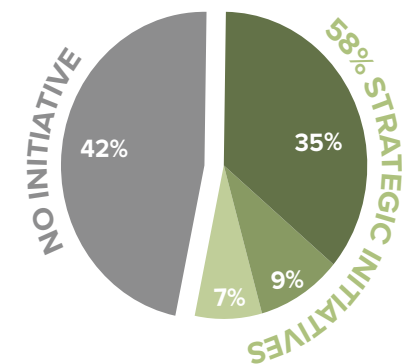


STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Strategic initiatives refers to a set of approaches and special projects that the Ridge Trail Council has been exploring and developing to help address and overcome especially significant challenges (such as opening a public trail on private property or conservation lands) and to leverage opportunities (such as the enthusiasm around multi-day treks and circumnavigation) to raise awareness and build support to drive our mission forward.

Strategic Initiatives in this report are: (1) Restricted access; (2) Focused planning areas; and (3) Transportation crossings. One or more of the initiatives encompass over half (56%, 148 miles) of the planned route as shown below. Future strategic initiatives not covered in this report will address multi-benefit opportunities between conservation and regional trails using resources including the Conservation Lands Network’s analysis.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES COVERAGE- PLANNED ROUTE



- Strategic Initiative Miles | **148 miles total**
 - Restricted Access | **94 miles**
 - Focused Planning Areas | **27 miles**
 - Transportation Crossings | **21 miles**
- Gaps without Strategic Initiative | **131 miles**



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #1

RESTRICTED ACCESS

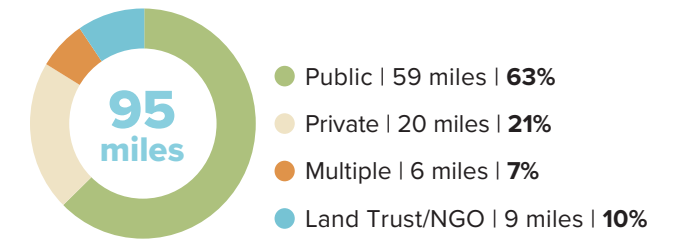
AKA VERY IMPORTANT TRAILS (VIT)

Over a third of the planned route (95 miles) may have the opportunity for restricted access outings, which means the gap has the presence of existing roads or trails that are on or near the proposed route, however, public access is limited in some way (i.e. not open to the public or require permits, docents or owner permission to access).

Our study identified almost 100 miles where opportunities to explore access may be possible through the restricted access initiative. There are currently 19 additional dedicated miles with access restrictions already existing on utility-owned land (SFPUC and EBMUD).

The Ridge Trail created the Very Important Trails (VIT) initiative to address this specific gap type, which provides opportunities for the public to access these restricted trails and roads through special outings or docent-led programs. These outings not only strengthen public and member support for closing gaps through restricted access areas, but also help build positive relationships with landowners and property managers. In 2019 and early 2020, the Ridge Trail hosted VIT outings with almost 200 participants on 12 different planned sections of the trail that covered over 30 miles of future Ridge Trail. Restricted outings are prioritized in the Council’s annual work plan, and an additional 65 miles of restricted access opportunities are being explored based on this report.

RESTRICTED ACCESS BY LAND OWNERSHIP - PLANNED ROUTE

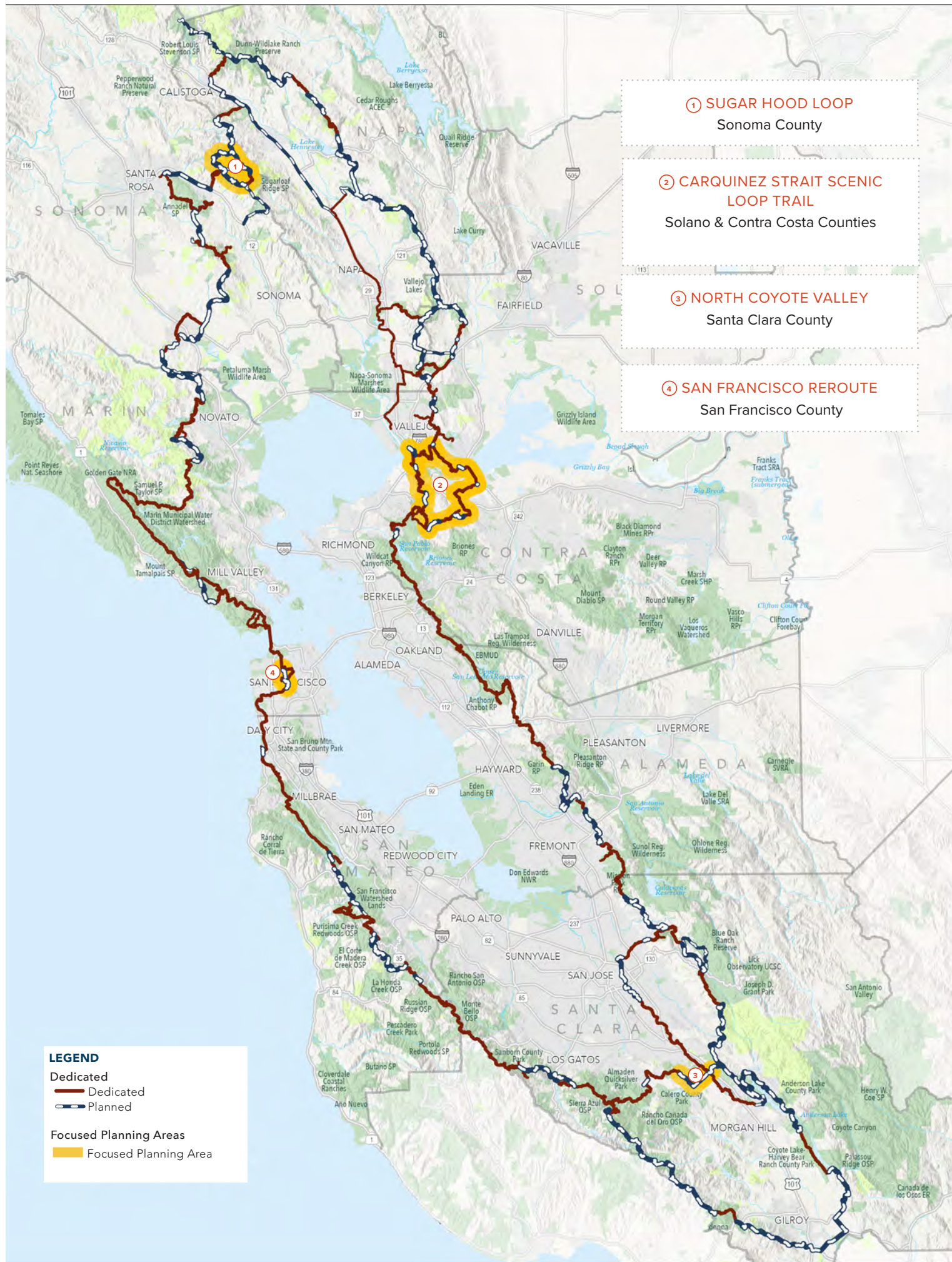


Generally VIT miles on publicly-owned properties are being readied for future opening, though that is not often true on private properties. Of the 95 potential planned miles for VIT outings, about 21% (20 miles) pass across private property. Most of these opportunities were identified due to the presence of existing roads or trails crossing the property. VIT outings may also be possible for properties without existing roads/trails, although it may be logistically more challenging to coordinate outings through those areas.

Timing is a key component here. Initially, it might be possible to host special access outings to some of these properties once or twice a year. Over time it might be possible to host regular outings on a quarterly or monthly basis. One goal would be to establish a schedule so that circumnavigators and others could traverse these additional route miles on an annual basis.

STRATEGIES

- **Private property with existing fire/ranch roads.** If there is an active relationship with the landowner, plan and host outings structured to advance multiple objectives, including building and maintaining a positive relationship with the landowner.
- **Private property without existing roads or trails.** Explore whether hosted outings are possible and how they could be achieved.
- **Utility and Private Conservation Lands with or without existing roads and trails.** Coordinate with utility and private conservation lands partners to gain access privileges in areas such as Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserve, Vallejo Lakes, Dunn-Wildlake Ranch and Duff Ranch.



- ① SUGAR HOOD LOOP
Sonoma County
- ② CARQUINEZ STRAIT SCENIC LOOP TRAIL
Solano & Contra Costa Counties
- ③ NORTH COYOTE VALLEY
Santa Clara County
- ④ SAN FRANCISCO REROUTE
San Francisco County

LEGEND

Dedicated
 Dedicated
 Planned

Focused Planning Areas
 Focused Planning Area

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #2

FOCUSED PLANNING AREAS

With over 150 gaps to close all with varying challenges, landowners, and funding needs, addressing multiple gaps through Focused Planning Areas is a strategy to complete the trail more efficiently. Focused Planning Areas are a cluster of gaps that are tackled through development of special study areas to develop solutions for the group. Over the last decade, we have seen great benefit from creating special study areas, usually in collaboration with partners, which offer a compelling story and can capture the imagination.

Benefits of this initiative include: raising awareness and focusing attention both on the larger RT mission and the local trail; bringing new partners and stakeholders to the table; building donor interest/excitement & financial leverage; and expediting trail development. Perhaps the best example of what can be achieved with a special planning area is the Carquinez Strait Scenic Loop Trail which has been in process for over a decade and is seeing continued and sustained success.

PLANNING AREAS SHOWN ON MAP:

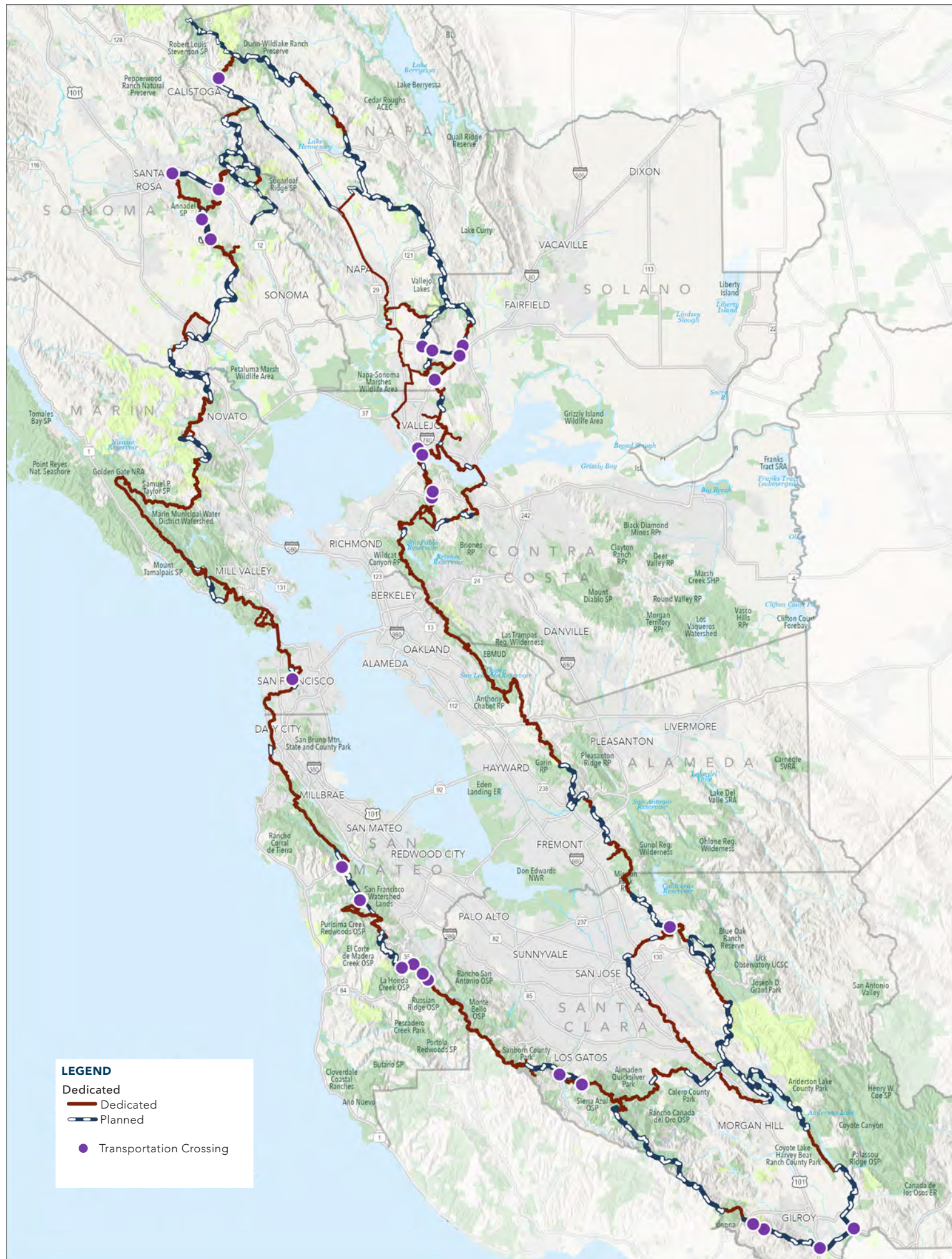
- 1. Sugar Hood Loop (Sonoma County)
- 2. Carquinez Strait Scenic Loop Trail (Solano and Contra Costa counties)
- 3. North Coyote Valley (Santa Clara County)
- 4. San Francisco Reroute (San Francisco County)

ADDITIONAL AREAS (NOT MAPPED):

- Highway 17 Crossing and Trail & Park Connections (Santa Clara County)
- Napa Trail Loop: Ridge, Vine & Bay (Napa County)
- Sucsol/Rockville Loop (Napa and Solano counties)
- Silicon Valley Trail Loop (Santa Clara County)

STRATEGIES

- **Continue to lead and collaborate in existing focused planning areas.** Continue active participation and leadership in groups including the Carquinez Strait Scenic Loop Planning Group.
- **Fundraise for focused planning area efforts.** Raise seed funding through partner grants, Trail Opportunity Fund or other methods to support planning and construction in these areas.
- **Identify and pursue new focused planning areas, as applicable.** As new areas are studied and become feasible, such as the Sugar Hood Loop, include in focused planning area initiative.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #3

TRANSPORTATION CROSSINGS

Locations where the RT needs to cross transportation corridors including highways, railroads and major roads can be particularly complex to address. The study shows that there are 21 planned road or highway crossings required to complete the Ridge Trail. Of these gaps, 16 cross state or interstate highways. Planned route highway crossings are found in every county except for Marin, with the most crossings in Santa Clara (6), San Mateo (4) and Solano (4) counties. These complex highway crossings can require lengthy and costly planning, design and review processes and may need expensive infrastructure solutions.

The RT is poised to lead or facilitate the initial planning of these complex transportation crossings as they often cross multiple jurisdictions with the RT being the common thread. These gaps may be some of the last completed, most expensive, and have the longest planning and design timelines of any sections of trail. The solutions are often costly and require strategic partnerships and timely negotiations with public works departments, Caltrans and other agencies. Due to the complexity of these projects, creating region-wide (covered by District 4 Caltrans) and crossing-specific approaches will be critical to the Ridge Trail's success.

STRATEGIES

- **Advocate for project priority.** For high-priority infrastructure projects, actively communicate with partner staff and leadership to elevate the gap's priority and ensure that the needs of the Ridge Trail and trail development costs are incorporated. Strategies to raise the visibility of a gap include emails, phone calls, meetings, invites to special event outings, and briefings/presentations.
- **Build partnerships to address transportation crossings.** Identify key stakeholders and cultivate relationships needed to tackle infrastructure challenges.
- **Leverage existing projects in gap areas.** Identify public ROWs in areas with active or upcoming projects that could be used for future RT.
- **Explore cost-effective strategies for crossings.** Identify economical strategies to create connectivity following city streets and still provide a safe user experience given the small number of through-users expected to follow the entire route of the Ridge Trail.
- **Incorporate the RT in Transportation Plans.** Ensure that Ridge Trail highway crossing needs are identified and included in highway expansion plans, such as Highway 12/Jamison Canyon, Highway 101 at Berryessa, Highway 80 at Highway 12 interchange, across Highway 780 in Benicia, across Highway 84 through Niles Canyon and across Highway 92 at the intersection with Highway 35.
- **Seek highway and active transportation funding.** Encourage partners, or seek highway transportation funding directly, for those Ridge Trail projects expected to provide alternative transportation benefits such as the Vallejo Bluff Trail (Solano), Coyote Creek Trail in San Jose, McGary Road bikeway in Solano County.

CONCLUSIONS

The Ridge Trail is an integral part of the Bay Area, serving as a trailhead to the stunning protected open spaces for all residents. The Ridge Trail connects communities and people to nearby nature or extended multi-day adventures; supports opportunities for active recreation and healing in nature; serves as a catalyst for protecting and preserving open space; creates multi-benefit projects that connect corridors for wildlife; and fosters stewards to care for and protect our region's environmental heritage.

By 2022, the Ridge Trail will reach 400 miles. Within the next ten years, we hope to reach our goal of completing over half of the remaining gaps, given the resources and alignment with partner priorities. This report will serve as the backbone of the Trail Program's analysis and communication over the next decade.

Completing a continuous, connected regional trail will require continual involvement from our long-term partners as well as building relationships with new partners, stakeholders and advocates in order to build political will, secure public and private funding to close the final gaps, and raise awareness among Bay Area residents. Completing our vision of a continuous Ridge Trail also supports our goal of keeping trails accessible, safe, and inclusive for all.

The status of gaps along the Ridge Trails is fluid and ever-changing - this report represents a moment in time to capture and assess the challenges and opportunities to complete the Ridge Trail. Study results will be used to inform the Ridge Trail work plan and Strategic Plan update.

NEXT STEPS

TRAIL ANALYSIS

- **Continue to Update and Adapt the Data and Analysis.** This report is a living document that will require updates and adaptations to remain relevant. Processes will need to be created to streamline our output from our database and spatial data in order to automate the analysis and map updates as efficiently as possible.
- **Continue to Collect and Refine Cost Information.** Understanding the costs associated with Ridge Trail development is essential for future planning and fundraising efforts. Cost estimates for the following should be developed, as applicable, including: average cost of trail development (planning, design, and construction); major infrastructure costs; funding needs for near-term projects (0 - 5 years); and key acquisition costs.
- **Analyze the Ridge Trail's overlap with wildlife corridors and conservation lands.** Deepen analysis of how the Ridge Trail overlaps with the Conservation Lands Network (CLN)'s areas that are essential to conservation. Determine how the Ridge Trail can partner with habitat restoration and wildlife-focused organizations to accelerate these multi-benefit projects.
- **Develop additional analyses for the following issues:** (1) multi-use gaps, (2) multi-day/overnight trekking, and (3) circumnavigation.

PLANNING AND OUTREACH

- **Develop separate summary reports and outreach documents for the following audiences:** (1) public-facing executive summary; (2) specific agency-focused summary reports (e.g. East Bay Regional Park District or Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, or Caltrans); and (3) decision-maker and funder-focused summary.
- **Schedule and make presentations to share study findings with:** partners, stakeholders and other audiences.
- **Update Strategic Plan & Work Plans:** incorporate study findings and recommendations into all our strategic and annual work plans.
- **Continue to raise awareness and cultivate more trail users, advocates and supporters,** including communities that have been historically under-represented in outdoor recreation.
- **Pursue needed funding: grow the Trail Opportunity Fund** to support the Council's ability to make small strategic project grants. This fund, created in 2020 is intended to provide on-the-spot seed funding for projects that have timely needs and are unforeseen in the normal budgeting process.



JOIN US!

Visit ridgetrail.org or contact the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council to learn more or get engaged.

GLOSSARY

ABBREVIATION & ACRONYMS

| ABBREVIATION & ACRONYMS | FULL NAME |
|-------------------------|---|
| ~ (i.e., ~1.5 mile) | Approximately |
| \$ | Dollars |
| Ag-rec | Agricultural/Recreational |
| Annadel SP | Trione-Annadel State Park |
| ATP | Active Transportation Plan |
| Bike/ped | Bicycle/pedestrian |
| CP | County Park |
| CRHT | California Riding and Hiking Trail easement |
| CSSLT | Carquinez Strait Scenic Loop Trail |
| E.g. / i.e. | For example / in other words |
| EIR | Environmental Impact Report |
| Esp | Epecially |
| Ft | Foot |
| HCP | Habitat Conservation Plan |
| Helen Puntam RP | Helen Putnam Regional Park |
| Hwy | Highway |
| I | Interstate (i.e., I-80) |
| ID | Identify |
| K | Thousand (i.e., 1,000) |
| Ln | Lane |
| M | Million (i.e., 1,000,000) |
| MU | Multi Use |
| n/a | Not applicable |
| NVVT | Napa Valley Vine Trail |
| O&M | Operations and Maintenance |
| OSP | Open Space Preserve |
| OSR | Open Space Reserve |
| PCA | Priority Conservation Area |
| Rd | Road |
| Re | Regarding |
| ROW | Right of Way |
| RP | Regional Park |
| RR | Railroad |
| RT | Ridge Trail |
| SHP | State Historic Park |
| SMART | Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit |
| SMCP | San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Dept. |
| SP | State Park |
| St | Street |
| STA | Solano Transportation Authority |
| TBD | To be determined |
| UP RR | Union Pacific Railroad |
| Xing | Crossing |

PARNTERS

| PARNTERS | FULL NAME |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Ag + Open Space | Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation & Open Space District |
| Anza Trail | Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail |
| Cal Water | California Water Service |
| Caltrans | California Department of Transportation |
| CDFW | California Department of Fish and Wildlife |
| County Roads Dept | Santa Clara County Roads & Airports Department |
| CRHT | California Riding and Hiking Trail easement |
| EBMUD | East Bay Municipal Utility District |
| EPRPD | East Bay Regional Parks District |
| GGNPC | Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy |
| GGNRA | Golden Gate National Recreation Area, National Park Service |
| Golden Gate Bridge District | Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District |
| JMLT | John Muir Land Trust |
| JSUSD | John Swett Unified School District |
| LTNC | Land Trust of Napa County |
| MALT | Marin Agricultural Land Trust |
| MCBC | Marin County Bicycle Coalition |
| MCP | Marin County Parks |
| Midpen | Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District |
| NCRPOSD | Napa County Regional Parks & Open Space District |
| NPS | National Park Service |
| POST | Peninsula Open Space Trust |
| SCC | State Coastal Conservancy |
| SCRPD | Sonoma County Regional Parks |
| SCCPRD | Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Dept. |
| SCVOSA | Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority |
| SEC | Sonoma Ecology Center |
| SFMTA | San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency |
| SFPUC | San Francisco Public Utilities Commission |
| SFRPD | San Francisco Recreation and Park Department |
| SMCP | San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Dept. |
| Solano LT | Solano Land Trust |
| Sonoma LT | Sonoma Land Trust |
| STA | Solano Transportation Authority |
| State Parks | California State Parks |
| UP RR | Union Pacific Railroad |
| Valley Water | Santa Clara Valley Water District |

COUNTY

| | |
|-----|----------------------|
| ALA | Alameda County |
| CCO | Contra Costa County |
| MAR | Marin County |
| NAP | Napa County |
| SFO | San Francisco County |
| SMA | San Mateo County |
| SCL | Santa Clara County |
| SOL | Solano County |
| SON | Sonoma County |



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