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Breakneck Ridge Station
to Dutchess Junction Park

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Existing Conditions

2.1 - Breakneck Ridge Train Station to Brickyards Parkland: From the Metro-North footbridge to the northernmost private parcel, there is a hill steadily ascending to the north. The small triangular area of parkland has steep slopes between the road and a wetland area adjacent to the railroad tracks. Two parcels are surrounded by state parkland, while the others comprise 11 privately owned parcels, for a total of 13 privately owned parcels in this area. One parcel, on the north end, is the historic mansion-turned-catering-hall/event space, Dutchess Manor.

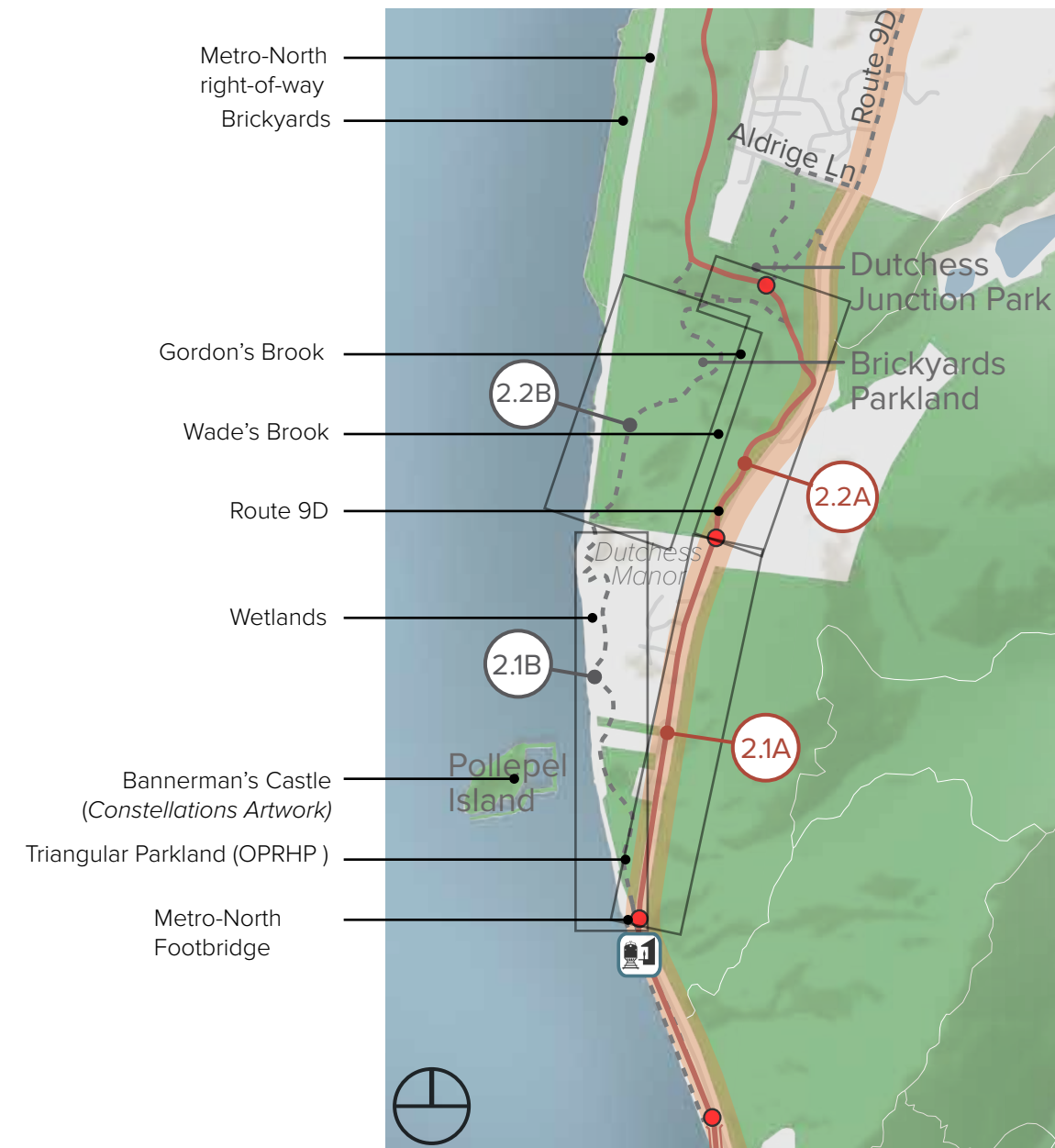
2.2 - Brickyards Parkland to Dutchess Junction Park: The Brickyards Parkland was once the site of several brickyards where bricks were produced and distributed throughout the Northeast during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Several graded roads were created to connect Route 9D to brick-making facilities and residences. Although few structures remain, there are some remnants of the prosperous brick industry, most notably the brick shoreline that appears during low tide. Some of the roads are still used by off-road vehicles and hikers, although the trails are not marked or maintained as hiking trails. This challenging landscape contains several deep gullies that lead into seasonal and year-round streams, most notably Wade's and Gordon's brooks, which drain the highlands east of Route 9D.



High tide along the Brickyards shoreline



Low tide along the Brickyards shoreline



Map 2.0 - Preferred and Alternative Route from Breakneck Ridge to Dutchess Junction Park

Legend

- Preferred Route
- Change in route segment
- - - Alternate Route
- Proposed Route 9D Corridor safety improvements
- State Parks

2.1 Breakneck Ridge Station to Brickyards Parkland

2.1A - From Breakneck Ridge Station to Brickyards Parkland on Route 9D (eastern upland route): The option to align the trail along Route 9D was explored out of necessity, due to the privately owned parcels that extend from the roadway to the wetlands between the railroad tracks and the upland area. The existing roadway right-of-way (ROW) is substantially wider than the existing roadway pavement. The paved road, however, is pushed up against the western edge of the ROW adjacent to private properties (see plan on p. 52), with all unused ROW east of the existing paved roadway. To include bikeable shoulders and a walkway requires an extensive roadway realignment, which is a significant capital construction project.

The proposed concept is to fully reconstruct the roadway approximately 10'-12' wider. All of the widening would occur on the east side of the roadway within existing ROW. The trail and shoulder would be located where the southbound moving lane currently

sits. The southbound lane would shift to the approximate location of the northbound lane. The proposed northbound moving lane would require substantial grading and excavation, including rock excavation and construction of new drainage ditches and culverts. There would also be significant tree impacts. Fortunately, existing utility poles on the west side of the road do not need to be moved. It is anticipated that the existing roadway would be milled and repaved, with a new crown to reflect the increased width and shift to the east. It is also recommended that the moving lanes be narrowed to 11 feet to help calm traffic, and to reduce the extent of the road widening (see image below).

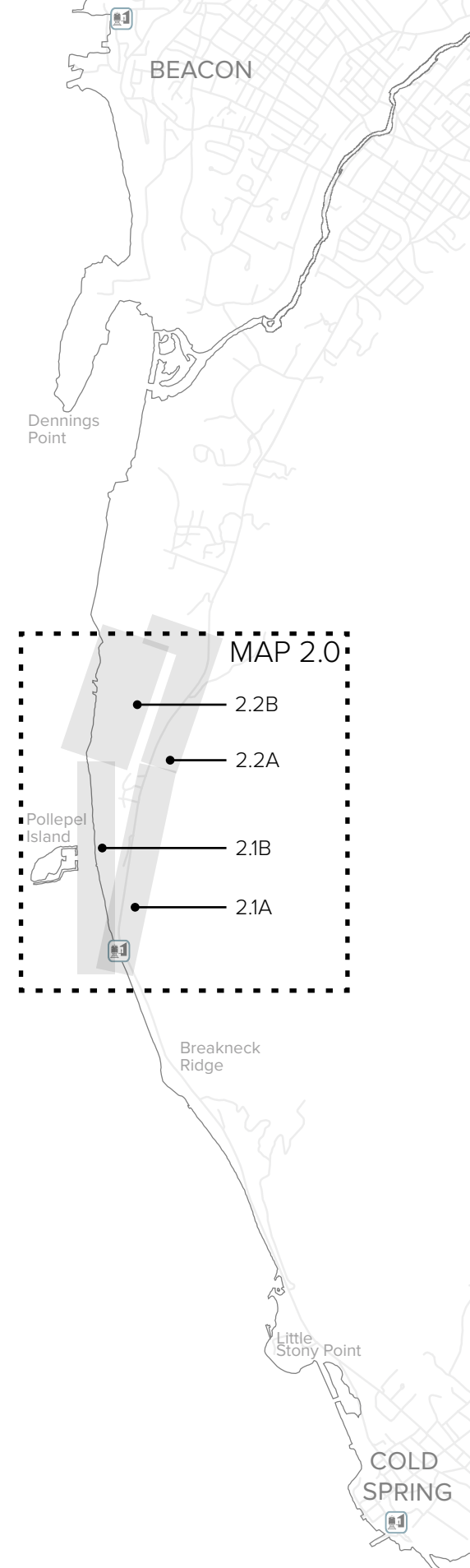
The proposed pedestrian trail would be 6 feet wide, separated from the five foot-wide red bikeable shoulder by a guiderail.



Route 9D at Hartsook Lane, existing condition. View looking north



Route 9D at Hartsook Lane, proposed widened roadway with adjacent trail separated by a bikeable shoulder





2.1B - From Breakneck Ridge Station to Brickyards Parkland via forest and wetlands (western lowland route): The parkland on the south end of the triangular area is topographically challenging, with low-lying wetlands rising to a steep hilltop peak in a short distance. To build a trail between the Metro-North footbridge and the wetland area adjacent to the privately owned parcels would require several switchbacks to maintain a reasonable grade, complicated by the need to stay off of private property.

Over the years since the railroad was built, wetlands have formed in the areas sequestered between the mainland and the railroad tracks. These areas were once part of the river, but have developed into wetland and tidal wetland areas with the buildup of sediment and the subsequent growth of wetland vegetation and habitat.

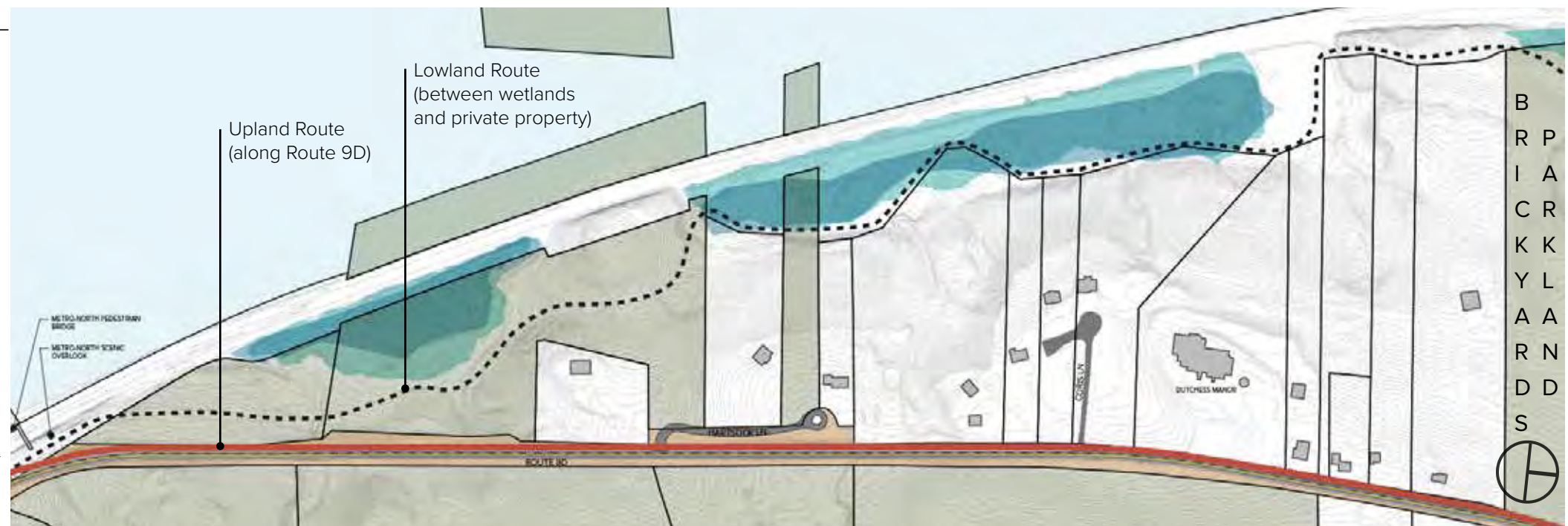
The privately owned parcels end at or near the wetland area, although in some cases the two overlap, as shown in the map below. In other cases, it appears that the steep slope down to the wetlands is outside of the private property line. In order to avoid routing the trail through private property, the trail would have to be placed along the edge of, and sometimes through, the wetlands. Once it reaches the wetlands, the trail would descend to a boardwalk structure built over the wetlands. This structure would maintain an elevation of 10-20 feet above high tide to minimize shading on the underlying wetland area.

The design team has worked with DEC to develop a conceptual design approach for a pile-supported structure to be built hugging the line that distinguishes wetlands from upland forest as much as possible. Based on a combination of follow up meetings with DEC and discussions with property owners, this alignment has serious environmental and property ownership challenges.

On August 6, 2014, a meeting was held at 8 Hartsook Lane to discuss the implications of aligning the trail on or near privately owned parcels. Property owners that had attended the first two public meetings were invited. Potentially feasible alignment on both private property and in the adjacent wetlands were discussed. Case study example photos were used to illustrate design concepts and issues of trail access to and from the privately owned parcels. This meeting was for informational purposes and no final determinations were made. It was conveyed to the property owners that there are design solutions to avoid private property, however, they involve routing the trail over sensitive wetlands and on steep slopes. If small portions of certain parcels that are set back from homes were to be made available for trail access by property owners, the trail may take a more desirable route and grade by avoiding being over the wetlands and following the natural contours of the land. Such access can be granted solely by the property owner. This option should continue be explored with property owners as an off-road route would be preferred.

LEGEND

- PROPOSED MULTI-USE TRAIL PREFERRED ROUTE
- - - PROPOSED MULTI-USE TRAIL ALTERNATE ROUTE
- - - - EXISTING ROADWAY EDGE
- PARCEL LINE
- ROUTE 9D CORRIDOR
- BUILDING FOOTPRINT
- STATE PARK
- TIDAL WETLAND
- NATIONAL WETLAND INVENTORY
- OVERLAPPING WETLAND TYPES



Parcel map showing location of private property and wetlands

Summary Evaluation

GOALS

SAFETY

2.1A Breakneck Ridge Station to Brickyard Parkland - Upland route along Route 9D

This portion of trail would provide a separated, designated walkway where one does not exist, facilitating the connection through this area. This would also provide a safe path for hikers that park as far north as Hartsook Lane for the Breakneck Ridge trailhead.

RECREATION

This portion of trail would connect to the currently unprogrammed Brickyards Parkland area of Hudson Highlands State Park.

HIGHLIGHT & RETAIN NATURAL BEAUTY

By avoiding the steep slopes and tidal wetlands, this route segment prevents encroachment on sensitive environmental areas. The disturbance required to build this trail would take place on the upland side of Route 9D, where the habitat is less sensitive.

CONSTRUCTION FEASIBILITY

This route segment constitutes a substantial construction project, but the work would take place in a less sensitive area than the lowland route. The space for the trail would be within the existing Route 9D right-of-way, which is already publicly owned. However, this alternative would take at least 10 years to fund, design and build, which goes beyond the desired timeframe for implementation.

P R E F E R R E D R O U T E

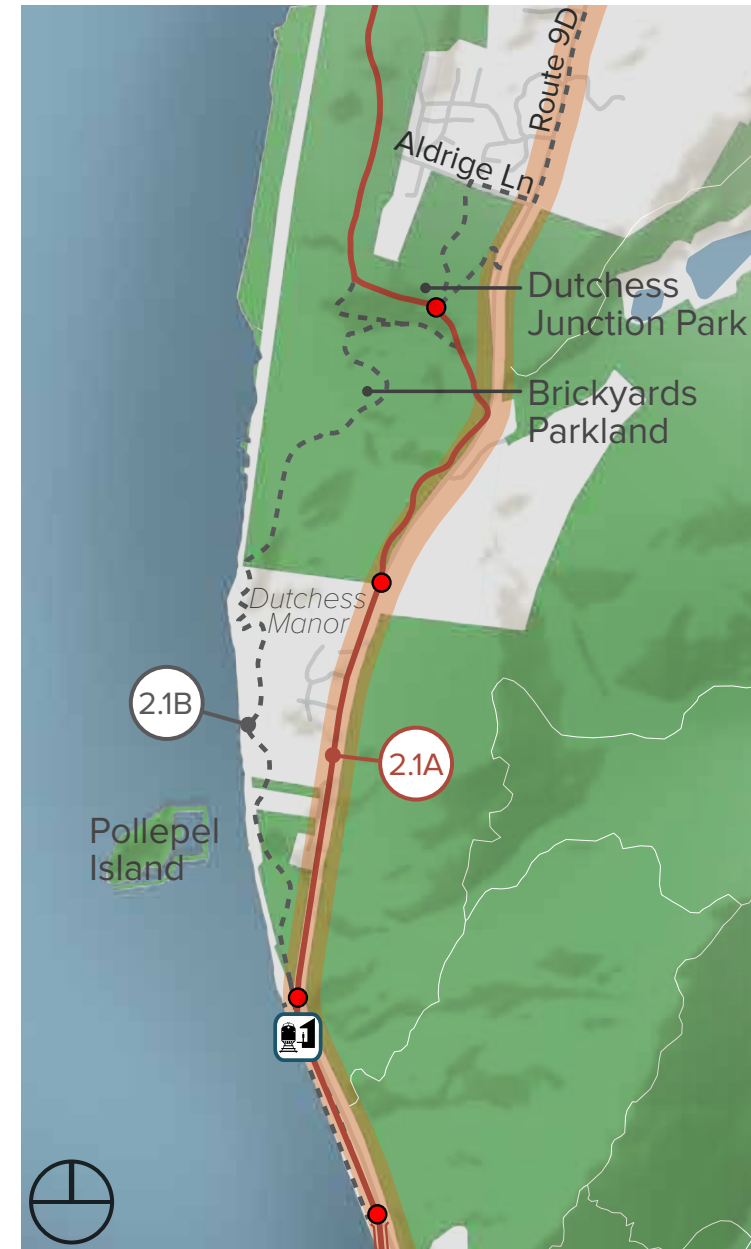
2.1B Lowland Route - between wetlands and private property

This route segment would be further removed from Route 9D. For emergency response, it would be the least accessible portion of trail from public property being considered, due to the private parcels between Route 9D and the wetlands. It would also be very isolated.

This alignment would also connect to the Brickyards Parkland, but would be more technically challenging to navigate.

While this alignment would bring trail users closer to the river and Pollepel Island, the construction impacts would be significant as the trail would be built over the wetlands.

In some cases, existing mapped wetlands and tidal wetlands are located on private property. In some instances this route which would be in the wetlands and/or on private property, require permits and easements. Construction impacts and shading to wetland areas would be significant where the trail would be built entirely above the wetlands and not on any private land. To maintain a similar grade to the land outcroppings to the north and south, a boardwalk structure would need to be elevated significantly above the wetland area, requiring deeper footings within the wetland and a sloped trail. This alignment should continue to be explored with property owners.



Map 2.1 - Breakneck Ridge Train Station to Brickyards Parkland

Legend

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