

Chapter III.I: Recreational and Open Space Resources, Accessibility – Fjord Trail North

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the existing conditions and assesses the Proposed Action’s potential effects on recreational and open space resources within the Fjord Trail North Corridor. An evaluation of the proposed Fjord Trail South is provided in Chapter IV.I, “Recreational and Open Space Resources, Accessibility – Fjord Trail South,” of this DGEIS.

This chapter describes existing recreational and open space resources in the Fjord Trail North Corridor and assesses the future conditions with and without construction of the proposed Fjord Trail North. The assessment identifies connecting recreational resources (those that are adjacent to the Fjord Trail North Corridor and/or are immediately accessible from the existing resources the Fjord Trail would tie together), noting Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible (Accessible) facilities and parking, within or directly adjacent to the Fjord Trail North Corridor. The assessment considers the ownership, operation/maintenance responsibilities, type of recreation, current use levels, and capacities of the resources.

The proposed Fjord Trail is anticipated to be a recreational resource as well as a connection to other recreational opportunities within the Hudson Highlands State Park Preserve (HHSPP), City of Beacon, Town of Fishkill, Town of Philipstown, and Village of Cold Spring. The potential for significant adverse impacts to open space and recreational resources and accessibility that would result from the construction and use of Fjord Trail North are considered in this chapter.

B. EXISTING CONDITIONS

The existing trails, parks, playgrounds, and other recreational resources, and ADA Accessible facilities and parking within or directly adjacent to the Fjord Trail North Corridor, are identified below. These recreational and open space resources are also shown in **Figure III.I-1a and 1b**.

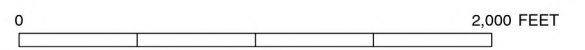
Nearly 50 percent of the Fjord Trail alignment (including Main Trail, Meanders, and Connectors), or approximately six miles, would be located within or adjacent to HHSPP. HHSPP is owned by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) and made up of a series of separate parcels along a 16-mile stretch of the eastern shore of the Hudson River and extends eastward up to four miles from the Hudson River’s shoreline. Recreational resources within HHSPP that are along the Fjord Trail North Corridor include Denning’s Point, The Notch and Notch Trail, and Bannerman/Pollepel Island within the Hudson River. HHSPP trails/trailheads including Breakneck Ridge, Wilkinson-Memorial, and Nimham Trails would be accessed by way of the Breakneck Connector and Bridge Project (BNCB) at the southern end of the Fjord Trail North Corridor. Additional recreational resources along the Fjord Trail North Corridor include Long Dock Park, Klara Sauer Trail, and Madam Brett Park, which are owned by Scenic Hudson.

Table III.I-1 identifies the recreational resources along and immediately adjacent to the Fjord Trail North Corridor. This section describes the connecting recreational resources, noting ADA



- Trail Corridor
 - Fjord Trail North
 - Park
 - Trail
- Recreational and Open Space Resources**

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Accessible facilities and parking, within or directly adjacent to the Trail Corridor including ownership, operation/maintenance responsibilities, type of recreation, current use level, and visitor capacity.

Table III.I-1
Existing Recreational and Open Space Resources, Fjord Trail North Corridor

Recreational Resource	Municipality	Owner	Type of Recreation	ADA/ABA Accessible	Parking
Long Dock Park	City of Beacon	Scenic Hudson Land Trust (Scenic Hudson)	Walking, relaxation, kayak pavilion	Yes	80± parking spaces
Klara Sauer Trail	City of Beacon	Scenic Hudson	Walking, running, bicycling, X-country skiing	Yes	None <i>(However, visitors can park at Long Dock Park and Denning's Point at either end of trail)</i>
Denning's Point (HHSPP)	City of Beacon	OPRHP	Hiking, fishing, wildlife watching, Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail Water Trail site	Yes – Partial ¹	35± parking spaces located at City of Beacon Water and Sewer Treatment Facility
Madam Brett Park	City of Beacon	Scenic Hudson	Dog walking on leash, fishing, walking, wildlife watching, X-country skiing, and Snowshoeing	No	15± parking spaces
Mount Beacon	City of Beacon	Scenic Hudson/ OPRHP	Dog walking on leash, hiking, hunting (in the section owned by OPRHP), wildlife watching, and snowshoeing	No	77 parking spaces at Mt Beacon Lot (includes 2 ADA); 30± informal and 4 formal spaces at Howland Ave/Exeter Circle
The Notch (HHSPP)	Town of Fishkill	OPRHP	Hunting, fishing	No	20± parking spaces along NYS Route 9D near Notch Trail Pull Off
Notch Trail (HHSPP)	Town of Fishkill	OPRHP	Hiking, hunting access, wildlife watching	No	5± parking spaces at informal pull off
Bannerman/ Pollepel Island (HHSPP)	Town of Fishkill	OPRHP	Guided walking tours only; events	No	Accessed via boats or kayaks only
Breakneck Ridge Trail/Wilkinson Memorial Trail/Nimham Trail ² (HHSPP)	Town of Fishkill	OPRHP	Hiking, hunting access, wildlife watching	No	Breakneck Ridge informal parking for 160+ vehicles

Notes:

¹ Approximately two-thirds of the Denning's Point Trail meets Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) trail accessibility standards (<https://www.access-board.gov/aba/>). The Denning's Point Trail is closed between December 15 to March 15 for protection of wintering bald eagles.

² These trailheads are adjacent to the Breakneck Connector and Bridge Project. Of note, the Breakneck Connector and Bridge Project will provide an off-road trail connection between the MNR Breakneck station platforms, formalized parking, and the Wilkinson Memorial and Breakneck Ridge Trailheads, in addition to constructing a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the MNR tracks.

LONG DOCK PARK

Long Dock Park is located on the Hudson River waterfront in the City of Beacon (Dutchess County) and is owned and maintained by Scenic Hudson Land Trust¹ and the City of Beacon. It offers passive and active recreation, with a kayak launch and storage, water access, picnic area, lawn space, a sculpture installation, and walking paths. The Scenic Hudson River Center, located at the park, is a multipurpose space that hosts cultural and community events. Long Dock Park is adjacent to and easily accessed from the Beacon-Newburgh Ferry Terminal and Metro-North Railroad (MNR) Beacon train station. The park is about a quarter-mile from the Dia Beacon art museum and about a half-mile to the City’s Main Street. The Dutchess County Public Transit’s Beacon Free Loop bus and Putnam County’s Cold Spring Trolley both have scheduled stops nearby the park at the MNR Beacon train station.

Long Dock Park provides approximately 80 parking spaces for park users and visitors to Scenic Hudson’s River Center. At peak hours on peak days (as defined in Chapter III.L, “Traffic and Transportation – Fjord Trail”) the park was observed to contain approximately 60 vehicles. The nearby MNR Beacon train station parking area, which connects to Long Dock Park via an existing path under Long Dock Road, provides additional parking with a capacity for approximately 200 vehicles. The MNR Beacon parking area requires payment on weekdays and is free of charge on weekends and designated holidays.

Just north of Long Dock Park is the Pete and Toshi Seeger Riverfront Park, which connects to Long Dock Park by way of Red Flynn Drive and together forms an active recreational waterfront. This waterfront park, which is owned and maintained by the City of Beacon, provides views of the Hudson River with picnic tables and barbecue grills, a playground, and basketball courts. The park also has a river pool, a circular mesh swimming area that floats on the Hudson River.

KLARA SAUER TRAIL

The Klara Sauer Trail is a one-mile pedestrian/bicycle trail connecting Long Dock Park to Denning’s Point in the City of Beacon. The existing trail is located on a narrow strip of land between the MNR tracks and the Hudson River shoreline and provides active recreation opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists. The trail is owned and maintained by Scenic Hudson Land Trust. The Klara Sauer Trail does not have dedicated parking but shares parking with Long Dock Park. Visitors can also access the trail from the parking lot for Denning’s Point.

DENNING’S POINT

Denning’s Point is a 65-acre peninsula on the Hudson River at the mouth of Fishkill Creek in the City of Beacon. It is part of HHSPP and is owned by OPRHP. Denning’s Point has extensive Hudson River frontage with a sandy beach at the park’s southern tip. It is popular among residents and people fishing in the spring. OPRHP is planning a cleanup of a vacant steel structure that is at Denning’s Point south of its entrance and plans to install photovoltaic solar panels. Currently, OPRHP conducts operations/maintenance in conjunction with a caretaker living on the property.

Parking for Denning’s Point is available at the City of Beacon’s Water and Sewer Department’s treatment facility parking lot on the east side of the MNR tracks. The parking area has capacity for approximately 35 vehicles. At peak hours, the parking area typically contains about 30 vehicles. Access from the parking lot to Denning’s Point is provided by Denning’s Avenue

¹ <https://www.scenichudson.org/explore-the-valley/scenic-hudson-parks/scenic-hudsons-long-dock-park/> (accessed April 8, 2024).

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Extension, a City street that travels on a bridge over the MNR tracks. The street is restricted to authorized vehicles and provides pedestrians/bicycle access to Denning's Point. The bridge has a sidewalk separated from the vehicular travel lane by a timber curb. As noted above, the Klara Sauer Trail provides a pedestrian/bicycle connection from the north side of Denning's Point to Long Dock Park and the MNR Beacon station and brings a steady influx of walkers and bikers to the park. Denning's Point offers a trail along the western side of the peninsula that underwent improvements in 2018, to upgrade the trail to meet Federal Accessibility standards. The main peninsula at Denning's Point is closed from December 15 through March 15 for protection of the wintering bald eagle population.

The Beacon Line, an inactive east-west rail line also owned by MNR and used by MNR for storage and staging of materials and equipment, is crossed at grade within the property.

MADAM BRETT PARK

Madam Brett Park is comprised of 12 acres and is located on the north side of Fishkill Creek in the City of Beacon. The park is managed by Scenic Hudson. It offers passive and active recreation, with a walking trail, an elevated boardwalk over a portion of Fishkill Creek's north bank, a viewing platform, and bench seating. An existing trail connects Madam Brett Park to Denning's Point. The park has a parking lot with a capacity for approximately 15 vehicles but is not ADA Accessible. At peak hours the parking area is typically full.

MOUNT BEACON PARK

Mount Beacon Park is not directly adjacent to the Fjord Trail North Corridor, but is a notable recreational resource within HHSPP that connects to the larger park and trail network in the Corridor. Mount Beacon is the highest peak of the Hudson Highlands and offers a series of hiking trails and is the site of the old Beacon Incline Railway that carried passengers to a former restaurant/casino at its peak. Scenic Hudson owns the parking lot and first part of the Casino Trail, and the remainder is owned by OPRHP.

The Mount Beacon parking area has capacity for about 77 vehicles, including two ADA Accessible spaces. The parking area is located at the trailhead on Wolcott Avenue (NYS Route 9D) in Beacon. During peak hours, the Mount Beacon lot is typically full. On-street parking is also available on Howland Avenue, with ten marked spaces near its intersection with NYS Route 9D and additional informal parking to the north on Howland Avenue and on Exeter Circle, with a total capacity in excess of 30 vehicles. During peak hours, the on-street parking is typically at capacity.

Putnam County's Cold Spring Trolley and the Beacon Free Loop bus have scheduled stops at Mount Beacon, providing visitors with another option for access.

THE NOTCH

The Notch is a 285-acre, mostly forested area of HHSPP located on the west side of NYS Route 9D south of Fishkill Creek (see **Figure III.I-1b**). This area has an old fallow playground area, and old carriage roads weave throughout the area. The area is open for hunting (archery and crossbow) only by permit during the appropriate hunting seasons, as well as for fishing access.

There are no designated trails within The Notch, although there is a Notch Trail on the east side of NYS Route 9D. Currently, visitors to the Notch Trail and surrounding area use unmarked dirt pull offs on both sides of the NYS Route 9D, including one at the Notch Trailhead. Combined,

the four unmarked pull offs accommodate up to 20 vehicles, and the area at the Notch Trailhead can accommodate up to four vehicles.

DUTCHESS MANOR

Dutchess Manor, the site of a historic home built in 1889, is sited on approximately 6.6 acres in the Town of Fishkill, and formerly served as a restaurant, event space, and catering facility, before it was purchased by HHFT, Inc. in 2020. The facility has a parking area with approximately 50 spaces. However, the site and parking area are currently closed to the public, and was not used as a public parking area during the operation of the restaurant.

BANNERMAN ISLAND

Bannerman (or Pollepel) Island is a 6.5-acre island in the Hudson River north of Breakneck Ridge within the Town of Fishkill. The island contains the ruins of Bannerman Castle, a former military supply warehouse. The island is part of HHSP and owned by OPRHP. Bannerman Castle Trust, Inc. (BCT) operates the island under an agreement with OPRHP. BCT provides guided and self-guided walking tours of the island with views of the castle remains and movie nights and theatrical events during the summer months. The island is also used for weddings and other special events. All access to the island is by boat, with bookings for visits made through BCT.

C. FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTION

In the future without Fjord Trail North, there are two notable improvements that would take place at recreational resources along and adjacent to the Fjord Trail North Corridor.

First, construction of the BNCB just south of the Fjord Trail North Corridor is currently underway and will include an approximately half-mile shared-use trail and new pedestrian/bicycle bridge with limited authorized maintenance vehicle access for the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP) over the MNR tracks, parking areas along NYS Route 9D, connections to two trailheads (Breakneck Ridge Trail and Wilkinson-Memorial Trail) within HHSP, the addition of two restroom buildings, upgrades to the MNR Breakneck Ridge station and platforms, relocation of power lines from the western side of NYS Route 9D to the eastern side, installation of a trail steward station, and upgrades to the upper overlook area along the Breakneck Ridge Trail. The BNCB would improve conditions at this popular and heavily visited destination for hikers, cyclists, and drivers, as it would provide off-street pedestrian facilities and reduce the number of pedestrians walking along NYS Route 9D to access the trails and other nearby recreational resources. Second, as part of a separate action by HHFT, Inc., which is undergoing SEQR review by the Town of Fishkill, HHFT, Inc. intends to adaptively re-use the Dutchess Manor site, which it currently owns. As part of this adaptive re-use, the existing manor house would be stripped of its modern additions (totaling approximately 13,500 square feet), renovated, and restored to the original 1889 structure. The renovated building would serve as offices for HHFT, Inc., and would include a small visitor center for existing trail users. The existing parking lot would be expanded to accommodate up to approximately 180 spaces for visitors to the area.

In addition, the Dutchess County Transportation Council (DCTC) is conducting a feasibility study for a potential rail trail along the MNR's inactive Beacon Line.² Implementation of this potential

² <https://www.beaconhopewellrailtrail.com/>. Accessed April 24, 2024.

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rail trail will depend on the results of the feasibility study and identification of funding, and the timeline of this potential project is not known at this time.

Aside from these projects, existing recreational and open space areas and accessibility along the Fjord Trail North Corridor would remain substantially similar to the current condition.

D. FUTURE WITH THE PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed Fjord Trail North would be a new recreational resource and would link existing recreational resources within HHSPP and the municipalities through which it would be constructed. The assessment below presents the potential beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed Fjord Trail North as those impacts relate to recreation and open space. It also addresses the potential impacts associated with the increase in the use of, and changes in accessibility to, existing recreational resources due to the development of the Fjord Trail North and recreational amenities of the proposed Fjord Trail North section. The proposed Fjord Trail is also expected to increase the availability, access to, and diversity of recreational resources along and adjacent to the Trail Corridor. It is anticipated that the Fjord Trail, once complete, would increase visitation to the recreational assets adjacent to its route, owing to side explorations accessible from the Fjord Trail. For details on the expected increase in visitation, see the “Visitor Projection Study” of Chapter III.L, “Traffic and Transportation – Fjord Trail.”

CONSTRUCTION

Construction of Fjord Trail North would occur in or along existing recreational resources and potentially result in temporary disruption to park and trail users due to noise, emissions (including dust), and visibility of construction activities and staging areas. Measures would be implemented to minimize temporary noise and air quality impacts during construction, as described in Chapter III.H, “Noise and Air Quality – Fjord Trail North.” Temporary closures or detours of existing trails may also be required during construction for public safety, particularly where existing trails would be improved, such as Long Dock Park, the Klara Sauer Trail, Denning’s Point, and Madam Brett Park. As discussed further in Chapter II, “Project Description,” construction of Fjord Trail North would occur in phases, each lasting approximately 24 to 36 months. Due to the linear nature of the Proposed Action, construction activities would be transient and would not be in one location for the entire construction period or require closure of all trails along the full corridor simultaneously. Therefore, temporary construction impacts would not result in significant adverse impacts on recreational resources.

OPERATION

Among its beneficial impacts, Fjord Trail North would connect a multitude of recreational resources along and adjacent to the Trail Corridor, including Long Dock Park, the Klara Sauer Trail, Denning’s Point, Madam Brett Park, The Notch, and the Breakneck Ridge Trail via the BNCB. It would improve access to these existing and proposed future recreational resources and create new opportunities for visitors to access and enjoy the Hudson River and its scenic views. It would also facilitate access to existing natural areas that are not currently publicly accessible including The Notch, the south side of Fishkill Creek, and the forested area south of Dutchess Manor from which Bannerman Castle can be easily viewed. As discussed in Chapter III.N, “Emergency and Public Services – Fjord Trail North,” through the provision of more parking facilities, separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, safer and more frequent points of access, and the creation of better connections to existing trails and other parks and recreational resources, visitors would experience an overall safer environment for outdoor recreation in the area. The

anticipated increase in visitors and vehicles to the area would be offset by improved visitor safety and emergency service provider accessibility on and around the Fjord Trail. The proposed Fjord Trail North would provide emergency service providers with new points of access along the Hudson River to reach injured Fjord Trail users, in addition to existing access points at Long Dock Park and Denning’s Point. New parking areas would also include reserved space for emergency responders, as designated with pavement marking and signage, to ensure their safety and to facilitate prompt access to the Fjord Trail in the event of emergencies.

The proposed Fjord Trail North would be Accessible where feasible. The Main Trail would be designed to provide recreational opportunities for everyone regardless of differences in ability. The designs for buildings on the Fjord Trail North section would follow ADA Accessibility Guidelines. The Main Trail would be an Accessible route with the alignment designed to maintain gentle slopes to the extent possible and to provide clear and ample zones on either side of the trail for resting intervals. Material for the Main Trail would be selected to provide firm and stable trail surfaces, and tactile shoulders, for visually impaired users. The designs for Entries, Meanders, Connectors, and Trail Banks in Fjord Trail North would also be Accessible, where possible.

At the time of this assessment, there is no intention to implement fees for use of the Fjord Trail. Fees are being considered for a new shuttle service in the Fjord Trail Corridor (see below) and for use of the existing and proposed lots at BNCB, Dutchess Manor, Wade’s Hill Lot, and Long Dock Park. The potential implementation of fees would be based on the outcome of a planned future study.

To enhance mobility of trail users throughout the Fjord Trail Corridor, a shuttle would be incorporated into the operations of the Fjord Trail. The shuttle, which may be implemented prior to the Fjord Trail to accommodate existing trailheads in the corridor, would have potential stops at the MNR Beacon train station, Long Dock Park, Beacon Housing Authority, Mount Beacon, The Notch, Dutchess Manor, Breakneck Ridge, Washburn Trailhead/Little Stony Point, and the MNR Cold Spring train station. The shuttle would charge a nominal fee for a daily pass. The amount of this fee would be established based on a future parking and shuttle study. Additionally, parking facilities at the Boscobel House and Gardens just south of the Village of Cold Spring may be available for Fjord Trail users, pending further coordination with the owners of that site, which could also be served by the shuttle. Further, rail access to Fjord Trail North would be available daily from the MNR Beacon station and the MNR Breakneck Ridge station on weekends.

LONG DOCK PARK

The entrance to the proposed Fjord Trail North would be located in Long Dock Park where the existing Klara Sauer Trail begins. The Fjord Trail trailhead would include new seating, restroom buildings, a bike repair station, and a location for bike rentals. These amenities would enhance services for park users. The parking lot at Long Dock Park, which provides approximately 80 spaces for park users and visitors to Scenic Hudson’s River Center, would not be changed with construction of Fjord Trail North. The proposed Fjord Trail North would also connect to the parking lot at the MNR Beacon station, which requires payment on weekdays and is available free of charge on weekends and designated holidays, via an existing path.

In the future, visitors would be able to access the park by personal vehicle using the provided lots, by train at the MNR Beacon train station, on the Dutchess County Public Transit’s Beacon Free Loop bus or Cold Spring Trolley (both with a stop at the MNR Beacon train station), on the proposed new shuttle service, on foot, or by bicycle. In the future, visitation to the park would be anticipated to increase. Even with increased access by way of public and private transit and the

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availability of significant parking at the train station on weekends, and even if the parking lot were full under the existing condition during typical peak days, the number of visitors is expected to be limited by the parking available at the park, along with the park's size and available amenities. Additionally, proposed improvements to address any parking limitations would include smart parking tools such as e-signage and parking apps. These would assist in improving congestion and overcrowding by directing drivers to available parking spaces at other locations in real-time (reducing circular parking search maneuvers) and allowing drivers to pay for parking electronically (see Chapter III.L, "Traffic and Transportation – Fjord Trail"). As such, any increases in users of Long Dock Park would not be expected to result in a significant adverse impact.

KLARA SAUER TRAIL

The proposed Fjord Trail North would incorporate the existing Klara Sauer Trail between Long Dock Park and Denning's Point. This section of Fjord Trail North would be Accessible. Portions of this section of Fjord Trail North would be elevated on a berm to keep the trail above anticipated sea level rise. There is an elevated overlook proposed along this section of Fjord Trail North as well.

There are no dedicated parking areas for Klara Sauer Trail, and this condition would not change with the Fjord Trail. However, parking is and would remain available to trail users at Long Dock Park and Denning's Point.

Currently, visitors can access the Klara Sauer Trail on foot or bicycle, and from Denning's Point or Long Dock Park. In addition to available weekend parking at the MNR Beacon train station, the Cold Spring Trolley and Dutchess County Public Transit's bus routes have scheduled stops at the MNR Beacon train station, which is a short walk from the Klara Sauer Trail. With the completion of the Fjord Trail North section of the Fjord Trail, visitors would continue to access the Klara Sauer Trail from these locations. Additional parking, and improved connections, including a proposed shuttle to existing and proposed parking areas, would be expected to improve access to Long Dock Park and Denning's Point. This would be anticipated to incrementally increase the number of visitors using the Klara Sauer Trail. However, user capacity is not expected to become an issue because access would not be substantially different than under existing conditions, and the Klara Sauer Trail (once it is part of Fjord Trail North) would be wider and more accessible than the existing condition, increasing visitor capacity.

DENNING'S POINT (HHSPP)

The Fjord Trail North section would slightly realign the Denning's Point Trail connection to the Klara Sauer Trail, more formally connect Denning's Point to Madam Brett Park, and add signage. Fjord Trail North would include a Meander on the west side of Denning's Point. This proposed Meander (much of which would incorporate an existing trail) would be enhanced and made more Accessible (as the design of the Fjord Trail North advances, the opportunity to convert the entire western trail on Denning's Point to an Accessible one would be considered). An Accessible entry to Denning's Point is also proposed, which would link the existing road alignment and parking lot to Fjord Trail North. The proposed Fjord Trail North would include six Trail Banks on Denning's Point, including a fishing bank, a landing, and an overlook.

Currently, visitors can access Denning's Point by personal vehicle, with parking available in the nearby City of Beacon Water and Wastewater Department's treatment facility parking lot. With the completion of the Fjord Trail North section, the proposed shuttle would also provide service to Long Dock Park (one mile from Denning's Point), offering access to Denning's Point for additional trail users.

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In the future, visitation to Denning’s Point would be anticipated to increase. OPRHP has experienced difficulty in keeping visitors off the Denning’s Point peninsula when the area is closed for protection of wintering bald eagles from December 15 to March 15. Even with increased access, the number of visitors is expected to be limited by the parking available at Denning’s Point, its size, and the available amenities. E-signage would be used to direct visitors to parking lots with available spaces, and to areas where visitors can access the proposed shuttle or access the Fjord Trail North from an alternate location. This would be expected to help offset issues of parking impacts. As such, an increase in users would not be expected to result in a significant adverse impact. However, given that visitors are still traversing the peninsula when closed as noted above, additional efforts may be undertaken in conjunction with the Fjord Trail to prevent human presence in this area when closed, potentially in the form of more clear and concise signage to replace outdated signage, and a sturdier gate.

MADAM BRETT PARK

Madam Brett Park is included in the proposed Fjord Trail North alignment, with the Main Trail incorporating an existing trail. A Meander off the Main Trail is proposed that would incorporate and improve portions of existing trails and potentially create new trail. Trail banks are proposed at Madam Brett Park, including a picnic terrace, marsh overlook, and a seating bank. Fjord Trail North would continue south of the park on a new pedestrian/bicycle (non-vehicle) bridge crossing Fishkill Creek, south of the existing boardwalk.

In the future, access to Madam Brett Park would be anticipated to remain by personal vehicle parking in the designated parking lot. Visitation to the park is likely to increase with construction of the Fjord Trail North, as it would include a new pedestrian/bicycle bridge across Fishkill Creek connecting the park to points south. Connection to the north exists as noted previously. In addition to Madam Brett Park being a destination, with the implementation of the Fjord Trail North section, it would become a point of interest on the overall Fjord Trail. To address increased demand for parking, proposed improvements would include smart parking tools such as e-signage and parking apps. These would assist in improving congestion and overcrowding by directing drivers to available parking spaces at other trail access points in real-time, reducing circular parking search maneuvers, and allowing drivers to pay for parking electronically (see Chapter III.L, “Traffic and Transportation – Fjord Trail”). Given the limited parking available, the proposed parking tools, and the lack of a shuttle stop at Madam Brett Park, the proposed trail improvements and the additional trail at the park, user capacity is not anticipated to result in a significant adverse impact.

MOUNT BEACON

Mount Beacon is not part of the proposed Fjord Trail alignment, and no improvements related to the development of the Fjord Trail North are proposed at this location. In the future, access to Mount Beacon would continue by way of personal vehicle with the designated parking area and on-street parking, and by way of Putnam County’s Cold Spring Trolley. The proposed shuttle service that would be implemented prior to, and incorporated by, the Fjord Trail would include a stop at Mount Beacon. However, visitation to the park would likely remain little changed with construction of the Fjord Trail North section, as access would not change substantially from the existing condition, and Mount Beacon is not directly connected to and is at least one mile distant from other destinations along the Fjord Trail.

THE NOTCH

The Notch is within the proposed Fjord Trail North alignment.

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Currently, access to The Notch area (for permitted hunters and fishing access) and to the Notch Trail is by personal vehicle by parking at informal dirt pull-offs along both shoulders of NYS Route 9D, with four small dirt areas in the vicinity of the Notch Trail trailhead. These informal parking areas are a safety hazard to pedestrians and motorists. With the construction of the Fjord Trail North, a new parking facility is planned at The Notch. The new parking facility would provide approximately 80 parking spaces (replacing the existing unmarked dirt pull offs on both sides of the road that currently accommodate approximately 20 vehicles). The Notch parking area would also include a restroom building and a Connector trail to the Main Trail of Fjord Trail North. A trail connection to and across NYS Route 9D would be provided for Notch Trail access. The Notch would have a vehicular entrance on NYS Route 9D. With construction of the Fjord Trail North, access to The Notch and the broader Fjord Trail would be by personal vehicle and by way of the proposed Fjord Trail shuttle service.

Visitation to The Notch would be anticipated to increase with the Fjord Trail. The Notch currently only seasonally allows hunters with permits and fishing access, but with the improved and expanded parking, and connections to existing and proposed trails, and with appropriate future assessments and design, impacts related to capacity would not be anticipated. Hunting may or may not continue to be allowed in this area once the Fjord Trail is constructed. The Notch improvements associated with Fjord Trail North would comprise about 10 acres of land, with the remaining land available for hunting, if it can be done safely. This would be determined in the future as design advances. Additionally, the vast majority of HHSPP allows archery/crossbow hunting, so it would not be considered a significant loss if hunting were discontinued in this area after construction of the Fjord Trail.

BANNERMAN ISLAND

Bannerman/Pollepel Island is near to, but not included in, the Fjord Trail North alignment. It is anticipated that the Fjord Trail, once complete, would increase visitation to the recreational assets adjacent to its route, through visitors making side explorations accessible from the Main Trail. Construction of the Fjord Trail North section would include a Meander with a Bannerman overlook, but access to the island would not change and would continue to be by boat and by bookings through the BCT. This booking process keeps visitation at a manageable level, and this would remain. Fjord Trail North does not propose additional kayak launches in the vicinity of Bannerman Island. As such, issues related to user capacity would not be anticipated.

E. CONCLUSION

The proposed Fjord Trail North would enhance recreational and open space resources by providing a new trail for pedestrians and bicyclists, by creating more cohesive and safer connections between existing parks and trails, and by expanding access to the Hudson River waterfront and scenic vistas in the Trail Corridor. As discussed above, various components of the Fjord Trail North section would be expected to minimize potential adverse impacts to existing recreational resources and open space, including improved and new parking areas, the introduction of smart parking tools (including e-signage and smart parking apps to direct visitors to available parking), the proposed shuttle service, better signage, improved connectivity of local trails and recreational amenities, and physical improvements added to existing recreational resources, including the addition of Accessible trails and features. Additionally, this new recreational resource would be accompanied by new HHFT, Inc. staff, a maintenance and operation plan, and funding meant to manage the resource and distribute visitors across the Fjord Trail and other nearby recreational opportunities. Thus, with these measures, the Proposed Action is not

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anticipated to result in significant adverse impacts to recreational and open space resources including those related to access and Accessibility. Therefore, no additional mitigation measures are proposed. *