

Chapter IV.B: Land Ownership, Management, and Maintenance – Fjord Trail South

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the existing conditions and assesses the Proposed Action’s potential impacts on Land Ownership, Management, and Maintenance within the Fjord Trail South Corridor. An evaluation of Fjord Trail North is provided in in Chapter III.B, “Land Ownership, Management, and Maintenance – Fjord Trail North,” of this DGEIS.

B. EXISTING CONDITIONS

LANDOWNERS WITHIN OR ADJACENT TO FJORD TRAIL SOUTH CORRIDOR

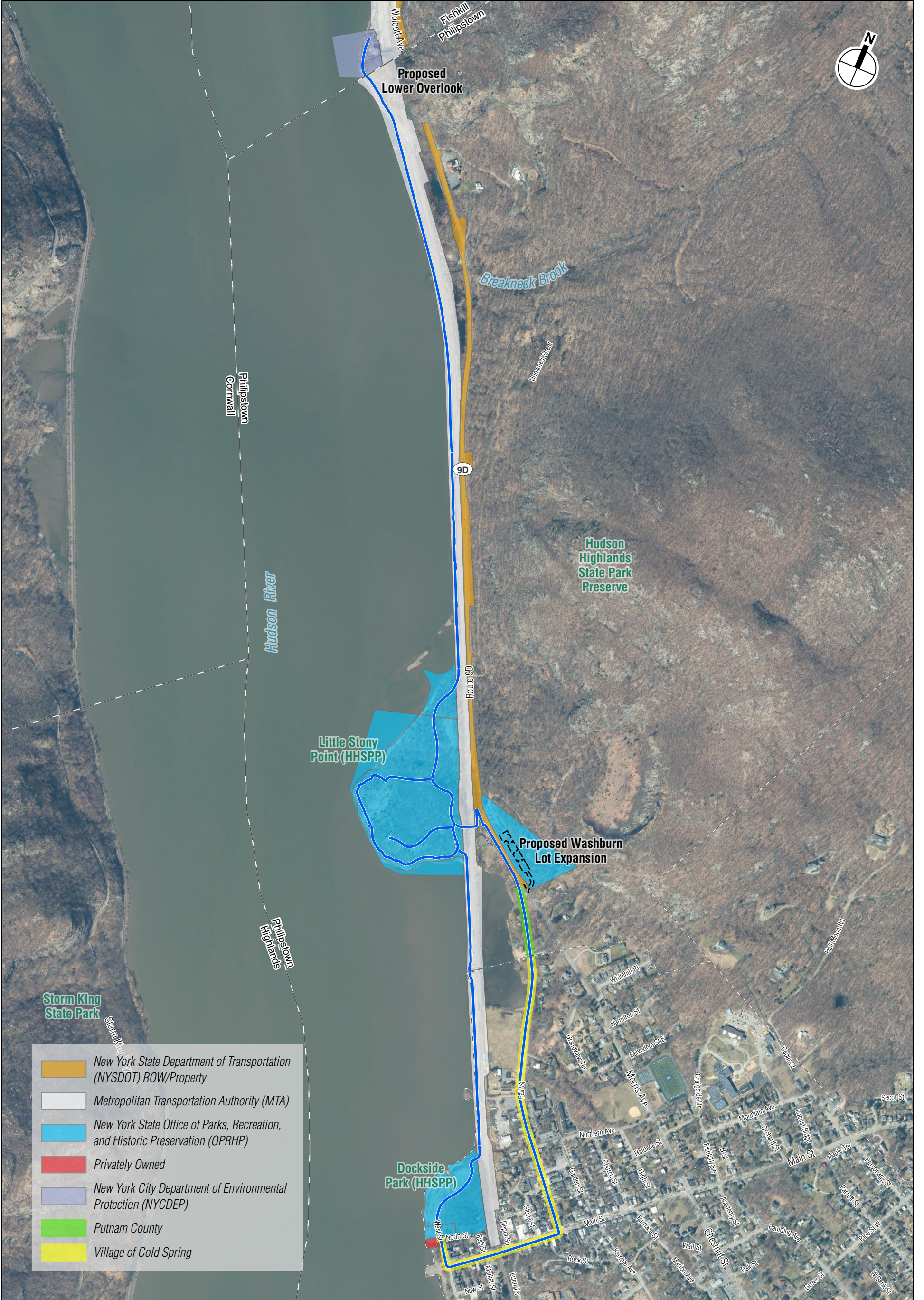
This section describes the existing landowners located within or adjacent to the Fjord Trail South Corridor and describes each entity’s relationship to the planning process and their various roles in managing and maintaining existing recreational resources along the Corridor. See **Figure IV.B-1** for a map of the landowners within or adjacent to the proposed Fjord Trail South.

NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION, AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) owns and manages the 9,740-acre Hudson Highlands State Park Preserve (HHSP), which encompasses about 25 percent of the Fjord Trail South Corridor. HHSP is comprised of multiple shoreline, upland, and mountainous land areas extending about 16 miles north to south and about four miles inland on the east side of the Hudson River. The northern portion of HHSP spans two counties (Dutchess and Putnam) and multiple municipalities, including the Towns of Fishkill and Philipstown, the Villages of Cold Spring and Nelsonville, and the City of Beacon. The southern portion of HHSP, which lies beyond the Fjord Trail Corridor to the south, falls within Putnam and Westchester Counties, in the Towns of Philipstown and Cortlandt and the City of Peekskill. HHSP lies directly across the Hudson River from Bear Mountain, Harriman, and Storm King Mountain State Parks. See Figure I-2 for a depiction of the area of HHSP in the vicinity of the proposed Fjord Trail.

As custodian of a large portion of publicly owned land along the Fjord Trail corridor, OPRHP is serving as lead agency for the Proposed Action under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). OPRHP has been involved with project planning since 2006 with the development of the “Hudson Fjord Hike/Bike Trail Capital Improvement Feasibility Study,” funded by the Philipstown Greenway Committee¹ and participates on the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail (HHFT) Project Steering Committee. In addition, OPRHP provided input and guidance during the

¹ Source: Philipstown Greenway Committee. Hudson Fjord Hike Bike Trail Project, <http://philipstowngreenway.weebly.com/hudson-fjord-hikebike-trail-project.html>. Accessed April 26, 2024.



Fjord Trail South

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development of the *Preliminary Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail Draft Master Plan, July 2015* and the February 2020 Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail Draft Master Plan.²

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY/METRO-NORTH RAILROAD

New York State's Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), a public authority, owns roughly 6.5 miles of railroad corridor from Long Dock Park in Beacon to Dockside Park in the Village of Cold Spring. This corridor is part of the Hudson Line commuter rail line, which is operated by MTA's subsidiary Metro-North Commuter Railroad Company (Metro-North Railroad; MNR). The Fjord Trail South Corridor is proposed to travel alongside or within an approximately two-mile section of the rail corridor between Breakneck Ridge and Dockside Park (see Figure III.B-1c). Daily rail access to HHSP is provided by MNR at stations in Beacon, Cold Spring and Garrison, and limited weekend only service for hiking is provided at the Manitou and Breakneck Ridge stations on weekends.

MNR maintains and operates commuter service on the Hudson Line, which includes the length of railroad track from Cold Spring to Beacon. MNR's Hudson Line is also used by Amtrak inter-city passenger rail services (Empire Corridor service between New York City and Albany, and beyond to Montreal and Chicago), as well as by CSX, a freight railroad. The Maximum Allowable Speed in this area is 80 mph.

MNR has provided guidance and input during project planning, layout, and design as part of the Project Steering Committee.

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) owns, maintains, and operates NYS Route 9D, which travels along the Fjord Trail South Corridor from Breakneck Ridge to the intersection of NYS Route 9D and Fair Street.

As the Executive Agency who either owns or manages roads on behalf of the State along the proposed Fjord Trail Corridor, NYSDOT has been involved as a partner and has provided guidance, input, and support during project planning, layout, and design as part of the Project Steering Committee.

PUTNAM COUNTY

Putnam County owns the portion of the Fair Street right-of-way within the Town of Philipstown.

VILLAGE OF COLD SPRING

The Village of Cold Spring owns the portion of the Fair Street right-of-way within the Village, as well as the right-of-way of other local streets where the potential Fair Street Meander would travel.

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The northern terminus of the Fjord Trail South Corridor is within New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP) property associated with its Hudson River Drainage Chamber (HRDC).

² <https://parks.ny.gov/inside-our-agency/public-documents.aspx>

PRIVATE LANDOWNERS

One private property is located at the proposed southern terminus of the Fjord Trail South Corridor in the Village of Cold Spring. OPRHP has an existing easement over this property to provide access to Dockside Park.

MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

This section describes the management and maintenance of public facilities along the proposed Fjord Trail South Corridor and the adjoining recreational assets, including the management arrangements, system of trash management, and hours of operation.

MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Following are the current management and maintenance arrangements and jurisdiction for the park areas on and adjacent to the Fjord Trail South Corridor.

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation

OPRHP manages and maintains HHSPP. OPRHP staff maintain HHSPP parking areas, trailheads, and facilities including mowing, garbage removal, and restroom services, where available. In some cases, maintenance, and management occurs with assistance from partner organizations. Along the Fjord Trail South Corridor, the main parking area for HHSPP trails along NYS Route 9D is located at the Washburn Trailhead (across from Little Stony Point), which is on OPRHP property. Informal, unmarked, parallel parking on the west side of NYS Route 9D is also available for HHSPP visitors to the Washburn Trail and Little Stony Point. There is also a small pull off that accommodates 2–3 cars located at the Brook Trailhead along the east side of NYS Route 9D just south of the Breakneck Ridge tunnel.

Informal, unmarked, parallel parking for the Breakneck Ridge Trailhead along NYS Route 9D, which is located just north of the Fjord Trail South Corridor, provides parking for HHSPP visitors to Breakneck Ridge and Wilkinson Memorial Trails.

There are five portable toilets at the Washburn Trailhead across from Little Stony Point. OPRHP pays a contractor to service the portable toilets. There are no other public restroom facilities currently located along the Fjord Trail South Corridor adjacent to HHSPP.

Beyond Fjord Trail South, there are six portable toilets servicing the Breakneck Ridge Trail, three located at the trailhead and three by the Breakneck Ridge train platform.

OPRHP provides Trail Stewards at the Washburn Trailhead from 9 AM to 4 PM generally from July 4 to Indigenous Peoples' Day to conduct hiker counts, provide trail maps, educate visitors on wilderness ethics, and assist in emergency cases, including lost hikers.

Metropolitan Transportation Authority/Metro-North Railroad

MNR provides passenger service to the Fjord Trail South Corridor via the Hudson Line with a station at Cold Spring and limited weekend only service for hiking provided by a station at Breakneck Ridge. The MNR Cold Spring station includes a parking lot with about 220 spaces, which requires payment on weekdays and is available free of charge to the public on weekends and designated holidays. MNR contracts maintenance of its Cold Spring Station Parking facility out to a parking operator.

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New York State Department of Transportation

NYS DOT manages and maintains the area within the NYS Route 9D right-of-way, which generally travels along the extent of the Fjord Trail Corridor between Beacon and Cold Spring. There are currently no formal agreements for maintenance of informal parking areas along NYS Route 9D.

New York – New Jersey Trail Conference

New York – New Jersey Trail Conference (NYNJTC) has constructed and maintained hiking trails in HHSPP for many years and contributes thousands of volunteer hours each year to help maintain and improve the trail system in HHSPP and at many other OPRHP facilities. NYNJTC has been providing seasonal Trail Stewards at the Breakneck Ridge Trailhead since 2013. The organization was represented on the Steering Committee. See Chapters III.L, “Traffic and Transportation – Fjord Trail,” and IV.O, “Other Planning Effort – Breakneck Ridge Visitor Use Management Plan – Fjord Trail South,” for additional information on the NYNJTC and trail counts conducted.

Village of Cold Spring

Under an agreement with OPRHP, the Village of Cold Spring manages and maintains Dockside Park.

TRASH AND SANITATION

This section inventories the existing trash and recycling receptacles in parks and at trailheads along the Fjord Trail South Corridor and describes the systems for their maintenance. **Table IV.B-1** identifies the trash and recycling receptacles in the Fjord Trail South corridor and beyond at Breakneck Connector and Bridge Project (BNCB), the northern trailhead/parking lot to access Fjord Trail South.

**Table IV.B-1
Trash and Recycling Receptacles: Fjord Trail South Corridor**

Location	Trash/Recycling Receptacles	Maintenance
Wilkinson Trailhead	1 garbage can*	OPRHP
MNR Breakneck Ridge Stop	4 garbage cans by the exit from the train platform*	MNR
Breakneck Ridge parking lot	1 garbage can*	OPRHP
Breakneck Ridge trailhead	3 garbage cans*	OPRHP
Little Stony Point	4 garbage cans at the beach, 4 cans around the park office, 2 cans at the trailhead, and a dumpster at the gate to the point*	Maintained by OPRHP staff; OPRHP pays to have the dumpster at this location serviced.
Dockside Park	1 trash and 1 recycling can	Village of Cold Spring
Note: * These are all the cans located near the Fjord Trail South Corridor. OPRHP has others in different areas of HHSPP. OPRHP checks all of them on weekend days and changes bags as needed. OPRHP normally checks them at least three other times during the week but more if it is very hot or less if it is cold or rainy.		

HOURS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

This section documents the hours existing public recreation assets within, along, or adjacent to the Fjord Trail South Corridor are open to the public, including any seasonal variations. This section also addresses seasonal use levels and shifts in demand over time for existing recreation assets. **Table IV.B-2** includes the operation hours for public recreation assets along or adjacent to the Fjord Trail South section.

**Table IV.B-2
Hours Open to the Public: Fjord Trail Corridor**

Public Recreation Asset	Hours
Breakneck Ridge and connecting trails	Sunrise to Sunset
Little Stony Point/Washburn Trail	Sunrise to Sunset
Dockside Park	Sunrise to Sunset

Visitation data shows that use of all recreational assets along the Fjord Trail South Corridor has overall been on the rise in the past decade. However, visitation has fluctuated in recent years (see Chapter III.L, “Traffic and Transportation – Fjord Trail,” and Appendix L-8 for additional details). Popular destinations include various locations within HHSP such as Little Stony Point, as well as hiking hot spots like Breakneck Ridge at the northern end of the Fjord Trail South Corridor.

The seasonal use of the existing recreational assets along the Fjord Trail South Corridor is highest in the spring and fall when the weather is most conducive for outdoor activities; the summer heat often suppresses high visitation. However, visitors do make use of the existing trails year-round. For more information on, and an assessment of projected visitation attributable to the project (above and beyond current use), refer to Chapter III.L, “Traffic and Transportation – Fjord Trail.”

C. FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTION

In the future without Fjord Trail South, property ownership and management of existing recreational facilities along the Fjord Trail South Corridor and existing trails would be expected to remain substantially the same. While private property may change hands, significant use changes would not be anticipated given local land use controls implemented through zoning ordinances.

D. FUTURE WITH THE PROPOSED ACTION

OWNERSHIP

This section assesses potential adverse impacts to landowners that would result from the Fjord Trail South. Fjord Trail South would be developed primarily on public lands. The public lands, and the mechanisms by which development would be allowed, are described below.

NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION, AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Approximately one-half mile of the proposed Main Trail of Fjord Trail South would be within HHSP at Little Stony Point and Dockside Park. Additional Meanders would be located within Little Stony Point. It is expected that lands under OPRHP control (whether by a fee interest, an easement, or a lease) would be operated and maintained by HHFT, Inc. under a cooperative management agreement.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY/METRO-NORTH RAILROAD

Roughly 75 percent of Fjord Trail South would be located within MTA/MNR-controlled lands. Any portion of Fjord Trail South on MTA/MNR-controlled parcels is proposed to operate under a future potential agreement between OPRHP and MTA/MNR. It is contemplated that these portions of trail would ultimately be operated by HHFT, Inc. under a cooperative management agreement between OPRHP and HHFT, Inc. No change in the ownership of MTA/MNR-controlled properties is expected as a result of Fjord Trail South.

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NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NYS DOT would continue to own NYS Route 9D, which parallels Fjord Trail South and MNR tracks from the Breakneck Ridge tunnel to its intersection with Fair Street in Cold Spring. No change in the ownership of NYS Route 9D is anticipated into the future. Modifications along NYS Route 9D would result from a proposed new entrance associated with the expanded Washburn Trailhead parking lot and potential intersection improvements (restriping, signal retimings, etc.) at the NYS Route 9D/Main Street intersection in the Village of Cold Spring (see Chapter III.L, “Traffic and Transportation – Fjord Trail,” for further discussion).

PUTNAM COUNTY

The potential Fair Street Meander would include new sidewalks along Fair Street, including the portion within the Town of Philipstown owned by Putnam County. HHFT, Inc. would implement the new sidewalks, in coordination with the County, but no changes in ownership of the right-of-way are anticipated.

VILLAGE OF COLD SPRING

The potential Fair Street Meander would travel along local streets in the Village of Cold Spring that are owned by the Village. The Meander would follow existing sidewalks along these streets, but would include new sidewalks along Fair Street north of the municipal lot where no sidewalks currently exist. HHFT, Inc. would implement the new sidewalks, in coordination with the Village, but no changes in ownership of the right-of-way are anticipated.

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

No changes in ownership of NYCDEP land would result from Fjord Trail South. The northern end of Fjord Trail South would cross NYCDEP property under an agreement between NYCDEP and OPRHP.

HUDSON HIGHLANDS FJORD TRAIL, INC.

HHFT, Inc. does not currently own property or operate parks or recreational facilities along the proposed Fjord Trail South, nor is it anticipated to obtain ownership of property along Fjord Trail South.

PRIVATE LANDOWNERS

As discussed above, OPRHP has secured an easement allowing for trail access across private property located at the entrance to Dockside Park.

MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

This section identifies the proposed long-term management, maintenance, and operation of Fjord Trail South including trash removal, snow removal, access restrictions (gates), repair, and response to vandalism (security).

MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE ARRANGEMENTS

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation

In the future with Fjord Trail South, HHFT, Inc. would assume operations and maintenance responsibility via a cooperative management agreement with OPRHP for the portions that would run through Little Stony Point and Dockside Park, which are currently owned by OPRHP, with

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Dockside operated by the Village of Cold Spring. No other changes to existing management or maintenance agreements for parcels outside of the proposed Fjord Trail South would be expected.

Metropolitan Transportation Authority/Metro-North Railroad

Any portion of Fjord Trail South on MTA/MNR-controlled parcels is proposed to operate under a future potential agreement between OPRHP and MTA/MNR. OPRHP would then authorize HHFT, Inc. to assume operations and maintenance responsibility over this portion of the trail through a cooperative management agreement.

New York State Department of Transportation

NYSDOT manages and maintains the area within the NYS Route 9D right-of-way. No substantial change is expected to result from the construction or operation of Fjord Trail South. The proposed new entrance for the expanded Washburn Trailhead parking lot and potential intersection improvements at the NYS Route 9D/Main Street intersection in the Village of Cold Spring would not be expected to substantially change management or maintenance activities along NYS Route 9D. A roundabout is being considered at the proposed Washburn Lot entrance at its Fair Street and NYS Route 9D intersection, pending further coordination with NYSDOT. The roundabout would be within NYSDOT right-of-way and would be maintained by NYSDOT.

PUTNAM COUNTY

While HHFT, Inc. would implement the new sidewalks along the potential Fair Street Meander, the right-of-way would remain under Putnam County ownership and no changes in maintenance responsibilities are anticipated.

VILLAGE OF COLD SPRING

While HHFT, Inc. would implement the new sidewalks along the potential Fair Street Meander, the right-of-way would remain under Village of Cold Spring ownership and no changes in maintenance responsibilities are anticipated.

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The northern end of Fjord Trail South would cross NYCDEP property under an agreement between NYCDEP and OPRHP. OPRHP would then authorize HHFT, Inc. to assume operations and maintenance responsibility over this portion of the trail through a cooperative management agreement.

Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail, Inc.

HHFT, Inc. would assume management responsibility, including operations and maintenance, of Fjord Trail South. Fjord Trail South would run through lands currently managed and maintained by OPRHP (including Little Stony Point and Dockside Park), MTA/MNR, and NYCDEP; HHFT, Inc. would assume operations and maintenance responsibility via a cooperative management agreement with OPRHP that would outline the operation and maintenance obligations and require HHFT, Inc. to fund an endowment sufficient to support the operations and maintenance of the Fjord Trail should HHFT, Inc. fail to do so.

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MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS

Snow Removal

Fjord Trail South would not be plowed in the winter. HHFT, Inc. would be responsible for snow removal for parking areas (i.e., the Washburn Lot) along Fjord Trail South either by staff or a contracted vendor.

As is currently the case, NYSDOT would manage snow removal and general maintenance of the NYS Route 9D right-of-way.

Security

The cooperative management agreement between OPRHP and HHFT, Inc. would require security, safety, and emergency measures to be in place for Fjord Trail South. Such measures would be set forth in a plan approved by OPRHP and would include safety and security checks and lighting at parking areas and access points to support visual inspection. In some locations, cameras may be installed. The Fjord Trail South section would have gates to prohibit nighttime use as well as enable the trail to be closed for emergencies or severe weather incidents. For areas on MTA/MNR property, security measures would be developed in coordination with MTA/MNR, as needed.

In the MNR right-of-way, the protective fencing or other security measures that would be installed on and along the elevated and at-grade portions of Fjord Trail South would be designed in accordance with MNR requirements and coordinated with and approved by MNR, as appropriate, and maintained by HHFT, Inc.

Trash and Sanitation

Trash removal along the proposed Fjord Trail South would be conducted by HHFT, Inc. staff and a garbage and recycling carrier. Trash and recycling receptacles would be placed at any designated entry to Fjord Trail South. The need for additional or alternately located trash bins and more or less frequent pickups would be assessed based on HHFT, Inc. observation as part of ongoing operations. HHFT, Inc. would not provide additional garbage and recycling receptacles to recreational assets adjacent to and near the trail. As the project is advanced, details related to who would pick up trash and recyclables and how often, where facilities/receptacles would be located, and how they would be accessed, would be developed.

Restroom buildings that would be developed at Little Stony Point and Dockside Park as part of Fjord Trail South would be cleaned and maintained regularly by HHFT, Inc. Any composting restroom systems, or similar, would be maintained and serviced by a vendor on a regular contracted schedule.

Hours Open to the Public

Fjord Trail South would be open from dawn to dusk 365 days a year unless it is decided that it should be closed for safety reasons or under severe weather conditions. This is consistent with HHSPP lands, and the Village of Cold Spring-operated Dockside Park in Cold Spring.

Additional seasonal closures may be required to limit disturbance to protected species that use the habitats surrounding certain sections of Fjord Trail South. This would be coordinated with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). For additional information on protected species, refer to Chapter IV.E, “Biological Resources – Fjord Trail South.”

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Maintenance, Repair, and Funding

Per the proposed future applicable agreements between and among MTA/MNR, OPRHP, and HHFT, Inc., maintenance and repair of all capital improvements to Fjord Trail South would be the responsibility of HHFT, Inc. HHFT, Inc. is self-funded through private charitable donations. This includes an endowment which is being scaled up as the project develops. The endowment will help cover annual operational costs as well as long-term capital repair and replacement costs. In addition, HHFT, Inc. would fundraise on an annual basis to support its yearly operating budget. Parking fees would also be considered and may provide operating revenue.

E. CONCLUSION

The proposed Fjord Trail South section of the Fjord Trail is not anticipated to result in a significant adverse impact regarding ownership, management, operations, or maintenance. Therefore, no mitigation measures would be required as a result of Fjord Trail South. *