



October 10, 2024

Dear Supervisor Van Tassel, Mayor Foley, Mayor Winward, and elected municipal representatives,

Thank you for your responses to our letter of August 16, 2024. It would, no doubt, be more efficient to discuss this in-person, but for the record, here are answers to your recent questions.

Phasing the project

The pause we are proposing would occur after the Breakneck Connector and Dutchess Manor improvements are complete, that is, when the trail is operational from Dutchess Manor to Breakneck, including the new Breakneck Train Station (not Little Stony Point). This would give us all a year to appraise how these improvements have affected trail-bound visitation impacts on the Village, before making a decision on Shoreline Trail South (Little Stony Point to Dockside).

At the time of our May meeting, Fred and I did not understand that, for a host of environmental, financial, and technical reasons, the North (Breakneck to LSP) and South (LSP to Dockside) portions of the Shoreline Trail have to begin construction at the same time. As a result, the later pause after completing shoreline north that we discussed at the meeting is infeasible and the decision we would be making in 2028 would be whether Shoreline Trail advances in its entirety to Dockside or only advances to Little Stony Point. Nonetheless, the essence of the solution we discussed remains – a delay in the decision regarding Dockside. Also, although the decision is at a time earlier than we discussed, we would still get the core benefit of the pause, which is that we, and the community, would have a year’s worth of operational and visitation data and experience from the opening of Phase 1, giving us actual experience with how effectively the trail is shifting visitor behavior and if visitation levels are occurring in line with the projections.

The decision we make regarding Dockside will be final (it will not be feasible to build LSP to Dockside later on). Thus, if the trail does not extend into Dockside Park, then the project footprint would begin at Little Stony Point and there would be no physical footprint in the Village. Until and unless a decision is made to build Shoreline Trail (north and south) we can make no infrastructure or other investments related to a Dockside entry, including bathrooms in Dockside. In the spirit of the project’s goal to help manage *existing* (i.e., pre-Fjord Trail) visitation impacts to the Village, we confirm, as discussed at our meeting, that we are open to discussing some measures that would be helpful in managing existing visitation impacts, regardless of the final decision on a Dockside entry point.

Nature of an Agreement

When we have a meeting of the minds about making a final decision on Dockside after the completion of the first phase of Fjord Trail, from Breakneck to Dutchess Manor, HHFT will be happy to confirm its agreement to this in a formal letter to the relevant municipalities.



East side of Tracks Alternate Route Status

It is our understanding that the east side of the tracks route that Mayor Foley had proposed was presented to Metro-North Railroad (MNR) during a meeting of elected officials and agency representatives and has since been determined unviable due to the lack of required setback. Please let us know in writing if our understanding is not correct.

Dockside Park as Meander

We would be happy to discuss the Dockside Park as meander concept in more detail once MNR reviews the new Alternate Route Option 9 for viability (Alternate Route Option 9 is a continuation of the west side MNR platform to a route parallel to the tracks until it meets Dockside Park along its eastern-most boundary). Should it be deemed viable, HHFT would encourage visitors disembarking at the Cold Spring station to access the trail via that route, instead of the route through the lower Village (lower Main Street to West Street into Dockside). This shift would make both the route through the lower Village to Dockside Park and the route along Fair Street “meanders,” meaning alternate ways to access the Fjord Trail that are not parts of the HHFT main trail itself, further diffusing visitors, especially during peak use times.

Mitigation Measures to Remedy Future Conditions and Help with Existing Ones

Under SEQRA, a project sponsor may be required to mitigate adverse impacts of the project as identified by the data and analysis in the environmental review. These impacts are measured by the build condition (i.e., post-project) compared to the no-build condition (i.e., pre-project). The environmental review, which should be completed in 2025, will specify potential or required mitigation measures for the new Fjord Trail.

We have offered to collaborate with the Village to help mitigate existing impacts of visitation, which are completely unrelated to the Fjord Trail project itself. Thus, these would be voluntary measures. As stated in our previous letter, we are eager to begin discussions with you to find ways in which HHFT might contribute to solutions to existing conditions before the first phase of the project is even completed. This way, we can fast-track remedies that can make even incremental differences as soon as possible.

Clarification of the statement: “At the same time, we have had to consider our obligations as the nonprofit partner of NY State OPRHP, the stated objectives and priorities of NY State, and the many and complicated logistical, environmental and financial considerations that drive planning and design of the Fjord Trail.”

We were simply observing that when considering emerging ideas to change existing plans developed over decades, we need to vet any proposed changes against the body of that work, which reflects regulatory requirements, and documented input, data, financial and technical analysis. A number of “counter proposals” have emerged that lack public and stakeholder input, violate some core stakeholder objectives, and/or are otherwise untethered from the realities of agency/authority land use requirements.



As a nonprofit partner of OPRHP, part of our mission is to bring private capital to bear in helping the State realize *its own* mission, vision, priorities, and values in relation to State lands. As the result of HHFT's many years of collaboration with OPRHP and other State agencies, the existing Fjord Trail plans incorporate and reflect not only the State's and state agency requirements, but their policy preferences. These include, for example, accessibility (especially for children and people with disabilities), climate resilience, and links to public transportation.

We hope this is helpful and look forward to resuming in-person discussions. Hopefully we all still agree that our plan to postpone a final decision on the Dockside entrance and making that decision based on actual impacts of the completion of the first phase of the trail remains the best path forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Davis'.

Chris Davis, Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amy Kacala'.

Amy Kacala, Executive Director