



HHFT Visitation Data Committee Meeting # 1: Kick-off

Date: August 18, 2023

Time: 5 PM - 6:30 PM

Location: Little Stony Point Citizens Association Volunteer Center, 3011 NY-9D, Cold Spring, NY 10516

Attendees:

Mary Kate Ephraim, Town of Philipstown; Jeffrey Robins, Town of Philipstown; Henry Feldman, Village of Cold Spring; James Labate, Village of Cold Spring; Chris Alice Winward, Village of Nelsonville.

Amy Kacala, Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail (HHFT); Executive Director
Chelsea Anderson, About the Work (AtW); Owner's Representative for HHFT

Regrets:

Greg Totino, Town of Fishkill; Thomas Campanile, Village of Nelsonville; Sarah Mencher, City of Beacon; MJ Martin, Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail.

AGENDA:

1.0	Committee Introductions
2.0	Roles and Responsibilities
3.0	Scope and Schedule
4.0	Committee Consultant
5.0	New business

Committee Introductions

Those in attendance provided a brief introduction and general interests in the project:

- Amy Kacala (Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail, Executive Director)
- Chris Alice Winward (Village of Nelsonville, Mayor) Background in policy. Interest on possible spillover impacts to Village of Nelsonville.
- Jeffrey Robins (Town of Philipstown, Attorney) Sees need for safety improvements. Would prefer a low impact plan and would like to see carrying capacity and other variables being studied.

- Henry Feldman (Village of Cold Spring, Computer Programmer) Biker and interested in seeing alternative modes of transportation being used to travel from Cold Spring to Beacon. Would like to see all the data when available.
- Mary Kate Ephraim (Town of Philipstown, Litigator) Served on the Philipstown comprehensive plan committee. Not afraid of development, would like to see bikes removed from 9D and recognises Breakneck is already very overcrowded.
- James Labate (Village of Cold Spring, Resident) Recognises Cold Spring is a great day trip from NYC and would like to see a plan to get ahead of the current visitation issues.
- Chelsea Anderson (About the Work, Project Executive) HHFT's Owner's representative. Responsible for consultant coordination and project management.

Project Overview

The HHFT draft master plan has been published at all municipal halls and project area public libraries, and can be found on HHFT's website. HHFT will host an optional "Fjord Trail 101" introductory meeting with the Visitation Data Committee (VDC) to review the overall project scope for those committee members less familiar with the project. HHFT will circulate a doodle poll to understand the group's availability for this session.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Committee Roles and Responsibilities
 - Visitation Data Committee roles are anticipated as follows:
 - Provide review to help ensure that traffic, pedestrian and visitation data collection methodology is sound and that data implications are understood
 - Help build confidence and understanding within each respective project area community
 - Relay public questions and/or input to HHFT

HHFT encourages members to report back to their respective municipal boards (and thereby community residents) to share committee progress.

- HHFT Role and Responsibilities
 - HHFT's role and responsibilities in this process are as follows:
 - Provide the VDC an independent expert consultant to serve as technical advisor
 - Provide materials for committee review in advance of meetings
 - Coordinate with consultants to ensure completion and preparation of the work product
 - Facilitate meetings, including providing notes for public distribution

Schedule and Scope

Regular meetings will be held once a 3rd party consultant has been brought on to review both the data and analysis being conducted as part of the DGEIS effort.

Six VDC meetings are anticipated over six months to address the following topics:

Meeting #1: Kick Off

Meeting #2: Consultant Selection/Interviews

Meeting #3: Consultant Scope Review and Refinement

Meeting #4: Visitation Across The Six Entries (Mitigation)

Meeting #5: Village of Cold Spring circulation

Meeting #6: Traffic data, preliminary findings and next steps

Public workshops are proposed as well to bring the information reviewed with the VDC to a broader community group

VDC noted the timeline for meetings is aggressive and an hour per meeting may not be enough to cover all the information being presented.

Rushing the process may cause additional questioning from the general population.

VDC would like to ensure the meetings are as productive as possible. Meetings would be ideally held on Mondays at 7 pm or Fridays at 5:30 pm. The 3rd Monday of the month will conflict with town meetings.

HHFT will reassess the timeline to ensure there is adequate time and pacing to not feel rushed and ensure flexibility in case an additional meeting is needed to continue discussion or revision of a particular topic. Materials will be provided the week before meetings to ensure a productive conversation.

Project Consultants

Meetings will be attended by the VDC, HHFT, About the Work, HHFT's consultants as necessary, and the committee's 3rd party technical consultant.

HHFT has hired AKRF to conduct traffic data collection and analysis in addition to drafting the DGEIS. Orca Consulting has been brought on for visitation management consulting, including visitation modeling and mitigation strategies, such as reservation systems, programming, park communications, etc.

Committee Consultant/3rd Party Reviewer

HHFT, on behalf of the VDC, will solicit a proposal from an engineering firm to provide a 3rd party review of pedestrian and traffic data and analysis.

HHFT circulated a hard copy of the proposal request for the VDC review. A digital copy in addition to the consultant shortlist will be submitted to the VDC for commentary.

The Visitation Data Committee will provide comments to the proposal request by August 30, 2023. Scope should allow direct coordination between the VDC and the consultant. Additional meetings may need to be scheduled to facilitate pre/post meeting briefings and conversations.

HHFT will level consultant proposals and host interviews with prospective consultants via Zoom meetings. All members of the VDC are welcome to attend. Jim, Jeff, Henry and Mary Kate all expressed interest in attending depending on scheduling.

The VDC requested raw data be distributed in addition to reports and analyzed data. HHFT will provide a timeline for issuance.

New Business

- **Data Collection**
 - **Traffic Data:** AKRF is currently slated to collect traffic data over Labor Day weekend. Data has been collected recently, in November 2022, May 2023 and July 2023. Data collected in 2023 has been over holiday weekends.
 - **Pedestrian Data:** Orca has been collecting pedestrian data at various points along the trail route and at project area train stations. They have data collected from Memorial Day and July Fourth weekends, and will collect data on Labor Day and Indigenous Peoples Day weekends as well.
 - **Breakneck Trail Data:** Trail Stewards from the NY-NJ Trail Conference take hiker surveys at the Breakneck Mountain trailhead from May to October most years.

The traffic detection tubes laid in the Village of Cold Spring currently are not within HHFT's scope.

DOT, Central Hudson, MNR and DEP will also be conducting construction within the same project area during the same period construction on Breakneck Connector and Bridge is ongoing. Project due diligence for agency projects is also underway. HHFT will follow up with the DOT to see if data being collected can be shared with the VDC committee.

VDC said it would be ideal to have traffic data collected over a typical fall weekend in addition to holiday weekends. The VDC is concerned visitation is not as high over holiday weekends.

- **Visitation Projections**
 - Data has been used to project future visitation based on current growth. Growth projections will be reviewed during the VDC meeting series.
- **Alternatives Analysis**
 - Alternative routes have been studied and are included in the DGEIS. A public workshop will be held to review the alternatives for the Cold Spring to Little Stony Point segment.

The VDC would like to understand the viability of the alternatives and if HHFT will be open to changing the route if an alternative is deemed acceptable.

The meeting adjourned.