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Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail, Inc. Shares Results of Survey Fielded in two Village of Cold Spring Neighborhoods

Fair Street and Riverfront residents provide valuable feedback to HHFT on trail-bound visitation

COLD SPRING, NY — On February 9, 2024, Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail, Inc. (HHFT) launched a survey specifically for households along Fair Street and west of Lunn Terrace (the river side of the Metro-North Railroad tracks) in the Village of Cold Spring. These neighborhoods currently shoulder a significant portion of the impact of existing trail-bound and riverfront visitation. The purpose of the survey was to better understand the challenges residents face with this type of visitation and to gather feedback on HHFT's planning, goals, and future efforts.

Since Fall 2023, HHFT Community & Visitor Relations Manager Rebeca Ramirez has been meeting with residents in these neighborhoods, and others, to answer questions and gather opinions, hopes, and concerns. "By inviting folks to share with HHFT in written form from their homes, and in a private setting, we are able to further see some of the complexity of community sentiment," says Ramirez. "We greatly appreciate the time all respondents devoted to sharing their thoughts with us. All of this feedback is incredibly valuable and helps inform our efforts."

The survey consisted of 25 questions, many of which included space for open comment, and was designed to elicit both quantitative and qualitative data. HHFT mailed surveys to the 147 households in the survey area. Residents could share their responses either on paper or online via Survey Monkey, to ensure that technology access or proficiency would not impact one's ability to participate. A complete description of the survey methodology is included on HHFT's website, along with the full results. The survey closed on February 26, 2024. There was a 45% response rate, with a total of 66 completed surveys submitted. Approximately two-thirds of respondents live on Fair Street and one-third live west of Lunn Terrace.

Nearly 77% of respondents indicated that they feel concerned about growing tourism in the Village of Cold Spring (41% are very concerned, 36% somewhat concerned). The survey helped reveal the specific challenges faced by residents in these neighborhoods. The majority of respondents experience the following challenges during times of peak visitation: trash/littering (79%); traffic congestion (76%); parking (69%); difficulty accessing main street (68%); and lack of pedestrian

safety (63%).

The survey revealed that 74% of respondents feel it is important to have a safe and accessible walking and biking path that keeps pedestrians off of Route 9D (55% feel it is very important, 19% feel it is somewhat important). 63% expressed support for HHFT's goal of creating a trail as a safe way to connect all pedestrians (both local and non-local) to the Hudson Highlands State Park Preserve, the Hudson River, and Beacon (40% expressed a great deal of support, 23% a moderate amount).

A majority of respondents in these neighborhoods—69%—expressed support for Shoreline Trail North, from Little Stony Point to Breakneck (45% a great deal of support; 24% a moderate amount). Shoreline Trail South, Dockside to Little Stony Point/Community Bypass Trail, received support from 55% of respondents (32% a great deal of support, 23% a moderate amount).

A majority of respondents—71%—indicated that they would like to see a safer Fair Street, with 91% indicating that they are in favor of completing new sidewalks on Fair Street to Little Stony Point.

When it comes to knowledge about the Fjord Trail plans, 80% of respondents felt somewhat or very informed. However, when asked if they feel they understand how HHFT's visitation management tools will work together to change pedestrian flow, traffic flow, and parking patterns, 54% responded that they did not understand or were not sure if they understood and needed more information.

"The survey indicates that there is measurable support for the Fjord Trail project within these two neighborhoods, and it is helping us understand what elements people need more information on, regardless of where they stand on the project at this time," said Ramirez. "We will continue to listen to all the information we receive from locals as we work to create a trail that best serves the community. This is an ongoing, iterative process."

The Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail has released two short background videos and is hosting a public information session, *Visitation Projection and Visitor Management Strategy*, on Wednesday, April 3, 2024, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Dutchess Manor. All those interested in learning more about the Fjord Trail's visitation management strategy and the visitor projections are invited to register at <https://hhft.org/experience/visitation-april-3/>.

To view the survey and full results, please visit <https://hhft.org/about-the-fjord-trail/community/>

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About HHFT

Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail, Inc. (HHFT) is a subsidiary nonprofit of Scenic Hudson, Inc., an organization devoted to sustaining and enhancing the Hudson Valley's inspirational beauty and health for generations to come. HHFT is responsible for the planning and construction of the Fjord Trail, which is slated for completion in 2031. HHFT's mission is to create and steward a 7.5-mile linear park along the Hudson River that solves existing safety concerns around visitation, provides welcoming access to people of all abilities, restores and protects natural resources, and enhances quality of life for local communities. The Fjord Trail will add organized parking, public restrooms, trash/recycling collection, and distribute users of the park along a 7.5-mile route with six main access points. For more information, news, and timely announcements on the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail, visit hhft.org.