



# Martin Van Buren National Historic Site

## *Transportation Analysis Report*



PMIS No. 73134  
October 2010





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## Section 1: Existing transportation conditions

### *Introduction*

Martin Van Buren National Historic Site (NHS) includes the home of Martin Van Buren, the country's eighth president, where he lived from 1841-1862. Van Buren, born in Kinderhook, New York, purchased the mansion and property during his presidency and came to live there after losing his presidential re-election to become a gentlemen farmer. His land, together with his home, is also known as Lindenwald. The original Martin Van Buren NHS, designated in 1974, includes the mansion and surrounding 39 acres. The Public Lands Management Act of 2009 expanded the park to 300 acres, securing much of the surrounding agriculture land and open space of the original Van Buren property. Temporary buildings house park offices and a small visitor center. The visitor center offers an introductory film, books, and park information. Outdoors, visitors can park in the lot, tour the Lindenwald mansion, walk the Wayside Trail, and attend special events throughout the year.

### **Project overview**

This project provides transportation support to Martin Van Buren NHS's first General Management Plan (GMP), which will be complete in 2010 or 2011. Currently, Martin Van Buren NHS attracts between 20,000 and 25,000 visitors per year.<sup>1</sup> The National Park Service (NPS) predicts an increase in visitation to the site over the next five to ten years. The expectation of an increase in visitation is based on the park's recent boundary expansion, plans for a new visitor center, and the park's goal to integrate the site into existing Hudson River Valley tours.

This study investigates existing transportation infrastructure, local transportation links, and regional transportation connections. The study looks at how alternative transportation may attract additional park visitors, accommodate event visitation, and incorporate new park activities.

### **Park location**

Martin Van Buren NHS is two and a half miles south of the village of Kinderhook, New York (Figure 1). Martin Van Buren NHS, the village of Kinderhook (pop. 1,295<sup>2</sup>), and the village of Valatie (pop. 1,874<sup>3</sup>) are within the town of Kinderhook (pop. 8,600<sup>4</sup>). The town is located in Columbia County (pop. 62,006<sup>5</sup>), along the eastern edge of the Hudson River, about 25 miles south of the city of Albany and ten miles north of the city of Hudson. Martin Van Buren NHS is 130 miles north of New York City and 160 miles west of Boston, Massachusetts. The land surrounding Martin Van Buren NHS is a mix of farmland, low density commercial development, and housing (Figure 2). The Hudson River Valley, which includes the surrounding landscape north and south of the park, is also primarily low density housing, farm land, and open space. The communities surrounding the park are in favor of an increase in tourism to the region and are supportive of the park's effort to attract more visitors.

The historic Lindenwald mansion is the primary attraction at Martin Van Buren NHS. The mansion is open daily for hourly tours from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM, mid-May through October, and the visitor center is open similar hours, 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM. While the mansion and visitor center are not open in the winter, the Wayside Trail and grounds are open year round from 7:00 AM to sunset. House tours are five dollars per visitor and include a 45-minute ranger-led talk on the life of Martin Van Buren as well as an explanation of the artifacts within the house. Accessibility and the number of visitors inside the house are limited due to the number of stairs and narrow hallways. Outdoors, visitors can tour the property along

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<sup>1</sup> National Park Service Public Use Statistics Office. <http://www.nature.nps.gov/stats/>

<sup>2</sup> US census Bureau. The village of Kinderhook had a population of 1,293 in 1990, 1,275 in 2000, and 1,295 in 2008.

<sup>3</sup> US census Bureau. The village of Kinderhook had a population of 1,487 in 1990, 1,712 in 2000, and 1,874 in 2008.

<sup>4</sup> US Census Bureau. The population of Kinderhook was 8,112 in 1990, 8,296 in 2000, and 8,570 in 2008.

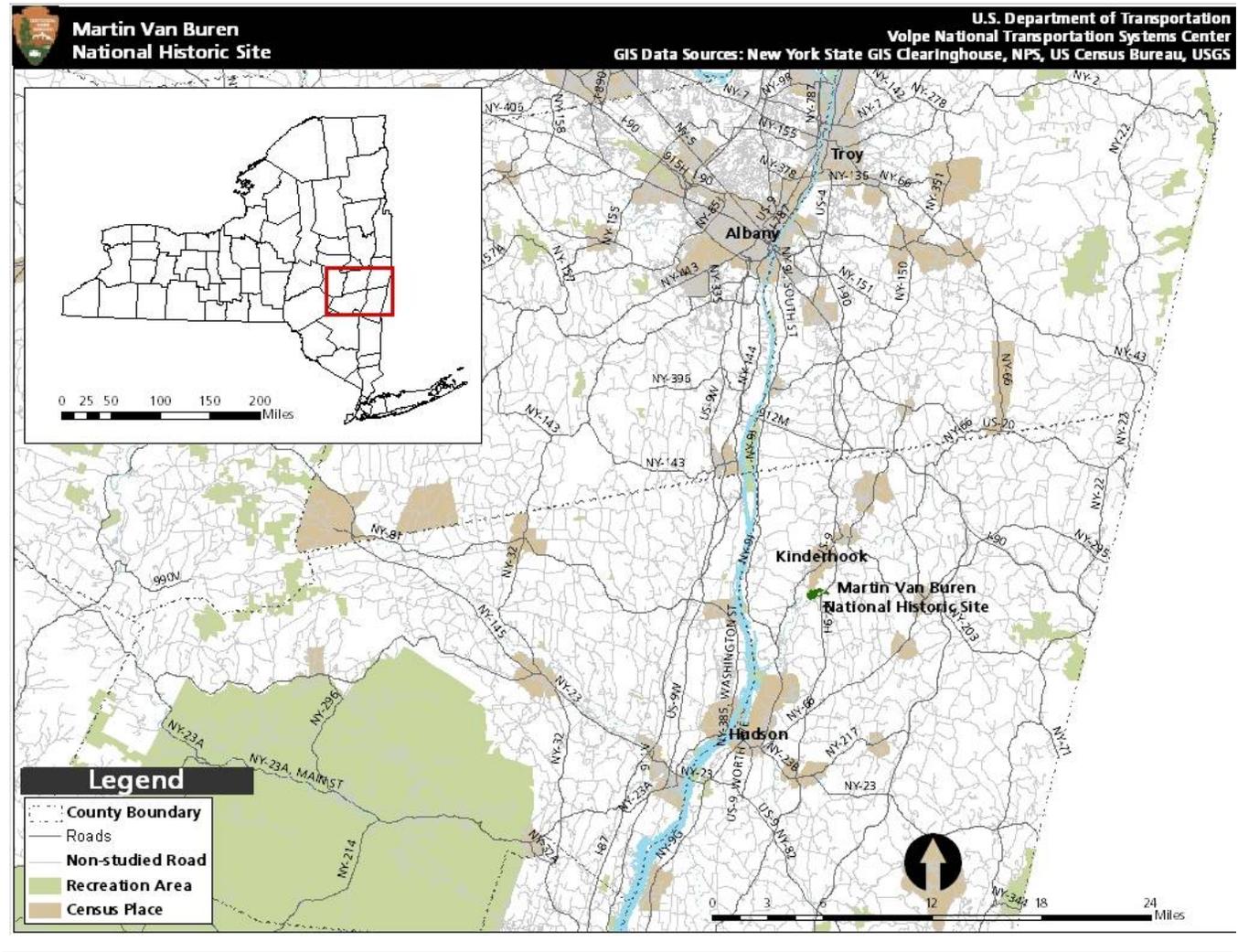
<sup>5</sup> US census Bureau. The population of Columbia County was 62,982 in 1990 and 63,094 in 2000.

the Wayside Trail to learn about the park's agriculture history, past Lindenwald residents, and other changes within the park.

Thirty-eight parking spaces serve employees and visitors at the site. All park facilities are on the west side of New York State Route (SR) 9H, and the park has easements on the east side of SR 9H. Old Post Road is the historic connection between New York and Albany and currently exists as a pedestrian gravel walkway within the Martin Van Buren NHS boundary. The historic Lindenwald carriage path provides a link between SR 9H and the mansion. The Martin Van Buren NHS holds several special events throughout the year, and the park allows parking on gravel or lawn areas during these events.

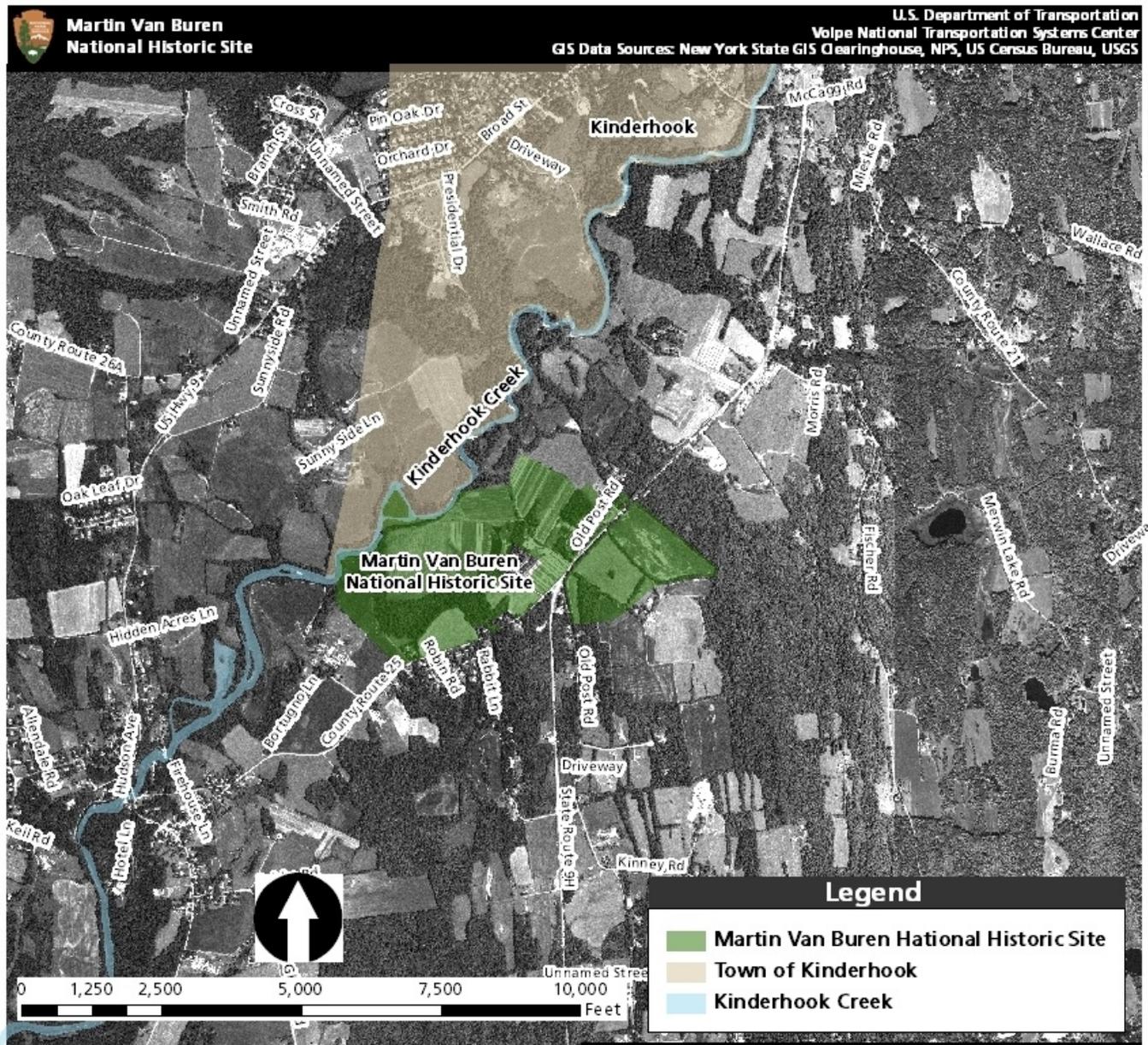
**Figure 1**  
**Martin Van Buren NHS context map**

Source: Volpe Center and NPS



**Figure 2**  
**Martin Van Buren NHS and Vicinity**

Source: NPS and Volpe Center

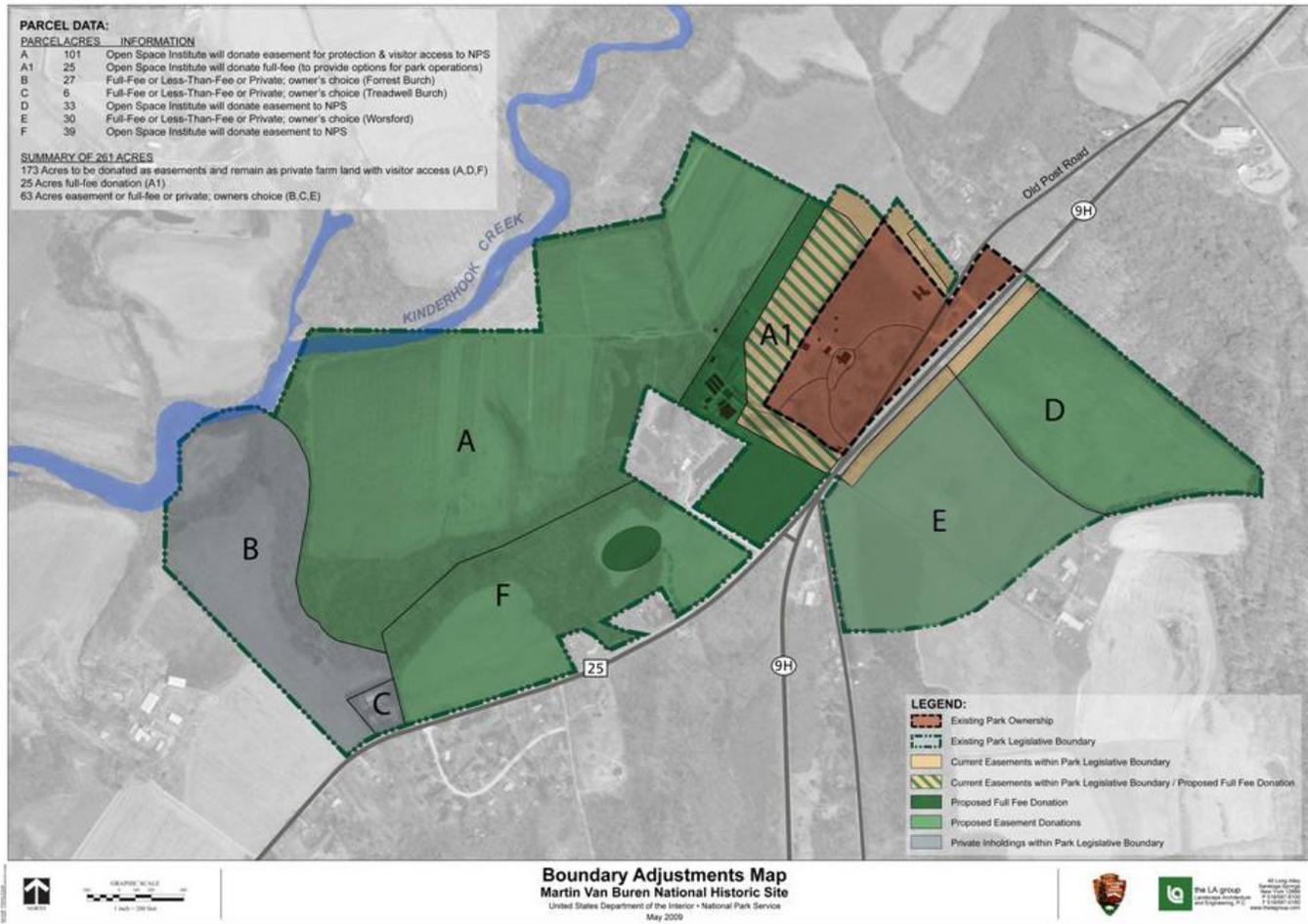


The Public Lands Management Act of 2009 significantly expanded the park boundary (Figure 3) from the original 39 acres surrounding the mansion (shown in brown) to 300 acres (shown within dashed outline). The farmland within the new park boundary includes much of Martin Van Buren’s original farm and views. The Open Space Institute (OSI), a land conservation and agricultural preservation group in New York, and the local community helped the park obtain additional land through easements in order to preserve the surrounding agricultural land. Section A is owned by Roxbury Farm, which has an easement on it owned by OSI. OSI has indicated that it will donate this easement to the NPS. Sections D and F are also owned by OSI, but they have not yet determined what the outcome will be for those parcels. Sections B, C, and E are in-holdings, or privately owned parcels, within the park boundary and are primarily

agricultural. Landowners will continue to live on and farm these parcels. Visitors will not have access to these lands, and NPS can purchase these properties only from willing sellers.

**Figure 3**  
**Martin Van Buren NHS site map and 2009 boundary adjustment**

Source: NPS



In December of 2009, OSI acquired 62 acres adjacent to Martin Van Buren NHS (not shown). The parcel is north of the park and adjacent to Kinderhook Creek.<sup>6</sup> OSI now owns a total of 800 acres along Kinderhook Creek and additional land within the Martin Van Buren NHS boundary. The most recent acquisition prohibits development on this land and preserves the agricultural character that was present during Martin Van Buren's life.

A portion of Roxbury Farm is within the Martin Van Buren NHS park boundary. Roxbury Farm is a community supported agriculture (CSA) farm, practicing organic and biodynamic farming and producing vegetables for their more than 1,000 members.<sup>7</sup> The farm is one of the largest CSAs in the country and was the first CSA to have members in New York City. Roxbury Farm also has members in the Albany region, Westchester County, and Columbia County. The farm holds two main events during the year and monthly work parties for members.

<sup>6</sup> Lachman, Robert. "OSI acquires 62-parcel adjacent to Lindenwald" Register-Star. <http://www.registerstar.com/articles/2009/12/09/news/doc4b1f2cbf79180014439351.txt>

<sup>7</sup> Roxbury Farm <http://roxburyfarm.com/>

To the northeast of Martin Van Buren NHS, across SR 9H, is the Martin Van Buren Park, with approximately 1.5 miles of trails. This area is owned by Columbia County and managed by the Friends of Lindenwald.

### Nearby attractions

Several sites of historic significance are situated near Martin Van Buren NHS. The village of Kinderhook promotes a walking tour that explores some of the historic structures in the historic district of town. Many of the houses within Kinderhook are from the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>8</sup> Several sites in town are on the National Register of Historic Places or are popular visitor destinations. These include:

- Columbia County Museum is three miles north of the park on Albany Avenue (County Road 21) near the intersection with Broad Street (Chatham Street or SR 9). The museum is in a building originally built in 1916 as a Masonic Temple. The building includes the Columbia County Historical Society's offices, storage, and exhibits. Exhibits typically include items from the Society's Columbia County collection. The museum is open weekends and Monday, Thursday, and Friday. The museum is free to the public.
- Martin Van Buren's statue is three miles north of the park at the corner of Albany Avenue and Broad Street. The statue exists in downtown Kinderhook because of efforts in 2007 by the Friends of Lindenwald.
- Martin Van Buren's gravesite is three and a half miles north of the park on Albany Avenue, near downtown Kinderhook.

Other sites of interest in the vicinity include:

- Luykas Van Alen House is one and a half miles north of the park on SR 9H. The house is a historic Dutch farmhouse and is operated by the Columbia County Historical Society. The house was built by Luykas Van Alen in 1737 and remains an example of Dutch farm life. The house is a National Historic Landmark and is open to the public on weekends from Memorial Day to Columbus Day. The cost of admission is five dollars.
- The Ichabod Crane Schoolhouse is on the same property as the Van Alen house. The schoolhouse was moved to the property in 1974 and restored to its 1920 condition. The schoolhouse takes its name from the teacher in Washington Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. The teacher in the book is believed to have been modeled after Jesse Merwin, a local schoolmaster in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. The hours of the schoolhouse are the same as the Luykas Van Alen house and admission is included in the Van Alen entrance fee.
- Stuyvesant Falls, two miles southwest of Martin Van Buren NHS, is the location of a hydro-electric plant and is a popular kayaking and hiking destination.

There are several regional attractions in the Hudson River Valley that are accessible by car from the park, including:

- The Millay Poetry Trail at Steepletop, 16 miles east of the park, is near the home of famous poet Edna St. Vincent Millay. The home, a National Historic Landmark, is in Austerlitz, New York. The trail is open to the public year round and guided tours occur occasionally during the summer.
- Shaker Museum, in Old Chatham, is 11 miles northeast of the park. The museum typically includes artifacts of Shaker life and is open to the public year round. Public programs take place in Shaker Village and include guided tours and interpretive talks.
- City of Hudson, 11 miles south of the park, is a popular tourist town with several artist studios, furniture stores, and restaurants. Hudson has the closest Amtrak station to Martin Van Buren

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<sup>8</sup> Horn, Martha J. A "Walking tour" *The Kinderhook Connection*. <http://www.kinderhookconnection.com/history2.htm#Tour>

NHS, which includes service south to New York City and north to Albany and Montreal. Within Hudson, the Fireman's Association of the State of New York Museum of Firefighting contains rare firefighting trucks, equipment, and gear. The museum is open every day except holidays. There is a five dollar charge for admission.

- Olana State Historic Site, 15 miles south of Martin Van Buren NHS, is a couple miles south of Hudson. Olana includes the home of Frederic Edwin Church and the house remains true to its late 19<sup>th</sup> century design. Church, a well-known figure in the Hudson River School of Landscape Painting movement, lived in the house until his death in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. House tours occur Friday and Saturday from November to March, and Tuesday through Sunday from April to October. The house is open only to guided tours but the grounds are open year round. House tours are nine dollars.
- The Thomas Cole Historic Site, an affiliated site of the NPS, 16 miles south of the park, is in the Town of Catskill within Greene County. Visits typically include a tour of the house and Thomas Cole's studio. In addition, there are several recognizable views near the historic site that can be found in the artist's paintings. The house and studio are open by guided tour from Thursday through Sunday, May through October. Group tours are offered by appointment in the winter. Tours are eight dollars.
- Clermont State Historic Site, 26 miles south of the park, is the home of seven generations of the Livingston family. Robert Livingston Jr. helped draft the Declaration of Independence. The site became a National Historic Landmark in 1973. The house and visitor center are open Tuesday through Sunday, April through October. House tours are five dollars. The grounds are open year round.
- Rip Van Winkle Bridge, 15 miles south of the park, is named after Washington Irving's short story. The bridge connects Hudson and Catskill across the Hudson River and includes a pedestrian walkway. The vehicle toll is one dollar.
- Taghkanic State Park, 20 miles south of Martin Van Buren NHS, is a popular beach, recreation, and camping location. The park is open year round with camping, swimming, and facilities open during the summer.

### **Hudson River Valley Greenway**

The Hudson River Valley Greenway, established in 1991, creates a framework for regional collaboration for counties along the Hudson River. The Greenway program established two organizations to coordinate this collaboration, the Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council and the Greenway Conservancy for the Hudson River Valley, Inc.<sup>9</sup> Together these organizations provide assistance to local governments for the promotion of tourism within the valley, preservation of land use, and funding programs.

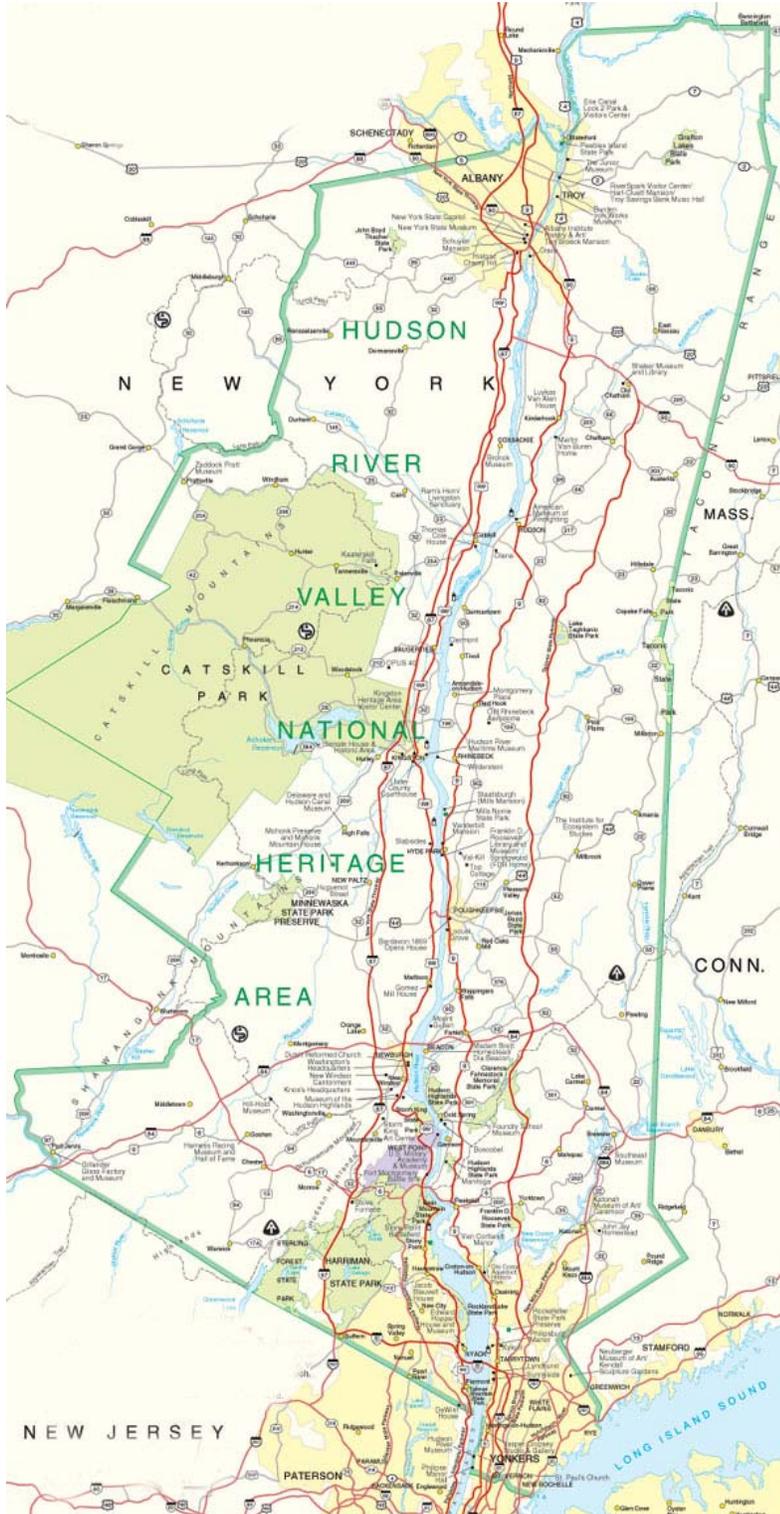
Martin Van Buren NHS is within the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area (NHA), home to 90 heritage sites on both the east and west side of the Hudson River (Figure 4). Designated in 1996, the Hudson River Valley NHA is managed by the Greenway Conservancy, includes approximately four million acres, is one of 47 Heritage Areas in the country, and has a mission to preserve and protect significant cultural resources of the Hudson River Valley. The NHA stretches approximately 150 miles, from Yonkers in Westchester County to Waterford in Saratoga County. Sites within the NHA include historic mansions, museums, libraries, historic village settlements, and cultural landscapes that represent the history of the region. Some of the events that attract larger numbers of visitors within the NHA include the Hudson River Ramble, which features outdoor recreation, Revolutionary War enactments, and bicycle and boat activities along the Hudson River. Harvest Day occurs during the Ramble and is promoted as one of the events to attend.

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<sup>9</sup> Hudson River Greenway. <http://www.hudsongreenway.state.ny.us/home.aspx>

**Figure 4**  
**Hudson River Valley NHA**

Source: Hudson River Valley Institute



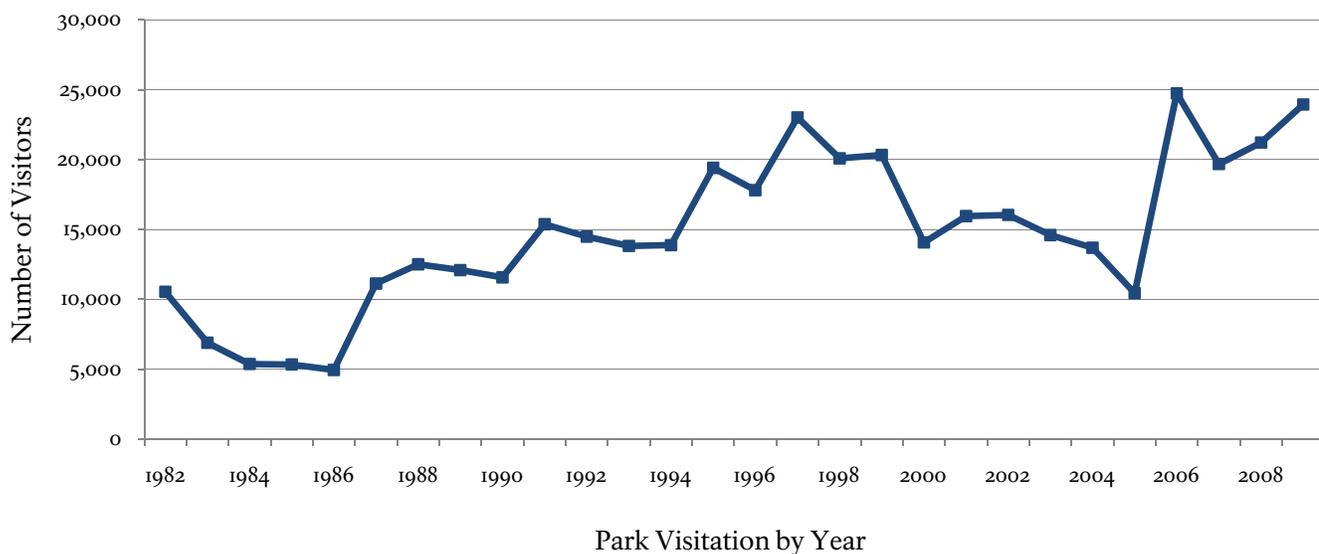
The state tourism office for New York recommends a couple driving routes that pass near the Martin Van Buren NHS.<sup>10</sup> The office recommends Interstate 90 (I-90) and I-87 and popular visitor destinations such as Vanderbilt Mansion NHS, Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt NHS, and Eleanor Roosevelt NHS. The maps do not refer to Martin Van Buren NHS.

## Visitation

The NPS reports 2009 visitation of 23,936 people to the park.<sup>11</sup> Figure 5 shows the increase, with some fluctuations, in visitation to the park from 1982 to 2009. Lower visitation in 2002-2005 was the result of the mansion's closure for renovation. Monthly visitation patterns for 2006 through 2009 are very similar (Figure 6). For the past three years, visitation peaks in September; other popular months include August, October, and July. Peak visitation is in September due to Harvest Day, which attracts thousands of visitors in a single day. The NPS predicts no change in visitation for Martin Van Buren NHS for 2010.<sup>12</sup>

**Figure 5**  
**Park visitation by year**

Source: NPS data (<http://www.nature.nps.gov/stats/park.cfm>) and Volpe Center



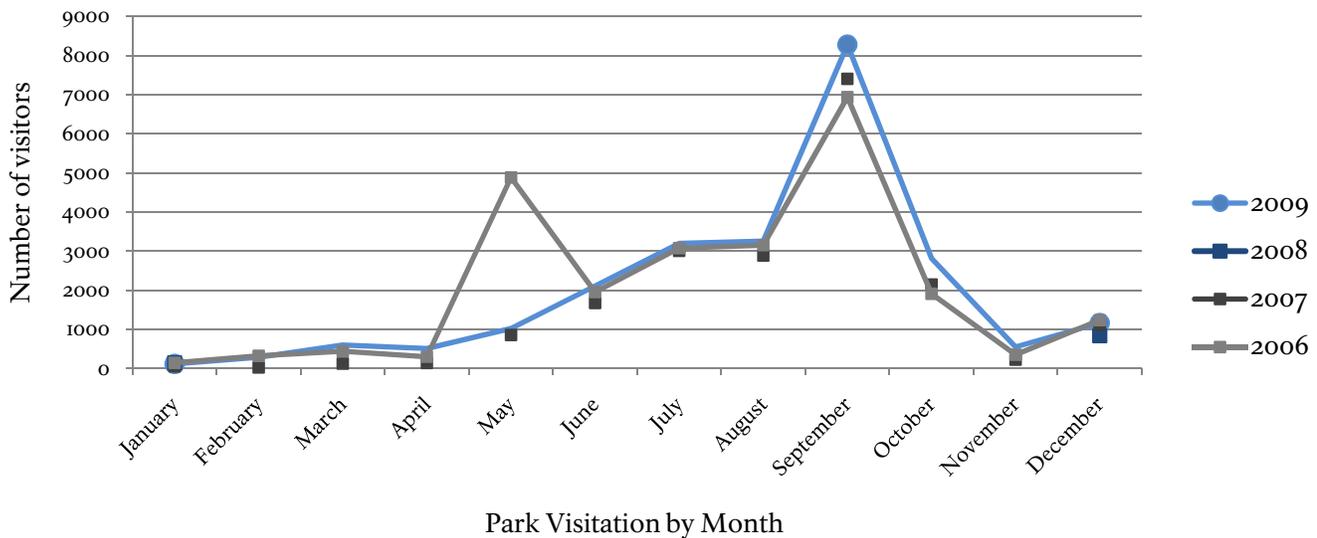
<sup>10</sup> New York State Department of Economic Development 2008. <http://iloveny.com/home.aspx>

<sup>11</sup> National Park Service Public Use Statistics Office. Annual park visitation. <http://www.nature.nps.gov/stats/viewReport.cfm>

<sup>12</sup> National Park Service Public Use Statistics Office. 2009 and 2010 Forecast of Recreation Visits. (<http://www.nature.nps.gov/stats/forecasts/forecasto910.pdf>)

**Figure 6**  
**Park visitation 2006-2009 by month**

Source: NPS Data (<http://www.nature.nps.gov/stats/park.cfm>.) and Volpe Center



Most visitors arrive to Martin Van Buren NHS by private vehicle. Transportation opportunities are limited because there is no shuttle service or public transit near the park. Few people arrive by bicycle. School groups typically take a bus to the park and the park coordinates their arrival to ensure minimal overlap of multiple school groups.

Several events are held throughout the year at Martin Van Buren NHS or in coordination with the park. The following events were scheduled for 2009:

- In May the park opens for tours.
- From June to August, members of the Friends of Lindenwald participate in Saturday afternoon house tours dressed in historically accurate costumes.
- In July, the park hosts an outdoor picnic with music and games. The event is sponsored by the Friends of Lindenwald.
- In August, the park encourages youth to participate in conservation and park history. During this event, children are able to earn a Junior Ranger badge.
- In September, the park hosts Harvest Day, significant to the park because of Martin Van Buren's history of farming and the surrounding agriculture. Harvest Day, the park's busiest day, attracts two to three thousand visitors throughout the day and the parking lot quickly fills.<sup>13</sup> On this day there are demonstrations on farming, gardening, and crafts.
- In October, the park hosts a campfire and program in the evening.
- In December, the park hosts a winter celebration outdoors under a tent. This event includes tours inside the candle-lit mansion with seasonal decorations by the Kinderhook Garden Club and actors in historic clothes. Kinderhook's Candlelight Walk, which is a tour of historic houses through the Village of Kinderhook, is on the same night. Similar to Harvest Day, the winter celebration attracts a high number of visitors.
- Also in December, the town of Kinderhook hosts an event for Martin Van Buren's birthday on December 5<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> National Park Service Public Use Statistics Office. Monthly Public Use Report. <http://www.nature.nps.gov/stats/viewReport.cfm>

A 2009 University of Idaho visitor study is in process although currently unavailable. This kind of visitor study report typically summarizes visitor statistics, level of satisfaction, activities, and visitor values for the park.

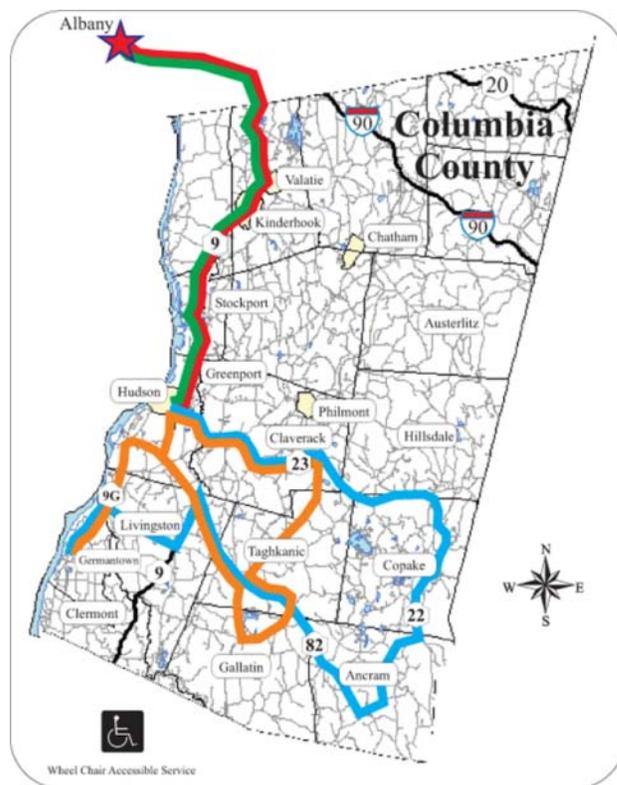
## *Bus/shuttle service*

### **Transit**

Columbia County has public transportation that operates under contract with Coxsackie Transport. Service includes four bus runs that connect Hudson and Albany (Figure 7). The route between the two cities follows SR 9 and passes through Kinderhook (shown in red and green in Figure 7). The shuttles leave Hudson at 6:15 AM, 7:00 AM, 2:30 PM and 4:00PM. The shuttles leave Albany (Empire State Plaza or Swan and Washington) at 7:35AM, 8:05 AM, 4:32 PM, and 5:10 PM. The cost of the full ride from Hudson to Albany is \$5.50. The bus makes eight stops along the route including Greenport, Columbiaville, Kinderhook, Vallatie, Broadway, and the State Office. Shuttle routes three and four (shown in blue and orange in Figure 7) circulate throughout the region. Coxsackie Transport also runs a shuttle within Hudson and school buses throughout Greene, Albany, Columbia, Dutchess, Putnam, Saratoga, Rensselear, Schoharie, and Delaware counties.

**Figure 7**  
**Columbia County shuttle routes to Albany**

Source: <http://coxsackietransport.com/Content/BPrice.htm>



The City of Hudson operates a year-round trolley bus system within Hudson. The trolley bus operates Monday through Friday from 6:20 AM to 4:45 PM. The trolley bus stops at the Amtrak train station, downtown Hudson, the high school, and the hospital.

There are several transportation services for the elderly, disabled people, and individuals in need of medical care in the area. The Department of Social Services and Office for the Aging provide transportation within Columbia County. Mental Health and Veteran Services drive their own set of vehicles within the County. The Columbia Healthcare Consortium provides transportation to medical services. RSVP is a volunteer group in Hudson that provides transportation for individuals who need help going to and from medical appointments. COARC, a nonprofit that supports individuals with disabilities and their families, owns several vehicles and transports disabled residents. Community Action of Greene County, Inc., an anti-poverty agency, operates small buses and services for individuals with a disability.

The Rip Van Winkle Express operates in Greene County and takes passengers from Catskill into outlying areas.<sup>14</sup> There are three routes during the day including a morning route into Catskill, a midday route through the village, and an afternoon route out of Catskill. The bus travels a fixed route that varies by day and predominantly serves senior citizens but the bus is open to the public. Passengers are able to flag down the bus if there is a safe place to stop. Passengers can also contact the operator, First Student, Inc., to schedule a pick-up.

### **Bus tours**

Currently, very few private bus tours stop at Martin Van Buren NHS. However, with several companies traveling throughout the Hudson River Valley, the park is hopeful that more buses traveling through the region will stop at the park in the future. For example, the New York Trailways tour bus company travels through the Hudson Valley along I-87 from New York City to Albany. Another company, the Short Line Bus, operates several bus tours within the Hudson Valley. The Hyde Park Overnight Package takes passengers from New York City to a hotel near Hyde Park. Fare includes hotel, bus fare, rental car, and restaurant discounts. Other tour destinations from New York include Bear Mountain State Park, Finger Lakes, and West Point.

## *Traffic and circulation*

### **Area circulation**

Martin Van Buren NHS is on SR 9H, which connects the park to the town of Kinderhook. SR 9H is a two lane road with a narrow shoulder and a speed limit of 55 miles per hour (Figure 8). South of the park, SR 9H veers south and County Road 25 (Albany Road) splits off to the west. At this junction, Old Post Road crosses SR 9H and runs through the park boundary, within which is a pedestrian trail and occasional parking areas. Due to the park's vicinity to SR 9H, traffic noise exists, although most site amenities, notably excluding the parking lot, are set back from the roadway.

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<sup>14</sup> Greene County Planning and Economic Development. "Transportation"  
"<http://greeneeconomicdevelopment.com/planning/transportation>"

**Figure 8**  
**Looking north at SR 9H and County Road 21 junction (left), looking north from the park entrance (right)**

Source: Volpe Center



### **Connections to nearby cities**

Albany is about 25 miles or a 35-minute drive from Martin Van Buren NHS. SR 9H north from the park intersects with SR 9, which connects with I-90 to the north. I-90 westbound connects to I-787 South to downtown Albany.

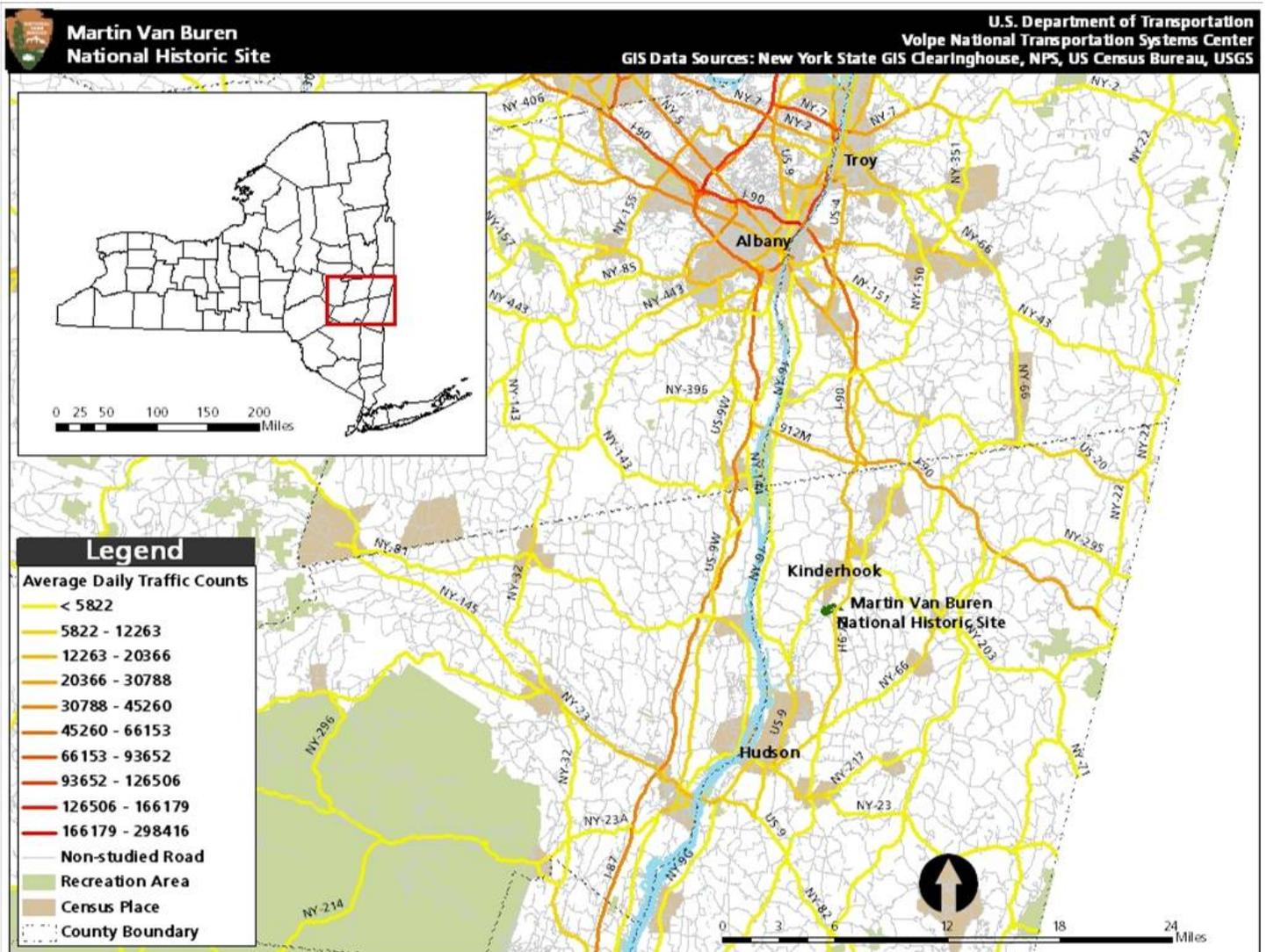
The other main connection from Martin Van Buren NHS and Kinderhook is to Hudson. Hudson is 13 miles south or a 20-minute drive south from the park. It is located on Union Turnpike 66, which intersects with SR 9H. Hudson offers the closest Amtrak station to the park along with several visitor attractions and amenities.

### **Traffic analysis**

Vehicles and trucks frequently travel along SR 9H; however, traffic congestion is low. While SR 9H does not receive heavy traffic, several nearby interstates experience heavy commuter and weekend traffic. The most recent (2007) annual average daily traffic (AADT) for SR 9H, the route adjacent to Martin Van Buren NHS, is 7,077 vehicles (Figure 9). Near Kinderhook, the AADT for SR 9 is 7,880 vehicles. The AADT where SR 9 and SR 9H join is 16,590.

**Figure 9**  
**2007 AADT for Columbia County**

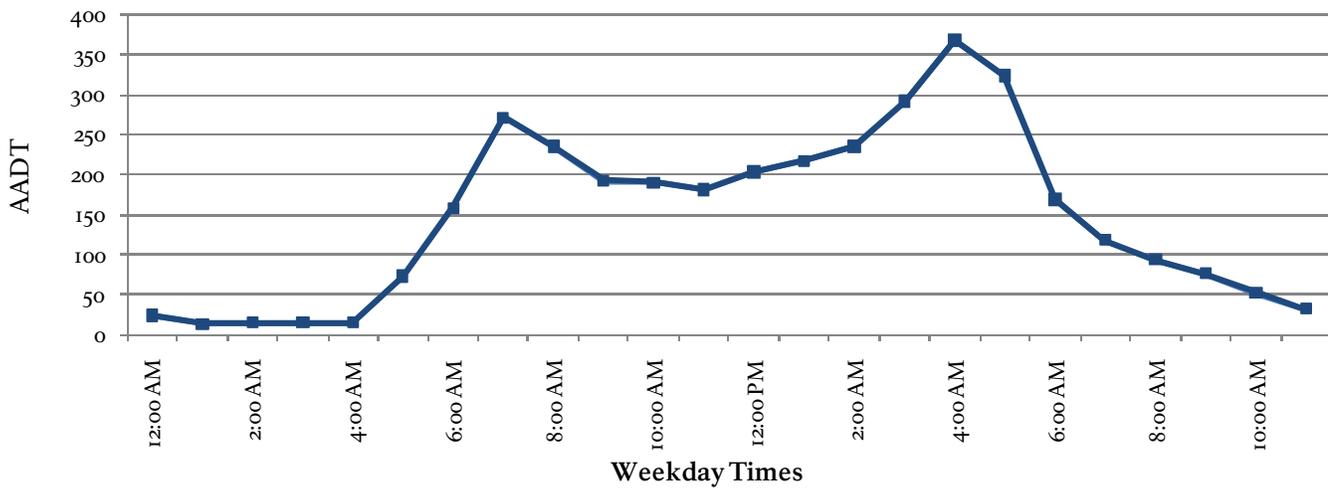
Source: New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and Volpe Center



North of Kinderhook, the AADT for I-90 is 24,911 vehicles. Traffic volume increases during commute times and on weekends in the summer months. Traffic congestion on I-90 is high during commute hours and weekends (Figure 10). East of Kinderhook, the AADT for the Taconic State Parkway is 3,800 vehicles, while to the west, the AADT for I-87 ranges from 36,700 to 40,400 vehicles.

**Figure 10**  
**I-90 weekday traffic volume**

Source: NYSDOT, June 2002



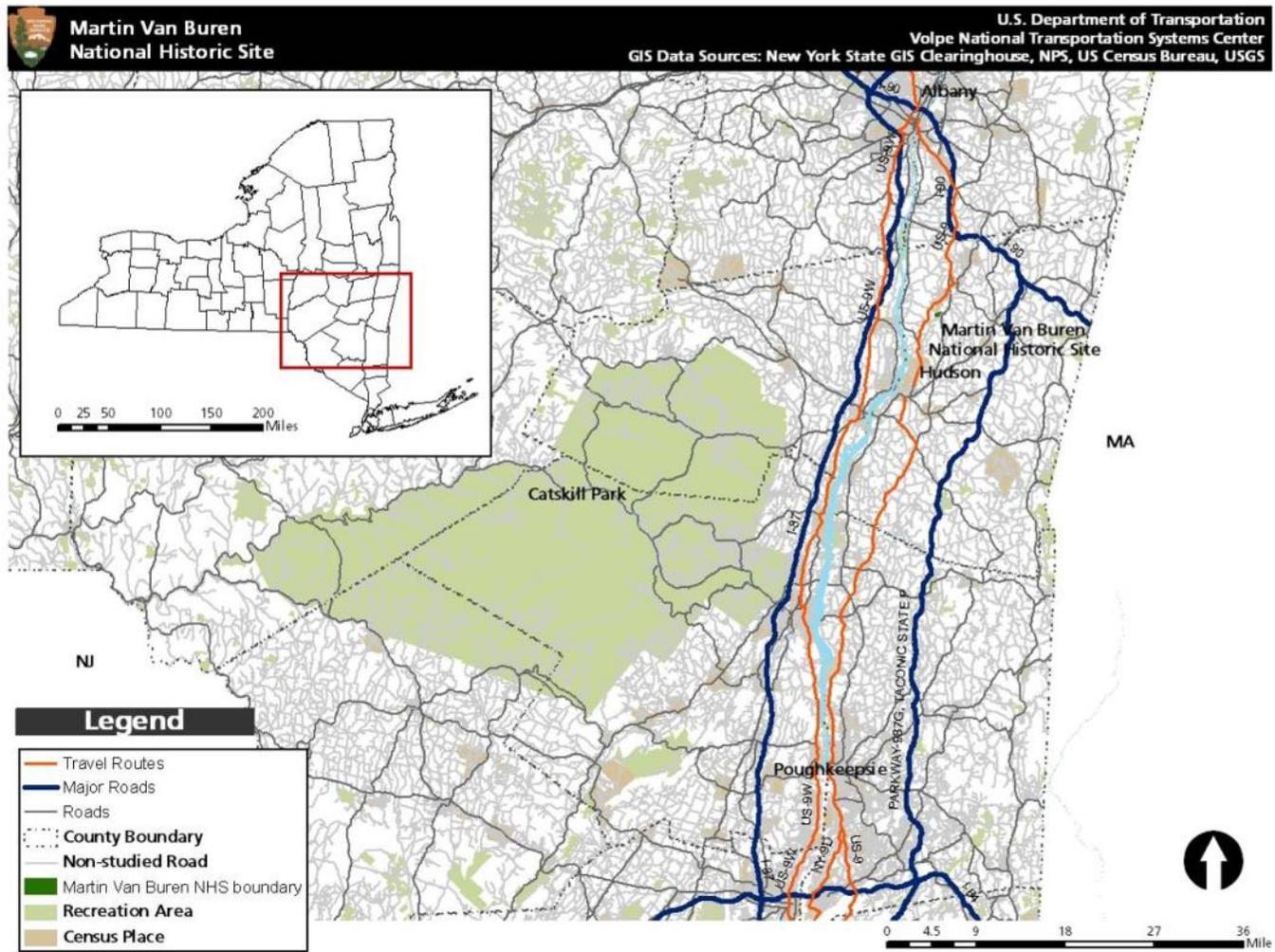
The Hudson Valley Transportation Management Center provides up-to-date traffic information for Westchester, Rockland, Putnam, Dutchess, Orange, Columbia, and Ulster counties. The center provides up-to-date traffic reports, traffic cameras, weather, and road information for the counties listed above. NYSDOT and the New York State Police control the Center. The Center is useful for local drivers within the seven counties and visitors new to the area. The website (<http://www.hudsonvalleytraveler.com/>) keeps drivers informed of changing road conditions and accidents and drivers of existing road regulations.

### **Thematic driving trails**

Visitors to the Hudson River Valley NHA commonly drive through the valley and visit sites of interest. The NHA recommends driving along major highways to access the region including I-90, I-87, and I-84 or travel routes including SR 9, SR 9D, or SR 9W to see the sites within the region (Figure 11). In addition to driving, there are boat and bus tours with private guides. There are several self-guided driving tours of the NHA with tour themes that focus on culinary attractions, wineries, architecture, history, and arts of the region.

**Figure 11**  
**Hudson River Valley driving routes**

Source: Hudson River Valley Institute, NYSDOT, and Volpe Center



The NHA identifies three tour themes within the valley that they promote on their website (<http://www.hudsonrivervalley.com/>). The tours include “Freedom and Dignity”, “Nature and Culture”, and “Corridor of Commerce”, each of which include several trip itinerary options.<sup>15</sup> If a visitor chooses to visit sites in the upper Hudson River Valley region associated with the colonial period (one of the tours within “Freedom and Dignity”) then Martin Van Buren NHS is listed as a recommended stop. While sites are recommended as stops, there is no suggested route to visit the sites. Other sites within the colonial period tour include Bronck Museum, James Vanderpoel House, Shaker Museum, Luykas Van Alen House, Albany City Hall, and several other sites within the region.

The Taconic State Parkway is a popular driving route because of the views and restrictions on vehicular traffic. New York parkways were designed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to connect cities with parks and open space. Parkway follow scenic areas throughout New York and generally do not allow bicycles, buses, trailers, and trucks.

<sup>15</sup> Hudson River Valley national Heritage Area. <http://www.hudsonrivervalley.com/>

## Parking

In the Martin Van Buren NHS parking lot, there are 38 parking spaces and two bus parking spaces (Figure 12). The lot was redesigned in 2007 to simplify visitor entrance into the park. A new top coat was put onto the parking area in the spring of 2009; the design of the lot did not change at that time. A 2008 park facility study, *Preliminary Analysis of Existing Facility Needs and Parking Requirements*, calculates parking requirements to be 40 parking spaces to meet the current peak visitor loads that occur in the fall along with the staff parking requirements. Without any nearby public transportation or designated bicycle lanes, most staff members drive personal vehicles to the park.<sup>16</sup>

**Figure 12**  
**Existing parking lot with vehicle and bus parking**

Source: Volpe Center



While parking availability is not a current problem, the park expects that the addition of a new visitor center will cause the demand for vehicle and bus parking to increase. In addition, the expansion of the trail network within the newly expanded Martin Van Buren NHS will likely cause visitors to stay at the park for longer periods of time. If visitors increase their stay to see the new visitor center, the grounds, and tour the house, parking turnover rate will decrease. This will in turn increase the need for additional parking spaces or an alternative method to access the site.

Both Martin Van Buren NHS staff and the 2008 facility analysis report acknowledge that event parking for the park is a problem. Staff report that the 38 spaces fill quickly during events such as Harvest Day in September and Winter Celebration in December. During events, park staff directs traffic to overflow locations within the park. None of the overflow parking locations, however, are designed to accommodate cars. During Harvest Day in 2009, the park's busiest day, the park reported accommodating 100 cars on the lawn behind the park headquarters building (Figure 13, left), 150-200 cars on the lawn behind the mansion (Figure 13, middle), and 60 cars along the Old Post Road (Figure 13, right).

<sup>16</sup> Einhorn Yaffee Prescott Architecture & Engineering P.C. *Preliminary Analysis of Existing Facility Needs and Parking Requirements*. Albany, New York. 2008.

**Figure 13**

**Overflow parking locations: behind the park headquarters (left), behind the mansion (center), and along Old Post Road (right)**

Source: Volpe Center



Columbia County's Martin Van Buren Park and trailhead across SR 9H from Martin Van Buren NHS includes a dirt parking area. This parking area is small and can accommodate only a few cars. There is no safe way to cross SR 9H, in part because there is a slight rise in the roadway, which reduces drivers' sightlines. Despite there being public parking lots in the vicinity, there are currently no official overflow locations off-site because there is no shuttle to connect other parking facilities to the park.

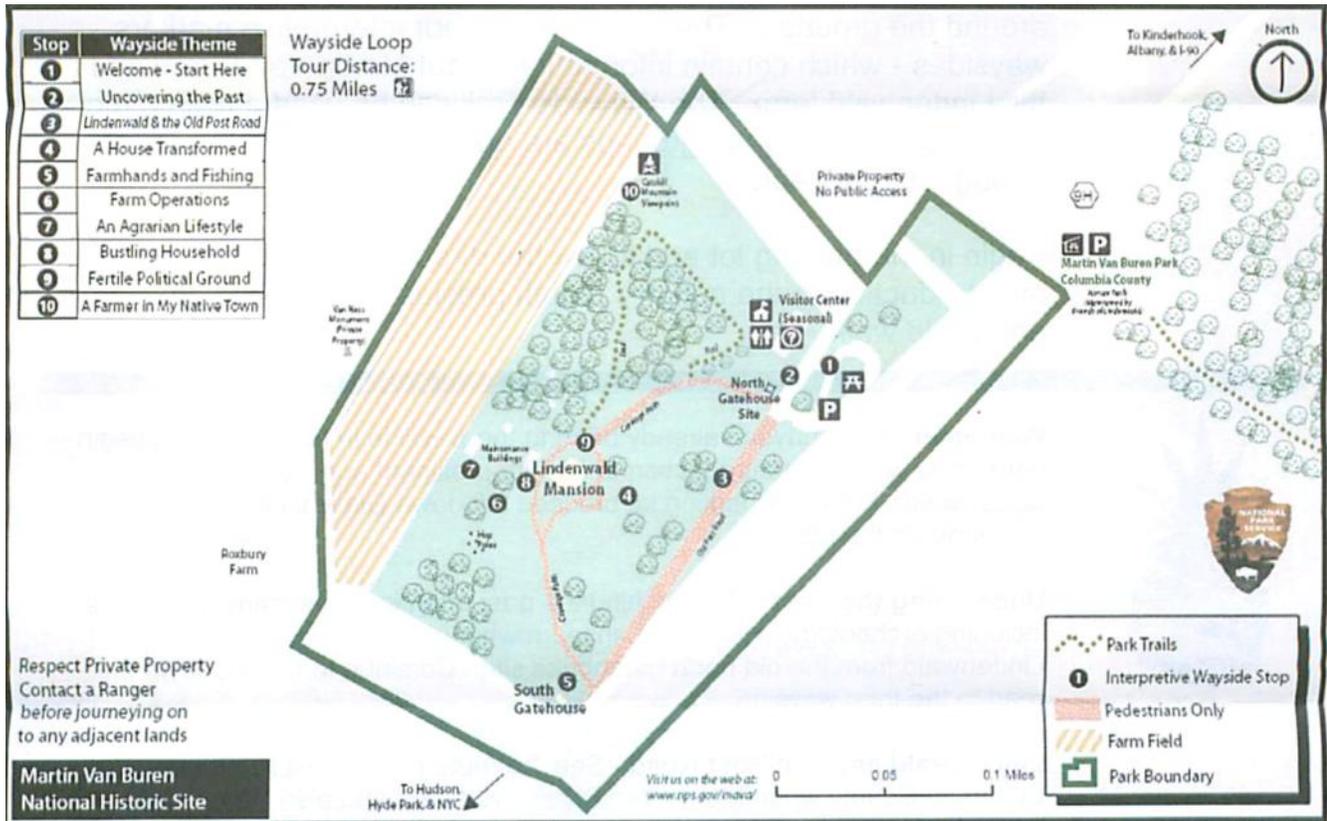
### *Pedestrian facilities and connections*

There are several informal pedestrian trails and one loop trail within the Martin Van Buren NHS boundary. The opportunity for trails and outdoor education exhibits is increasing as the park's boundary expands. There are gravel trails that connect the parking lot to the visitor center and to the mansion (the walkways to the mansion are the historic carriage paths). In addition, Old Post Road is a wide gravel walkway with a right of way that continues to the north of the site through private property.

The Lindenwald Wayside Trail is within the original park boundary (Figure 14). The loop trail is three quarters of a mile long and connects ten interpretive markers throughout the park (Figure 15). Trail markers include archeological findings from the park, the mansion, farm work, the gatehouse, and additional sites with historical significance.

**Figure 14**  
**The Lindenwald Wayside Trail**

Source: NPS



**Figure 15**  
**The Wayside Trail: between the parking lot and the mansion (left), surrounding land (center), and Old Post Road sign (right)**

Source: Volpe Center



The Wayside Trail connects with the Old Post Road, which is the historic connection between New York and Albany. The portion of the Old Post Road within the Martin Van Buren NHS is one of the only remaining unpaved sections of the Old Post Road.

The Wayside Trail surface varies from gravel around the mansion to lawn or dirt paths in the woods and overlooking the surrounding farmland. Currently, the trail does not have a formal connection to the Luukas Van Alen House, 1.5 miles north on SR 9H.

The Wayside Trail is located on an upper terrace that exists within the original park boundary. From the upper terrace there is no formal connection to Kinderhook Creek or the lower terrace to the west from the Wayside Trail. There is a 35-foot change in elevation and access is difficult. To create a trail connection, NPS submitted a Project Management Information System (PMIS) proposal for the planning of a new one- to two-mile trail that will connect the two terraces, Kinderhook Creek, and Roxbury Farm. The project does not currently have funding; however, the project was submitted in 2008 and reviewed in 2009.

The county-owned Martin Van Buren Park, across SR 9H from Martin Van Buren NHS, is rented by the Friends of Lindenwald. The friends group, a volunteer-based non-profit organization, is responsible for the maintenance of the site's 1.5 miles of trails (Figure 16). The trail network is comprised of several small loops and is used by hikers and bicyclists in the summer and cross country skiers and snowshoers in the winter. The trailhead is a dirt parking lot with picnic tables and maps.

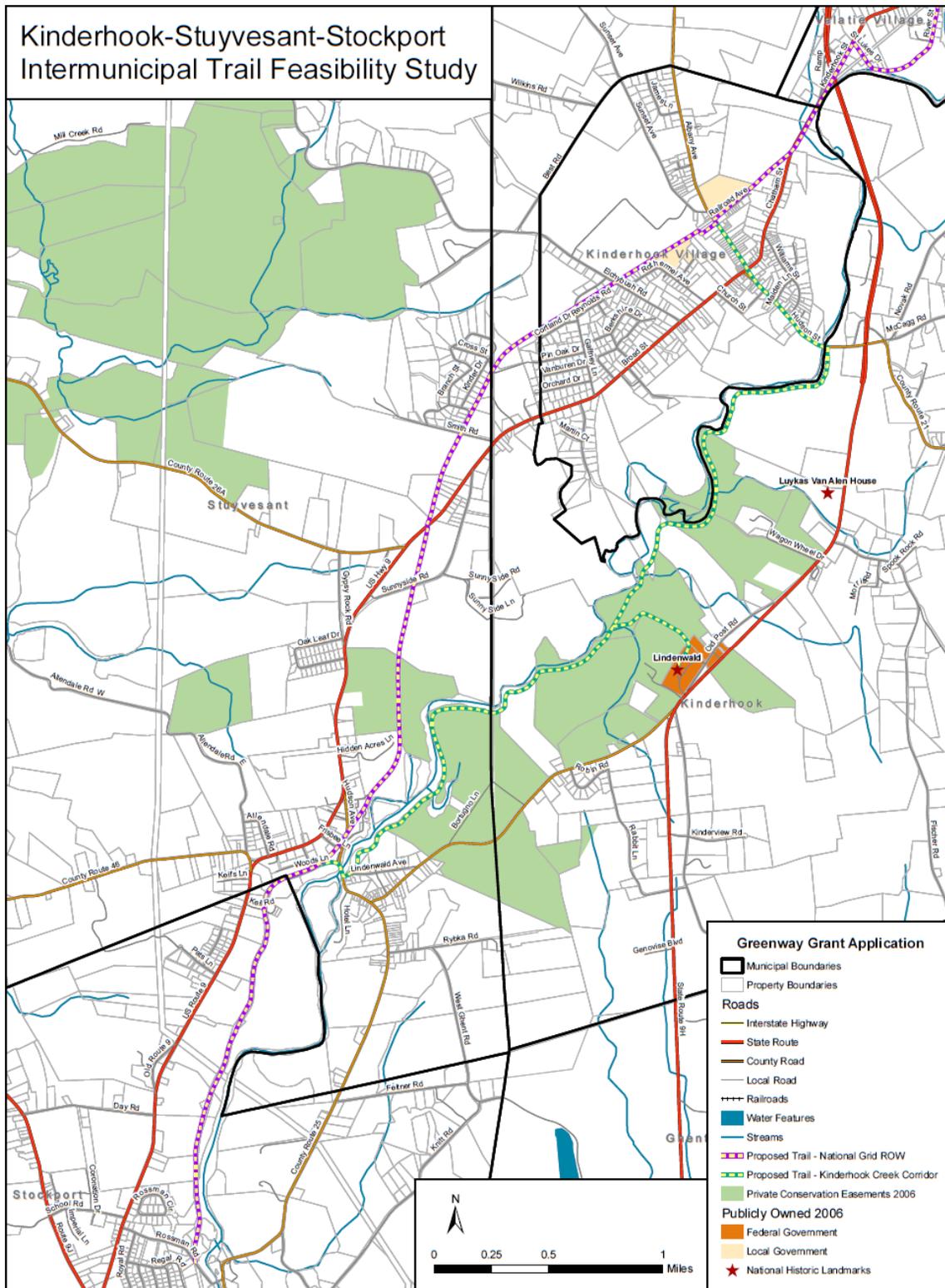
**Figure 16**  
**The county-owned Martin Van Buren Park Trailhead (left) and trails (right)**

Source: Volpe Center



The town of Kinderhook's Trail Committee received funding in October 2009 for a new trail in the area. The trail is the result of the town of Kinderhook's Comprehensive Plan (2000), which conveyed the residents' desire for additional recreational trails. The goal of this project is to link Kinderhook, Stuyvesant, and Stockport. The trail will be approximately six miles long, although the trail alignment is not decided. The Columbia County Land Conservancy applied for and will receive technical assistance through the NPS Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) to facilitate a collaborative discussion with stakeholders to determine the trail alignment. Currently, there are several possible alignments including Kinderhook Creek, segments of Old Post Road, and the right of way maintained by the National Grid (Figure 17). Martin Van Buren NHS prefers an alignment that incorporates the Old Post Road or includes a spur trail that joins with the park.

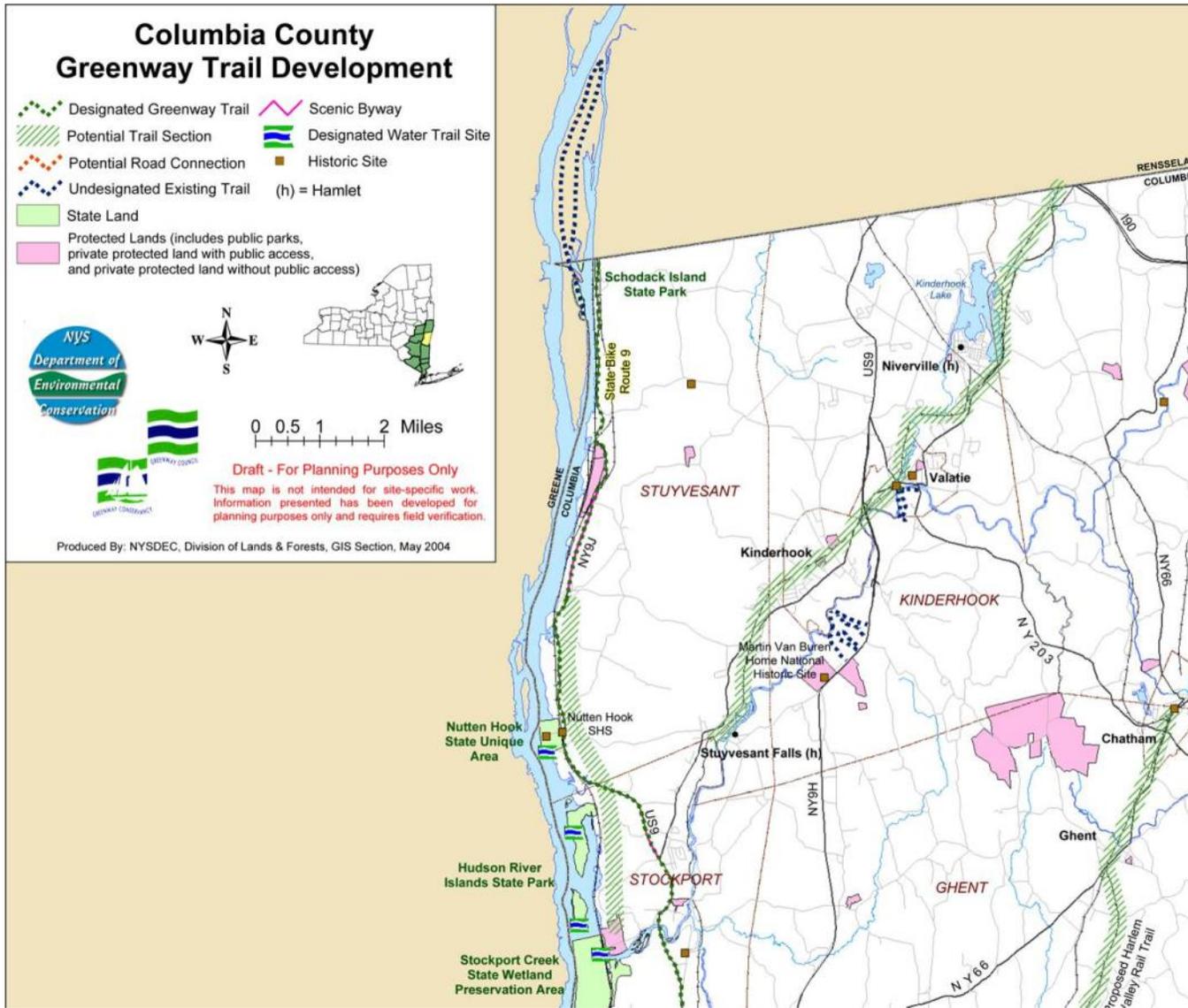
**Figure 17**  
**Kinderhook-Stuyvesant-Stockport Trail Feasibility Study**  
 Source: Town of Kinderhook



An additional grant, secured through the Greenway Conservancy for the Hudson River Valley Inc., provides funding to study the Hudson River Valley corridor and develop a framework for a trail to be incorporated in county plans, including Columbia County (Figure 18). This trail is planned to connect the Capital District to New York City.

**Figure 18**  
**Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail Vision, 2004**

Source: Hudson River Valley Greenway



In addition to pedestrian trails, two organizations, the Hudson River Valley Greenway and Hudson River Watertrail Association, are working on a water trail to connect New York City to Albany. These organizations are also working to develop a trail that will connect the towns located along the river. This trail is to connect with the land-based Greenway Trail system.

## *Bicycle facilities and connections*

Currently Martin Van Buren NHS does not encourage bicycling within the park boundary. The trails on site are narrow and lack adequate design for bicycle traffic. There is no formal bicycle path adjacent to the park; however, bicycles are allowed in the trails within the county-owned Martin Van Buren Park, across SR 9H from Martin Van Buren NHS, and on State Routes. There is a bicycle rack adjacent to the parking lot for visitors who arrive to the site on bicycle.

NYSDOT designates SR 9 as a bicycle route between New York City and the Canadian border (Figure 19). SR 9 is one of three long-distance bicycle routes in the state of New York and it is the only north to south bicycle route. There is signage indicating the road as a bicycle route. SR 9 is intended for experienced bicyclists because of the speed of traffic and shared use of the road along much of the route. State Bicycle Route 9 is a designated part of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail system.

**Figure 19**  
**State bicycle routes**

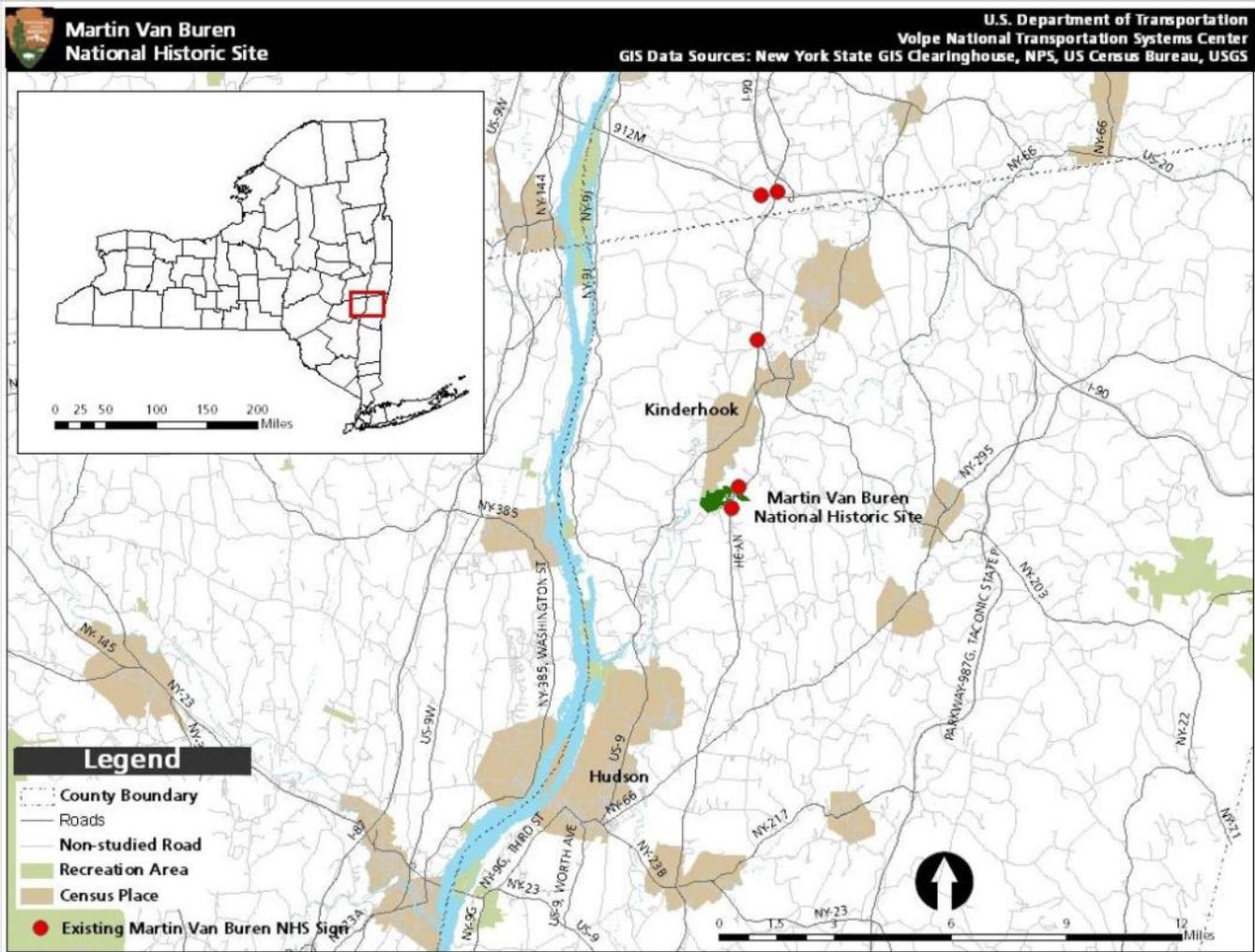
Source: NYSDOT



## *Signage and wayfinding*

The park has a few signs along SR 9H and there are a couple of signs along I-90 and SR 9H (Figure 20). Along I-90, there is a large NPS sign for both eastbound and westbound traffic at Exit 12 (Figure 21, left). In addition, the state installed a Martin Van Buren NHS sign four miles north of the park at the rotary intersection of SR 9 and SR 9H (Figure 21, middle). Within a couple hundred yards of the site on SR 9H, there is one sign for northbound (Figure 21, left) and one sign for southbound traffic that are both owned by the state. In addition to park signs for Martin Van Buren NHS, there are two signs for northbound traffic and two signs for southbound traffic for the nature trails in the county-owned Martin Van Buren Park that is located across SR 9H from the park. Within the park boundary, there is a primary entry sign, small wayfinding signs to the visitor center, and signage along the Wayside Trail. The signs along the Wayside Trail are porcelain and enamel.

**Figure 20**  
**Regional Signage map**  
 Source: Volpe Center



**Figure 21**  
**The signage for I-90 (left), 9H rotary (middle), and 9H (right)**  
Source: Volpe Center



## *Rail*

The nearest Amtrak station is in Hudson, 11 miles south of Martin Van Buren NHS. The train station is at the northwestern edge of downtown near the Hudson River. Travel time between New York City and Hudson is two hours on Amtrak's Empire Service route, which connects New York City to Niagara Falls. The fare from Hudson to New York City varies from \$31 to \$60 and the fare from Hudson to Albany varies from \$15 to \$21. The train makes 18 daily stops in Hudson. From the train station in Hudson, visitors can take taxis or private vehicles to Martin Van Buren NHS. Alternatively, there is an Enterprise car rental facility near Hudson, 1.5 miles from the Amtrak Station.

The Hudson train station includes a train depot, waiting area, and Amtrak schedules (Figure 22). There are two large parking lots near the Hudson train station. One parking lot, with approximately 50 parking spaces, is adjacent to the train station and allows daily parking but prohibits overnight parking. The second parking lot, with approximately 200 spaces, is across the street from the train station and permits long-term parking.

**Figure 22**

**Amtrak Station in Hudson, New York: loading area (left), train station (center), and schedule (right)**

Source: Volpe Center



The Hudson River Valley NHA, in partnership with I Love New York, the official New York State tourism site, produces the “Windows on History” publication.<sup>17</sup> This guide describes the train ride on Amtrak through the Hudson River Valley NHA. The trip is from Pennsylvania Station (Penn Station) in Manhattan to Albany and tourists are encouraged to visit historic sites, explore the natural setting, and learn about the towns along the route. While Amtrak passes through the Hudson Valley region, there are few public transportation links from train stations directly to sites of interest mentioned in the guide.

The Town of Poughkeepsie is the last stop on the Metro North Railroad Hudson Line and is 50 miles south of Martin Van Buren NHS. The town is accessible along SR 9H, SR 9, and SR 9G from the park and is an hour and a half drive. The trip on Metro North between Grand Central Station in New York City and Poughkeepsie is less than two hours and fares vary from \$13.78 to \$26.00 one-way or \$26.56 to \$39.00 round trip for adults. The Amtrak station in Poughkeepsie connects to Hudson and Penn Station in New York City. The trip is about an hour and a half from Poughkeepsie to Penn Station and 30 minutes from Poughkeepsie to Hudson. Round-trip Amtrak fare from Poughkeepsie to Penn Station is approximately \$70 and one way travel is about \$40.

### *Boat service*

There is a public recreational boat launch facility in Hudson near the Amtrak station. In addition, this is the docking point for small private barges and small private cruise boats for access along the Hudson River.

There are several private boat companies that offer tours along the Hudson River. For example, the River Valley Tours Company offers Hudson River boat tours to historical sites along the river. There are other boat tours such as the Rip Van Winkle that focus on the Kingston area of the Hudson River.

### *Aviation*

Albany International Airport is 33 miles northwest of Martin Van Buren NHS. There are two primary routes to access the airport from the site including I-87 and I-90. The travel time from the Albany airport to Martin Van Buren NHS is approximately 40 minutes by car. To access Martin Van Buren NHS from the airport, out-of-state visitors have to take a taxi or rent a car because there is no alternative transportation option that connects the airport to the Hudson and Kinderhook area.

<sup>17</sup> New York By Rail and I Love New York. “Windows on History: Exploring the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area” <http://www.hudsonrivervalley.com/ExploreHeritageArea/Windows.aspx>

## *Development activities*

### **Regional plans**

#### *Land use*

The Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) is the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Albany-Schenectady-Troy area. While Columbia County is not within CDTC's boundary, the planning decisions for this MPO influence Columbia County. The CDTC's vision for 2030 includes a focus on urban investment, smart urban growth, and economic development. Within the CDTC, there is funding available for transportation and land use plans that support transit and pedestrian access.

#### *Transportation*

The statewide transportation plan emphasizes corridor management, which includes major multi-modal state corridors.<sup>18</sup> Within the Capital Region, I-90 and I-87 are primary state corridors. I-90, which is a toll road, is approximately 10 miles north of the park and provides east-west access across New York and Massachusetts, and I-87 provides north-south access across New York. NYSDOT recognizes the importance of these interstates for trade and connections with other states. The state encourages carpooling as well as plans that concentrate use along these corridors. Additional investment in I-90 will improve access to the region as well as encourage multi-modal travel to and from major cities.

### **Local plans**

#### *Land use*

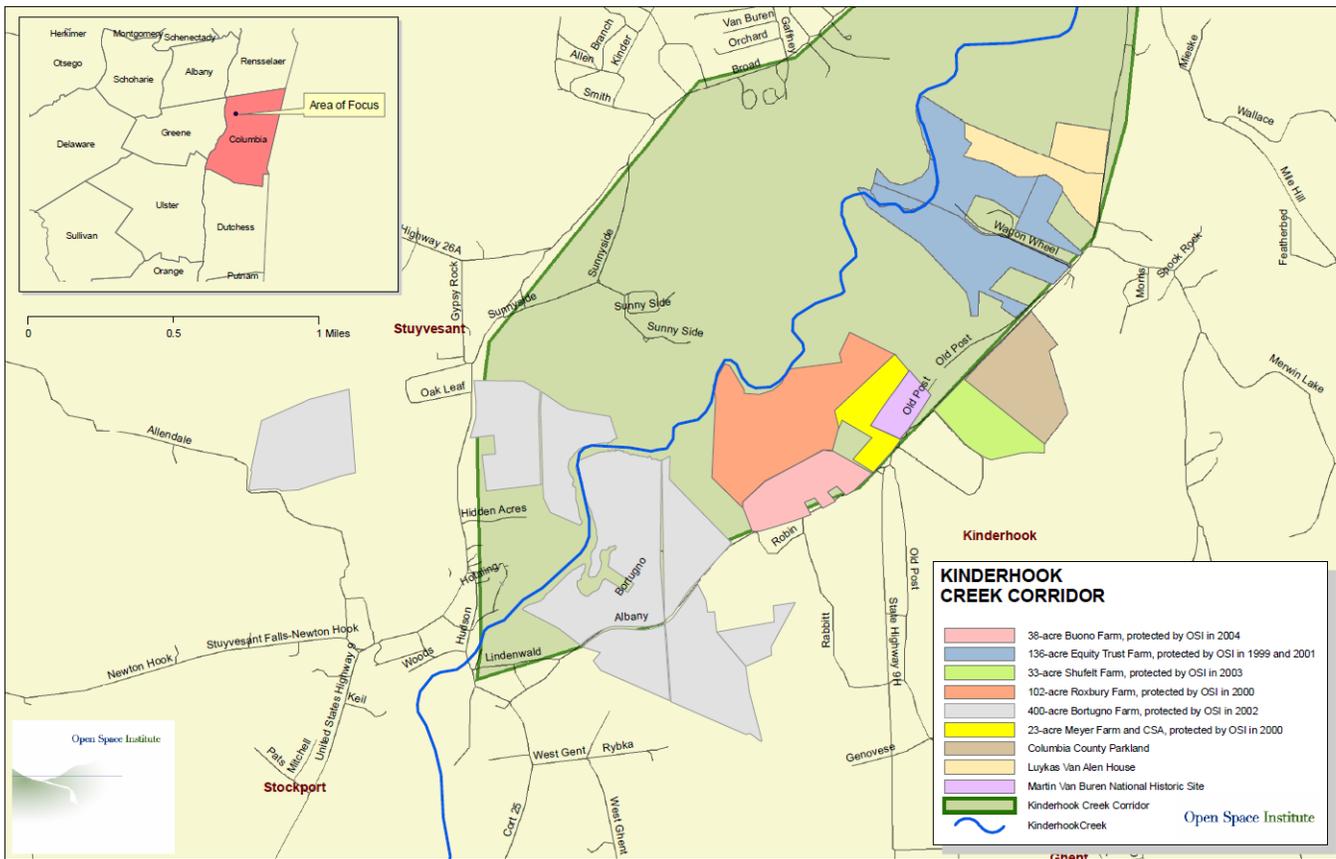
Prior to the park expansion in 2009, there was a proposal for a housing development adjacent to the Martin Van Buren NHS within Parcel F. The OSI's purchase of the land is the result of disapproval within the community of the development and its impact on the historic views from the park. As mentioned earlier in this section, in addition to the land within the new park boundary, the OSI protects several nearby farms in the valley and along Kinderhook Creek (Figure 23).

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<sup>18</sup> New York State Department of Transportation. Strategies for a New Age: New York State's Transportation Master Plan for 2030. 2006.

**Figure 23**  
**Land ownership around Martin Van Buren NHS**

Source: Open Space Institute



The town of Kinderhook includes thirty square miles and the villages of Kinderhook and Valatie. The Town of Kinderhook Comprehensive Plan (2000) recommends the preservation of agricultural land, open space, and architectural heritage.<sup>19</sup> These landscape features are important to Kinderhook residents in order to maintain agricultural land and a small town atmosphere. The plan recommends housing and commercial development that retains open space where possible. The plan encourages the continuation of the agricultural economy and the preservation of agricultural landscapes. The plan recommends the use of zoning, conservation easements, farmland protection, and the provision of incentives for farmers to preserve the existing farm land.

For the villages of Kinderhook and Valatie, the Town of Kinderhook Comprehensive Plan includes site design recommendations that are applicable to Martin Van Buren NHS. According to the plan, parking is to be located behind existing structures or set back from the road with a planted buffer. Signage should be clear and consistent with other signs in the area and controlled so as to not confuse drivers. Pedestrian access is to be available and safe and may require new traffic slowing techniques. As of 2000, the town of Kinderhook has been building a relationship with the park in order to develop programming for business development, recreation, and tourism to benefit both the park and town.

While the increase in population over the last couple of decades for the town of Kinderhook has been small, the subsequent change in employment has affected land use for the region. While the most common occupations in the 1970s included craftsmen, foremen, operators, and sales, the most common

<sup>19</sup> Town of Kinderhook Comprehensive Plan. 2000.

occupations in 1990 included administrative support, professional, and executive positions. This change reflects a loss of agricultural and craft-related employment opportunities and associated land uses.

The 2007 Kinderhook Village Comprehensive Plan Update recognizes the town's planning accomplishments since the Town of Kinderhook Comprehensive Plan (2000). The update recognizes public concern over the shortage of commercial density, need for economic development, and desire for greater preservation efforts. The update also states the public concern about street lighting and speed limit enforcement. One important transportation item mentioned in the update is that the city has begun to investigate with NYSDOT the conversion of SR 9H into a truck route. This change would alter the traffic levels, noise, and safety at the park. The plan also encourages the visual enhancement of SR 9.

### *Transportation*

A joint Transportation Needs Assessment is underway by Soule Consulting Services for Greene and Columbia counties. The assessment report will highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the current transportation system within the two counties. Greene County wants to expand public transportation and Columbia County wants to improve and coordinate the role of the current alternative transportation system within the county.

### *Conclusion*

There are several cultural attractions in the Hudson Valley that accommodate large numbers of visitors throughout the year. The recent boundary expansion provides Martin Van Buren NHS with additional land for visitor services and interpretation opportunities. The park's plan for a new visitor center and the expansion of its trail system will attract more visitors, school groups, and tours; however, some populations may still lack access to the park. Without sufficient transportation infrastructure, including adequate signage, lack of wayfinding resources, and the absence of affordable alternative transportation, the park will likely be unable to safely accommodate the increase in visitors it hopes to receive. The transportation infrastructure should provide opportunities at the site for all modes of transportation, including walking, bicycling, and driving, as well as within the region for alternative transportation access, vehicular travel and safety, and touring.

## Section 2: Area trail connections

### Overview

This section describes possible short- and long-term trail connection projects to existing and proposed trails in and around Martin Van Buren National Historic Site (NHS). Short-term projects (zero to five years) include trail connections to existing sites and resources that are adjacent to the park. These include connections to Kinderhook Creek, Roxbury Farm, Luykas Van Alen house, the Martin Van Buren County trails (managed by the Friends of Lindenwald). Long-term projects (five to ten years) include coordination with other historic and recreational sites within the region, the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area (NHA), and along State Bicycle Routes 9 and 9J. Additional trail projects should include connections to the village of Kinderhook, Hudson, recreation opportunities, and other historic sites in the region. While this section contains information and recommendations on signage specific for bicyclists and pedestrians, Section 3 addresses signage and signage more generally.

### Purpose

With trail extensions and new trail connections, Martin Van Buren NHS would encourage pedestrian and bicycle arrivals to the park and provide visitors with new recreation opportunities. Connections to both existing and new trails would encourage more regular visitation by trail users and increase awareness of the park to those already traveling through the area. In addition, new trail connections would provide a safe route to the park for visitors who do not have access to a car or are traveling through the region without a car.

Once visitors arrive at the park, the connection to nearby trails would provide visitors with an incentive to stay in the area for a longer period of time. This opportunity would allow visitors to see more of the landscape that was part of Martin Van Buren's life and farm and provide the park with more recreational options for school groups or tours.

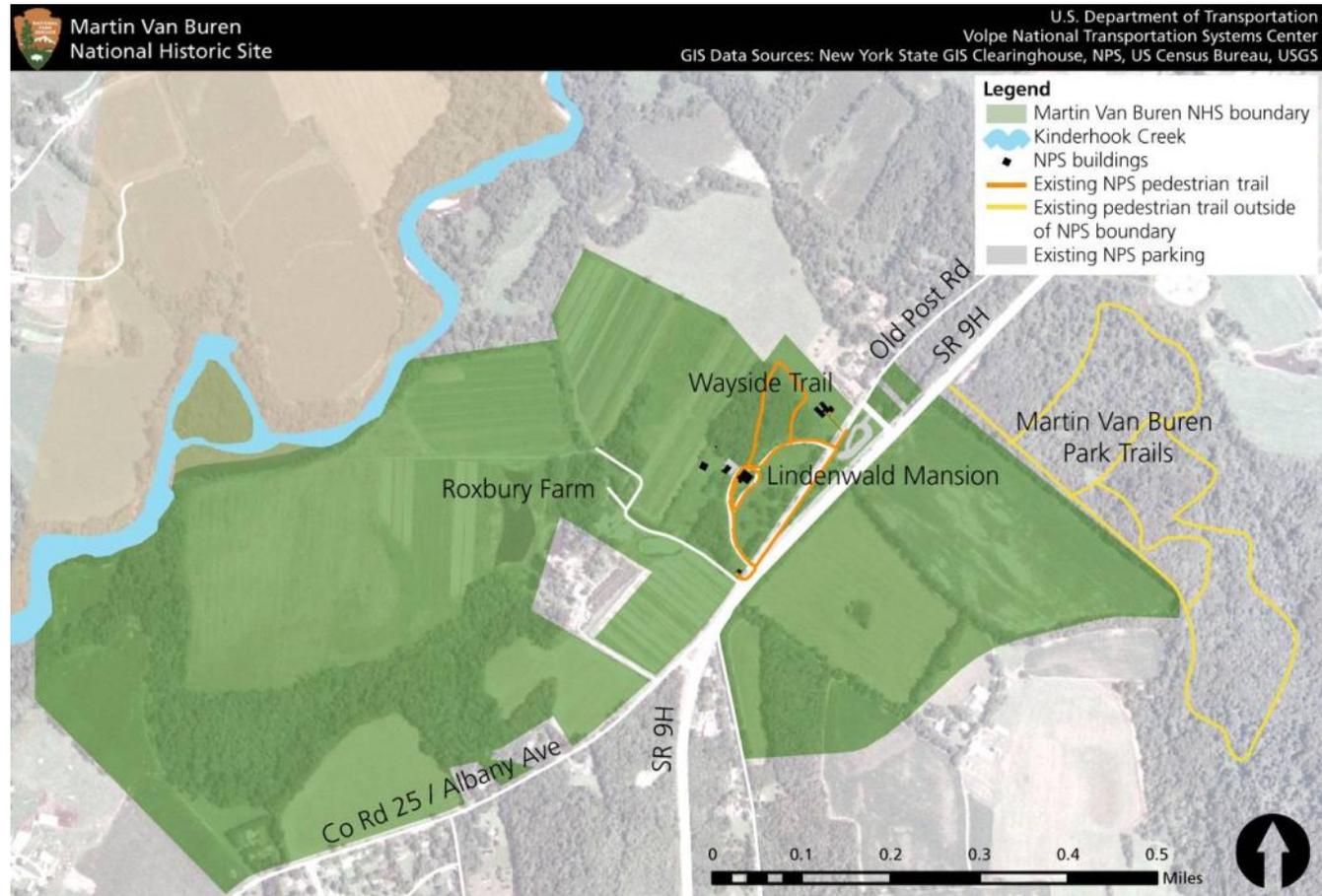
### Existing trails

Currently, there are short pedestrian walkways and one pedestrian loop trail within the Martin Van Buren NHS boundary. Pedestrian walkways link the parking lot, visitor center, mansion, and gatehouse. The Old Post Road, adjacent to New York State Route (SR) 9H, is not open to traffic and is part of the park's pedestrian network. In addition, the Lindenwald Wayside Trail is 0.75 miles long and loops through the woods to connect to the pedestrian walkway between the parking lot, visitor center, and mansion (Figure 24).

As discussed in Section 1 (Existing Transportation Conditions), there are several regional trail networks that run through the Hudson River Valley. SR 9 is a designated bicycle route that follows the Hudson River and there are water trails along the Hudson River. In addition, there are several long-term trail planning projects, such as the Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail that would encourage nonmotorized transportation within the valley and connect historic and recreational sites. Currently there is a limited number of bicycle and pedestrian trails and facilities within a five mile radius of the park. There are, however, several opportunities for new bicycle and pedestrian amenities in this area.

**Figure 24**  
**Existing site and adjacent trails**

Source: Volpe Center

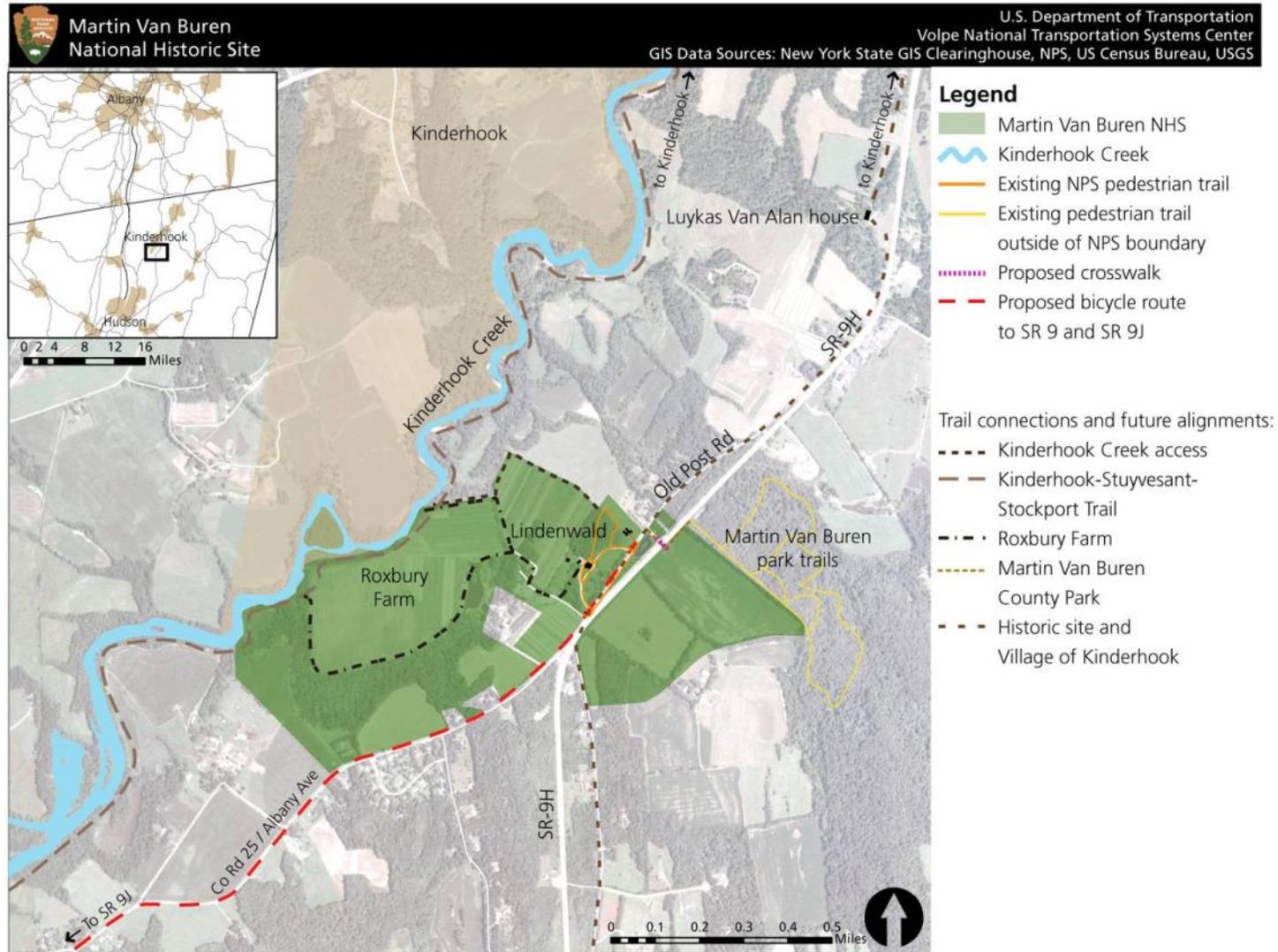


### Proposed site trail connections

Proposed trails near the Martin Van Buren NHS can provide for additional recreation opportunities to park visitors. Summer activities such as walking and bicycling as well as winter activities such as snow shoeing and cross country skiing are already popular in the region. The Wayside Trail is within the park boundary, but there are no safe or signed connections to nearby trails or sites of interest. There are several short connections and wayfinding possibilities that could lead visitors to these nearby resources. These connections would attract users from outside of the park boundary into the park and connect Martin Van Buren NHS visitors to nearby sites (Figure 25).

Opportunities for new connections on-site include access to Roxbury Farm to the south, Kinderhook Creek to the west, and trails within Columbia County's Martin Van Buren Park across SR 9H to the east (Figure 25). These extensions from the Wayside Trail can serve as an educational tool for school groups, visitors, and recreationists. An extension of the Wayside Trail that connects to other nearby resources would particularly benefit the park when there are tour and school groups because the park would be able to offer longer on-site walking tours. In the future, as the park is able to attract more visitors, trail connections would enable the park to accommodate more groups by staggering the mansion tour times and providing park activities in addition to the mansion tour. The park's ability to attract and accommodate more visitors is one of the park's long term goals in order to bring more awareness to the park, the agricultural landscape, and Martin Van Buren's life.

**Figure 25**  
**Site trail connections**  
 Source: Volpe Center



The rest of this section discusses proposed trails that would improve connectivity in the park and to the region surrounding the park. These trails include:

- Kinderhook Creek
- Roxbury Farm
- Martin Van Buren Park
- Historic site connections
- Village of Kinderhook

#### *Kinderhook Creek*

Following the expansion of the park boundary in 2009, there is now a greater potential for the expansion of pedestrian trails. These trails can be designed for both interpretive value and connectivity, which should include a connection to Kinderhook Creek.

In 2009, Martin Van Buren NHS submitted a trail project proposal in order to receive funding from the Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in the Parks Program (TRIP). The proposal, PMIS 143798 - *Provide Access to Martin Van Buren's Original Farm*, describes the planning and design of a new trail. With approval and funding, the trail would increase access from 20 acres to 121 acres of Martin Van Buren's farm. There is a grade change of approximately 35 feet between Lindenwald and Kinderhook Creek that requires trail design and construction.

This project includes two phases. Phase 1 includes the trail construction of the upper terrace, which is closest to the mansion. Phase 2 includes the construction of the lower terrace, which is adjacent to Kinderhook Creek. Kinderhook Creek is also a priority for the Open Space Institute (OSI), which is working with the NPS to preserve the creek's corridor and create a trail along the creek that connects to the village of Kinderhook.<sup>20</sup>

The Kinderhook Creek trail and the upper terrace trail design should be a consideration in the planning for the *Kinderhook-Stuyvesant-Stockport Trail Feasibility Study* (see Kinderhook section, below). The construction of the Kinderhook Creek trail and the new trails within the park boundary would allow visitors to travel between the mansion, along Kinderhook Creek, and towards the village of Kinderhook or Stuyvesant Falls.

#### *Roxbury Farm*

The park can easily construct a pedestrian trail from the Wayside Trail to Roxbury Farm. The current connection is across the lawn, on the southwest portion of the park property. This trail connection would benefit the park when visitors come to the farm and likewise benefit the farm when visitors come to the park by increasing the visibility of both sites. This physical connection is in-line with the park's mission to inform visitors of the region's ongoing association with agriculture. The easement on the 101 acres that is currently owned by OSI will be donated to the park. This easement includes a right of way for a new trail in a location that will have as little negative impact to the farm operations as possible and will be safe for pedestrians. Trail interpretation and education could focus on the surrounding active farms. The park could educate trail users so that trail use does not impact farm operations.

#### *Martin Van Buren Park*

A safe pedestrian connection from the Wayside Trail and Old Post Road to Columbia County's Martin Van Buren Park would provide visitors with access to additional recreation opportunities that are already in place. This connection would have to cross SR 9H, which has high traffic speeds. If proposals to widen SR 9H proceed, pedestrians and vehicles will have a more difficult time getting into and out of the parking lot or crossing the roadway. Existing vehicular and truck traffic and the gradual grade change north of the park make it a dangerous place for visitors to cross the road. A safe connection across SR 9H is also important in order to provide access to the park's property on the south side of SR 9H. If this property

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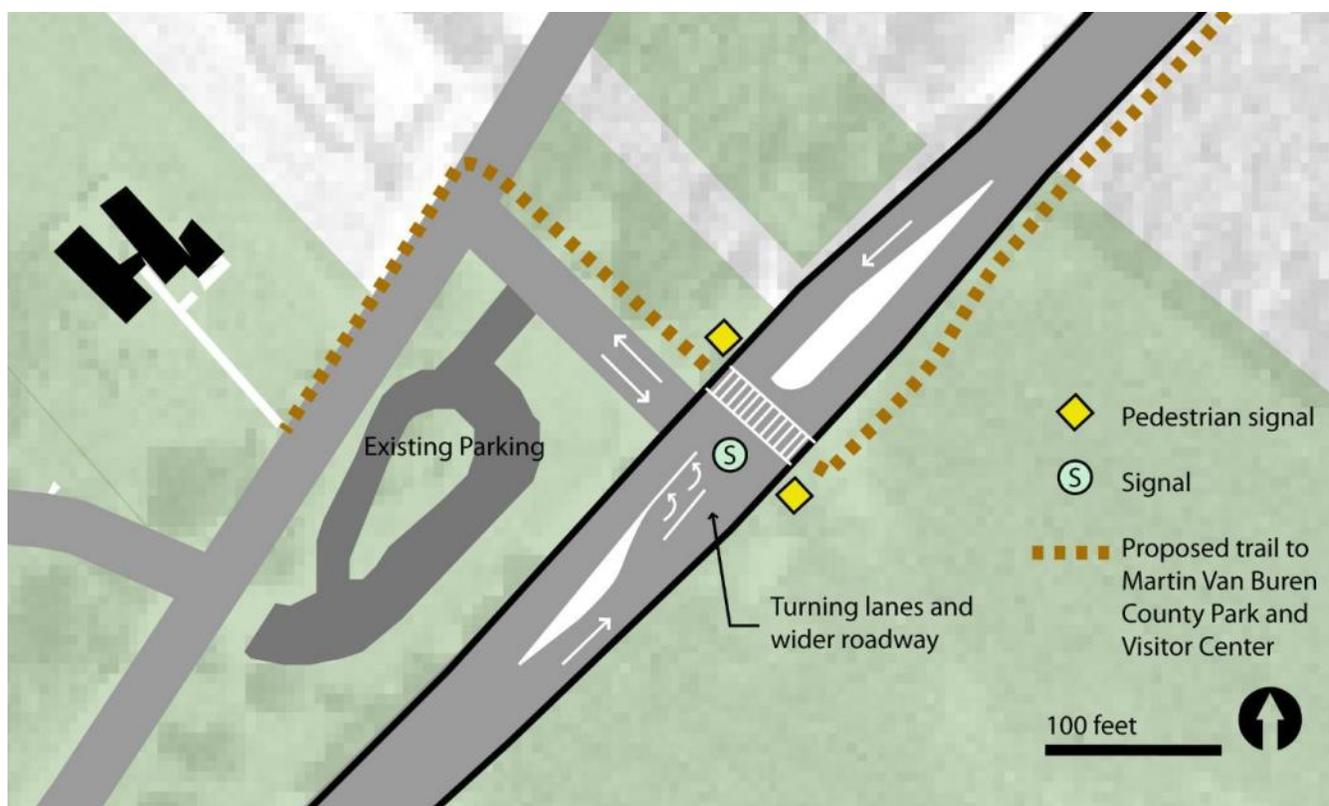
<sup>20</sup> Open Space Institute. <http://www.osiny.org/>

serves as the location for trails, parking, and educational demonstrations in the future, a safe connection would be critical.

A crosswalk between Martin Van Buren NHS and the Martin Van Buren Park should be designed to slow traffic when pedestrians are nearby. A signalized crosswalk on SR 9H at the entrance to Martin Van Buren NHS would slow through traffic and provide visitors with a clear place to cross. In addition, slower traffic would enable vehicles to safely turn into and out of the park's parking lot. The installation of signals, a clearly marked crosswalk in front of the park, and turn lanes would slow traffic speeds and allow for a safer roadway for park visitors (a concept for which is shown in Figure 26). Signs notifying drivers of this intersection should be installed in advance of the intersection so drivers will begin to slow down. Other traffic calming methods are not appropriate for the high traffic speeds along SR 9H.<sup>21</sup> Section 4 (Roadway Considerations) explains this intersection in more detail.

**Figure 26**  
**Conceptual improvements at intersection of park driveway and SR 9H**

Source: Volpe Center



#### *Historic site connections*

The Luykas Van Alen house and the Ichabod Crane Schoolhouse are approximately one mile north of the park on the west side of SR 9H. Pedestrians can walk along a short segment of Old Post Road part of the way towards the Van Alen house; however, this road ends and there is no pedestrian walkway to the house. The only pedestrian connection between the two sites is along the shoulder of SR 9H or along informal pathways. Both the Martin Van Buren NHS and the Luykas Van Alen house would benefit with the addition of a new pedestrian trail between the two sites. The path should be safe for pedestrians and

<sup>21</sup> U.S. DOT. Environment - Traffic Calming Methods <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/tcalm/part2.htm>

bicyclists, which has the potential to attract additional visitors to each site. This connection would also provide visitors with more options to access each site so they do not have to drive between the two sites.

### *Village of Kinderhook*

The village of Kinderhook, approximately three miles north of Martin Van Buren NHS, is the location of the Martin Van Buren bronze statue, Martin Van Buren's gravesite, Columbia County Museum, and the Columbia County Historical Society's offices. The village of Kinderhook's downtown, near the intersection of Albany Avenue (County Road 21) and Broad Street (Chatham Street or SR 9), contains amenities useful for visitors traveling through the area including coffee shops, restaurants, and shops. A trail would encourage nonmotorized travel between Kinderhook's downtown and the Martin Van Buren NHS.

One possible location for a new trail is parallel to SR 9H along the western side of the roadway. This trail would connect the Martin Van Buren NHS, Luykas Van Alen house, and the village of Kinderhook. The advantage of this alignment is that trail users would enter the park from the north through the "front door entry" where visitors would have a view of the mansion, access to facilities and park information, and would be in close proximity to the visitor center. In addition, the park would be able to inform visitors of the surrounding landscape, its historical significance, and trail use within an active organic farm. This alignment would better allow NPS to protect and support both farm operations and park resources. New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) owns the roadway, and the park should coordinate a new trail with the NYSDOT, local stakeholders, and property owners.

In addition to a trail along SR 9H, there is a proposed trail along Kinderhook Creek. The "Kinderhook-Stuyvesant-Stockport Trail Feasibility Study" includes possible trail alignments to link Kinderhook to Stockport via Kinderhook Creek or the National Grid right of way. It would be beneficial to Martin Van Buren NHS for the trail alignment to be along Kinderhook Creek rather than the National Grid right of way in order to connect the park to surrounding recreation and educational opportunities. However, this trail alignment is relatively far from park amenities and several feet below the grade of the visitor center, facilities, and park information. While trail users would be able to walk between the creek and the visitor center, some trail users might not choose to visit the park because of the distance and grade change. In addition, in comparison to the SR 9H trail alignment, the park may not be able to provide trail users with sufficient information in order to protect the farm and park resources.

### **Regional trail connections**

There are several existing trail segments and regional trail planning projects around Martin Van Buren NHS. The park has the opportunity to coordinate with these trail planning efforts as their own trail connections expand. When collaborating with other trail planning efforts, the park should convey the benefits of trail alignments that connect to or come close to the park. The park already offers public facilities, educational opportunities, and interpretive programs that attract visitors. Martin Van Buren NHS is one of many historic sites within the Hudson River Valley NHA. While most of these sites are only accessible to one another by private vehicle, within the area there are several potential sites for new trail segments to connect recreation opportunities and historic sites (Figure 27). Connections between these sites would encourage visitors to extend their stay or visit more sites within the area.

This section discusses proposed regional trail connections that would improve connectivity and trail use in the area surrounding the park. These trails include:

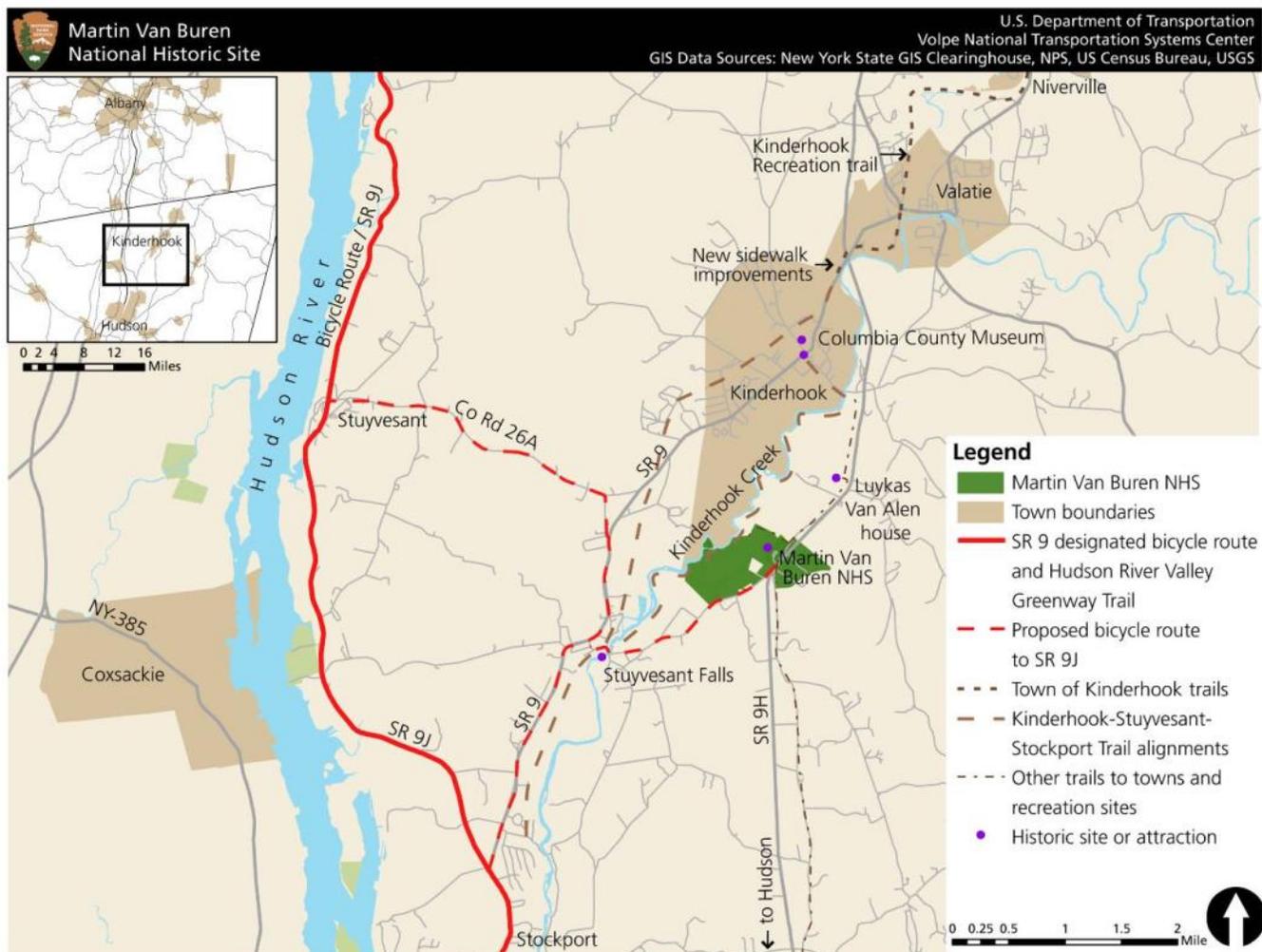
- Town of Kinderhook Trails (sidewalk along SR 9 near SR 9H intersection and Kinderhook recreational trail)
- Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail
- The Harlem Valley Rail Trail
- State Bicycle Route 9
- Regional bicycle connections

### Town of Kinderhook trails

There are proposals for two trail segments within the town of Kinderhook for which the village of Kinderhook is the sponsoring agency.<sup>22</sup> First are plans to construct new segments of sidewalk near the SR 9 and SR 9H intersection in the next two to three years. These sidewalk improvements will lead to the start of the proposed Kinderhook recreational trail. The Kinderhook recreational trail will connect Valatie and Niverville (the location of Kinderhook Town Park and Kinderhook Lake). One possible alignment for this trail is along the Niagara Mohawk Transmission Line. This project is to take place in the next five years. While the sidewalk and recreational trail are north of the village of Kinderhook, they would provide a connection from the north into the village of Kinderhook where another trail could link from the village of Kinderhook to Martin Van Buren NHS. See Appendix A for trail details of the two town of Kinderhook trail proposals.

**Figure 27**  
**Regional trail connections**

Source: Volpe Center



<sup>22</sup> Email conversation with Lisa Mondello, NYSDOT Planning, Region 8, Poughkeepsie, 845-431-5783.

### *Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail*

The Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail, described in a 2004 draft plan, will connect Waterford (12 miles north of Albany) to Battery Park in Manhattan along the Hudson River.<sup>23</sup> The trail will be composed of bike paths, water trails, sidewalks and hiking trails. In general, the draft plan encourages more infrastructure and attention to nonmotorized transportation options throughout the valley. Within Columbia County, the trail will follow the Hudson River on the eastern shore, along the bike route on SR 9J. The draft plan recognizes the future trail segments from Niverville to Stuyvesant Falls and the need to provide a connection between the trails. The park can benefit from this trail if there is a bicycle or pedestrian connection from the trail to the park or if the trail runs adjacent to the park. This connection would bring more awareness to the park and attract additional visitors as they pass through the region. NPS should continue to work with Columbia County, the town of Kinderhook, and the town of Stuyvesant to coordinate trail planning that supports the goals set forth in the Greenway Trail plans.

### *State Bicycle Route 9*

NYSDOT designates SR 9 as a bicycle route connecting New York City to the Albany region. Within Columbia County, the bicycle route follows SR 9J along the Hudson River. For bicyclists to access the park from SR 9J there are two feasible options which connect the park to SR 9J: one from the north and the other from the south.

Currently, there are no markings for these connections and signage does not exist for bicyclists traveling through the area indicating that the park is within five miles of the bicycle route. Directional wayfinding signs on SR 9J and along county roads would assist bicyclists as they navigate this route. These signs should show the distance to the park as well as clear direction on where to turn and how to return to SR 9J.

### *The Harlem Valley Rail Trail*

The Harlem Valley Rail Trail would follow the Harlem Division railroad corridor within Dutchess and Columbia counties. The proposed trail is 43 miles long, connecting New York's Metro North Station in the south to the town of Chatham in the north (Appendix B). Chatham is eight miles east of Martin Van Buren NHS. Currently, there are open trail segments in the southern section of the trail between the Metro North Station to Millerton Station and Under Mountain Road to Copake Falls. The sections in the north that are closer to the Martin Van Buren NHS are not built; however, once trail planning begins, the trail will attract new visitors and trail enthusiasts to the region.

### *Regional bicycle and pedestrian connections*

Within the region, there are several historic sites that a bicyclist or pedestrian can visit in one day. In addition to the sites within the town of Kinderhook, Stuyvesant Falls (2 miles south), Hudson (9 miles south), the Olana State Historic Site (14 miles south), the Rip Van Winkle Bridge (14 miles south), and the Thomas Cole Historic Site (15 miles south) are all accessible along SR 9, SR 9J, and segments of the Old Post Road. Martin Van Buren NHS should partner with nearby historic sites, recreational sites, and property owners to coordinate and encourage bicycle and pedestrian routes between these sites. A pedestrian and bicycle map, showing distances, site amenities, and attractions would benefit all sites within the area and would encourage visitors to take nonmotorized forms of transportation.

### **Trail design**

Trails within the Martin Van Buren NHS site should meet NPS trail design standards and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. Trail alignments shown in the figures above are schematic and should be designed to meet surrounding grade and ADA requirements. The American Association of State

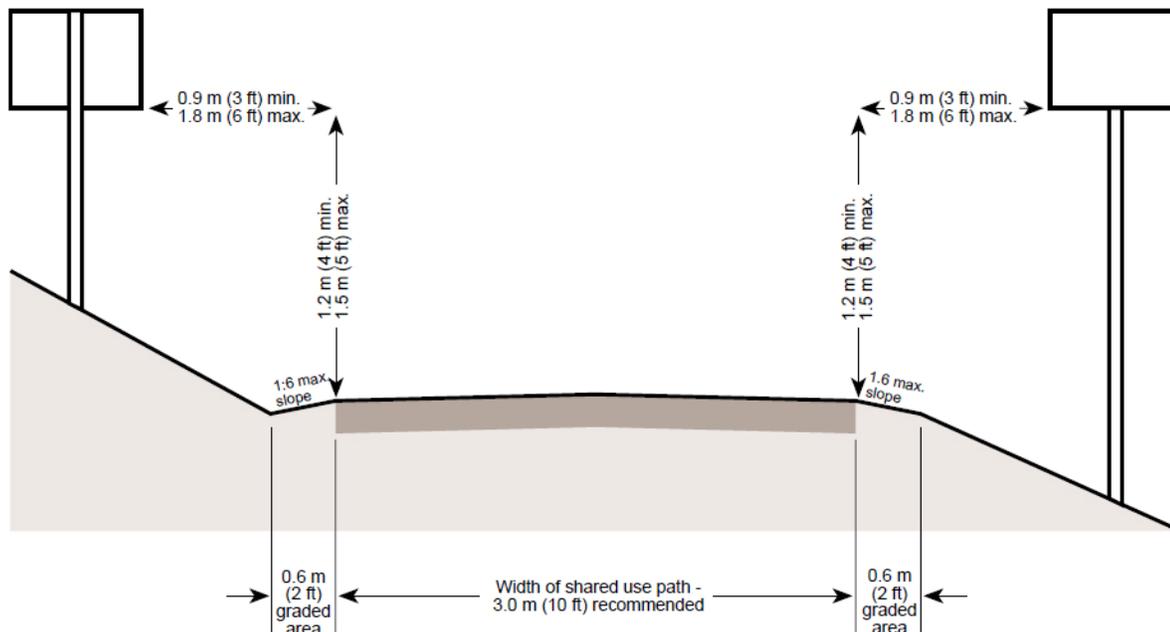
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<sup>23</sup> Hudson River Valley Greenway. Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail Vision, 2004.  
<http://www.hudsongreenway.state.ny.us/AbouttheGreenway/OverviewandMission.aspx>

Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) recommends that multi-use trails, which accommodate bicycle and pedestrian use, should be ten feet wide (eight feet is adequate where there are width constraints) with graded shoulders (Figure 28). A pedestrian path, which does not accommodate bicyclists, should be a minimum of three feet wide with five-foot wide resting places to meet ADA requirements.

**Figure 28**  
**Multi-use Trail Design**

Source: American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the development of Bicycle Facilities. [http://www.sccrtc.org/bikes/AASHTO\\_1999\\_BikeBook.pdf](http://www.sccrtc.org/bikes/AASHTO_1999_BikeBook.pdf)



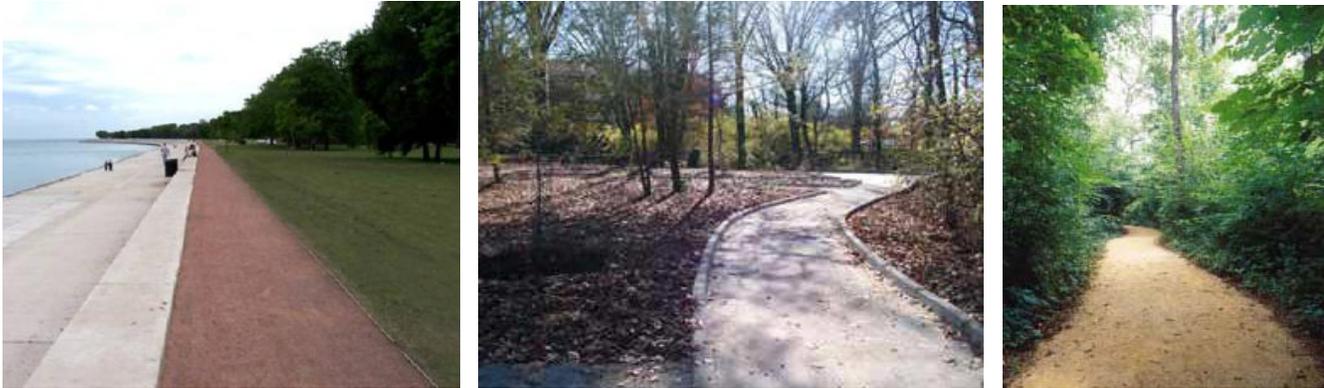
Trail materials should be selected so that they are appropriate to the park setting, user types, and drainage needs. Multi-use trails that accommodate bicyclists should be able to withstand frequent heavy impact from bicyclists; pedestrian trails receive less of an impact. While materials such as asphalt or concrete are strong and durable, there are several other pervious materials that could also withstand bicycle and pedestrian use. Decomposed granite with a stabilizer, pervious concrete, or plastic cells with gravel infill can all be designed to be accessible and are feasible alternatives to asphalt, which may be less compatible with the historic landscape (Figure 29). Where possible, trail design should accommodate both pedestrian and bicycle use and nonmotorized winter uses such as snowshoeing and cross country skiing.

Construction of new trails should include signage for pedestrian and bicyclists. For example, if a spur bicycle trail connects the park with SR 9J, there should be signs at the SR 9J intersections with SR 9 and County Road 26A as well as at intersections along the two routes. Ideally, there should be signs at every major intersection along a roadway or at junctions or trail changes along pedestrian paths. Trail markers should be consistent and frequent along trails where feasible. Trailheads should include maps of local trail networks and include information about trail use on an active farm within a National Historic Landmark. There should also be signs along trails and spurs that link historic sites, villages, and popular visitor sites when the site is further off the trail.

**Figure 29**

**Permeable trail materials: stabilized granite (left) pervious pavement (center) and plastic cells (right)**

Source: Kafka Granite LLC, Lincoln Park, Chicago Illinois [http://www.kafkagranite.com/photos\\_lincoln\\_park/index.php](http://www.kafkagranite.com/photos_lincoln_park/index.php) (left); Pervious Concrete, Ready Mixed Concrete Association [http://www.perviouspavement.org/pervious\\_paths\\_article.htm](http://www.perviouspavement.org/pervious_paths_article.htm) (center); Invisible Structures, Oakdale Nature Preserve, Illinois [http://www.invisiblestructures.com/brochures/GPGV\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.invisiblestructures.com/brochures/GPGV_brochure.pdf) (right).



### Partnerships

The park should coordinate and continue to work with agencies that own and manage nearby historic or recreational sites in order to work together on trail projects. Roxbury Farm, Friends of Lindenwald, Columbia County Historical Society, Columbia County Land Conservancy, and the towns of Kinderhook and Stuyvesant are important partners to coordinate local trail planning efforts. The local NYSDOT office in Poughkeepsie, Hudson River Valley NHA, nearby historic sites, and other regional trail planning groups should be made aware of the opportunities at Martin Van Buren NHS and when feasible, the park and its partners should assist one another to develop non-motorized connections between sites.

### Conclusion

Martin Van Buren NHS can encourage nonmotorized transportation and access to the park by providing links to nearby sites and regional trails. These trail networks will provide users with an alternative to driving in order to access the park, encourage visitation to and from surrounding historic sites, and offer new recreation opportunities.

Short-term projects (0-5 years) should include the construction and coordination of safe and accessible trail connections to existing sites and resources that are adjacent to the park including Kinderhook Creek, Roxbury Farm, Luykas Van Alen house, and the Martin Van Buren Park trails. These trail connections will offer visitors more activities that relate to Martin Van Buren's life and farm while keeping visitors nearby. Coordination should occur with the town of Kinderhook's trail committee and the town of Stuyvesant for planning the alignment of the Kinderhook-Stuyvesant-Stockport Trail. Coordination should also occur with the village of Kinderhook on the recreational trail.

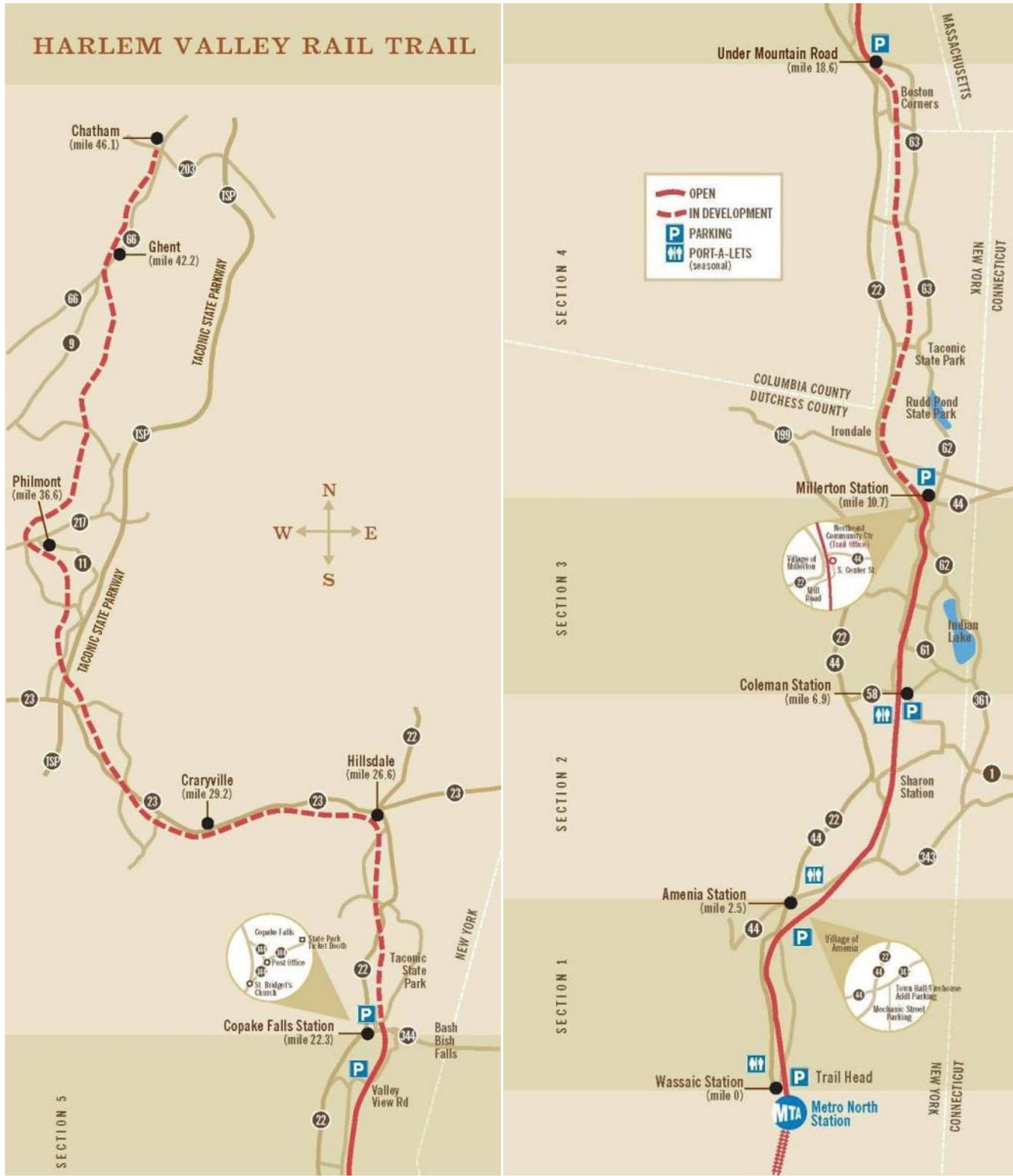
Long-term projects (5-10 years) should include coordination with historic and recreational sites within the region and the sites along the State Bicycle Route 9. Collaboration should also take place with the Hudson River Valley NHA, the Hudson River Valley Greenway, nearby towns, and other historic sites. By partnering with other agencies and organizations, trail construction, signage, and trail promotion can be coordinated and expedited.



## Appendix B

### Harlem Valley Rail Trail - northern segment (left), southern segment (right)

Source: Harlem Valley Rail Trail <http://www.hvrt.org/>



## Section 3: Signage

### Purpose

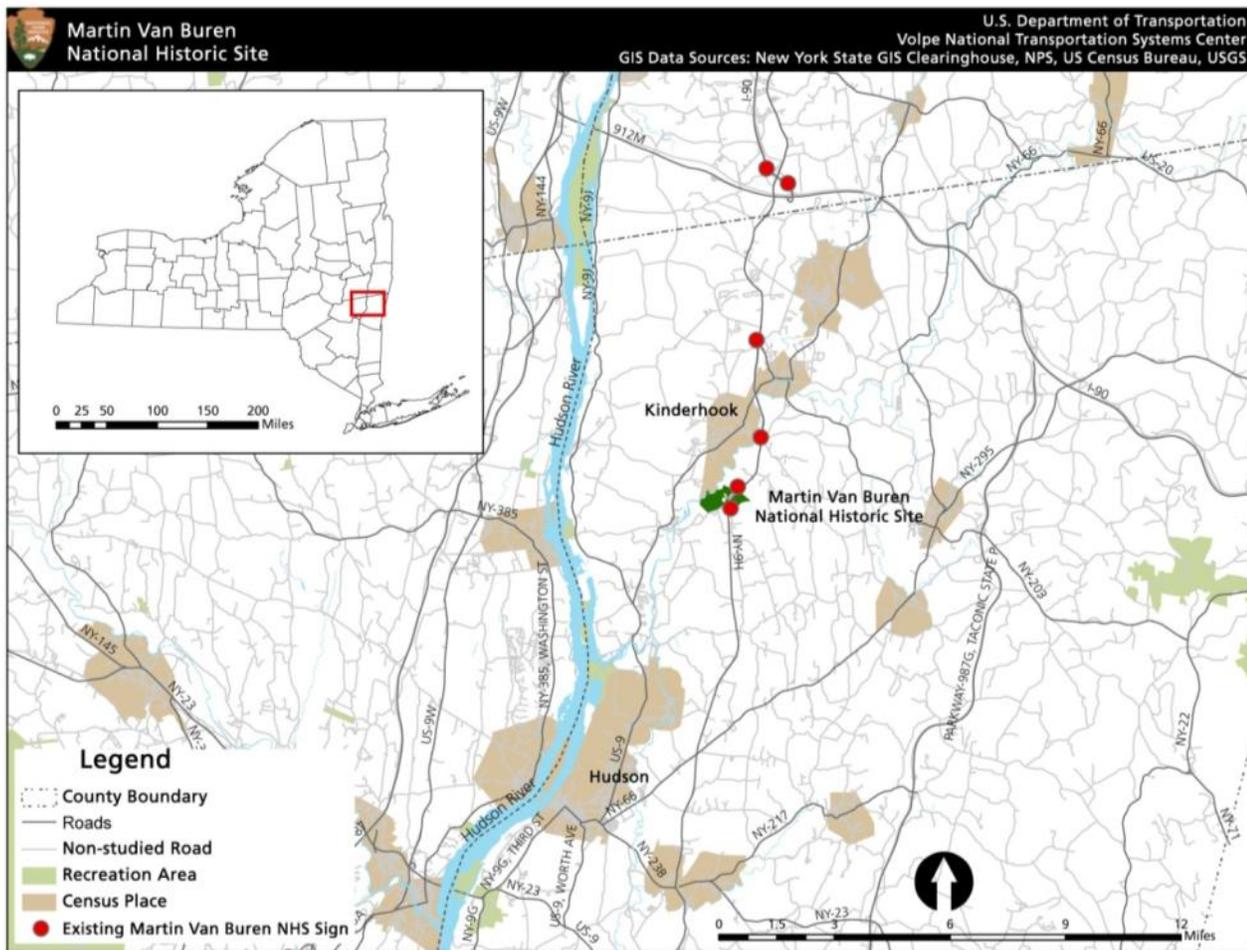
With additional signage, Martin Van Buren National Historic Site (NHS) will improve park awareness, increase visibility to travelers in the region, and attract more visitors. Additional signage will improve the visitor arrival experience and will help ensure that visitors new to the region will find the park more easily. This section focuses on signage for vehicular wayfinding and travel routes within the 20-mile region surrounding Martin Van Buren NHS. This section considers the location of existing signs and identifies locations appropriate for new signs.

### Existing signs

Currently, there are six signs within ten miles of the park (Figure 30). However, there are no signs along Interstate 87 (I-87) or on the Taconic State Parkway. In addition to the entry sign in the park boundary (Figure 31 – left), existing signs include two signs on I-90 (Figure 31 – center), two signs near the park entrance (Figure 31 - right), one sign at the junction of New York State Route (SR) 9 and SR 9H, (Figure 32 – left), and one sign at Hudson Street and SR 9H (Figure 32 – right).

**Figure 30**  
**Existing signage**

Source: Volpe Center (from Section 1, Existing Transportation Conditions)



*Near the park*

There are two historic site road signs for Martin Van Buren NHS approximately 800 feet from the entrance to the park. The signs are on SR 9H for both northbound and southbound travelers. The sign for northbound travelers is on the east side of the road and the sign for southbound travelers is on the west side of the road. These small brown and white signs read “Martin Van Buren NHS” and have a directional arrow (right arrow for southbound travelers and left arrow for northbound travelers; see Figure 31 – right).

**Figure 31**

**Sign Types: park entrance sign (left), I-90 sign at exit 12 (center), and historic site sign on SR 9H (right)**

Source: Volpe Center



*Regional signs*

There are four signs along travel routes within ten miles of the park, all of which are north of the site. There are two signs at I-90 and two along SR 9H. The two signs along I-90 are at Exit 12, both westbound and eastbound (Figure 31 – center). There is another sign west of Valatie and north of Kinderhook, at the junction of SR 9 and SR 9H, where the two roads join at a traffic circle (Figure 32 – left). Finally, there is a sign at County Road 21 eastbound just before SR 9H directing travelers to the park (Figure 32 – right).

**Figure 32**

**Existing signs: Martin Van Buren NHS signs at SR 9 and SR 9H (left) and on County Road 21 eastbound before SR 9 and SR 9H (right)**

Source: Volpe Center



### **New signs**

The proximity of major travel routes and population centers is important in determining the best locations for new signs. The busiest travel routes near the park, according to annual average daily traffic (AADT) data, and the most obvious access routes to the region surrounding the park, are I-87 to the west, I-90 to the north, and the Taconic State Parkway to the east. The population centers in the region are Albany, about 20 miles to the north; Poughkeepsie, about 50 miles to the south; and Hudson, about 11 miles to the south. Further away, but still within a three-hour drive, are New York City and Boston, which are about 150 miles to the south and east, respectively.

While Poughkeepsie is too far for directional signage to Martin Van Buren NHS, the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) NHS in Hyde Park is just north of Poughkeepsie, and is a relevant site at which to consider installing signage to the park. Additionally, there are several sites within the village of Kinderhook that relate to Martin Van Buren's life and the Martin Van Buren NHS.

Kinderhook is the closest village to Martin Van Buren NHS and includes visitor amenities such as restaurants, shops, and lodging. Signage improvements that direct visitors driving between Kinderhook, the Martin Van Buren sites in Kinderhook, and the Martin Van Buren NHS would help clarify the route.

#### *Routes to Martin Van Buren NHS*

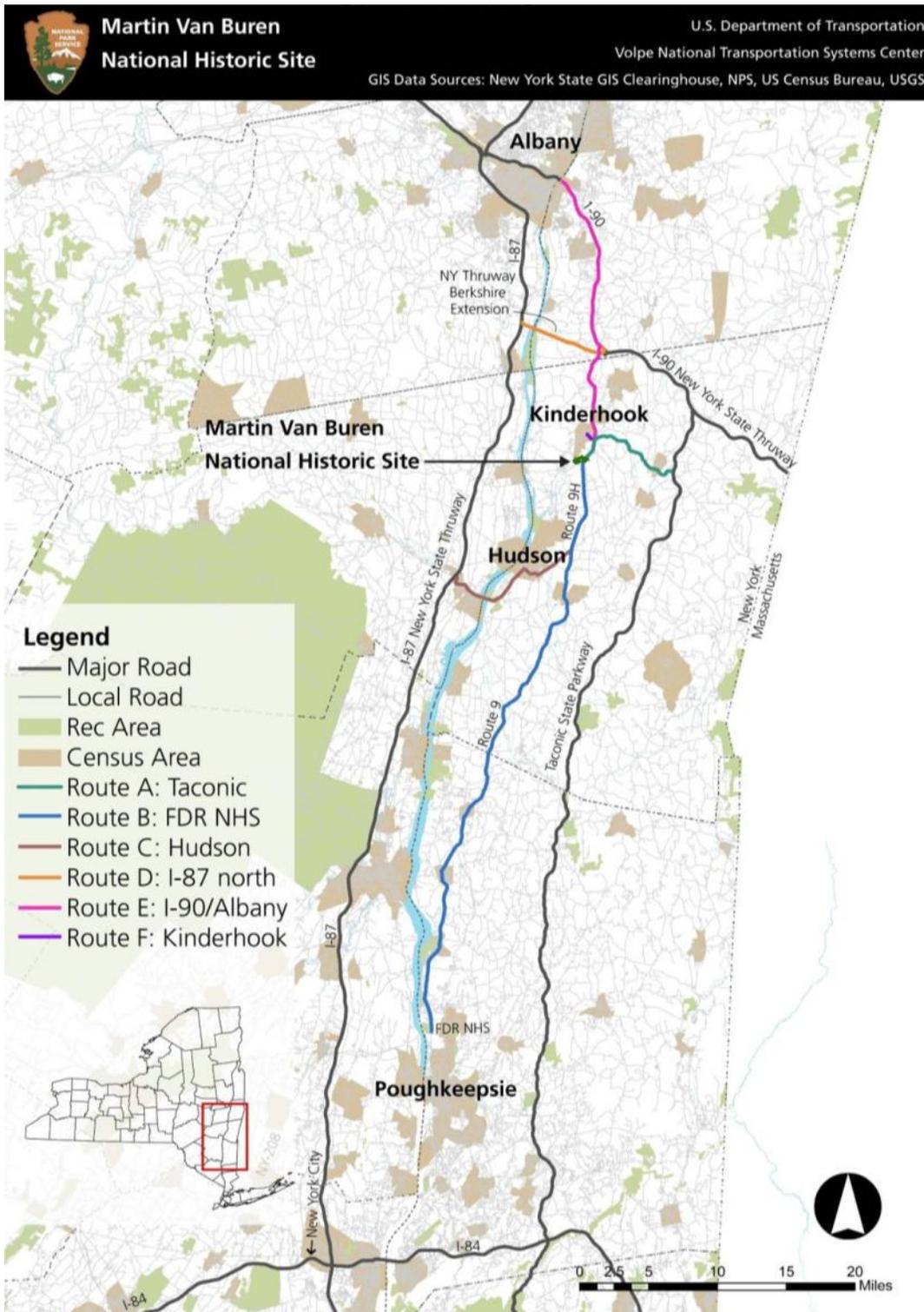
The determination of the exact locations for new signs took into consideration the best route from these locations to the park. Google Maps was used to determine routing information between each set of two points, in this case, from the nearest exit to access the park from the main highways (Taconic State Parkway, I-87, and I-90) as well as points of interest (Home of FDR NHS, Albany, Hudson, and Kinderhook). This method produces the shortest route, typically by time. The resulting routes, shown in Figure 33, to the park are:

- A – Taconic State Parkway (16 miles)
- B – Home of FDR NHS (46 miles)
- C – I-87/Hudson (18 miles)
- D – I-87/Berkshire Extension (17 miles)
- E – I-90/Albany (22 miles)
- F – Kinderhook (3 miles)

Figure 33

Martin Van Buren signage route map

Source: Volpe Center and National Park Service (NPS)



### *Sign analysis*

The universe of signs, exact location, and text for new signs depends on several criteria. In determining the universe of signs, there could be a sign prior to exit ramps leading off of major highways within 20 miles of the park. In addition, there could be signs at all roadway intersections along each route. Applying these criteria to the roadway network and designated routes around Martin Van Buren NHS results in a total of 47 signs for all of six routes. The text on each sign should clearly label the park, travel direction and potentially the distance remaining.

### *Sign priority*

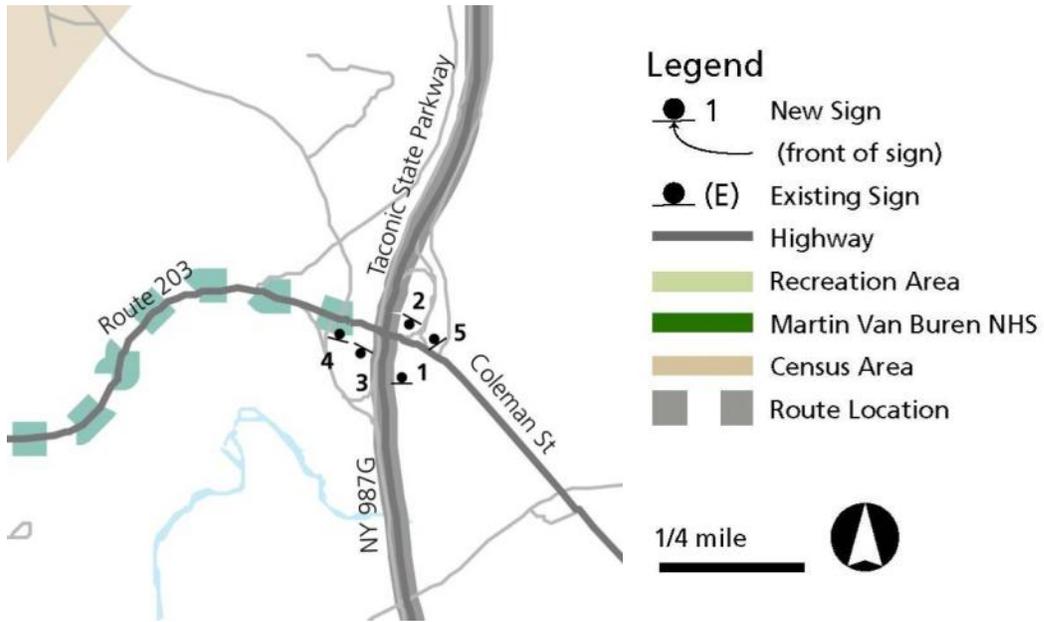
Due to the high number of signs resulting from this analysis, each sign is ranked according to priority and importance to ensure that travelers take the correct route to the park. Each sign has a priority number indicating its importance to the park. The priority was assigned based on objective and subjective elements such as relative ease of installation, distance from the park, traffic volume and subsequent visibility, and jurisdiction. All 47 signs are also categorized in one of three groups: high, medium, and low. These groups are defined as:

- High priority signs are those of critical importance, primarily because without the sign, a traveler will not know the existence of or direction to the park unless they have navigational aids.
- Medium priority signs are those that are along routes with lower traffic volumes or that feed into primary routes to the park.
- Low priority signs are those that are either too far from the site to attract the casual traveler or where routing elsewhere is available on other signs.

This prioritization results in 15 high priority signs, 15 medium priority signs, and 17 low priority signs. These three categories are based off of a sign prioritization list where sign priority numbers with ranks of 1-15 are high priority, 16-30 are medium priority, and 31-47 are low priority. Table 1 shows the full prioritization table with information on each route, location, sign, intersection, text, and jurisdiction.

See Appendices A through F for signage location maps for the six routes. Figure 34 is an example of a sign location map for the Taconic State Parkway route from Appendix A.

**Figure 34**  
**Taconic Route Signage A-1 (left)**  
 Source: Volpe Center and NPS



**Table 1: Signage list for Martin Van Buren NHS**

Source: Volpe Center and NPS

Route	Location	Sign	Intersecting St 1	Intersecting St 2	Sign Text	Jurisdiction	Rank	Priority
<b>Taconic Parkway</b>								
A	1	1	Taconic Parkway NB	S of Route 203	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ Next Exit	NYSDOT	High	7
A	1	2	Taconic Parkway NB offramp	Route 203	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (right arrow) 9 miles	NYSDOT	Low	36
A	1	3	Taconic Parkway SB	S of Route 203	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ Next Exit	NYSDOT	High	8
A	1	4	Taconic Parkway SB offramp	Route 203	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (left arrow) 9 miles	NYSDOT	Low	37
A	1	5	Route 203	Taconic Parkway NB ramp	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (straight arrow) 9 miles	NYSDOT	Low	44
A	2	1	Route 203	Route 66	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (straight arrow)	NYSDOT/Chatham	Medium	21
A	2	2	Route 203	Route 66	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (left arrow)	NYSDOT/Chatham	Low	38
A	2	3	Route 203	Route 66	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (right arrow)	NYSDOT/Chatham	Low	39
A	3	1	Route 203	County Route 21B	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (bear-right arrow)	NYSDOT	Low	43
A	3	2	Route 203	McCagg Road	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (left arrow)	NYSDOT/Kinderhook	Medium	22
A	4	1	McCagg Road	County Route 21	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (straight arrow)	Kinderhook/ Columbia County	Medium	24
A	4	2	County Route 21 access road	NY Route 9H	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (right arrow) 2 miles	Columbia County/ NYSDOT	Medium	23
A	4	3	County Route 21 access road	Route 9H access road	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (straight arrow) 2 miles	Columbia County/ NYSDOT	High	9
A	4	4	County Route 21	McCagg Road	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (left arrow) 2 miles	Columbia County/ Kinderhook	Low	41
A	4	5	County Route 21/ Hudson St	Route 9H access road	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (right arrow) 2 miles	Columbia County/ NYSDOT	Medium	25
A	4	6	County Route 21/ Hudson St	Route 9H access road	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (left arrow) 2 miles	Columbia County/ NYSDOT	Low	42

**Table 1 (continued): Signage list for Martin Van Buren NHS**

Source: Volpe Center and NPS

Route	Location	Sign	Intersecting St 1	Intersecting St 2	Sign Text	Jurisdiction	Rank	Priority
<b>FDR NHS</b>								
B	1	1	FDR Site Access Road	Route 9	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (left arrow) 43 miles	NPS/ NYSDOT	Medium	30
B	2	1	Route 9	Route 82/23	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (straight arrow) 14 miles	NYSDOT/ Hudson	High	6
B	2	2	Route 9	Route 82/23	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (right arrow) 14 miles	NYSDOT/ Hudson	Low	40
B	3	1	Route 23	Route 9H	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (straight arrow) 11 miles	NYSDOT/Claverack-Red Mills	High	10
B	3	2	Route 23	Route 9H	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (right arrow) 11 miles	NYSDOT/Claverack-Red Mills	Medium	26
B	3	3	Route 23	Route 9H	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (left arrow) 11 miles	NYSDOT/Claverack-Red Mills	Medium	27
B	4	1	NYS 9H	Route 66, Union Turnpike	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (straight arrow) 7 miles	NYSDOT	High	11
B	4	2	NYS 9H	Route 66, Union Turnpike	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (right arrow) 7 miles	NYSDOT	Medium	28
B	4	3	NYS 9H	Route 66, Union Turnpike	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (left arrow) 7 miles	NYSDOT	High	12
<b>I-87/Hudson</b>								
C	1	1	I-87 Northbound	Exit 21	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ Next Exit	NY Thruway	High	1
C	1	2	I-87 Southbound	Exit 21	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ Next Exit	NY Thruway	High	2
C	1	3	I-87 off ramp	County Road 23B	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (left arrow) 18 miles	NY Thruway/ Leeds	Low	32
C	1	4	County Road 23B	Route 23 EB	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (left arrow)	Leeds/NYSDOT	Low	31
C	2	1	Rip Van Winkle Bridge	NYS 9G	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (bear left arrow)	bridge/ NYSDOT	High	13
C	2	2	NYS 9G	NYS 23B	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (left arrow) 14 miles	NYSDOT/Hudson	High	14
C	3	1	NYS 9G	N 3rd Street/Columbia St	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (right arrow) 11 miles	NYSDOT/ Hudson	High	15
C	4	1	NYS 9G	Route 9/Columbia St	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (bear-left arrow)	NYSDOT/ Hudson	High	3
C	4	2	Route 9	Columbia St	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (bear-left arrow)	NYSDOT/ Hudson	Low	33
C	5	1	Route 9	Route 66, Union Turnpike	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (left arrow) 10 miles	NYSDOT/Hudson	Medium	16

**Table 1 (continued): Signage list for Martin Van Buren NHS**

Source: Volpe Center and NPS

Route	Location	Sign	Intersecting St 1	Intersecting St 2	Sign Text	Jurisdiction	Rank	Priority
<b>I-87 North/NYS Thruway Berkshire Extension</b>								
D	1	1	I-87 Northbound	Exit 21 A	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ Next Exit 17 miles	NY Thruway	Low	34
D	1	2	I-87 Southbound	Exit 21 B	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ Next Exit 17 miles	NY Thruway	Low	35
<b>I-90/Albany</b>								
E	1	1	I-787 Southbound	Exit 5 Ramp	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ Follow I-90 East 23 miles	NY Thruway/Albany	Low	45
E	1	2	I-90 Eastbound	Exit 8A	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (straight arrow) 23 miles	NYSDOT/Albany	Low	47
E	1	3	I-787 Northbound	Exit 5 Ramp	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ Follow I-90 East 23 miles	NYSDOT/Albany	Low	46
E	2	1	NYS Thruway Ext	Exit 12	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ Next Exit 11 miles	NY Thruway	Medium	29
E	2	2	Exit 12 Ramp	Route 9	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (left arrow) 9 miles	NYSDOT	Medium	19
E	2	3	I-90 EB Exit 12	Route 9	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (right arrow) 9 miles	NYSDOT	Medium	20
E	2	4	Route 9	County Road 32	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (straight arrow)	NYSDOT/ Columbia County	Medium	18
<b>Kinderhook</b>								
F	1	1	County Route 21/ Hudson St	Broad St	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (straight arrow)	Columbia County	Medium	17
F	1	2	Broad St	County Route 21/ Hudson St	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ (right arrow) 3 miles	Kinderhook/ Columbia County	High	4
F	1	3	Broad St	County Route 21/ Hudson St	Martin Van Buren National Historic Site/ left arrow) 3 miles	Kinderhook/Columbia County	High	5

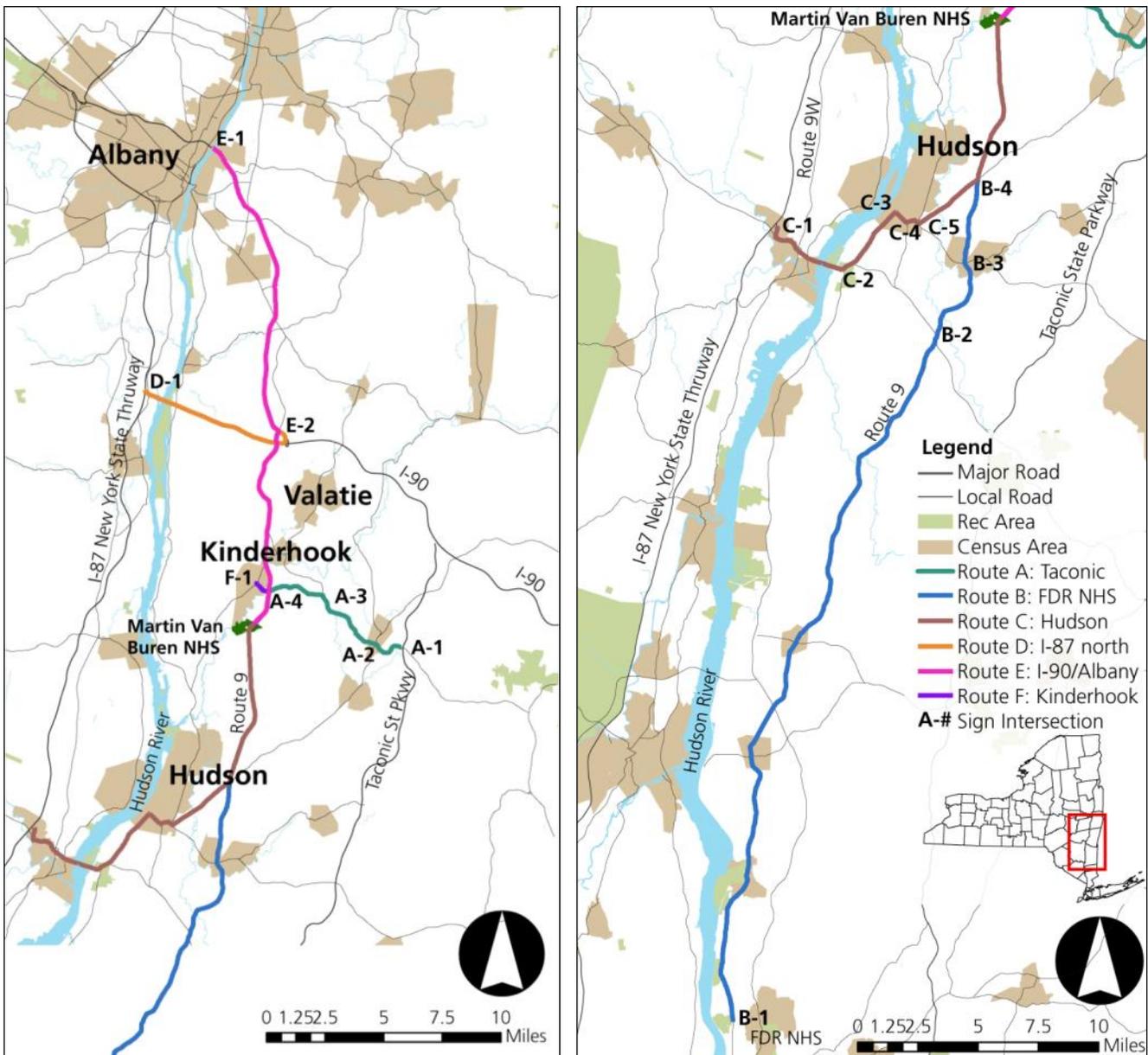
Signage route locations

Figure 35 shows the six routes to the park and intersections where signs are proposed for the area north of the park (left) and south of the park (right). The colored lines represent the six routes and the intersection call-outs represent the route name and intersection number. The exact text, placement, and orientation of signs are available in Appendices A-F (each Appendix corresponds to each route).

**Figure 35**

**Martin Van Buren detail signage route maps: north A, D, E, and F (left) and south B and C (right)**

Source: Volpe Center and NPS



### *Taconic State Parkway*

The Taconic State Parkway is about nine miles east of the park. To directly reach the park from the Taconic State Parkway, travelers take SR 203 westbound through Chatham, turn left on McCagg Road, about four miles from the park, and then turn southbound onto SR 9H. There are four intersections/junctions along this route, resulting in the need for up to 16 signs (three high, five medium, and eight low priority signs). The intersection at SR 9H is also along the route from I-90/Albany to the north. In addition, the existing signs immediately north and south of the park entrance and at the park entrance are part of all routes. See Appendix A for more detail.

### *Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site*

The Home of FDR NHS is about 46 miles south of Martin Van Buren NHS in Hyde Park, just north of Poughkeepsie. While far, the two sites share many similar characteristics and visitors to one may have interest in seeing the other. Additionally, the route travels through the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area (NHA). The route from the Home of FDR NHS to the park follows SR 9 to its intersection with SR 23 southeast of Hudson (14 miles from the Martin Van Buren NHS). At SR 23/SR 9H, the route follows SR 9H to the park. There are four major intersections along this route, resulting in the need for up to nine signs (four high, four medium, and one low priority signs). See Appendix B for more detail.

### *Interstate 87/Hudson*

I-87 is the major north-south travel route in the Hudson Valley. From New York City, visitors to the park will most likely travel I-87 to Exit 21 (SR 23) in Jefferson Heights, about 19 miles from the park. From I-87, the shortest route to the park is across the Rip Van Winkle Bridge, through the town of Hudson, following SR 66 to SR 9H. This route is important because it includes downtown Hudson, further increasing the park's visibility to a large tourist population. Along this route, there are five main intersections/junctions and the need for up to 10 signs (six high, one medium, and three low priority signs). See Appendix C for more detail.

### *Interstate 87/New York State Thruway Berkshire Extension*

The I-87 exit closest to the park is Exit 21A at the New York State (NYS) Thruway Berkshire Extension (which connects I-87 to I-90 north of the park), about 16 miles from the park. Travelers to the park from the south side of Albany most likely use this route; however, those north and west of Albany most likely use I-90. The proposal is for up to two signs at the interchange of I-87 and the Berkshire Extension, both low priority signs. See Appendix D for more detail.

### *Interstate 90/Albany*

I-90 is the closest interstate highway to the park, less than 10 miles north. The nearest exit is also the interchange for I-90, the NYS Thruway Berkshire Extension, and SR 9. At this interchange, two new signs are high priority for travelers exiting I-90; however, signs in Albany and along the Berkshire Extension are low priority because the park is not a high priority attraction for this major interchange near downtown Albany. Currently, there are two signs at the interchange for travelers exiting I-90 westbound and eastbound prior to the SR 9 off-ramp. There is a need for up to seven new signs along this route (four medium and three low priority signs). See Appendix E for more detail.

### *Kinderhook*

Kinderhook is the closest village to the park, three miles to the north. Martin Van Buren NHS, the village of Kinderhook, and the village of Valatie are within the town of Kinderhook. The major intersection in the village of Kinderhook is at Hudson Street (County Road 21) and Broad Street (Chatham Street or SR 9). There is a need for three signs at this intersection that would direct travelers visiting Kinderhook as well as those traveling on along SR 9 or County Road 21. There is also a need for up to three signs along this route (two high and one medium priority signs). See Appendix F for more detail.

### *Sign identification*

Consistent sign placement along the entire route, particularly at intersections where drivers may be unsure on how to proceed, is important. For the purposes of this study, each sign has suggested text specific to its location and a uniform design. A unique identifier (sign ID<sup>24</sup>) for each sign includes the route (A, B, C, D, E, or F), and intersection along each route (1, 2, 3...). At all intersections, each sign has a number. For example, the sign on the Taconic State Parkway northbound at SR 203, about nine miles from the park, should read: “Martin Van Buren National Historic Site, Next Exit”. The ID for this sign is A-1-1 (signifying this sign is along route A, at intersection 1, sign 1). The next sign travelers would see exiting the Taconic State Parkway northbound is at the end of the off-ramp at the intersection with SR 203. This sign should read: “Martin Van Buren National Historic Site, 9 miles” with a right-turn arrow, with a sign ID of A-1-2. All routes and intersections in this signage plan are in Appendix A through F and follow a similar identification pattern. Additionally, where available, the appendix includes a Google Maps “Streetview” screen capture of the approximate location of the sign along the roadway.

### *Sign types*

There are four existing types of signs for Martin Van Buren NHS. These include the one large park entrance sign (Figure 2 - left), the two large brown and white signs on I-90 (Figure 2 - center), a small brown and white sign at the intersection of SR 9H and SR 9 (Figure 32 - left) and immediately north and south of the park (Figure 31 - right), and a small brown and white sign at SR 9H and Hudson Street (Figure 32 - right). For all new signs, the park should consider using a consistent design. Signs with larger text are appropriate for roadways with higher average speeds, while smaller-text signs are appropriate for lower speed roadways.

### **Bicyclist and pedestrian signage**

In order to encourage more visitors to arrive to the park by foot or by bicycle, it is important to have signage directed for these user groups. Section 2 (Area Trail Connections) discussed the location of these routes and approximate placement of signs for bicyclists and pedestrians. The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) designates SR 9 as one of three long-distance bike routes in the state. The bike route splits from SR 9 near Columbiaville and follows SR 9J, which is five miles west of the park, along the Hudson River to Albany. Bike safety signage for the bike route exists along segments of SR 9 and SR 9J and advises drivers to be aware of bicyclists.

There are wayfinding signs for pedestrians within the Martin Van Buren NHS boundary that guide visitors around the Lindenwald Wayside Trail. The Wayside Trail does not connect to surrounding trails or attractions that already attract pedestrian traffic. In order to attract pedestrians from Roxbury Farm, Kinderhook Creek, the village of Kinderhook, the Luykas Van Alen House, and adjacent county trails, the park should create trail connections to these sites and locate new signs that direct pedestrians to the park.

### **Process**

While the National Park Service (NPS) is responsible for installing signs within the park boundary, coordination with NYSDOT, the NYSDOT Region 8 Regional Real Estate Office in Poughkeepsie, the NYS Thruway Authority, the Columbia County Highway Department, and town and village highway and planning departments is necessary in order to install additional vehicular wayfinding signs.

NYSDOT is responsible for the installation of tourist site signs along state routes, including SR 9, SR 9H, and the Taconic State Parkway. To apply for a sign along a state route, NPS should first contact the NYSDOT Region 8 Regional Real Estate Office in order to confirm the accurate and up to date point of contact to obtain sign permission. An email can be sent to Peter Mattson ([pmattson@dot.state.ny.us](mailto:pmattson@dot.state.ny.us)) with the NYSDOT Region 8 Regional Real Estate Office in Poughkeepsie or a letter can be sent to the

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<sup>24</sup> Sign IDs are arbitrary and do not indicate priority or have any other meaning.

following address to start the application process: Joseph Hurley, New York State Department of Transportation, 4 Burnett Boulevard, Poughkeepsie, New York 12603.<sup>25</sup>

The letter or email should include the type and location of the new signs. According to NYSDOT, the agency that requests the sign installation is responsible for installation, maintenance, and cost of the new signs.<sup>26</sup> In addition, NYSDOT does not typically approve new signs that are more than five miles from the site. However, there are examples where an existing sign is more than five miles from a historic site, for example the Rip Van Winkle Bridge sign at the SR 9 and 9H junction in Valatie (Figure 32 - left), which is 20 miles away. While NYSDOT will install and maintain a limited number of small brown and white signs with a directional arrow (Figure 36) for historic sites, additional signs are typically the responsibility of the applying agency. Currently, there are two of these signs north and south of the park (Figure 31 - right).

**Figure 36**  
**Historic site sign**

Source: NYSDOT



	Sign	Size	Border	Line 1	Line 2	Line 3
C	NYM9-1	30" x 24"	Varies	4"-D	2"-F	
	NYM9-1	45" x 36"	Varies	6"-D	3"-F	
C	NYM9-2	30" x 24"	Varies	4"-D	4"-D	2"-F
	NYM9-2	45" x 36"	Varies	6"-D	6"-D	3"-F
C	NYM9-3	30" x 24"	Varies	4"-D	2"-D	
	NYM9-3	45" x 36"	Varies	6"-D	3"-D	
C	NYM9-4	30" x 24"	Varies	4"-D	4"-D	2"-D
	NYM9-4	45" x 36"	Varies	6"-D	6"-D	3"-D

<sup>25</sup> Address and contact information should be verified through the NYSDOT. (845-437-3349) <https://www.nysdot.gov/divisions/engineering/real-estate/offices>.

<sup>26</sup> Phone conversation with Gayle Curtis 845-575-6051 [gcurtis@dot.state.ny.us](mailto:gcurtis@dot.state.ny.us) NY DOT. February 8, 2010. Additional application information: <https://www.nysdot.gov/programs/nys-signs/apply> and <https://www.nysdot.gov/programs/nys-signs/tod>

The NYS Thruway Authority is responsible for I-87 and segments of I-90. In order to apply for a sign along the thruway or for additional signs along I-90, the NPS should email [paul.neuhaus@thruway.state.ny.us](mailto:paul.neuhaus@thruway.state.ny.us) or contact the administrative headquarters at (518) 436-2700. The application should include the applicant's contact information, the address of the facility, the entity which is applying, and the federal tax ID. The NYS Thruway Authority typically only approves signs within 15 miles of the attraction, but sometimes there are exceptions.<sup>27</sup> The Hudson route exit from I-87 is 18 miles from Martin Van Buren NHS and the I-87 route is 17 miles from the park; however, they are the closest exits along the thruway.

The Columbia County Highway Department is responsible for installing signs along all county roads outside of town jurisdictions.<sup>28</sup> This department determines if the county owns the land for a sign and if new signs are feasible. There are no annual fees for these signs and the county typically supplies the sign post. To install park signs along county roads, the NPS should contact Dave Nicholson at the Columbia County Highway Department (518-828-7011). NPS should provide the department with all preferred sign locations within the county's jurisdiction.

Towns such as Kinderhook, Chatham, and Hudson should be contacted individually for new sign placement within each jurisdiction. Where NYSDOT routes go through a town, both the town and NYSDOT should be contacted. To contact the highway department for the town of Kinderhook, NPS should contact the Highway Superintendent (518-758-6100).<sup>29</sup> To contact the Code Enforcement Department for Hudson (responsible for sign permits), NPS should contact Peter Wurster (518-828-3133).<sup>30</sup> To contact the highway department for Chatham, NPS should contact Joseph Rickert (518-794-7281).<sup>31</sup>

## Partnerships

Martin Van Buren NHS is within the Hudson River Valley NHA, where there are a large number of visitors already traveling through the area who are interested in tourist attractions. The park should coordinate with the Hudson River Valley NHA and other sites within the NHA to install signs at neighboring historic sites and to coordinate applications to the NYSDOT and NYS Thruway Authority. With the coordination of sign placement, tourists can better guide themselves throughout the valley.

The New York State Parks and Recreation and Historic Preservation Office installs signs for sites within their jurisdiction. The office coordinates with NYSDOT to install directional wayfinding signs and the office produces site specific interpretive signage within the agency. The NPS should coordinate new applications on new directional signs to the NYDOT and the NYS Thruway Authority to minimize costs for new sign posts and coordinate wayfinding routes for tourists.

## Cost

Cost of permit fees, signs, and sign installation vary on the jurisdiction. For the NYSDOT routes, there is a permit cost of \$50 per year once new signs are installed. This cost can vary and the submission of the application will provide NYSDOT with the information it needs to determine the permit cost.<sup>32</sup> New NPS signs should comply with the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). The MUTCD is published by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and defines the standards used by road managers for the installation and maintenance of traffic control devices on all public roads and

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<sup>27</sup> Phone conversation with Paul Neuhaus [paul.neuhaus@thruway.state.ny.us](mailto:paul.neuhaus@thruway.state.ny.us) New York State Thruway Authority. February 8, 2010.

<sup>28</sup> Phone conversation with Dave Nicholson. Columbia County Highway Division. Additional contact information: Highway Division Director: Bernie Kelleher (518) 828-7011 [bkell@govt.co.columbia.ny.us](mailto:bkell@govt.co.columbia.ny.us).

<sup>29</sup> Town of Kinderhook. "Highway Department." [http://www.kinderhook-ny.gov/Public\\_Documents/KinderhookNY\\_highway/index](http://www.kinderhook-ny.gov/Public_Documents/KinderhookNY_highway/index).

<sup>30</sup> City of Hudson "Departments – Code Enforcement Department." <http://cityofhudson.org/content/Departments/View/3>. The Public Works Department may also need to be contacted at (518) 828-9458.

<sup>31</sup> Town of Chatham "Highway Department" <http://www.chathamnewyork.us/HighwayDepartment.htm>.

<sup>32</sup> Phone conversation with Peter Mattson March 19, 2010. (845-437-3349) [pmattson@dot.state.ny.us](mailto:pmattson@dot.state.ny.us) with the NYSDOT Region 8 Real Estate Office.

highways.<sup>33</sup> While sign costs vary, there are pricings available for similar signs.<sup>34</sup> A typical steel post sells for \$42, a stand is \$15, and a sign is \$40-\$50. The total price for a new sign and post is approximately \$97-\$107 per sign. The exact cost will depend on the size, installation, and location of the sign. NYSDOT typically purchases signs through Corcraft, or the New York State Department of Correctional Services, Division of Industries, which employs inmates to produce goods and services to sell to government entities and non-profit organizations.<sup>35</sup> Through Corcraft, 24 x 30 Historic Signs are \$28.55 each, and 15 x 21 Directional Arrow Signs are \$13.10 each. Other agencies may have specific sign types, size requirements, and installation requirements that are different from NYSDOT sign regulations. Jurisdictions should be contacted individually for specific cost information.

## Conclusion

This section identifies and prioritizes 47 signs that would aid visitors traveling to Martin Van Buren NHS. While 15 of these signs are identified as high priority, the park may not be able to install all of these signs. If this is the case, NPS can follow the sign priority list and rank in Table 1. This prioritization recommends that NPS focus on new signs that will attract the most visitors and provide the most clarity to drivers en route to the park. Due to the high traffic volumes along I-87 and I-90, signage on these interstates and along the routes from these interstates will improve park awareness and attraction to the park. However, while I-87 and I-90 are major roads and have a high annual average daily traffic, interstate agencies can be strict about signage placement.

Due to the potential difficulty in installing signs along the interstates, other locations should also be considered. For example, the park should consider that the travel routes suggested by the Hudson River Valley NHA to visitors. These travel routes include SR 9W (parallel to I-87) and SR 9 (parallel to Taconic State Parkway). In addition, the park should consider existing tourism in towns such as Hudson and historic sites such as Olana State Historic Site and Home of FDR NHS. The village of Kinderhook is the closest village and wayfinding between the park and the village should be clear. Lastly, the park should coordinate with its partners to determine which of the high priority locations make the most sense for a sign to the park; partners may want to work with the park to share costs by posting two signs – one for the park and one for their attraction – at some locations.

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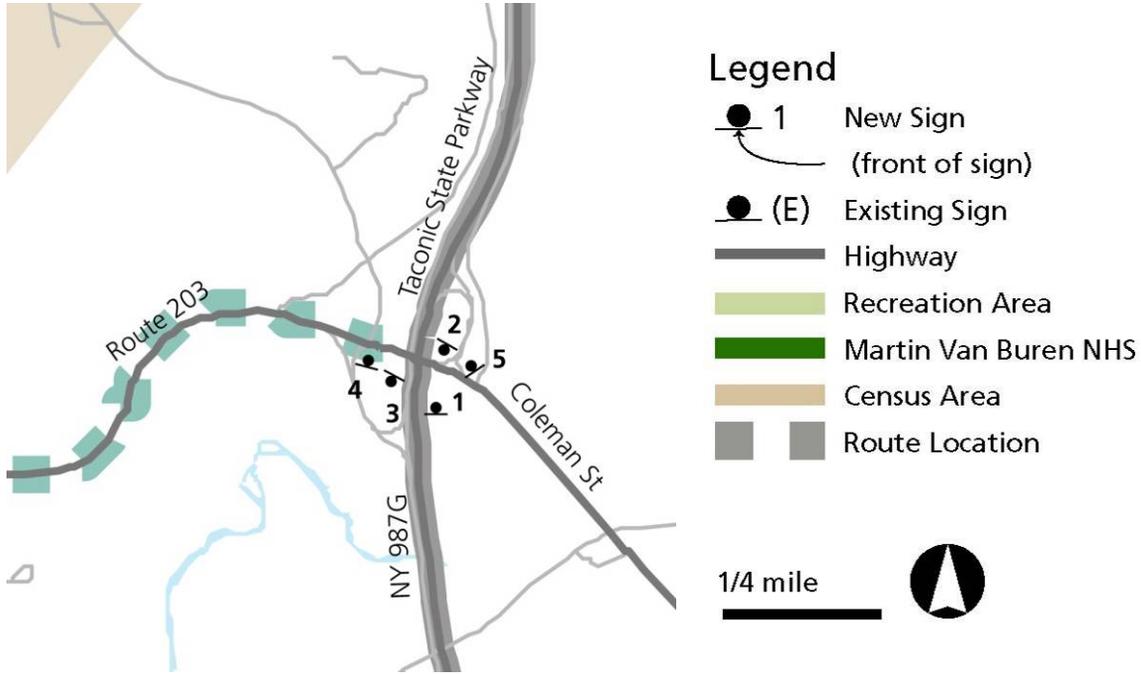
<sup>33</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration. “Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.” <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/>.

<sup>34</sup> Rice Signs: Your Leader in Transportation Safety. “Traffic signs” <http://www.ricesigns.com/?gclid=CMqE5-3Rn5UCFQNHfQodlW6kjlw>

<sup>35</sup> Email correspondence with Gayle Curtis [gcurtis@dot.state.ny.us](mailto:gcurtis@dot.state.ny.us). February 18, 2010. <http://www.corcraft.org>

# Appendix A: Taconic Route Signage

Taconic Route Figure A-1 (left) and legend (right) \*legend is for all route maps in Appendix  
Source: Volpe Center and NPS



Taconic Route Figure A-1-1 (left) and A-1-3 (right)  
Source: Google Street View



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### Taconic Route Figure A-1-5

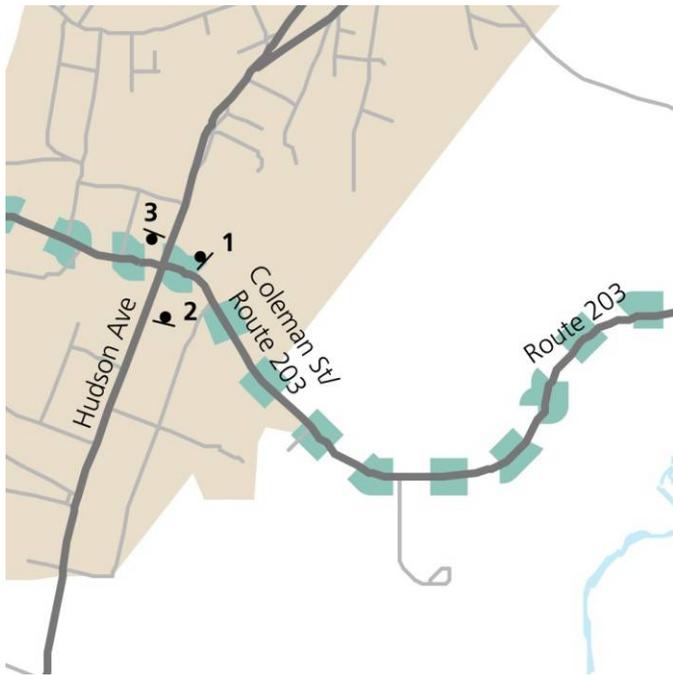
Source: Google Street View



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### Taconic Route Figure A-2

Source: Volpe Center and NPS



**Taconic Route Figure A-2-1 (left) and A-2-2 (right)**

Source: Google Street View



**Taconic Route Figure A-2-3**

Source: Google Street View



**Taconic Route Figure A-3**

Source: Volpe Center and NPS



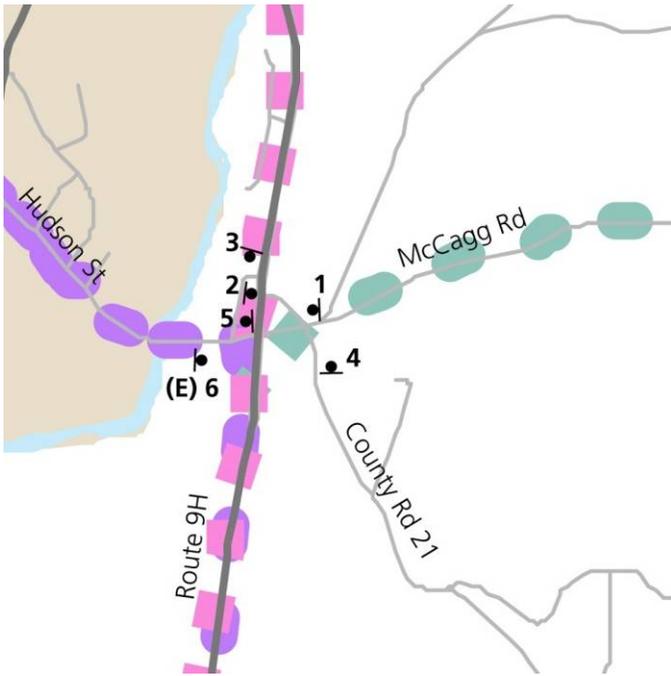
**Taconic Route Figure A-3-1 (left) and A-3-2 (right)**

Source: Google Street View



**Taconic Route Figure A-4 (and two overlapping routes)**

Source: Volpe Center and NPS



**Taconic Route Figure A-4-1 (left) and A-4-3 (right)**

Source: Google Street View



**Taconic Route Figure A-4-4 (left), A-4-5 (right)**

Source: Google Street View



**Taconic Route Figure A-4-6 existing sign**

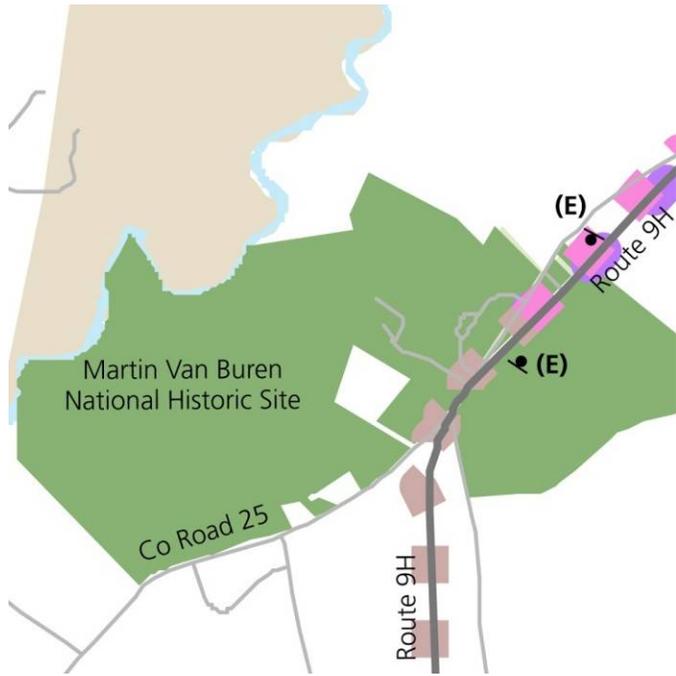
Source: Google Street View



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### Taconic Route Figure A Existing Signage

Source: Volpe Center and NPS



## Appendix B: FDR Route Signage

### FDR Route Figure B-1

Source: Volpe Center and NPS



### FDR Route Figure B-2

Source: Volpe Center and NPS



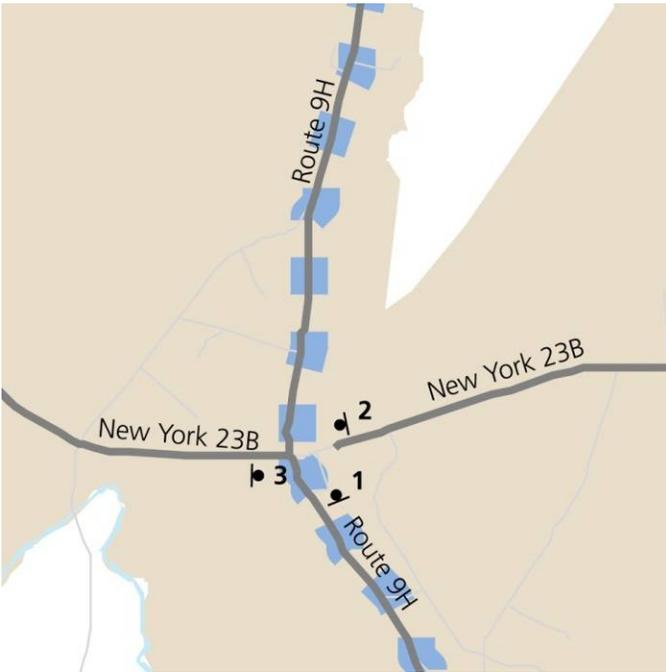
**FDR Route Figure B-2-1 (left) and B-2-2 (right)**

Source: Google Street View



**FDR Route Figure B-3**

Source: Volpe Center and NPS



**FDR Route Figure B-3-1 (left) and B-3-2 (right)**

Source: Google Street View



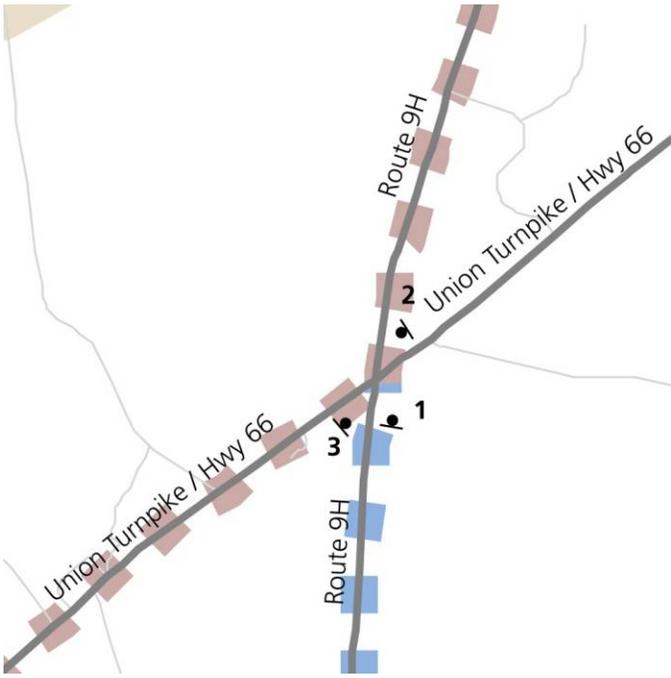
**FDR Route Figure B-3-3**

Source: Google Street View



**FDR Route Figure B-4**

Source: Volpe Center and NPS



**FDR Route Figure B-4-1 (left) and B-4-2 (right)**

Source: Google Street View



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### FDR Route Figure B-4-3

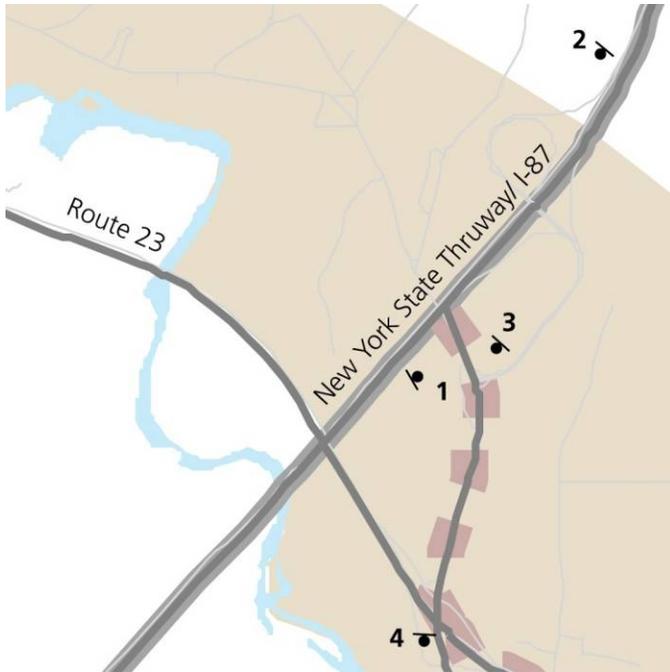
Source: Google Street View



## Appendix C: Hudson Route Signage

**Hudson Route Figure C-1**

Source: Volpe Center and NPS



**Hudson Route Figure C-1-1 (left) and C-1-2 (right)**

Source: Google Street View



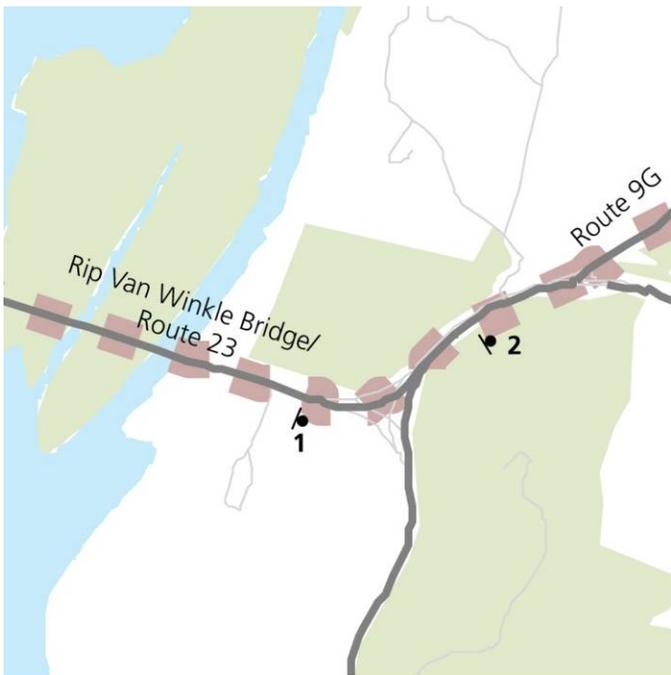
**Hudson Route Figure C-1-3 (left) and C-1-4 (right)**

Source: Google Street View



**Hudson Route Figure C-2**

Source: Volpe Center and NPS



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### Hudson Route Figure C-2-1 (left) and C-2-2 (right)

Source: Google Street View



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### Hudson Route Figure C-3

Source: Volpe Center and NPS



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### Hudson Route Figure C-3-1 (left)

Source: Google Street View



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### Hudson Route Figure C-4

Source: Volpe Center and NPS



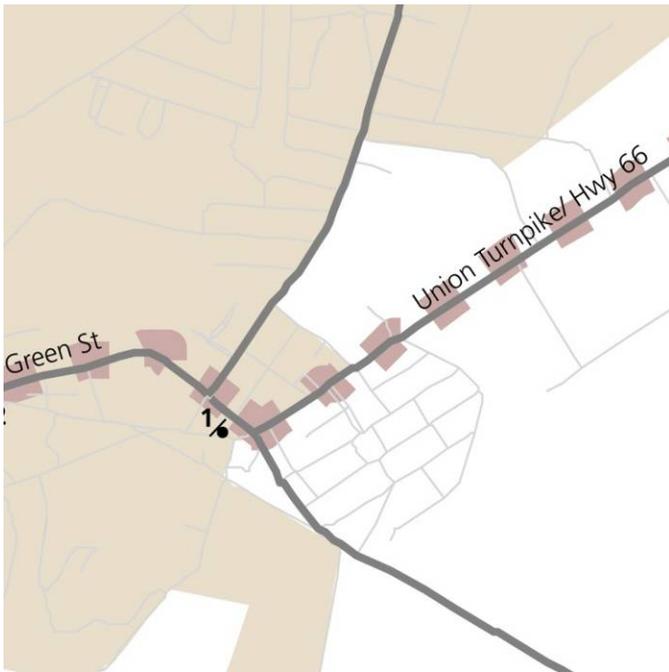
**Hudson Route Figure C-4-1 (left) and C-4-2 (right)**

Source: Google Street View



**Hudson Route Figure C-5**

Source: Volpe Center and NPS



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**Hudson Route Figure C-5-1**

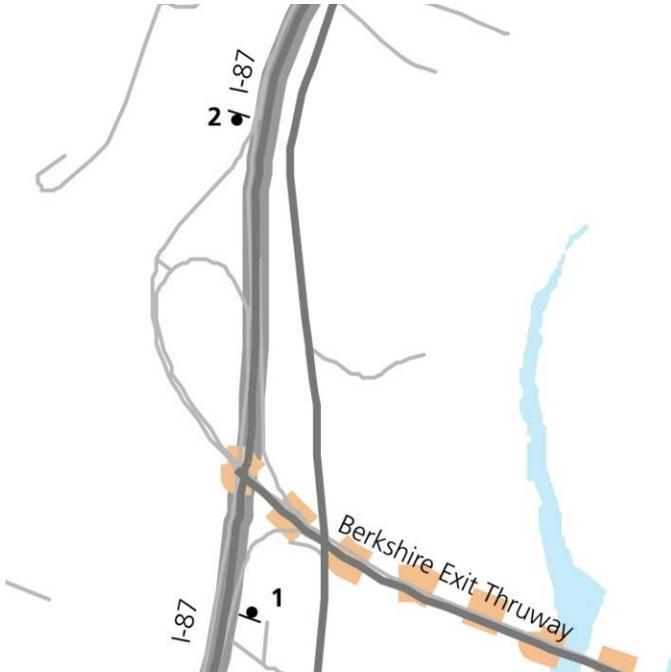
Source: Google Street View



## Appendix D: I-87 Route Signage

### I-87 Route Figure D-1

Source: Volpe Center and NPS



### I-87 Route Figure D-1-1

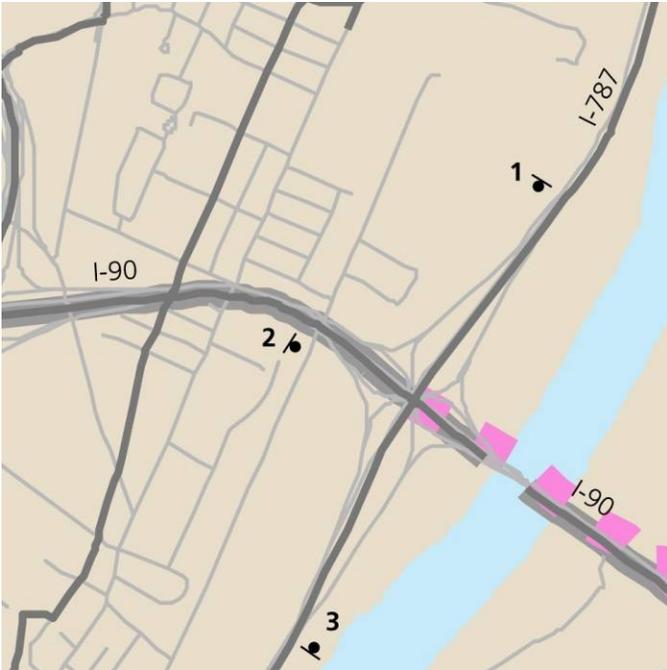
Source: Google Street View



# Appendix E: I-90/Albany Route Signage

**I-90/Albany Route Figure E-1**

Source: Volpe Center and NPS



**I-90/Albany Route Figure E-1-1 (left) and E-1-2 (right)**

Source: Google Street View



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### I-90/Albany Route Figure E-1-3

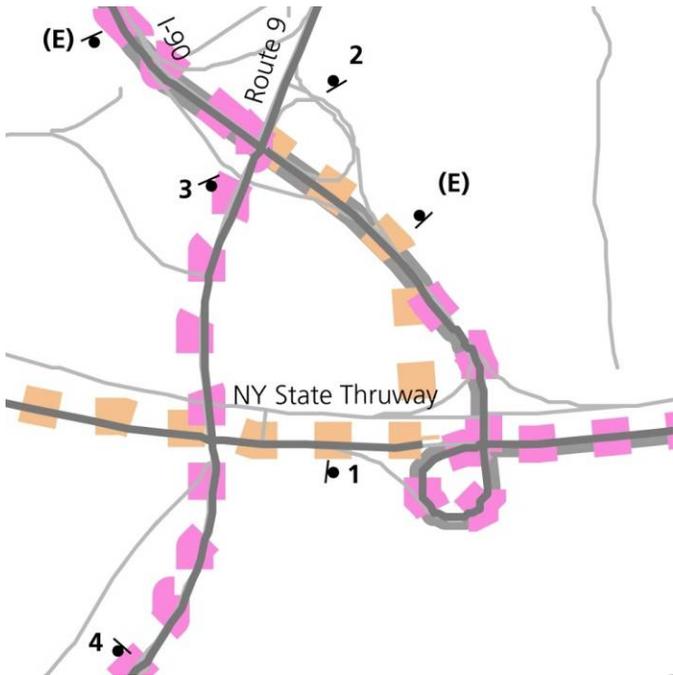
Source: Google Street View



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### I-90/Albany Route Figure E-2

Source: Volpe Center and NPS



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### I-90/Albany Route Figure E-2-4

Source: Google Street View



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### I-90/Albany Route Figure E Existing

Source: Volpe Center and NPS



## Appendix F: Kinderhook Route Signage

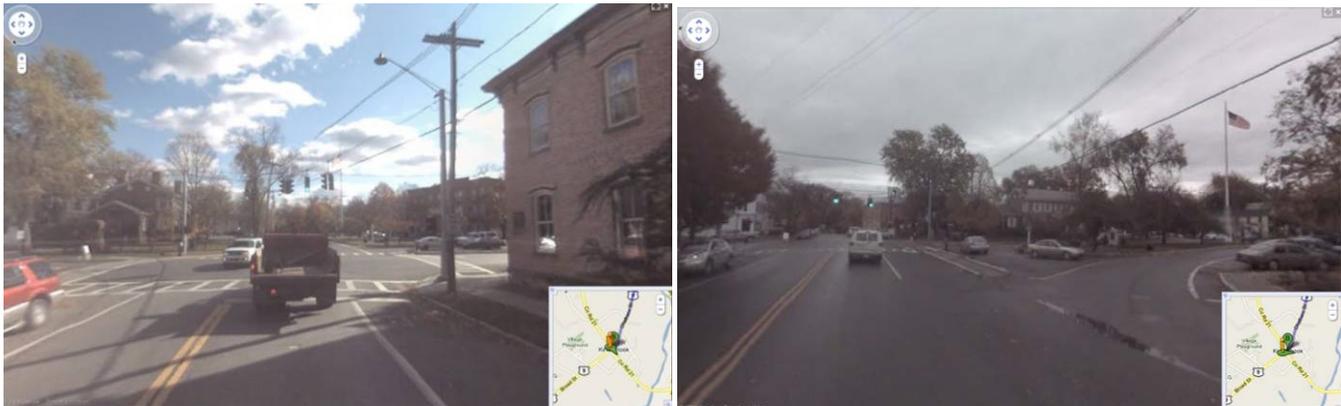
### Kinderhook Route Figure F-1

Source: Volpe Center and NPS



### Kinderhook Route Figure F-1-1 (left) F-1-2 (right)

Source: Google Street View



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**Kinderhook Route Figure F-1-3**

Source: Google Street View



## Section 4: Roadway Considerations

### Purpose

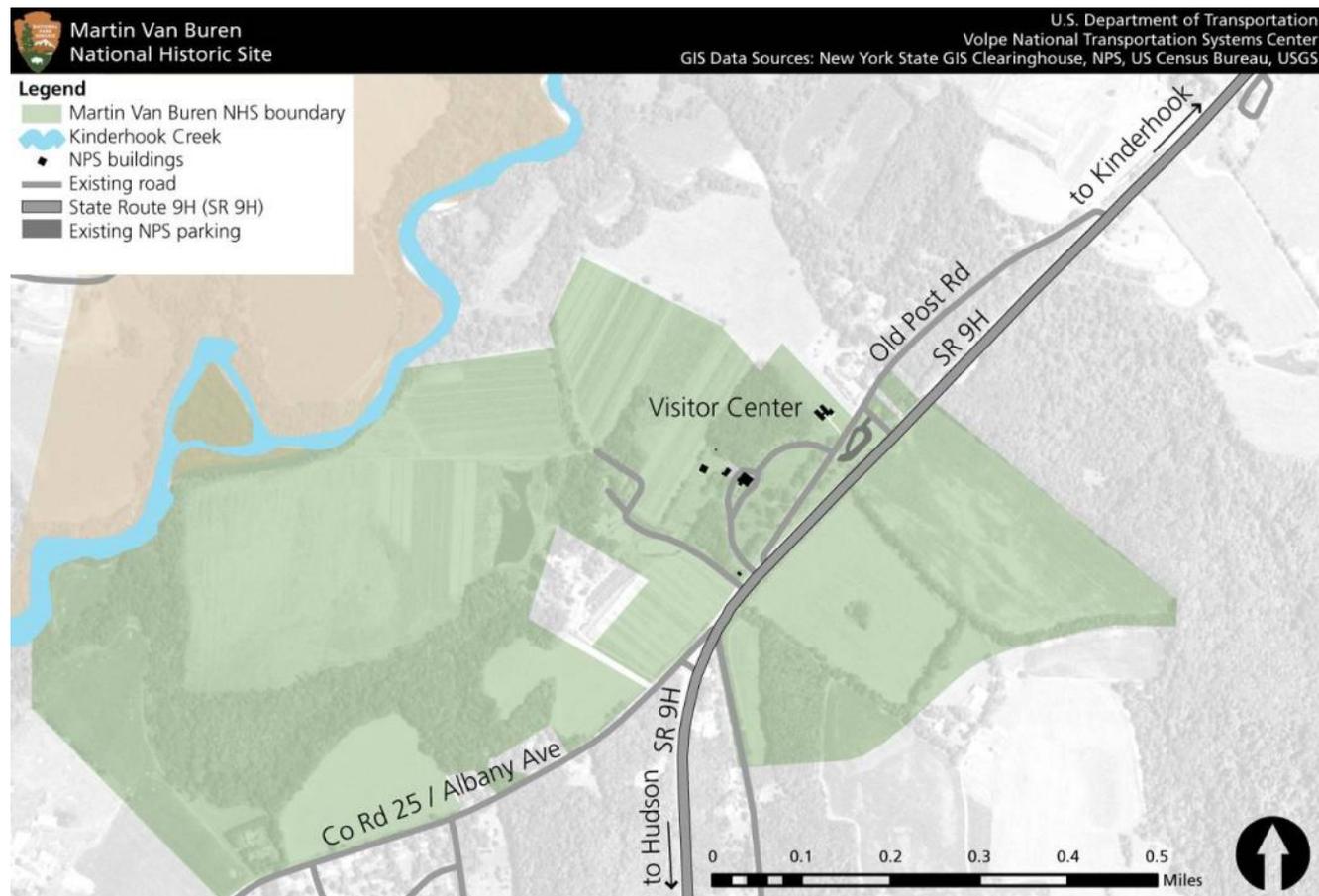
This section analyzes the adequacy of and planning for the roadway network in the immediate vicinity of the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site (NHS). The roadway analysis considers traffic conditions, safety, and overall access to the park on area roadways and addresses future planning efforts currently under consideration. An analysis of the immediate roadways surrounding the park is part of a broader effort to analyze transportation to and through the park, as visitation will likely increase in future years due to improvements to the site and the encouragement of alternative transportation access to the park.

### Existing roadways

State Route (SR) 9H is the major public roadway that passes by the park (Figure 37). In the vicinity of the park, SR 9H is a two-lane highway with narrow shoulders, which pose safety concerns for pedestrians and bicyclists as well as motorists, as there is a lack of an area to pull over in an emergency. Closer to the park, the shoulders are slightly wider than along other parts of SR 9H (Figure 38). To the north, about 1.5 miles from the park (beginning just south of County Road 21), SR 9H widens to two lanes in each direction, with two double-yellow lines separating directional traffic flow, allowing for safer higher-speed travel (Figure 39). The speed limit on SR 9H is 55 miles per hour (MPH) near the park.

**Figure 37**  
**Roadways adjacent to Martin Van Buren NHS**

Source: Volpe Center



**Figure 38**  
**SR 9H approach north of the park showing shoulder width change**  
Source: Google Maps, 2010



**Figure 39**  
**Four-lane section of SR 9H north of the park**  
Source: Google Maps, 2010

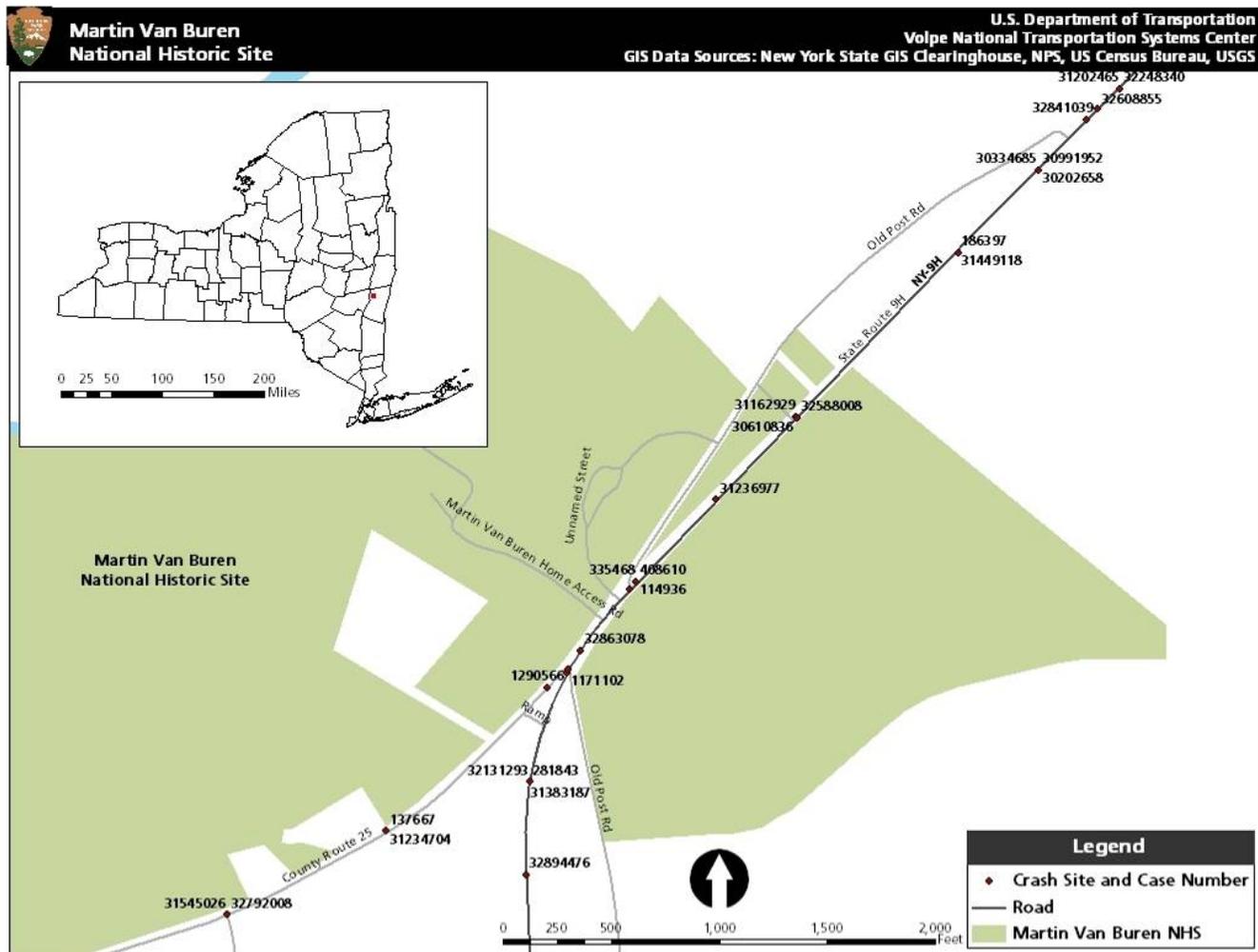


## Crashes

New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) crash data for SR 9H shows that between 1999 and 2009 there were 17 crashes along roadways near the park. At the intersection with the park driveway and SR 9H, there were three reported crashes. Two of the crashes were vehicle-vehicle and one did not have information as to the type. The crash data for the two vehicle-vehicle crashes shows three injuries and no fatalities. Other areas with high crash reports include the junction of SR 9H and Albany Avenue (County Road 21) and near Old Post Road and SR 9H, just northeast of the junction with Albany Avenue. Of the other crashes in the immediate vicinity of the park, only one had a fatality – the crash at the intersection of Albany Avenue and Rabbit Lane. Figure 4 shows the location of all crashes near the park, and Table 1 includes details for each crash. The number at each crash site in Figure 40 corresponds to a case number in Table 2.

**Figure 40**  
**Vehicle crash locations near Martin Van Buren NHS**

Source: NYSDOT (data) and Volpe Center (map)



**Table 2**  
**Crash summary chart (1999-2009)**

Source: NYSDOT

Case Number	Type of Crash	Fatalities	Injuries
114936	Collision w/light support/utility pole	0	0
137667	Collision w/light support/utility pole	0	1
186397	Collision with animal	0	0
281843	Collision with motor vehicle	0	2
335468	Collision with animal	0	0
408610	Collision with motor vehicle	0	0
1171102	Collision with fence	0	0
1290566	Collision w/light support/utility pole	0	0
30202658	Not entered	0	0
30334685	Not entered	0	0
30610836	Not entered	0	0
30991952	Collision with motor vehicle	0	1
31162929	Collision with motor vehicle	0	1
31202465	Collision with motor vehicle	0	1
31234704	Collision with earth element/rock cut/ditch	0	1
31236977	Collision with guardrail-end	0	0
31383187	Collision with tree	0	0
31449118	Collision with deer	0	0
31545026	Collision with sign post	0	1
32131293	Collision with motor vehicle	0	3
32248340	Collision with deer	0	0
32588008	Collision with motor vehicle	0	2
32608855	Overtaken	0	1
32792008	Collision with motor vehicle	1	2
32841039	Collision w/light support/utility pole	0	0
32863078	Collision with tree	0	0
32894476	Collision with guard rail	0	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>17</b>

### Existing concerns

From the National Park Service (NPS) perspective, the primary concerns on area roadways include truck traffic, overall speed of passing vehicles, the historic character of the surroundings, safety, and the lack of access for pedestrians and bicycles.

#### *Truck traffic*

Truck traffic is significant on SR 9H as it is the only primary north-south roadway on the eastern side of the Hudson Valley that is truck-friendly. United States (U.S.) Route 9 and the Taconic State Parkway are also on the eastern side of the Hudson Valley, but U.S. Route 9 travels through many towns and villages and the Taconic State Parkway is off-limits to trucks. As a result, many thru-traveling trucks use SR 9H.

The Kinderhook Village Comprehensive Plan Update (2007) requests that NYSDOT officially establish SR 9H as a truck route, which may increase the amount of truck traffic on SR 9H.

### *Speed*

There is a proposal to alter and perhaps widen SR 9H to two lanes in each direction. As a basis for comparison, it is possible that the widening will result in a roadway profile similar to how it appears north of the park (Figure 3). Widening SR 9H will increase the design speed of the roadway and will make it more likely for traffic to maintain or exceed the speed limit.

The high speed of traffic on SR 9H is a concern for the park. At the park driveway, there are no turning lanes for vehicles approaching in either direction, creating a hazard as vehicles slow to turn into the park. Additionally, there are no provisions for pedestrians or bicycles entering the park or crossing the road. The park is also concerned about an increase in noise generated by SR 9H that would result from the widening of the roadway and increased speeds.

### *Historic and scenic character*

Maintaining the scenic value and character of the area surrounding the park by ensuring that vistas remain similar to their character during Van Buren's era is a concern for the park. Old Post Road is the historic road connecting New York City to Albany east of the Hudson River; today, SR 9H serves as a similar connection. While not original in appearance to the Old Post Road, SR 9H is narrow and maintains a rural character as it approaches and passes the park. Further north, SR 9H is much wider, providing insight into how the roadway might look as a four-lane highway.

### *Safety*

The curve at the junction of SR 9H and County Road 21 (Albany Avenue) (Figure 5) is a safety concern. Vehicles travel through the junction at relatively high speed, increasing the likelihood of crashes for turning vehicles. The crash data (see Figure 41 and Table 2) shows that there have been a number of crashes at this location.

**Figure 41**

**The junction of SR 9H (center), CR 25/Albany Avenue (left) and Old Post Road (right)**

Source: Volpe Center



### *Pedestrians and bicycle access*

There are no pedestrian facilities along SR 9H near the park. Pedestrian use of the roadway is rare, likely because of the lack of pedestrian-friendly connections between destinations in the area. However, improvements to the park and surrounding area may increase the likelihood of pedestrians and bicyclists wanting to make connections in the area, and any changes to the design of the roadway should consider these uses. Section 2 (Area Trail Connections) discusses pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements in more detail.

### **Recommendations**

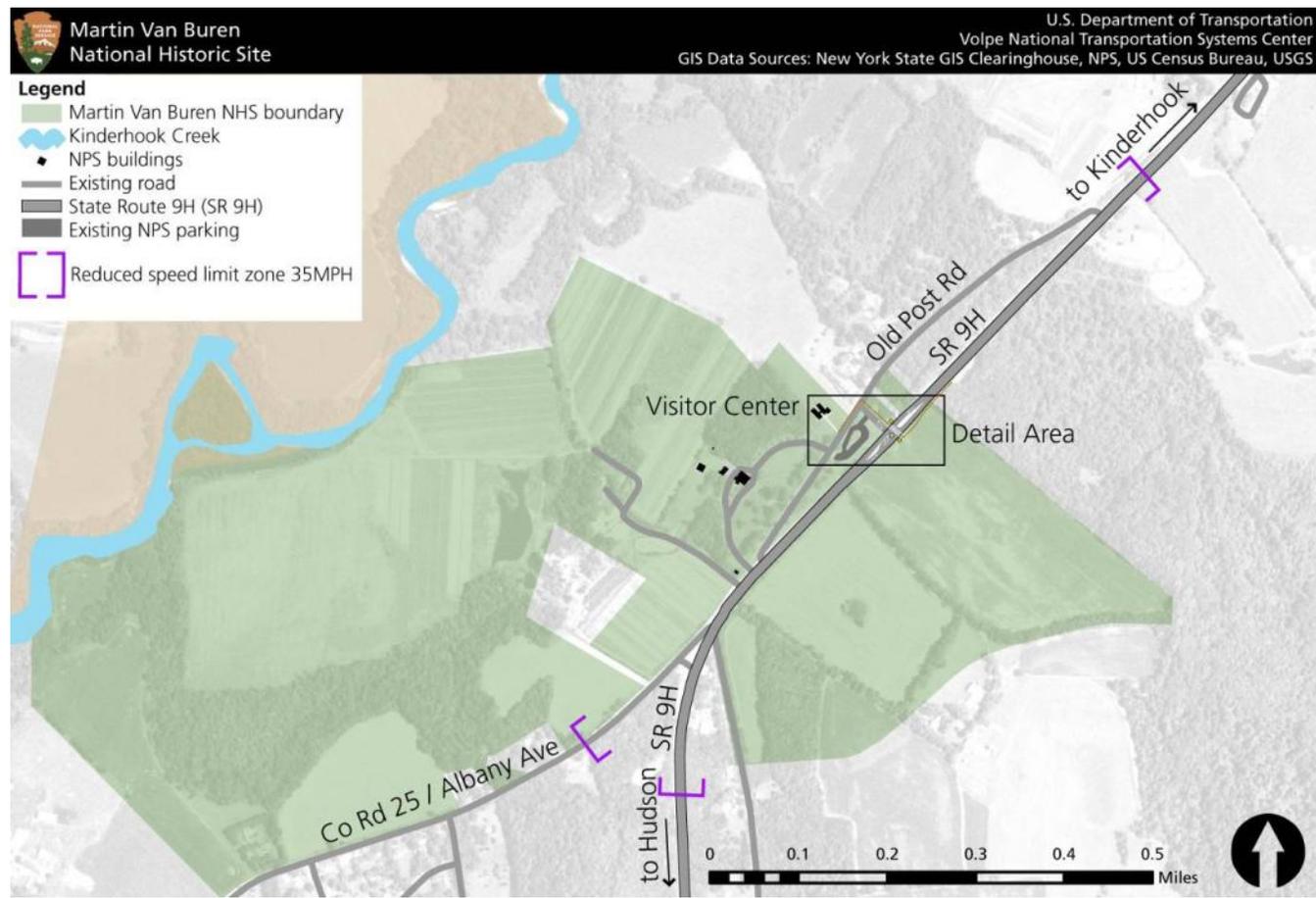
The park should work with local and state governments to pursue the following roadway recommendations as visitation increases and as transportation improvements occur in the region:

- *Develop transportation-specific goals for the park.* Transportation-specific goals would help the park make future transportation decisions. These goals could focus on preservation, safety, access to the park, and/or other topics or issues that the park deems appropriate. The General Management Plan (GMP) can include these goals to guide park and area roadway improvements.
- *Be involved in the planning of SR 9H.* Current planning and any subsequent construction of SR 9H near the park will impact access, safety, and the overall character of the area around the park. The local SR 9/9H Committee is currently assessing funding for roadway improvements. The park should work with this group on these improvements to ensure that changes adjacent to the park are, to the extent possible, consistent with GMP and other park goals.

- The crash rate along the curve of SR 9H at County Road 21 is high, and improvements such as lower speed limits or a redesign could help reduce the number of crashes. The park should work with the SR 9/9H Committee on planning efforts for this section of road.
- *Commission a study to analyze and redesign driveway access to the park.* The park driveway is the primary access for visitors to the park, as well as to several homes along Old Post Road (Figure 42). The current intersection of the park driveway and SR 9H does not have a signal, crosswalks, or turning lanes. As part of a broader effort to improve multi-modal access to the park, a study that recommends improvements to this intersection should not only enable safer access for motor vehicles, but also for pedestrians and bicycles. A study should be coordinated with the SR 9/9H Committee and should consider the following concepts for improvements:
  - Construct a left turn lane for SR 9H northbound (a concept for which is shown in Figure 43). This would allow vehicles to slow down and queue for oncoming traffic, instead of blocking through traffic approaching from behind. A right turn lane for SR 9H southbound should also be considered.
  - Consistent with the trails plan and with promoting pedestrian access to the park, construct a pedestrian crosswalk across SR 9H on the north side of the intersection, connecting a new trail to Columbia County’s Martin Van Buren Park, just north of the Martin Van Buren NHS (a concept for which is shown in Figure 43).

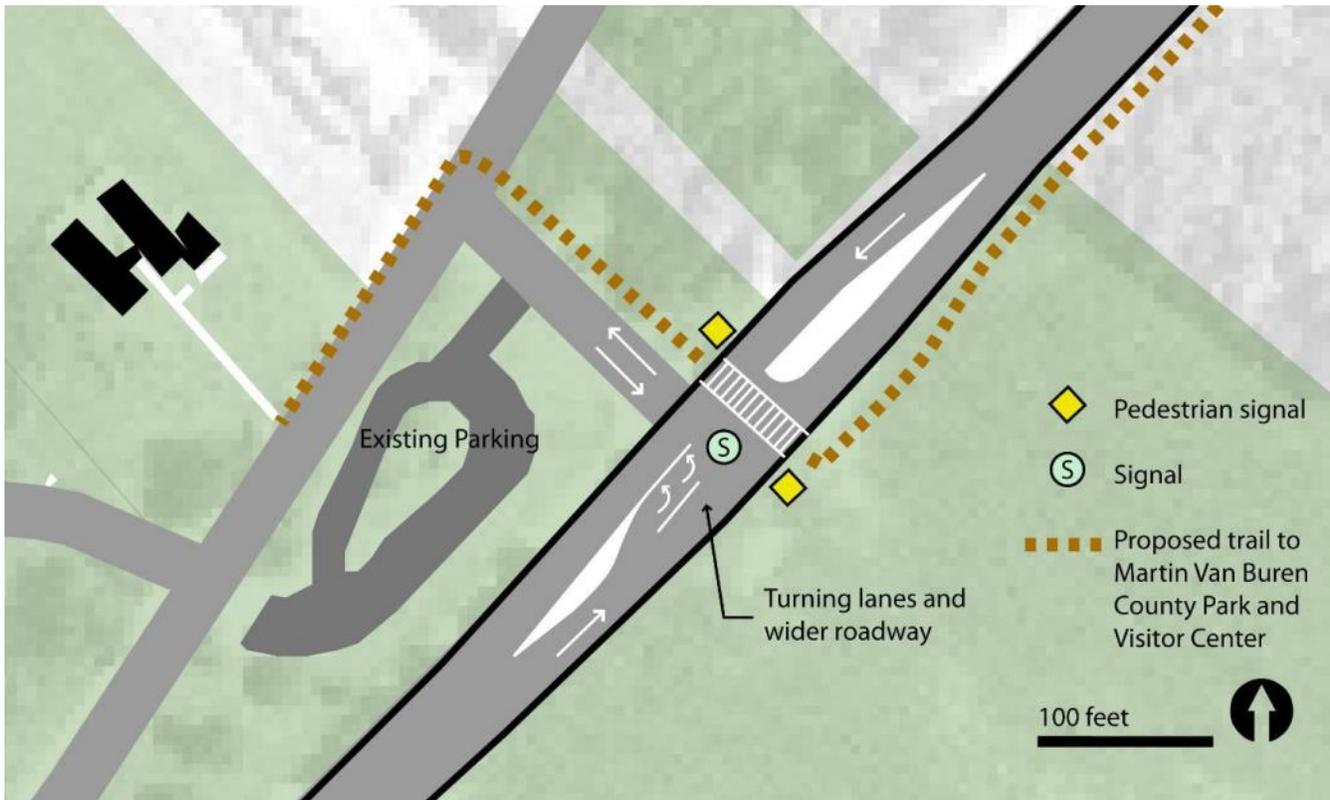
**Figure 42**  
**Conceptual improvements at intersection of park driveway and SR 9H**

Source: Volpe Center



**Figure 43**  
**Conceptual improvements at intersection of park driveway and SR 9H (enlargement)**

Source: Volpe Center



- High speed along SR 9H is a concern for the park as it creates a hazard for vehicles turning out of the park driveway onto SR 9H as well as inhibits pedestrians from crossing SR 9H. The installation of a traffic signal at this intersection may help control traffic speed, as well as vehicle safety, and facilitate pedestrians crossing SR 9H (Figure 7). This signal should have vehicle loop detection and pedestrian activation to minimize disruption to through traffic on SR 9H. Additionally, it may be desirable to reduce the speed limit on SR 9H near the park from 55 MPH to 35 MPH (Figure 6).
- With installation of a new traffic signal at the intersection of SR 9H and the park driveway, it may be necessary to install flashing “signal ahead” signs along SR 9H in both directions warning drivers of the upcoming signal, since the speed limit approaching the park is 55 MPH. This signage will help prevent vehicles from having to suddenly brake if the light turns red for SR 9H traffic.

### Conclusion

There are several roadway issues for the park to consider moving forward. The primary issue is the future of SR 9H itself. The park should work with the SR 9/9H Committee in Columbia County to ensure that park planning is consistent with that of the county and state. Furthermore, the park should coordinate regional trail planning to ensure that safe crossing of SR 9H is available if future trails and/or parking is across the roadway from the main driveway of the park. Furthermore, the speed along SR 9H is high, which is hazardous for pedestrians and bicyclists; a lower speed limit could improve the safety of this intersection.

## Section 5: Parking Considerations

### Purpose

Parking improvements would enable Martin Van Buren National Historic Site (NHS) to accommodate overflow parking during special events and an anticipated increase in visitors. Parking improvements in existing parking areas could provide the park with more formalized parking options during special events when the park receives hundreds of cars during the day. Parking improvements would also aid with parking congestion during summer weekends or school visits, particularly as visitation increases and after the new visitor center is built.

### Existing overflow parking

Current weekday and weekend parking does not exceed the capacity of the park's primary asphalt parking lot between State Route (SR) 9H and the visitor center. There are 38 parking spaces and two bus parking spaces within this parking area, which serves employees and visitors. During special events, which include Harvest Day and Winter Celebration, National Park Service (NPS) staff directs visitors to on-site overflow parking areas along Old Post Road, in the field in the north portion of the site, and on the lawn area in the southwest portion of the site (see Figure 1344 and 45):

**Figure 44**

**Overflow parking: Old Post Road (left), the north field (center), and the southwest lawn (right)**

Source: Volpe Center



#### *1 - Old Post Road*

In addition to a walking trail along the front lawn of Lindenwald, the park uses this area for overflow parking during special events. NPS staff directs drivers to park along the path, which can accommodate up to 60 cars. Visitors and pedestrians use this path as they walk around or through the park. Old Post Road continues north and south of the park parallel to SR 9H.

#### *2 - North field area behind the park headquarters*

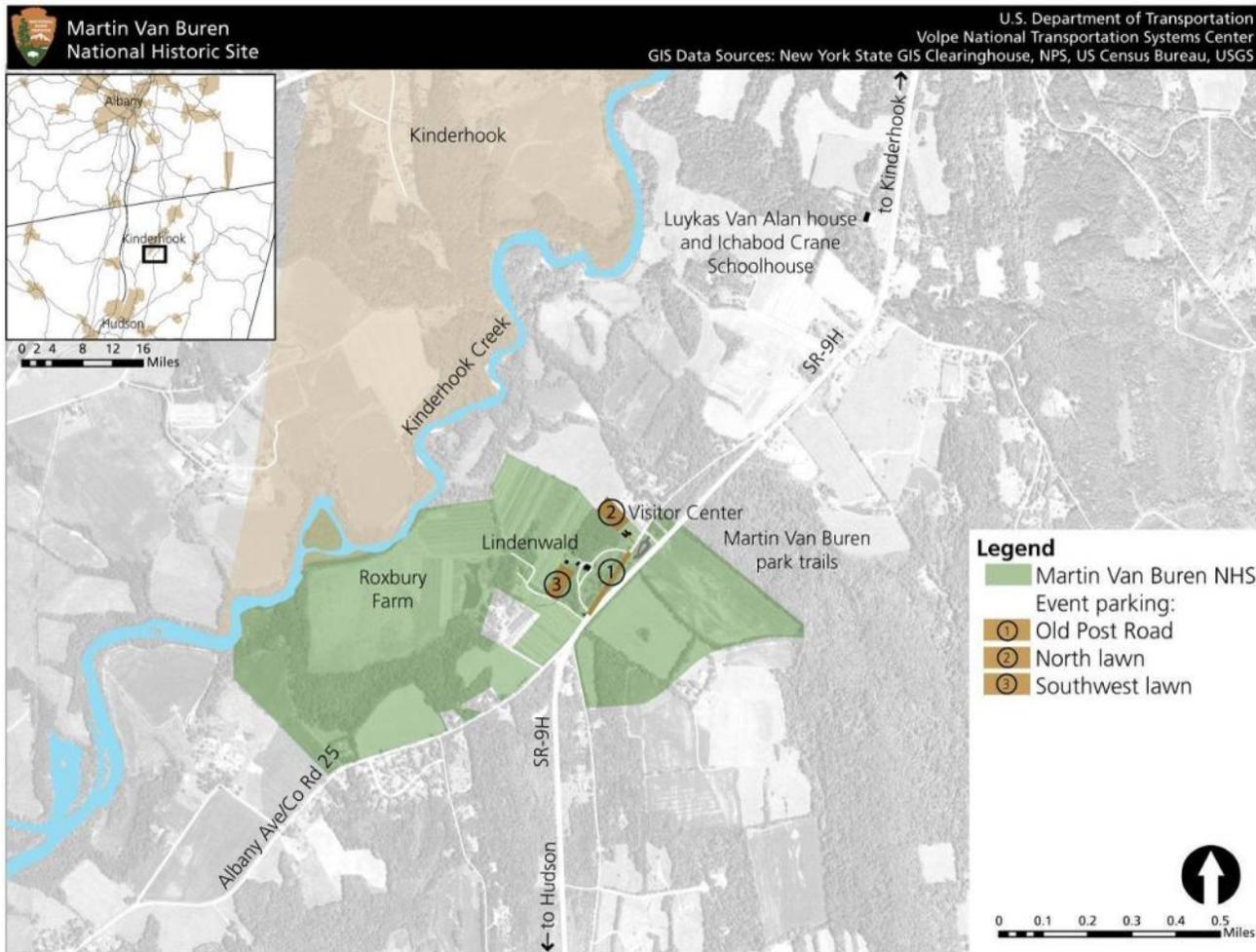
The park also uses this area for overflow parking during special events. NPS staff directs drivers to drive by the temporary headquarters building to access this field, which reportedly accommodates 150 to 200 cars. This field area overlooks the surrounding farm land and Catskills and is set back from SR 9H.

#### *3 - Southwest lawn area behind the mansion*

The park uses this area for overflow parking during special events. NPS staff directs drivers to drive along SR 9H, turn right on the Access Road, and turn right to park on the southwest lawn, which reportedly accommodates up to 100 vehicles. This lawn area is close to Roxbury Farm and includes some interpretive signs near the mansion.

**Figure 45**  
**Existing Overflow parking map**

Source: Volpe Center



### Options for overflow parking

There are changes the park can make to existing overflow parking areas and there are additional locations within and nearby the park that the park has considered for overflow parking. Considerations for parking improvements include:

- The design and placement of all parking areas should be sensitive to the surrounding landscape and should not alter the area’s visual character.
- The park should consider sustainable materials and/or pervious paving with the design of new parking facilities.
- Parking should include an adequate number of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible spaces and bus parking spaces relative to the total amount of parking.
- Parking design should allow for adaptable use where feasible to serve as a demonstration area, educational space, or event space.

Options for parking changes include the following (see Figure 46):

#### *1 - Old Post Road*

The park could install a permeable pavement or decomposed granite with a stabilizer along this road in order to stabilize the gravel road and allow for storm water infiltration. In addition, the park could install pavement or reinforced paving material to accommodate bicyclists and provide ADA access.

#### *2 - North field area behind the park headquarters*

The park could convert a portion of this field area to a permeable pavement type, allowing the accommodation of parking or circulation routes during events. This improvement could be made adjacent to Old Post Road or along the property line away from the septic leach field. By introducing a permeable pavement type, the park could ensure that the surface on which vehicles mostly travel is strong enough to support moderate use while protecting the underlying soil and allowing for proper rainwater runoff.

#### *3 - Southwest lawn area behind the mansion*

The park could convert a portion of this lawn area to a permeable pavement type allowing the accommodation of parking or circulation routes during events. Improvements in this area could occur adjacent to the road to Roxbury Farm or along a route that would serve as an infrequent driving lane.

#### *4 - Existing parking lot*

The park could expand the existing parking lot to accommodate additional bus and/or vehicular parking. An expansion could involve the use of a permeable surface between the parking lot and Old Post Road or along the park driveway. This parking expansion would filter parking lot runoff during normal visitation periods and provide for parking during events.

#### *5 - Trees adjacent to the mansion*

Historically, the trees in the area northeast of the mansion made up an orchard. A group of student landscape architects suggested locating a parking lot within a restored orchard. The students presented the park with several concept drawings, which the park is currently considering. This alternative would require the clearing of the current forest understory layer and a tree survey study to identify trees and their stability. This alternative may also necessitate the removal of many full size trees to accommodate new orchard planting, vehicle parking, and traffic circulation. Further analysis of the health of the trees, soil type, and parking layout would need to occur to determine if this option is feasible. For example, if new trees are planted, they will be more sensitive to soil impact from vehicles. This option would also result in vehicle parking closer to the mansion, which may alter the view from the trails and mansion.

#### *6 - Triangle south of parking lot*

There is a strip of land in the shape of a triangle between Old Post Road and SR 9H that could provide additional space for overflow parking. One consideration is the presence of several large trees on this land; however, it may be feasible to use this area for overflow parking if the park continues to use Old Post Road for overflow parking. The park could install a permeable parking material to protect the trees and provide for parking between the trees. The park should consider the visibility of parked cars to travelers on the road in this area because it is adjacent to SR 9H.

#### *7- Martin Van Buren Park trailhead*

The trailhead of Columbia County's Martin Van Buren Park has parking for several vehicles and is less than 1,000 feet from the Martin Van Buren NHS entrance. Visitors, however, would have to cross SR 9H in order to walk between this parking area and the park. This parking lot is currently unpaved. The parking lot and park area is managed by the Friends of Lindenwald, which rents it from Columbia County. By working with the county and the Friends of Lindenwald, the park could convert this unpaved area to a permeable pavement type, which would allow for more regular use as a parking lot.

**Figure 46**  
**Proposed on-site parking map**

Source: Volpe Center



### Parking design

There are several design options for new parking that would accommodate vehicles, protect the lawn, and minimize mud. Depending on the material selected, a new parking area could also function as a demonstration, gathering, or event area. All materials should be ADA accessible.

The park can install the following materials to accommodate a large number of vehicles on event days while protecting the visual character of the open space. These materials can be used in combination with one another or with more conventional paving materials such as asphalt or concrete. The park should further study the exact location, design, material, and grades of these areas in more detail.

- Permeable pavers with sand or plantings would accommodate occasional vehicle parking and pedestrian use (see Figure 473747, Figure 48, and Figure 49).

**Figure 4737**  
**Permeable pavement example in Provincetown, MA**

Source: Volpe Center



**Figure 48**  
**Permeable pavement examples: drivable grass concrete pavement system**

Source: Soil Retention Pavers <http://www.soilretention.com/>



- Reinforced plastic rings would sit on top of a layer of gravel. Within the rings, lawn or gravel would fill the openings. If the park chooses to plant grass within the plastic rings, the lawn would grow between the rings and from a distance the area would look more like a typical lawn (see Figure ).
- Stabilized turf, which is a mixture of crushed stone and soil that supports occasional parking yet allows grass to grow, can be installed similar to what is used for overflow parking at Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine.

- Porous concrete or asphalt can be installed in order to infiltrate storm water runoff from large parking areas. Porous concrete or asphalt can withstand frequent vehicle use although it is more expensive than conventional concrete or asphalt. This type of paving looks the same as asphalt or concrete.
- Stabilized decomposed granite can accommodate light vehicular and regular pedestrian use. A stabilizer binds the decomposed granite in order to keep gravel contained and accessible. Stabilized decomposed granite can be permeable, although the soil is often compacted so that it may no longer be permeable. Decomposed granite comes in a variety of colors (see Figure ).

**Figure 49**

**Permeable pavement examples: concrete and decomposed granite (left) and plastic cells (right)**

Source: Paving Center <http://www.pavingexpert.com/grasspav.htm>



**Figure 50**

**Decomposed granite with a stabilizer**

Source: Kafka Granite [www.kafkagranite.com](http://www.kafkagranite.com) (left) and <http://www.gailmaterials.net/> (right)



## Partnerships

An alternative to the design of additional parking within or adjacent to Martin Van Buren NHS is a satellite parking facility. In this alternative, visitors would park their vehicles off-site. This option requires the use of shuttles between the satellite location and the park. Possible satellite parking locations include existing public and private lots within the village and/or town of Kinderhook; it is possible that the park could contract parking and shuttle operation to a concessionaire or other operator. This service may also connect to other historic sites within the area. Though the cost of operating a shuttle may be prohibitive, the park is beginning a shuttle study that will assess the feasibility of such a system.

## Conclusion and next steps

The current capacity for parking is generally appropriate for daily visitation. On special events, the park uses the Old Post Road and open grassy areas for parking. An alternative to this operation includes new pavement types or off-site parking with shuttle service to the park. The shuttle study will provide an assessment of transit options including special event shuttles in addition to shuttles in regular operation. The cost for relocating or altering the existing parking capacity is dependent on many factors, including the size, type, and location of new parking areas.

Parking demand is dependent on future visitation and how visitors access the park. If the park introduces regular shuttle operations, builds new trails that connect to a regional trail network, or attracts more tour buses, there may be some demand for additional parking. However, if the park significantly increases availability of tours, increases marketing, or attracts more visitors without introducing new transportation modes, the park will need to consider additional parking.

The location of a new visitor center should influence the location of parking. Additional recommendations in Section 2 (Area Trail Connections) and Section 4 (Roadway Considerations) involve the signalization of the intersection of SR 9H and the park driveway, which would facilitate pedestrian crossing of SR 9H. The park will need to carefully consider this and other options for a new visitor center as well as accompanying parking.

Relocation and/or alteration of the existing parking capacity at the park will have an effect on the environment and character of park. An environmental assessment should consider the drainage impact of varying pavement options. The park values the character of the farmland and landscape in general; any changes to parking may affect the look and feel of the park. The park should, therefore, consider graphical or visual renditions of parking areas on the existing landscape to determine the impact of parking changes.

Before implementing any of the preceding options for expanded or improved parking, the park will need to complete a full assessment to determine the best alternative for new parking at the site. This assessment should include and analyze the following elements:

- Parking demand,
- Site conditions,
- Environmental effects,
- Landscape character effects, and
- Cost of implementation and maintenance.

## Section 6: School and Charter Bus Service

### Overview

This section describes how to increase school and charter bus service access to the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site (NHS). With the expansion of the park boundary, new trails, and a future new visitor center, the park can anticipate and attract additional school and charter bus visits. Additional school and charter bus visits will alter the visitation patterns and arrival times from current patterns. While most visitors arrive in small groups throughout the day, school groups and tour groups result in higher concentrations of visitors at one time.

The park will be better prepared to attract and accommodate groups if there is coordination to provide sufficient programming, communication, school and tour company coordination, parking, partnerships, and infrastructure. Site tours are currently limited in number due to staff availability and mansion capacity. In order to better accommodate school and group tours, the park could begin by addressing several items that were discussed in earlier sections such as trail connections, parking considerations, and roadway considerations.

There are several short-term (zero to five year) strategies that can help the park better attract and facilitate group visitation. These strategies, outlined below, are shown in more detail in the subsequent subsections of this section. These strategies include:

- Program opportunities – Facilitate tours to encourage use of all park amenities.
- School groups – Provide schools in the region with information on park resources and accommodate group arrival and activities.
- Tour companies – Coordinate arrival and departure times with tour companies and promote park amenities to tour companies already traveling in the region.
- Parking – Coordinate tour and school group parking for peak season and special events.
- Partnerships/communication – Coordinate with other local destinations and publicize park amenities and attractions on Hudson Valley websites.
- Infrastructure – Provide additional visitor center space such as a theater, classrooms, or exhibit space to accommodate additional visitor groups at once or during rain. This strategy may be longer term (five to ten years).
- Visitor season – Extend the visitor season from its current six months.

### Program opportunities

Currently, Martin Van Buren NHS staff report that tour and bus groups are reluctant to visit the site due to its capacity. The park reports that it takes approximately two hours to give 50 people a tour, and buses typically hold between 50 and 60 visitors when full.<sup>36</sup>

Tour times and routes, which are currently only held through the mansion, are staggered to accommodate the maximum number of visitors. Park staff report that they would like to cycle through more visitors, but they are limited by staff and mansion capacity.

To accommodate more visitors, the park can promote tours of outdoor attractions. The following activities and attractions could be part of a staff-led or a formalized self-guided tour:

- Roxbury Farm
- Kinderhook Creek
- Martin Van Buren Park trails
- Wayside Trail
- Expansion of existing park trail system
- Outdoor educational demonstrations

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<sup>36</sup> Volpe Center site visit to Martin Van Buren NHS. October 2009.

If faced with a lack of available staff or at-capacity conditions at the mansion, the park can encourage visitors to take self-guided tours of these attractions. Park staff could advise visitors of these attractions with maps or signage and staff could recommend various routes through the park depending on a group's interest.

### **School groups**

Martin Van Buren NHS currently accommodates school groups by coordinating a group's arrival and departure time to ensure there is minimal overlap with other groups. The park's primary attraction is the mansion tour; however, there are a limited number of tours that the park can conduct at once. As discussed in the program opportunities section above, the park can accommodate additional school groups if there are more staff or activities in other areas of the park to occupy groups that are not touring the mansion.

The park currently offers two educational programs for elementary and middle school students.<sup>37</sup> In addition, the Hudson River Valley Institute offers several lesson plans for the students in the region that could take place in the park.<sup>38</sup>

School groups typically take field trips mid-week during the late spring and fall while school is in session. The park currently has the capacity and staff resources to facilitate additional school groups during this time. On rare occasions, youth groups also visit the park in the summer. The park has the capacity to facilitate additional youth groups during this season as well. The park should keep track of when these youth school groups typically arrive so that groups can be advised to arrive during the time of week or day when there are fewer visitors.

To attract additional school groups, the park can continue to provide schools in the region with educational material on Martin Van Buren's life, the history of the property and mansion, and the history of the region. The park can host special events or demonstrations to attract school groups, go to schools to provide them with preliminary information, or in the future promote educational facilities at the park. The park's relationship with the Red Hook Central Schools, 30 miles south of the park, can serve as a model for future growth.

### **Tour companies**

While the park reports that there are few tours that stop at the park, there are several bus and boat companies that travel through the Hudson Valley. Boat tours would need another mode of transportation to access the park, such as a shuttle, but bus tours could easily stop at the park. To facilitate tours, the park can encourage tour providers to make a stop at the park and encourage tour and transportation providers to supply park brochures at their stations or on the bus or train. This information can include taxi and rental car companies so visitors can travel from a station to the park.

- *Adirondack/Pine Hills Trailways* – Provides service to New York City, Albany, Ravena, and Catskill. In addition, the service offers group charters throughout the state. Website and contact: [www.trailwaysny.com](http://www.trailwaysny.com), tel. 800-776-7548, [info@trailwaysny.com](mailto:info@trailwaysny.com).
- *Greyhound Bus Lines* – Provides service to Catskill, Albany, Ravena, Coxsackie, and several other cities within the Hudson Valley. There are numerous pick-up and drop-off areas throughout the state. Website and contact: [www.greyhound.com](http://www.greyhound.com), tel. 800-231-2222 or 1-800-454-2487, [charters@greyhound.com](mailto:charters@greyhound.com).

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<sup>37</sup> National Park Service. Martin Van Buren National Historic Site: For Teachers. <http://www.nps.gov/mava/forteachers/index.htm>.

<sup>38</sup> Hudson River Valley Institute. "Lesson Plans" [http://www.hudsonrivervalley.org/learning/lesson\\_plans.html#lpi](http://www.hudsonrivervalley.org/learning/lesson_plans.html#lpi).

- *Hayfield Tours* – Based out of Queensbury, NY; runs a presidential homes tour which already includes a stop to the Martin Van Buren NHS. Other stops include sites in Newburgh and Hyde Park.  
Website and contact: <http://www.hayfieldqualitytours.com/udson-valley.asp>.
- *Fall Foliage Tours* – Provides tours to the Hudson Valley in order to view the fall foliage. This tour currently stops at West Point and does not go further north.  
Website and contact: [http://www.fallfoliagetours.net/?event=offer\\_detail&offerId=5405&startDate=05/01/2010&endDate=05/31/2010](http://www.fallfoliagetours.net/?event=offer_detail&offerId=5405&startDate=05/01/2010&endDate=05/31/2010), tel. 800-617-3244.
- *Metro-North Railroad* – Offers "One-Day Getaways" through the Hudson Valley.  
Website and contact: <http://www.mta.info/mnr/html/outbound.htm>, tel. 800/METRO-INFO
- *New York Waterway* – Offers fall boat tours along the Hudson River.  
Website and contact: [www.nywaterway.com](http://www.nywaterway.com), tel. 800-533-3779.
- *River Valley Tours* – Organizes group weeklong bus and boat tours along the Hudson River. In the past, trips included a stop to Hyde Park, the Culinary Institute of America, and wineries.  
Website and contact: [www.rivervalleytours.com](http://www.rivervalleytours.com), tel. 800/836-2128.
- *Short Line Bus, Coach USA* – Provides service from New York City throughout the Hudson Valley. Short Line also offers organized tours, boat trips, and multi-day trips. Short Line currently offers a two-day trip to Hyde Park, which includes access to rental cars and taxi services in order to access the historic sites.  
Website and contact: [www.shortlinebus.com](http://www.shortlinebus.com), tel. 800-631-8405.
- *Hudson Valley Brewery Tours* and the *New York Countryside Wine Tours* – Offer themed tours within the Hudson Valley.  
Website and contact: <http://thelittlebeerbus.com/index.html> or <http://thelittlewinebus.com/index.html>, tel. 917-414-7947.

## Parking

As mentioned in Section 5 (Parking Considerations), there are a limited number of bus (school bus and charter bus) parking spaces in the existing parking lot. The current designated parking area can accommodate two buses at a time. Park staff reports that currently the capacity is appropriate on off-peak days. However, during peak season and special events, the park faces capacity issues, especially as visitation continues to increase annually. To accommodate school and tour buses, the park should continue to coordinate arrival and departure times for groups during the peak season.

Bus parking should be considered in any parking design changes due to their size, weight, and potential damage to park resources. During special events, bus parking should be concentrated at the existing parking lot or on more stable surfaces such as Old Post Road or new reinforced parking locations as recommended in Section 5.

## Communications/partnerships

Martin Van Buren NHS can attract more tour and school groups by partnering with other local organizations and agencies that provide access or tours to the Hudson Valley. These partners include Amtrak, the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area (NHA), the Hudson River Valley Institute, the *I Love NY* collaborative, tour companies (see tour companies section), and school groups (see school group section).

- *Amtrak* – Martin Van Buren NHS has the opportunity to partner with Amtrak, Vanderbilt Mansion NHS, and the Trails & Rails program in order to attract additional group tours. Groups that wish to visit the Hudson Valley by train can do so through the Trails & Rails program, which

is a partnership between Amtrak and the National Park Service.<sup>39</sup> The closest Amtrak route to Martin Van Buren NHS is the Adirondack route, which connects New York City, Albany, and Montreal with a stop in Hudson, NY. The route contains two Trails & Rails programs, both of which are in New York: the route from Croton-Harmon to Hudson, which is based out of Vanderbilt Mansion NHS, and the route from Albany to Rouses Point, which is based out of Saratoga National Historical Park (NHP).

- *Hudson River Valley NHA* – The Hudson River Valley NHA website (<http://www.hudsonrivervalley.com/Home.aspx>) presents a significant opportunity to bring school groups and tours to historic sites in the region and to Martin Van Buren NHS. The NHA’s website contains an interactive map that categorizes sites by interest, region, and popularity. The mapping tool includes the location of attractions, an explanation of amenities, hours, and a tool to design and map routes through the area. As the park’s amenities, programs, events, or hours change, the park should inform NHA staff to in turn inform visitors of the park’s offerings.

The Hudson River Valley NHA recommends that visitors to the region drive along major highways including I-90, I-87, and I-84 for through travel or along travel routes such as State Route (SR) 9, SR 9D, or SR 9W to see the sites within the region (Figure 51)<sup>40</sup>. SR 9 is very close to the park and would be an easy detour for visitors traveling through the region.

- *Hudson River Valley Institute* – The Institute is part of the Hudson River Valley NHA and provides visitors with suggested tours, educational material, and online information.<sup>41</sup>
- *Official “I Love NY” website* – This website (<http://www.hudsonvalleyvoyager.com/>) is a collaboration of tourism organizations that promotes themed tours in the Hudson Valley. One route is the “Great Estates & Historic Mansions of the Hudson Valley,” which includes the Martin Van Buren NHS.<sup>42</sup> The website provides maps, itineraries, and brochures to various sites. The park can encourage more group visits by sharing information and communicating with this collaborative.

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<sup>39</sup> National Park Service “Rails and Trails” <http://www.nps.gov/findapark/trailsandrails.htm>

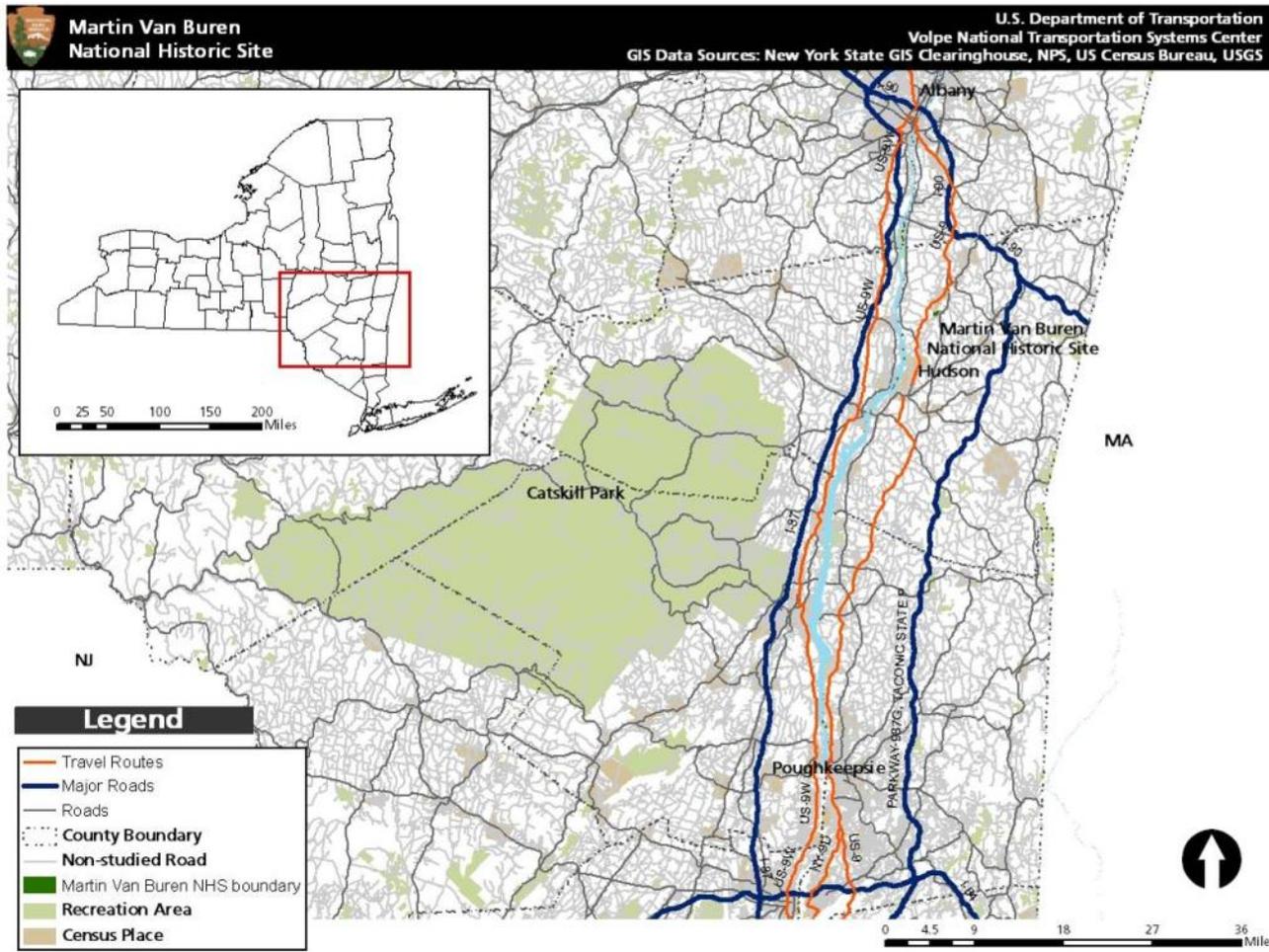
<sup>40</sup> Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. “Welcome to the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area” <http://www.hudsonrivervalley.com/Home.aspx>

<sup>41</sup> Hudson River Valley Institute. “About Us” <http://www.hudsonrivervalley.org/about/>

<sup>42</sup> Hudson Valley New York Inc., Hudson Valley Tourism, and The Gold Standard. “I Love NY – Great Valley” <http://www.hudsonvalleyvoyager.com/guides/houses.htm>.

**Figure 51**  
**Hudson River Valley driving routes**

Source: Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, NYSDOT, and Volpe Center



**Infrastructure**

Park staff report that it is difficult to manage groups when it is raining or cold because there are not enough indoor facilities to handle visitors. Larger indoor visitor center space, a theater, classrooms, and exhibit space would allow the park to accommodate groups inside. Additional space would also provide park staff with space to set up demonstrations, exhibits, or videos that could help attract school groups. Indoor space could be a stop on a park tour or part of a self-guided tour, which would provide visitors with an alternative activity to the mansion tour.

**Visitor Season**

Park staff report that the current visitor season to the mansion, which is seven days a week from mid-May to late October, could be extended to encourage additional school groups and tour bus visits. Also, with additional infrastructure, such as a new visitor center, park staff could provide interpretation and exhibit space that is separate from the mansion and open to more visitors during the off-season.

## **Conclusion**

Martin Van Buren NHS can encourage and plan for additional school group and tour visitation with short and long term strategies. By increasing programmatic opportunities, the park can conduct tours in more areas of the park and keep visitors in the park or region for a longer length of time. Advertisement and coordination efforts with schools and tour providers could increase the frequency of group visits.

Planning for bus parking will allow the park to attract and accommodate buses during peak season or events. The park's partnerships with local organizations will improve communication and visibility to the public and visitors. To improve group visitation in the long-term, the park can work to increase indoor visitor and exhibit space.

By increasing school group visits to Martin Van Buren NHS, the park will be able to reach out to a younger generation who may not be aware of the historic sites in the region. By increasing charter bus tour visits, the park will be able to reach out to individuals who would otherwise not have access to the park or only pass through the area and not discover any of the park's rich history.

## Document Review

Einhorn Yaffee Prescott Architecture & Engineering P.C. *Martin Van Buren National Historic Site: Preliminary Analysis of Existing Needs and Parking Requirements (2008)* – This analysis of the Martin Van Buren NHS facilities states that the NPS offices, storage space, and event parking are inadequate and do not meet the space requirements for the park. The report recommends a new visitor center, additional office space, additional storage space for park collections, maintenance facilities and storage, and additional event parking. The report recommends these improvements in order to meet the vision in the 2005 Interpretive Concept Plan as well as the plans to expand the park.

Hudson River Valley Greenway, *Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail Vision Plan (2004)* – This report summarizes the Greenway trail that is part of the 1991 Greenway legislation. The trail is to connect Saratoga County to Rensselaer County. The trail segment through Columbia County is planned to go along SR 9.

Jane Clark Chermayeff Associates LLC and QL Consulting, Inc. for Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council and Greenway Conservancy for the Hudson River Valley, Inc. *Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area Management Plan (2002)* – This report includes a comprehensive plan for the Hudson River Valley. The objective of the NHA, as stated in the report, is to increase access and interpretation of the region. The report encourages regional and local transportation initiatives to promote the use of public transportation and trails and bicycle routes.

Kinderhook – Stuyvesant – Stockport Intermunicipal Trail Feasibility Study (2009) – This report builds off the 2003 Recreational Trail Design and Feasibility Study to build a bicycle and pedestrian trail on the National Grid right of way in Columbia County. This study proposes extending the trail along Kinderhook Creek.

National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center, and the Department of the Interior, *Martin Van Buren National Historic Site Interpretive Concept Plan (2005)* – This concept plan guides the park's ten year plan for interpretation, education, and visitor experience. The interpretation plan recommends changes that will influence visitor experience through visitor services and facility modifications. The primary goals in the report include the preservation and protection of Lindenwald and the life of Martin Van Buren, the park boundary expansion, a General Management Plan, outreach and visitor services, and the maintenance and expansion of partnerships. The report addresses issues relating to park outreach, visitor arrival, facilities, nearby development, resource protection, an accurate study of visitor statistics, maintenance of the agricultural landscape, visitor circulation and wayfinding, and access within the mansion.

New York State Department of Transportation, *Strategies for a New Age: New York State's Transportation Master Plan (Summer 2006)* – This plan focuses on five themes: mobility and reliability, safety, security, environment, and economic competitiveness. The long term plan is intended to be a vision for 2030 for the state of New York.

Town of Kinderhook. *Town of Kinderhook Comprehensive Plan (August 2000)* – This plan, developed by representatives from the town and villages of Kinderhook and Valatie. states that Kinderhook's vision is to maintain the historic, agricultural, and rural character. The town will achieve this by guiding growth and development while promoting a walking and biking network.

Columbia County Transportation Request for Proposals (unpublished) – This study will investigate current public transportation systems within the county as well as recommendations for the system's role and operations in the future.

University of Idaho Park Studies Unit, Visitor Services Unit. (unpublished)



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<b>13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b>					
<b>14. ABSTRACT</b>					
<b>15. SUBJECT TERMS</b>					
<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b>			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b>	<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b>	<b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b>
<b>a. REPORT</b>	<b>b. ABSTRACT</b>	<b>c. THIS PAGE</b>			<b>19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include area code)</b>







As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has the responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our parks and historic places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.