

Goals for Hudson River Drinking Water Intermunicipal Council (2021-2022)

These goals are meant to help guide the work of the Hudson River Drinking Water Intermunicipal Council (Hudson 7) from June 2021 through May 2022. The Hudson 7 marks its anniversary on May 31 each year, as the date in 2018 when municipal leaders gathered to sign the Memorandum of Agreement that created the Council. These goals will help guide the work of the Council in its fourth year.

Goal 1: Identify funding options from Hudson 7 municipalities, and hire a coordinator

The Hudson 7 should hire a coordinator with municipal funds, replacing the coordinator that Riverkeeper has funded for three years. The Council has also discussed the potential for other budgetary needs, such as a dedicated attorney. Riverkeeper has pledged to remain a partner and technical adviser after relinquishing the coordinator role. To move forward, the Council should form an ad hoc committee with the charge of identifying models for funded staff positions at other intermunicipal councils; a budget goal; fiscal sponsorship or other management options; any changes to by-laws that may be required; municipal funding options through water user fees, tax-funded municipal dues, requests for county support, or other means. These funding options should be analyzed for fairness and equity, both at the municipal level and the individual water rate payer level. A proposal should be formulated, discussed and adopted by the Council and, as needed, by its member municipalities.

Goal 1a: Education

If a coordinator is funded and hired, then a goal is to develop a presentation about the Hudson 7's accomplishments to date, importance for the water supply, and priorities, should be developed so that the coordinator can ensure that member communities and other stakeholders are well informed about the work and value of the Council.

Goal 1b: Water operator training

If a coordinator is funded and hired, then a goal is to develop at least one accredited training session for Hudson 7 water operators, so that they can be convened around a relevant topic for training that is approved for credits needed to maintain professional certifications.

Goal 2: Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2)

Having learned that the Hudson 7 will receive state support to update a Source Water Assessment and develop a Drinking Water Source Protection Plan, we will have to devote a significant amount of our effort this year to participating in the program. The first steps will include 1. building out our stakeholder group (which is already substantially in place, but will include more regular interactions with water plant operators, wastewater plant operators, county DOH representatives, and others to be determined) 2. Establishing goals and formulating a vision and

3. Contributing to a new source water assessment (map of watershed including known threats and concerns). Note: A coordinator will have a large role in the success of DWSP2

Goal 3: Maintain watchdog role on key issues threatening water quality

Hudson 7 will remain vigilant on issues that are affecting or may affect drinking water quality, including Esopus Creek turbidity, CHPE transmission cable, Central Hudson coal tar and Coast Guard spill prevention and response efforts. The issues the Council has to deal with are largely driven by external factors, and so prioritization and time allocation beyond listing these known priorities is difficult.

Goal 3b: Establish clear leadership and charge for committees

Building on the successful establishment of ad-hoc committees to focus on issues, the Hudson 7 should ensure that each committee formed has a chairperson and a clear charge.

Goal 4: Streamline meetings

In addition to these main goals, the ad-hoc committee recommends some small changes to the agenda to streamline meetings and respond to ideas that were surfaced as part of the committee's work. These are:

- Identify a voting council member to act as the point-person for reviewing agendas ahead of time
- Restricting agenda items to those requiring discussion or decisions. In conjunction with this recommendation, create a “memorializing” addendum to each agenda with ongoing items of interest that are not being discussed in the current meeting.
- Provide all communications as a packet to council members, and move “Communications” to the end of the agenda.