

# **OHIO RIVER VALLEY WATER SANITATION COMMISSION**

**Roundtable Issues Forum  
Crowne Plaza Indianapolis Downtown Union Station  
Indianapolis, Indiana  
Wednesday, February 12, 2020  
1:15 PM to 2:45 PM EST**

**1) Overview of Roundtable Issues Forum**

Commission Chairman John Kupke will provide an overview of the topics being presented and discussed during the February 12, 2020 Roundtable of Commissioners Issues Forum.

**2) Status of the 2020 Strategic Plan Update**

Program & Finance Committee Chairman Chuck Duritsa will provide an overview regarding the Committee's preparation work for the 2020 Strategic Plan Update accomplished since the October 10, 2019 Commission meeting. A presentation on the Committee's proposed update process will be provided including a summary of the results from the Commission's Program Priority Survey. A Commission discussion and feedback on the proposed process will help provide guidance to assist the Program & Finance Committee as it assesses and prepares the 2020 Strategic Plan Update for Commission review and approval as directed through the action of the Commission at its October 10, 2019 Meeting.

**3) Status of the Ohio River Basin Alliance PAS Project with the USACE to Develop an Ohio River Basin Strategic Plan**

Executive Director Richard Harrison will provide an overview of status of the USACE Planning Assistance to States (PAS) project to develop an Ohio River Basin Strategic Plan. Work accomplished to date will be presented as well as a proposed process to complete the work. Input from the Commission will provide valuable guidance as the plan is finalized.

**Meeting Summary of the Roundtable Issues Forum  
Hilton Richmond Downtown  
Richmond, Virginia  
Wednesday, October 9, 2019**

## **Introduction to Strategic Planning and Commissioner Survey**

Commission Chairman John Kupke began the Roundtable discussion by providing an overview of the strategic planning process. This discussion was prompted by the Commission's action from the June 6, 2019 meeting to revisit the strategic plan. The need to revisit the plan stems from a number of significant issues the Commission has been grappling with including the recent Pollution Control Standards (PCS) review, timing with respect to funding, and challenges posed by several water quality issues such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), mercury (Hg), and harmful algal blooms (HABs).

Chairman Kupke conducted a brief survey of the Commissioners to gauge opinions on the need and value of strategic planning. This poll included three basic questions. In the first, respondents were asked to rate their past strategic plan development experience on a scale of 1 to 5 ranging from "bad" to "overwhelmingly good". The second poll question asked Commissioners to rate their past experience with effectiveness of utilization of an in-place strategic plan. Response options ranged from 1 equating to "virtually no use" to 5 meaning "important and frequently used in clarification of organization direction and priorities". The final question asked respondents to rate the need for an ORSANCO plan update. Again the responses were on a scale of 1 to 5 ranging from 1 meaning "No; not essential and more important things to do" to 5 meaning "Yes; very important now to clarify ORSANCO priorities and direction with fulfilling Compact implementation objectives.

Survey results for Question #1 regarding past experiences with strategic planning development indicated Commissioners typically found past strategic planning exercises to be generally beneficial with an average score of 3.82 on a scale of 1 to 5. Similarly, the Commissioners' responses to Question #2 (*i.e.* average 3.65) suggest past experiences with the utilization of strategic plans have been generally favorable. Results for the third and final survey question, with an average score of 4.05, indicate the Commissioners strongly believe the time is right for an update to ORSANCO's Strategic Plan.

## **Overview of Past ORSANCO Strategic Planning Efforts**

ORSANCO Executive Director Richard Harrison provided an overview of ORSANCO's past Strategic Planning efforts including a review of how they were developed and the associated timelines. He noted that from October 1948 through January 1988 the Commission had a "Statement of Policies." This provided guidance for meeting provisions of the Compact. This included up to 12 policy statements to further delineate Compact provisions. For the period from January 1988 to May 1992 the Commission utilized a plan developed through an Ad Hoc Task Force for long range planning referred to as "New Directions." This included eight objectives to be given special attention by the Commission over the upcoming five year period. Objectives ranged from program efforts related to standards, funding, Commissioner liability, and non-point source pollution. The Ohio River Sweep was also developed as a result of this effort.

The "Strategic Plan for the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission" was the guiding document from May 1995 through June 2003. This was implemented through the Program & Finance Committee with

a focus on a Five Year Plan and the mission of the Commission. This included eight technical goals such as monitoring, better understanding non-point source pollution in the Ohio River Basin, rapid response to spills or unauthorized discharges, conducting water quality evaluations to meet Compact goals, legislative efforts, and public information and education efforts. The Five Year Plan was updated annually by the Program & Finance Committee between 1996 and 2000 as part of the annual program and budget process. The “2003 Strategic Plan” was in effect from June 2003 to June 2008. This plan was updated by the Program & Finance Committee with a focus on broad planning with a more streamlined Mission, as well as, specific Vision statements and strategic objectives tied to each article of the Compact.

The most recent strategic planning effort was completed in June 2008. The “2008 Strategic Plan” was a broad effort facilitated by staff. This plan emphasized the need for ORSANCO to focus first on the mainstem of the Ohio River and the lower reaches of direct tributaries. Interstate tributary issues would be addressed as resources allowed and with the consent of member states. A large focus of this plan was on whether ORSANCO should expand its work to include water resources and climate change. Identifying successful approaches to reduce impacts of non-point source pollution through consultation with member states was also envisioned.

### **Proposed Process and Schedule for Updating the 2008 Strategic Plan**

Chairman Kupke provided a proposed strategy to conduct an FY2020 Strategic Plan Update defining the Who, What and When of the process. The proposed process would be led through the Program & Finance Committee. Commissioner engagement would be achieved through three Roundtable sessions which includes this Roundtable as the first of three. The second and third Roundtable discussions would be conducted at the February 2020 and June 2020 Commission meetings. Commissioners would also be invited to participate in the Program & Finance Committee strategic planning discussions and could also include facilitated sessions if desired. How to engage and connect the States’ programs and priorities as well as other stakeholders would be fleshed out by the Program & Finance Committee.

The desired output from the planning process would be a concise strategic plan update with priorities clearly defined. This plan would dovetail anticipated Ohio River needs with the charge of the Compact. It is envisioned that specific, targeted goals would be developed for the five year period covering FY2020 through FY2025.

Chairman Kupke proposed the following timeline for the completion of the strategic plan update.

- Oct 10, 2019 – Formal indication of the intent to proceed
- Oct 2019 – Jan 2020 – P&F Committee prepares plan outline and begins development
- Feb 12, 2020 – Second Commission Roundtable
- April – May 2020 – P&F plan development meetings
- May 8, 2020 – Complete draft plan
- June 10, 2020 – Third Commission Roundtable
- June 11, 2020 – Commission considers adoption of updated Strategic Plan

### **Questions and Discussion**

Commissioner Duritsa asked how the last 2008 strategic planning process was completed. Commissioner Flannery noted that it was a professionally facilitated process which involved a questionnaire. A statistical assessment of the responses was done to prioritize issues. This facilitated process cost \$25,000, though he hopes that this next one will be less expensive.

Commissioner Flannery commented that while the ORSANCO 2008 strategic plan was the only time he has gone through this process, he does see value in periodically revisiting the plan to address changes that have occurred over time. This includes issues such as changing funding pathways, an evolving set of stakeholders and addressing large national-scale issues such as sustainability. This process is also a useful opportunity for Commissioners to reevaluate the Commission's priorities.

Commissioner Elmaraghy noted that it will be important to get staff input through the strategic planning process. He also commented given that strategic plans are often not well utilized, an implementation strategy should be included in the strategic planning process.

Commissioner Woodwell commented that he has been involved with a number of strategic planning efforts and has seen a wide-range of outcomes from some being very helpful to others being completely useless. It all comes down to what you want to get out of the exercise and how committed you are to seeing it through. There is an art and science to conducting an effective strategic planning process and finding a skilled facilitator that understands how organizations work is well worth the expense.

Commissioner Conroe expressed his belief that ORSANCO has the skill and expertise among its staff and Commissioners to complete this process in-house without use of a paid facilitator, especially in light of budgetary challenges.

Commissioner Pigott commented that he strongly supports moving forward with the strategic planning process and further added that it is important that the Commission commit to reviewing the plan annually to keep up with changing circumstances. He also indicated support for utilizing a paid facilitator with a fresh set of eyes to get the most out of this process.

Commissioner Lovan commented that he has been through all types of strategic planning processes. He has found the simpler and less expensive efforts that are clear and concise are the most beneficial. It is important though to revisit the plan on an annual basis to look at your mission, vision, and strategic goals.

Commissioner Frevert noted that ORSANCO's strategic plan must be anchored to the provisions of the Compact.

Commissioner Bruny commented that the Commission needs to determine if succession planning is part of the strategic planning process or if that is a separate issue. The Commission also needs to determine what role the advisory committees will play through this planning process.

The session concluded with Chairman Kupke thanking all those that participated in the Roundtable discussion.