

**Hudson Valley Flood Resilience Network**  
*Strategic Roadmap*  
**2023-2028**



*Photo of the Hudson River from Strategic Roadmap Stakeholder Survey*

*April 2023*

The Hudson Valley Flood Resilience Network Strategic Roadmap was written with support from Hannah Mico, Resilient Communities Manager at River Network. An intentional stakeholder engagement process was used in 2022 and 2023 to engage members, partners, and collaborators of the Hudson Valley Flood Resilience Network to inform the content of this document.

Writing, editing, and refinement of the Roadmap was a joint effort between River Network & the Flood Resilience Network's Strategic & Planning Teams (in alphabetical order):

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- Jessica Kuonen, Hudson Estuary Specialist, New York Sea Grant – Cornell University
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- Julie Noble, Environmental Education & Sustainability Coordinator, City of Kingston
- Emily Vail, Executive Director, Hudson River Watershed Alliance
- Libby Zemaitis, Climate Resilience Program Coordinator, NYS DEC Hudson River Estuary Program + NYS Water Resources Institute at Cornell University



**Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation**

**Hudson River  
Estuary Program**



**NEW YORK STATE  
WATER RESOURCES  
INSTITUTE**

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## **Mission**

The Hudson Valley Flood Resilience Network connects local governments who are committed to taking actionable steps to manage current and future flood risk.

We do this through:

- Convening communities for peer learning on projects and strategies
- Coordinating local and regional efforts
- Sharing opportunities for funding and training
- Facilitating communication between local governments and regional partners
- Communicating on challenges and barriers as a unified voice
- Catalyzing flood adaptation actions

## **Values**

The Hudson Valley Flood Resilience Network jointly agrees to the following list of values and community-based agreements:

- Share resources, stories, and data intentionally and meaningfully
- Embrace and celebrate diverse people, perspectives, and experiences
- Listen to understand and “share the mic”
- Center our work around shared goals and visions
- Gather with a collaborative spirit
- Communicate with honesty, transparency, and positive intent
- Value and elevate all of the knowledge in the Network

## **Founding & History**

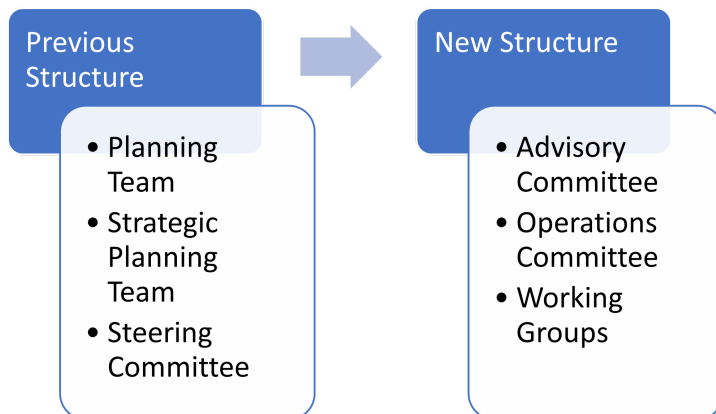
The Hudson Valley experienced historic watershed flooding in 2011 after Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee, followed by historic Hudson River flooding in 2012 after Superstorm Sandy. Starting in 2012, the City of Kingston, Village of Catskill, Village of Piermont, and Town of Stony Point each received funding from the Hudson River Estuary Program to engage in a 9-month sea level rise planning process, led by Scenic Hudson, Consensus Building Institute (CBI), and other partners, to examine waterfront vulnerabilities along the Hudson River.

In 2015, members of the municipalities’ Sea Level Rise Task Forces formed the Sea-level Rise Implementation Learning Group to compare vulnerabilities and strategies. The City of Kingston received a Hudson River Estuary Program grant to support this work. Participating communities found these meetings valuable, and, in 2018, expanded to include all municipalities along the tidal Hudson River. The Village of Piermont received a Hudson River Estuary Program grant to create the Hudson River Flood Resilience Network, with additional leadership from the Village of Catskill, City of Kingston, Hudson River Estuary Program, CBI, Resilience Communications & Consulting, and Scenic Hudson. The Network grew from three to 14 municipalities, with regular educational programming and waterfront tours. This programming shifted online in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, with particular support from New York Sea Grant, Resilience Communications & Consulting, and CBI in 2021 after the 2018 grant was completed.

In 2021, CBI, New York Sea Grant, and the Hudson River Watershed Alliance received grant funding from the Hudson River Estuary Program to develop a strategic roadmap for FRN, while continuing to deliver programming. As the Network continued to develop, we particularly saw the need to define governance and roles more clearly, including planning for long-term sustainability and leadership transitions across a longer timeframe than the two-year grant cycles. A strong organizational foundation will allow FRN to better serve more of its municipal members, especially communities with more limited capacity.

With funding from the New York State Water Resources Institute at Cornell University, the Hudson River Watershed Alliance brought on River Network to co-create the strategic roadmap. River Network is a nationwide capacity-building organization that focuses on climate resilient communities; robust water laws and policies; healthy rivers in agricultural landscapes; clean, safe, affordable drinking water; and strong organizations and leaders across all watersheds. The strategic roadmap process included an in-depth stakeholder engagement process to better understand the needs and goals of members of the FRN, both to define an effective organizational structure and to develop supportive programming.

## Transitions



## Leadership Structure

### ***Advisory Committee***

To promote shared leadership and elevate the expertise of the Network, Flood Resilience Network is led by an Advisory Committee, comprised of at least 7 members. Leadership is shared amongst the Advisory Committee, Operations Committee, and Working Group leads. Specific roles are detailed below.

The makeup of the Advisory Committee is recommended to be:

- 1 representative from Hudson River Estuary Program
- 2 partners
- 4 members representing Hudson River Watershed municipalities or counties

The Advisory Committee may include more members than outlined above, so long as the ratio of Members to Partners remains consistent.

The functions of the Advisory Committee are to advise on Network programming, prioritize topics covered in training and informational sessions, direct Network goals and strategies, identify needs and gaps for resource creation and sharing, and to keep the Network's scope grounded in local priorities. The Advisory Committee might also be involved in making decisions on behalf of the Network related to funding, advocacy opportunities, managing Network growth, and planning/facilitating gatherings of the Network. It is recommended that the Advisory Committee meet quarterly, at minimum.

Advisory Committee members serve terms of 2 years, and might lead working groups comprised of other network members throughout the course of their term. There are no limits on how many terms can be served. Terms start in January and end in December of the following year.

Advisory Committee members can self-nominate themselves for election, or be invited/selected for nomination with their consent. The nomination and approval process will be overseen by the Operations Committee. Network Members will vote to approve the Advisory Committee once per year at an annual gathering: a full slate of candidates will be presented and Members will vote to either approve or reject the entire Advisory Committee. If the Network fails to approve the Committee candidates, up to one month's time is allowed for amendments to the candidates before another vote will be cast to approve the Advisory Committee. If the Network still fails to approve a new Advisory Committee, the Operations Committee and existing Advisory Committee will appoint new members for the coming year.

### ***Operations Committee***

The Operations Committee maintains the day-to-day operations and administration of the Network. This Committee includes staff from New York Sea Grant and Hudson River Watershed Alliance, who are paid for their time through dedicated funding from the New York State Water Resources Institute at Cornell University and NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program. New York Sea Grant staff and Hudson River Watershed Alliance staff will share responsibilities and co-facilitate the Network.

In general, New York Sea Grant and Hudson River Watershed Alliance will coordinate and work together on programming; developing communications materials; providing administrative support for the Advisory Committee, Working Groups, members, and partners; submitting quarterly reports for current funding; and identifying additional potential funding sources.

### **[Operations Committee roles.](#)**

### ***Working Groups***

Working groups comprising Advisory Committee members and other Network Members and Partners will form as needed to carry out strategies and advance Network goals; these groups

are temporary and project-based. A member of the Advisory Committee should always be present in working groups, either as a lead, co-lead, or participant.

Working Groups are formed at the request of a Member and/or by the direction of the Advisory Committee. All Working Groups need to be approved by the Advisory Committee.

At this time, only the Operations Committee is identified as a permanent structure adjacent to the Advisory Committee.

## **Membership Structure**

Members are municipal and county governments in the Hudson River estuary watershed, represented by any number of elected, appointed, or hired officials working directly with or adjacent to the issue of flood resiliency. There are no dues for Members.

Members are responsible for attending Network programming to increase their knowledge and capacity for resilience planning, share their experiences with other Network members, bring their stories of success forward for shared learning, and participate in regular feedback opportunities to help shape and direct the Network.

Members receive the following benefits by participating in the Network:

- Access to a peer network
- Educational opportunities including technical training
- Access to a network of agency, community, and consulting partners and resources

In general, Members are involved in informal decision-making in the following ways:

- Once per year, Members are asked to approve the Advisory Committee, using whatever format is deemed appropriate by the Operations Committee
- As is relevant, Members are asked to sign-on to, weigh-in on, or opt-in to support state or federal policy positions that the Network may choose to take, including advocacy for funding and investments in flood infrastructure
- When applicable, Members may be asked to provide insight or feedback on funding that the Network might pursue, if it is not consistent with the current funding portfolio or raises ethical concerns
- Members are asked regularly for feedback on Network programming, events, and other business

## ***Member Agreements***

Membership is formalized with an annual agreement, which outlines the responsibilities of the Network & the Member to each other, as well as the Member municipality's goals related to flood resiliency. This format allows the Network to actively respond to Member needs and goals, to maintain member contact information, and for Members to regularly evaluate their progress, participation, and value in the Network.

Member Agreements include the Network's group agreements for convening together.

## [2023 Member Agreement](#)

### **Partnership Structure**

Network Partners are categorized in three ways:

- Agency Partners: state, federal, or regional agencies
- Community Partners: regional (multi-county), state, or national non-governmental organizations, community foundations, corporate funders
- Consulting Partners: consultants, engineers, lawyers, other private-sector partners

There are no dues for Partners to participate in the Network, though there may be individual event fees specific to Partners.

Partners are expected to contribute time, expertise, capacity, and resources to advance the work of Network Members' flood resilience goals. This may include facilitating training on technical topics, assisting in planning efforts, connecting municipalities to funding opportunities/funding a project, participating in peer-sharing gatherings to promote knowledge or helpful services, or other activities.

By participating in the Network, Partners receive the following benefits:

- Access to a municipal network
- Connections to other professionals interested in flood resilience

### ***Partnership Agreements***

Partnership with the Network is defined by a Partner Inventory Form, which Partners will be prompted to fill out on an annual basis. This form will identify a partner's areas of expertise, geographic focus, interest in the Network, connection to flood resilience, ability to work with Members, and other information. Partners are expected to contribute to the Network and support Members in their efforts to implement flood resilience projects.

Partner agreements include the Network's group agreements for convening together.

## [2023 Partner Inventory Form](#)

## **Programming Goals**

Three main goals, identified through multiple stakeholder engagement opportunities, will persist throughout five year plan:

1. Strengthen Network systems
2. Increase Network connectivity
3. Provide meaningful Network programming & tools

Pages 15 and 16 summarize the workplan and distribution of Working Groups throughout the five year plan.

### **Year 1**

#### Goal: Strengthen Network systems

Strategy: Transition Network leadership structure

Owner: Existing Planning Team & Steering Committee, Network Members

Strategy: Build internal communications structures and document management systems

Owner: Operations Committee

Strategy: Develop onboarding documents for new members

Owner: Operations Committee in partnership with Advisory Committee

Strategy: Introduce Member & Partner structures and complete agreements for existing entities

Owner: Operations Committee

Strategy: Recruit & convene web workgroup to create & manage a website workplan, identify funding for website design & build

Owner: 1-2 members of Advisory Committee

Strategy: Recruit & convene funding workgroup to research funding “hub” structure & management options

Owner: 1-2 members of Advisory Committee, Hudson River Estuary Program

Strategy: Recruit & convene governance workgroup to evaluate Member structures and decision-making, Network “bylaws,” and other pinch-points in the Network structure transition

Owner: 1-2 members of Advisory Committee

Strategy: Begin planning for future grant applications to support the Network, such as the National Coastal Resilience Fund

Owner: Operations Committee

#### Goal: Increase Network connectivity

Strategy: Design Network website that includes space for a member directory, resource library, newsletter archive, about the network, and other information as is relevant (build of website may be delayed due to funding)



Owner: Web Workgroup

Strategy: Develop framework for online Member/Partner directory

Owner: Web Workgroup

Strategy: Evaluate Network newsletter content to promote Member spotlights, Partner spotlights, and Member/Partner events outside of Network programming

Owner: Operations Committee

Strategy: Evaluate capacity to introduce a cohort-style onboarding of new Members to complete vulnerability assessments & receive support

Owner: Advisory Committee

Strategy: Explore collaboration and structure of the Network and the existing Waterfront Resilience Coordination Group

Owner: Advisory Committee, Hudson River Estuary Program

*Goal: Provide meaningful Network programming & tools*

Strategy: Create an internal annual program calendar, including categorizing different Network offerings (such as site visits, lunch & learns, annual meeting, etc.).

Owner: Operations Committee, with Advisory Committee feedback

Strategy: Develop a screening tool to evaluate relevance and use of program offerings

Owner: Operations Committee

Strategy: Develop a feedback mechanism to assess programming with Network input, focusing on the Member Agreement and Partner Inventory forms as a starting place

Owner: Operations Committee

Strategy: Research funding opportunities and identify ways to build & manage a funding “hub” for Network Members to access project funding

Owner: Funding workgroup, Hudson River Estuary Program

Strategy: Build foundation for online resource library by compiling existing tools & information, to be housed on the new website; this should include an open call to the Network to submit resources & tools they use

Owner: Web Workgroup, Advisory Committee & Network at Large

Strategy: Identify resources to create that support communications within and between municipalities during flood events

Owner: Workgroup with input from Advisory Committee & Operations Committee

Strategy: Host 1-2 in-person site visits for Members & Partners

Owner: Network members (to be identified), with Operations Committee support

Strategy: Host technical training opportunities for Network Members, with at least one opportunity focused on funding opportunities while the funding hub is being researched and built  
Owner: Advisory Committee in partnership with Funding Workgroup

## **Year 2**

### Goal: Strengthen Network systems

Strategy: Revisit Advisory Committee structure after Year 1 via self-assessment; re-tool as needed

Owner: Advisory Committee in partnership with Governance Workgroup

Strategy: Submit recommendations for Network structures based on the findings of the governance workgroup

Owner: Governance Workgroup

Strategy: Implement recommendations for voting, bylaws, or other governance structures

Owner: Operations Committee, Advisory Committee, Governance Workgroup

Strategy: Recruit & convene storytelling workgroup to guide collection of case studies and creation of project library

Owner: 1-2 Members of Advisory Committee

Strategy: Continue convening funding workgroup to build online funding “hub”

Owner: Funding Workgroup

Strategy: Renew Member & Partner Agreements

Owner: Operations Committee

Strategy: Recruit for and convene an events workgroup that focuses on the Network’s Annual Meeting and explores possibility of a Network Summit or Conference

Owner: 1-2 Members of Advisory Committee

Strategy: Apply for National Coastal Resilience Fund or other funding opportunities

Owner: Operations Committee

### Goal: Increase Network connectivity

Strategy: Complete buildout of a new Network website to house the directory, resource library, funding hub, and general Network information

Owner: Consultant in partnership with Web Working Group

Strategy: Develop library of project case studies, including guidance on how to implement a similar project; recommendation to include a way for a community to submit a new case study or project story on the website

Owner: Storytelling Working Group

Strategy: Develop a mechanism for connecting Members who are working on similar projects to promote collaboration & joint funding opportunities

Owner: Advisory Committee

Strategy: Promote peer-sharing circles and lunch-and-learns as informal Networking opportunities, virtually and in-person

Owner: Operations Committee, with Advisory Committee feedback

Strategy: Maintain Member & Partner directory online

Owner: Operation Committee

Strategy: Host the Network's first Annual Meeting & request first Member approval of Advisory Committee

Owner: Events Workgroup, Operations Committee, Advisory Committee

Goal: Provide meaningful Network programming & tools

Strategy: Publish funding "hub" online and advertise access to Network Members & Partners, along with potential guidance on accessing opportunities

Owner: Operations Committee

Strategy: Create online resource library of resources & tools compiled in Year 1

Owner: Web Workgroup

Strategy: Implement pilot of cohort-style onboarding of new Members, explored in Year 1

Owner: Operations Committee

Strategy: Establish a regular feedback mechanism around resource needs, along with programming priorities.

Owner: Operations Committee

Strategy: Focus on creating resources to help municipalities evaluate their flood preparedness and level of flood resilience

Owner: Workgroup with support from Operations Committee & Advisory Committee

Strategy: Host 1-2 in-person site visits for Members & Partners

Owner: Network members (to be identified), with Operations Committee support

Strategy: Host technical training opportunities for Network Members

Owner: Operations Committee, with Advisory Committee and Member feedback

### **Year 3**

Goal: Strengthen Network systems

Strategy: Complete self-evaluation of the Advisory Committee

Owner: Advisory Committee

Strategy: Explore creating working groups based on geographies or types of flooding experienced in different communities

Owner: 1-2 Members of Advisory Committee

Strategy: Evaluate Network funding profile for tensions and opportunities

Owner: Operations Committee & Advisory Committee

Strategy: Recruit & convene data working group to explore options for flood data collection, storage, and sharing within the Network

Owner: 1-2 Members of Advisory Committee

Goal: Increase Network connectivity

Strategy: Update case study library & increase storytelling capacities of the Network, possibly including video-storytelling

Owner: Storytelling Workgroup

Strategy: Renew Agreements and maintain Member & Partner directory online

Owner: Operations Committee

Strategy: Member & Partner outreach campaign to attract new communities & expertise

Owner: Operations Committee & Advisory Committee

Strategy: Host Annual Meeting

Owner: Events Workgroup, Advisory Committee, Operations Committee

Goal: Provide meaningful Network programming & tools

Strategy: Update online resource library as needed & maintain funding hub

Owner: Operations Committee

Strategy: Evaluate success of cohort-style onboarding for new Members; re-tool as needed to receive new Members as a result of the outreach campaign

Owner: Operations Committee

Strategy: Scope the value of hosting a Summit for Elected Officials to receive information on flood resilience

Owner: Events Workgroup

Strategy: Invest in building advocacy-specific resources or making advocacy-specific connections for Members & Partners

Owner: Workgroup with support from Operations Committee & Advisory Committee

Strategy: Host 1-2 in-person site visits for Members & Partners

Owner: Network members (to be identified), with Operations Committee support

Strategy: Host technical training opportunities for Network Members

Owner: Operations Committee, with Advisory Committee and Member feedback

Strategy: If recommendations suggest a conference-style event is helpful for the Network, plan & announce this offering

Owner: Events Workgroup, with Operations Committee support

#### **Year 4**

##### Goal: Strengthen Network systems

Strategy: Complete self-evaluation of Advisory Committee

Owner: Advisory Committee

Strategy: Create a sustainable fundraising plan based on previous funding evaluation, that includes funding for a staff person committed specifically to the Network

Owner: Operations Committee & Advisory Committee

Strategy: Transition Events Workgroup to a standing Annual Meeting Committee

Owner: Events Workgroup, 1-2 Members of Advisory Committee

##### Goal: Increase Network connectivity

Strategy: Renew Agreements and maintain Member & Partner directory online

Owner: Operations Committee

Strategy: Host Annual Meeting

Owner: Annual Meeting Committee

Strategy: Analyze impact of storytelling tools and collect feedback on functionality of project library/case studies

Owner: Storytelling Workgroup

##### Goal: Provide meaningful Network programming & tools

Strategy: Update online resource library as needed & maintain funding hub

Owner: Operations Committee

Strategy: Onboard new cohort of municipalities and complete risk assessments/planning

Owner: Operations Committee

Strategy: Follow recommendations of data working group to advance data sharing throughout the Network

Owner: Data Workgroup, with Operations Committee support

Strategy: Host 1-2 in-person site visits for Members & Partners

Owner: Network members (to be identified), with Operations Committee support

Strategy: Host technical training opportunities for Network Members

Owner: Operations Committee, with Advisory Committee and Member feedback

## **Year 5**

### Goal: Strengthen Network systems

Strategy: Complete self-evaluation of Advisory Committee

Owner: Advisory Committee

Strategy: Hire a support person specifically for the Network

Owner: Operations Committee

Strategy: Follow recommendations for convening working groups specific to geography/type of flooding

Owner: 1-2 Members of Advisory Board

Strategy: Review progress of current strategic roadmap and start a new planning process

Owner: Advisory Committee & Operations Committee

### Goal: Increase Network connectivity

Strategy: Renew Agreements and maintain Member & Partner directory online

Owner: Operations Committee

Strategy: Host Annual Meeting

Owner: Annual Meeting Committee

Strategy: Focus on storytelling the progress of the last five years through special newsletters, press releases, or other media

Owner: Operations Committee, Storytelling Workgroup

### Goal: Provide meaningful Network programming & tools

Strategy: Update online resource library as needed & maintain funding hub

Owner: Operations Committee

Strategy: Host 1-2 in-person site visits for Members & Partners

Owner: Network members (to be identified), with Operations Committee support

Strategy: Host technical training opportunities for Network Members

Owner: Operations Committee, with Advisory Committee and Member feedback

## SUMMARY OF WORKING GROUPS

1. Governance Working Group (years 1-2)
2. Web Working Group (years 1-2)
3. Funding Working Group (years 1-2)
4. Storytelling Working Group (years 2-4)
5. Events Working Group (years 2-4)
6. Data Working Group (years 3-5)
7. Geographic/Flooding Working Group (years 3-5)

## Timeline

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
<b>Governance</b>					
<b>Web</b>					
<b>Funding</b>					
<b>Storytelling</b>					
<b>Events</b>					
<b>Data</b>					
<b>Geography/ Types of Flooding</b>					

## SUMMARY OF WORKPLAN

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
<b>Strengthen Network systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Transition Network structures</li> <li>-Create Web Workgroup</li> <li>-Create Funding Workgroup</li> <li>-Create Governance Workgroup</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Assess new structures</li> <li>-Create Storytelling Workgroup</li> <li>-Create Events Workgroup</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Assess need for new working groups (data, geography/flooding)</li> <li>-Evaluate Network funding portfolio</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Create a funding plan</li> <li>-Transition Events Workgroup to Annual Meeting Committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Hire support staff for the Network</li> <li>-Review progress on Strategic Roadmap &amp; begin new planning process</li> </ul>
<b>Increase Network connectivity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Improve Network communications</li> <li>-Create frameworks for collaboration (directory, cohorts)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Buildout website</li> <li>-Compile case studies &amp; project library</li> <li>-Promote informal networking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Increase storytelling capacity of Network</li> <li>-Member &amp; Partner outreach campaign</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Analyze use of project library &amp; storytelling tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Highlight storytelling tools and progress in five years</li> </ul>
<b>Provide meaningful Network programming &amp; tools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Create annual program calendar</li> <li>-Focus on evaluation mechanisms</li> <li>-Compile existing tools &amp; information</li> <li>-Focus on communications &amp; funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Publish funding hub</li> <li>-Pilot municipal cohorts</li> <li>-Create resource library</li> <li>-Focus on emergency preparedness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Evaluate events &amp; programming from previous years</li> <li>-Maintain libraries &amp; hubs</li> <li>-Focus on advocacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Maintain libraries &amp; hubs</li> <li>-Onboard new cohort of Members</li> <li>-Focus on flood data &amp; forecasting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Maintain libraries &amp; hubs</li> <li>-Continue programming based on previous years</li> </ul>