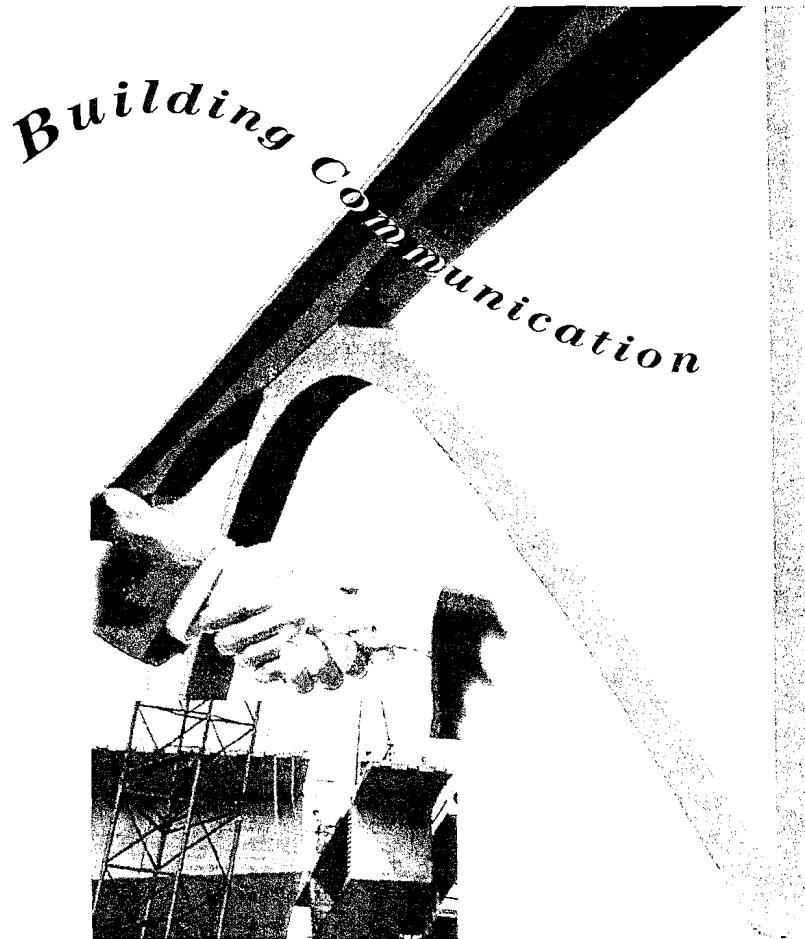


Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division

Partnering Implementation Guide



1996

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Introduction

How To Use This Guide

This *Partnering Implementation Guide* was developed by the Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division (EFLHD) Construction Operations Engineer's (COE's) and management. This guide is intended to be used by construction operations engineers, project engineers, contractors, partnering agencies, and third party facilitators to enhance partnering.

This guide outlines the procedures to be followed by COE's and project engineers to successfully manage a partnering effort. The procedures are listed in a check list format so that leaders of the facilitation process may easily keep track of what actions have been taken. The checklists itemize the step by step actions required from the beginning of a partnering effort to the conclusion of the project and subsequent end of partnering. Since each partnering activity is different and requires procedural modifications to meet the unique needs of each project, the user of this manual should view the checklists as a guide and choose the steps that best fit the situation.

Also included in this guide is commentary which describes the reasons why certain procedural decisions are made. The commentary also describes what is expected of partnering leadership, the partners, and the partnering process. In this way the *Partnering Implementation Guide* may be used as a tool to train new COE's and project engineers.

In keeping with Total Quality Management, the intent of this guide is to place the focus on process. A clear focus on process means that the EFLHD project personnel will be held accountable for choosing and implementing the actions that make partnering possible. Leaders may choose to handle all actions themselves or they may delegate these responsibilities to others. If delegation is a viable option then the step by step procedures within this manual provide leaders with an overview system to ensure that all tasks are completed as needed.

In summary, this guide is intended to be a working tool for partnering leadership.

What is Partnering?

Partnering is defined as the formal process of bringing teams from different organizations together where they cooperate to achieve a set of separate but mutually complementary objectives. [Policy—FLHM 1C3]

Formal Partnering

Formal partnering involves a four phase process. The COE sends a letter to the contractor highlighting the benefits of partnering a particular project. This letter may be followed by a phone call to reinforce the importance of partnering. Once the contractor accepts the invitation to partner, the partnering process is facilitated by an independent facilitator. The four phases of partnering include:

Phase I—Partnering Design

In the design phase, the independent facilitator gathers data that is used to develop and implement a successful team development strategy for the partnering team. Among other items of assessment, the facilitator evaluates the degree of commitment that all partners bring to the process. The facilitator may also evaluate the past partnering experiences of each partner including the similarities and differences of those experiences.

Phase II—Team Development

The team development phase is concerned with creating a foundation for successful teamwork. The essential elements of the team development phase include: establishing a partnering agreement that describes how team members will treat each other, specifying an escalation procedure that describes how decisions will be handled when the scope of the decision exceeds the authority of partnering team personnel, creating a set of common goals which are shared by all of the partnering team, and clearly identifying the roles and responsibilities of each member of the partnering team. Partners are cautioned that partnering is not intended to be a means for arbitrary contract changes.

Phase III—Implementation

The implementation phase of partnering is intended to ensure that the attitudes of partnering are practiced in informal as well as formal settings in every aspect of the project. In the implementation of partnering concepts, the problems that are solved and the decisions that

are made are conveyed to all project personnel. Project leaders on all sides encourage open communication and problem solving at all levels of project operations. The goal of partnering is to eliminate adversarial posturing. Both sides work diligently to respond to each other's requests.

Phase IV—Evaluation and Measurement

Partnering evaluation is an important component of the partnering experience. Effective evaluations can provide all partners with information on the usefulness of their partnering efforts. Periodic partnering evaluation helps the partnering team stay on track. In addition, data collected on the benefits of partnering help determine the effectiveness of partnering versus traditional methods and adversarial relationships. Lessons learned from evaluation and measurement are shared with all partners so that future partnering processes may be enhanced. In this way the continuous improvement of partnering is ensured.

Informal Partnering

How It Differs from the Formal Process

In the informal partnering process, the same functions are performed as in the formal process. The major distinctions between the two processes include:

- a. The informal process is lead by the COE, the contractor, or a combination of both;
- b. The informal process may or may not include formal partnering meetings.

It is recommended but not required that the informal partnering process operate with a partnering agreement, escalation procedures, and a set of complementary objectives.

Because the informal process relies heavily on the perception that a partnering attitude exists between the contractor and the Government, formal partnering training is not usually needed.

Informal partnering is subject to the same partnering measurements as the formal process. Although the measurement system remains the same for formal and informal partnering, project personnel may not have sufficient time to assess all of the things which are evaluated in the formal process. Therefore, comparisons of formal and informal partnering will differ in the quality of the results obtained and that difference will be reflected in the measurements taken.

Informal partnering also has four phases. However, informal partnering is different from formal partnering in the following ways:

No Independent Third Party Facilitator

Informal partnering does not have an external facilitator. Facilitation is handled by the COE, the contractor, or a COE/contractor facilitation team.

Phase I—Design is Handled at Pre-Construction Conference

The design phase of partnering can be handled at the pre-construction conference. During the pre-construction conference, the EFLHD personnel under the leadership of the COE, work with the contractor to develop a preliminary plan of how partnering will be implemented on the job. This plan may specify such things as the type of partnering meetings, the frequency of meetings, and location of the meetings [near the job site is recommended]. Partnering agreements, escalation procedures and common goals may also be discussed at the

pre-construction conference. Or, these topics may be addressed at the first partnering meeting scheduled after the pre-construction conference.

Partnering Team Development is Project Management

Team development occurs as part of the project management. Early in the project, the COE develops the partnering agreement, escalation procedures, and common goals with his or her counterpart.

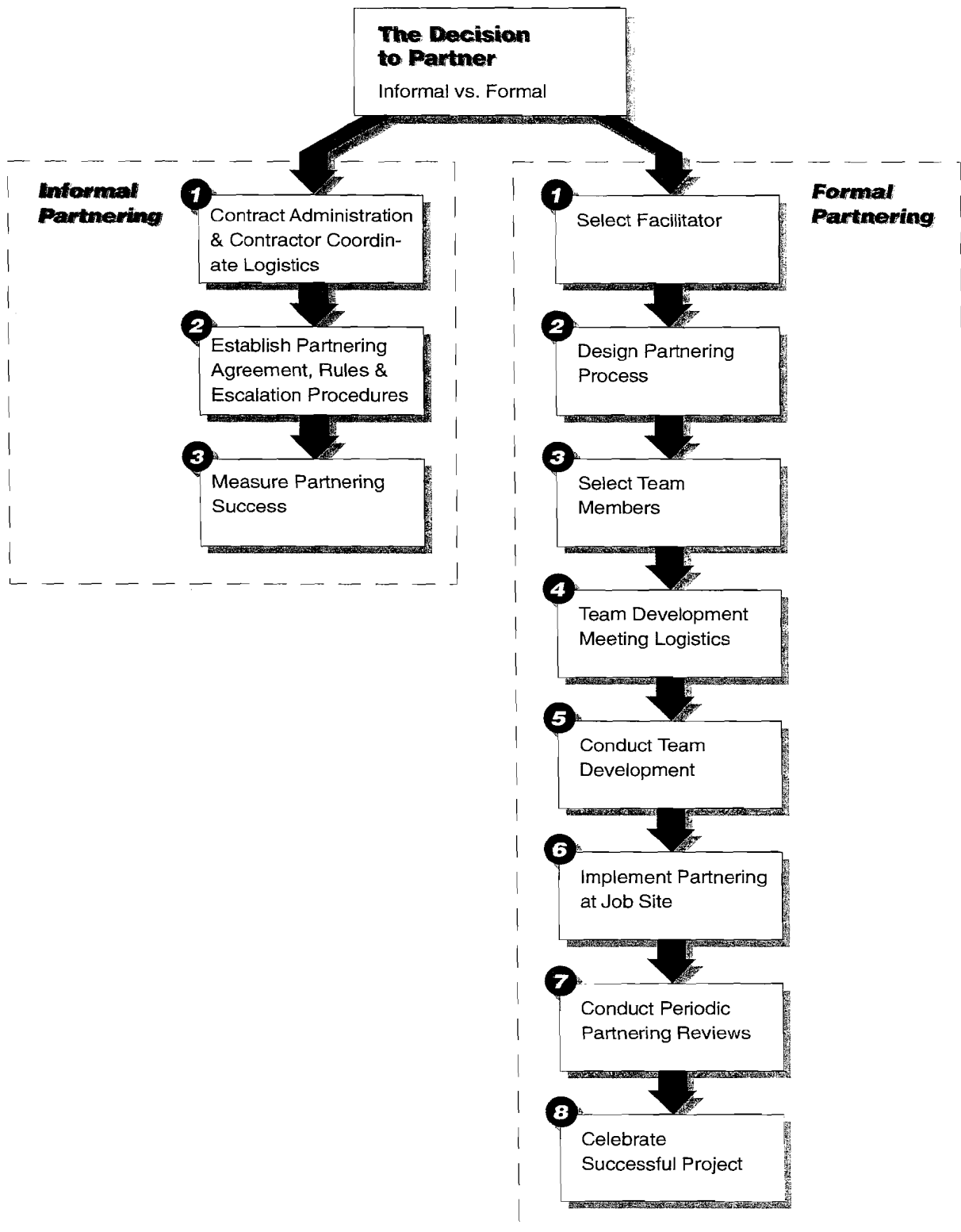
Emphasis is on Attitude

The major emphasis in informal partnering is on the partnering attitude. This attitude is conveyed throughout the implementation of the project and is characterized by the phrase, “If there is a problem, we can work it out.”

Transition to Formal at Anytime

At any time in the informal partnering process, COE's and their counterparts may move from informal partnering to formal partnering. Anytime a contractor requests a change from informal to formal partnering, that request will be honored. When formal partnering is in place and partners desire a transition to the informal process, the partners must agree that such a move is in the best interest of all parties.

The Partnering Process



The Decision to Partner

Every Project is a Project to be Partnered

The decision to partner is fundamentally a decision of the time and resources which need to be invested in the partnering process. Large projects, complex projects or projects with anticipated problems require more partnering effort than small, easy, and trouble free projects.

Projects exceeding ten million dollars in scope are considered large and deserve a considerable investment in partnering. Generally falling into the same category are those projects that have complex or unique design elements. Complex projects may also include those that have experimental research components. Anticipated problems can be listed under many categories including such things as design changes, complex owner/contractor relationships, and adversarial attitudes.

Projects between three million and ten million dollars in scope represent a mid-sized range of projects. For projects in this range, partnering offers a method for improving work processes and relationships. In addition, other factors influence the degree of difficulty of mid-sized projects increasing the usefulness of the partnering process. Conceivably, the combination of a number of factors may increase the degree of difficulty and the need for partnering. The cost effectiveness of such partnering projects is typically not a concern. Partnering on projects greater than three million dollars in size can be cost justified. Within this range, the key question is time available for partnering on the part of project personnel. The COE's justification to engage in formal partnering or not on mid-sized projects rests largely on the perception of how much time can be saved through a formal process.

Projects of less than three million dollars in scope are considered small and may be partnered in an informal manner. Simple projects that do not contain unusual design elements, complex owner/contractor relationships, or difficult site conditions may also utilize an informal partnering process.

A combination of factors may lead to a partnering decision that is either formal or informal. For example a large project may be an easy job. All of the partners may naturally practice partnering skills and an informal process may work well. On the other hand, a small project may challenge all parties because of complex or unusual conditions requiring the assistance of a third party facilitator and use of the formal process.

A third possibility exists. The project may operate without any partnering. The decision to not partner is not a desired option. However, some situations may exist where one or more of the key participants choose not to partner and no amount of persuasion will bring them to the partnering table.

The decision to partner, to use the formal or informal approach, or not to partner at all can be illustrated by a matrix (see next page). To enhance the use of the matrix, one can assign point values to each of the choices. Total point values above a certain range indicate the need for formal partnering while totals below a certain range can use the informal approach. Partnering should not be initiated where there is no support for the idea.

The Accountability Factor

In 1992 the President's Council on Competitiveness determined that 80 billion dollars a year were spent on litigation. Partnering holds the promise of reducing that number because partnering is an alternative to litigation and contract growth. Yet partnering is viable only if it is used. Therefore, the decision to use partnering and the level of partnering used is a subject of accountability. Avoiding the use of partnering is not acceptable. Using partnering practices poorly is not acceptable.

► *The Partnering Decision Matrix*

Degree of Difficulty \ Size of Project	Large (>\$10 million)	Mid-size (\$3-10 million)	Small (<\$3 million)
Complex Project			
Experimental Procedures Required			
Anticipated Design Changes			
Difficult Site Conditions			
Challenging Schedule			
Adversarial or Litigious History			
Moderately Complex Design			
Typical Schedule			
Partnering Attitude Unknown			
Easy Project			
Good Partnering History			
No Support for Partnering			

► *The Decision To Partner Checklist*

Partnering Choices:

☐ No partnering on this job, contractor declined

☐ Informal process

☐ Formal process

— Letter of invitation from C.O.

— Phone call from C.O.

Reason for Choice:

The Formal Process

Selecting an Independent Facilitator

By definition the formal partnering process requires the services of an independent, third party facilitator. The contractor and the EFLHD jointly select the facilitator.

Where Government contracts are involved, a paperwork advantage often exists if the services of the facilitator are acquired by the contractor.

When hiring a facilitator, partners should be aware that not all facilitators are equal in experience. An experienced facilitator should be used. Local facilitators should be considered.

Selection of an independent facilitator is first and foremost a quality issue. Unqualified and inexperienced facilitators produce average results at best. Partnering facilitators need to be skilled in four areas. These areas include:

Diagnostic Skills

Diagnostic skills provide the basis for the design and implementation of a project life cycle partnering effort. The facilitator should be good at asking open-ended questions that reveal attitudes about partnering and past experience that may influence the current project.

Team Development Skills

Team development skills assist project personnel in developing the essentials of teamwork. The facilitator should be prepared to help the team develop and implement a partnering agreement, escalation procedures, common goals, decision-making processes, and communication linkages. Facilitators should view the partnering team as a work team that is focused on project issues. Experience in partnering is valuable. In addition, experience in facilitating project teams and cross functional teams is valuable. Background in the construction industry is also a plus.

Mediation and Alternative Dispute Resolution Experience

Mediation and alternative dispute resolution skills in team settings are extremely valuable in the implementation phase of partnering.

Active Involvement Attitude

Partnering facilitation is best when it is viewed as part of the project for the life of the project. When facilitators are kept informed and included in some periodic partnering meetings, they can provide better service. Facilitators who communicate a willingness to be a part of the project team will generally provide better service than the facilitator who says, “Call me if you have problems.” For most facilitators the most profitable part of the partnering process is the team development phase. Diagnostics and follow-up are time consuming and require more preparation, follow-up work, and skill than the original team building. Consequently, a test of quality facilitation is a willingness to be actively involved for the duration of the project.

Summary of Qualifications

Good facilitation is based on many factors. Among these are experience and skill. In addition, the selection of facilitators can be enhanced when the COE checks references and evaluates the facilitator against the criteria established in the checklist of qualities of good facilitation. All other factors being equal, facilitators local to the area should be chosen to decrease the cost of professional services.

► *Potential Facilitators*

1.	_____
	<i>name</i>

	<i>organization</i>

	<i>address</i>

	<i>phone</i>
2.	_____
	<i>name</i>

	<i>organization</i>

	<i>address</i>

	<i>phone</i>
3.	_____
	<i>name</i>

	<i>organization</i>

	<i>address</i>

	<i>phone</i>
4.	_____
	<i>name</i>

	<i>organization</i>

	<i>address</i>

	<i>phone</i>

► *Quality Facilitation, Positive Indicators Checklist*

- ☐ Is this facilitator experienced in the construction industry?
- ☐ Has this facilitator conducted a number of successful partnering projects?
- ☐ Does this facilitator have extensive background in working in public and private sector organizations?
- ☐ Does this facilitator view partnering as a commitment for the life of the project?
- ☐ Is this facilitator acceptable to all partners?
- ☐ Is this facilitator a skillful interviewer?
- ☐ Does the facilitator have a background in organizational development?
- ☐ Is this facilitator skilled in alternative dispute resolution?
- ☐ Can the facilitator provide examples of partnering agreements that she/he has helped develop?
- ☐ Does the facilitator view communication as the process through which work gets done?
- ☐ Does the facilitator custom design each partnering program?
- ☐ Does the facilitator initiate the possibility of diagnostic interviews with the prospective partners?
- ☐ Does the facilitator initiate discussion of follow-up to ensure partnering over the life of the project?
- ☐ Is the facilitator versatile, able to handle a wide range of challenges and needs?
- ☐ Is the facilitator focused on your needs?
- ☐ Is the facilitator fair minded, able to see all sides of an issue?
- ☐ Is the facilitator strong, demonstrating an ability to take and maintain control in difficult situations?
- ☐ Is the facilitator well prepared?
- ☐ Does the facilitator show depth in knowledge and skills?
- ☐ Did you check the references?

► *Quality Facilitation, Negative Factors Checklist*

- ☐ Is the facilitator's experience limited?
- ☐ Does the facilitator view partnering and team building as the same thing?
- ☐ Does the facilitator lack awareness that a partnering agreement is essential?
- ☐ Does the facilitator lack an understanding of the essential elements of a partnering agreement? [Procedures for how partners will work together and the escalation process, for example.]
- ☐ Does the facilitator view partnering as a one or two day team building exercise?
- ☐ Does the facilitator focus the team development process solely on training exercises that are fun to do?
- ☐ Does the facilitator view partnering as a touchy/feely exercise?
- ☐ Is the facilitator a poor interviewer asking questions exclusively about feelings, attitudes, and values avoiding project specific concerns?
- ☐ Have the facilitator's credentials, including education and experience, been verified?
- ☐ Were adequate references provided?
- ☐ Is the facilitator biased?
- ☐ Does the facilitator lack flexibility?
- ☐ Is the facilitator a poor communicator?
- ☐ Is the facilitator desperate for business?
- ☐ Will the facilitator compromise on price?
- ☐ Is the facilitator trying to "buy" the business?

► *Facilitator and Key Contacts*

The Facilitator:

name

organization

address

phone

fax

The Facilitator's Contacts:

› *Contract Administrator/COE*

name

organization

address

phone

fax

› *Contractor*

name

organization

address

phone

fax

› *Client/Owner*

name

organization

address

phone

fax

Partnering Meeting Logistics

Meeting logistics are an important part of the partnering process. Partners need to be comfortable and able to have ready accessibility to food, beverages, and basic office supplies. COE's and other Government employees attending partnering meetings should act in a manner consistent with Government regulation regarding food and beverage.

At the pre-construction meeting, decisions should be made with respect to meeting logistics. The first logistics decision is determining who is to be responsible for arranging the facilities and ensuring that all partners will have what they need. Sometimes this decision is one of convenience. The person closest to the facility makes the arrangements. At other times, the arranger is also the one who is to be invoiced for the services. Or, the facilitator may want to take on the responsibility for the arrangements because of room arrangements, timing breaks, and audio visual equipment needs that are likely to affect the program.

The Meeting Site

The location of the partnering session is an important consideration. Some people would rather hold the first meeting at a resort setting to give partners time to work and get to know each other without constant interruption from telephone, fax, and other message carriers. Holding such a meeting at a place remote from the work site also tends to increase the participants' satisfaction with the session. Usually follow-up meetings are held at or near the work site.

The most common arrangements for the first partnering meeting are to hold it close to the work site. Occasionally contractors have hosted the meeting at their offices to increase the familiarity of their partners with their organization. The same is true of the owner and the EFLHD personnel. However, the team development meeting should be set in a neutral location so that one party does not feel at any disadvantage because of location.

The physical layout of the room needs to be carefully considered. Having more space available is far better than too little. Often hotels have occupancy ratings for their meeting rooms. As a rule of thumb, ask for a room that will hold at least twice as many people as who will actually be attending the program.

Selecting Members for the Partnering Team

Who is on the Team?

Who is on the partnering team? This question is central to partnering. Ideally, effective partnering requires that participants are those who can make decisions, resolve issues, solve problems, and maintain a partnering attitude. In order to be effective partners, participants need to be familiar with the project and also be skillful communicators.

Three key prerequisites for participation include:

1. The empowerment to identify problems and potential solutions
2. Technical ability and familiarity with the project
3. The training and skill to be an effective partner

The result of empowerment, technical ability, and partnering skills is to produce prompt, fair solutions.

Involvement

A partnering team issue is the amount of involvement required by all participants. Just as the Division Engineer's involvement must be limited due to time limitations, the COE faces the same issue. Each COE may be involved in many formal partnering projects per year. It has been estimated that a minimum of 30 partnering days per year are required by each COE. Consequently, the ability to delegate the active participation and leadership of partnering to project level personnel is essential. Equally important is that each individual to whom such responsibility is delegated demonstrate the ability to identify problems and potential solutions, possess the technical ability to meet project needs, coordinate internal resources with the COE, and have the management skill to effectively lead partnering with the contractor.

COE's need to attend partnering sessions to the extent to be satisfied that each team/project is following proper concepts and processes and that standards and variations are within the desired limits. The COE needs to attend enough sessions to be assured that the overall program and individual projects are managing partnering as intended. Until partnering becomes an integral part of the project management process, it is recommended that COE's attend all or most of the partnering meetings.

► *Partnering Team Selection Criteria Checklist*

Selection Criteria for Team Members

- ☐ Empowered to make decisions on behalf of their organization
- ☐ Able to solve problems and resolve issues with partners
- ☐ Able to maintain a partnering attitude demonstrating a willingness to work with others in a team setting
- ☐ Is a stake holder in the project with project specific responsibilities

Represented Organizations

- ☐ EFLHD Construction
- ☐ Contractor
- ☐ Client/owner
- ☐ Utilities
- ☐ Subcontractors
- ☐ Facilitator
- ☐ Other stake holders:

Partnering Team Organizational Representation

The formal partnering process has participants from four different organizations.

1. The client/owner
2. The contractor
3. EFLHD personnel
4. The facilitator

Fulfilling Key Roles

The roles that need to be fulfilled by each organization include:

- *Owner*—This person represents the owner's or client's interests. In addition this individual helps solve problems and make decisions that are client based concerns.
- *Contractor*—This individual or individuals represent the prime contractor. They are the project site counterparts of the EFLHD construction personnel.
- *Subcontractors*—In addition to the prime contractor, the subcontractors may play an important role. The essential criterion for inclusion is whether or not the subcontractor will have the responsibility for a key activity or a major part of the work. When in doubt about whether to include a subcontractor, lean toward inclusion. The rule of thumb is that excluding people gains little while inclusion can offer a great deal of potential. This is especially true in the first partnering meeting. On large projects the first meetings may contain upwards of 20 participants. However the core partnering team usually consists of 8 to 12 people who meet frequently and then call upon the larger pool of partners for special needs.
- *COE Construction/EFLHD*—The partnering project is led by the COE, who is designated the key Government participant. The COE should attend all partnering meetings for which he or she has direct responsibility. The COE also decides on the additional EFLHD personnel required, if any. The COE recommends that Project Engineers, or other key project people be included in formal partnering projects. The COE has limited authority to initiate

changes. The COE is responsible to the project and its partners to keep everyone fully informed of changes that he or she feels might benefit the project. The EFLHD executives should be involved as required by the escalation procedures.

- *The Facilitator*—The facilitator provides professional group leadership of the partnering process. The facilitator is a third party independent participant. In the role of independent third party, the facilitator must treat all partners with impartial equality and fairness. The responsibility of the facilitator is to ensure that the partnering process runs smoothly, that partnering agreements are established, that escalation procedures are created, that all partners receive training in skills to make partnering possible. This person is also a specialist in alternative dispute resolution and facilitates the group to resolution of any disputes that may arise from discussions about the job. The facilitator serves as a major communication link between parties to ensure continual open communication. The facilitator is the one who encourages and supports ongoing follow-up between partners. The facilitator is a key to effective measurement of the partnering process and is in the unique position to provide unbiased feedback to the partnering team. If requested, the facilitator will also provide a note keeper or team recorder.
- *The Coordinator*—COE's may appoint a coordinator to ensure that correspondence gets to the right people in a timely manner. The coordinator keeps the facilitator informed of project concerns, ensures that all partners receive meeting minutes, agendas, and other correspondence. The coordinator also may work as a liaison with the meeting room facility manager to coordinate meeting times, rooms, a/v equipment and other logistics.
- *Note Taker/Meeting Recorder*—An official recorder of key decisions and actions required of partners is needed. During the first formal partnering meeting this individual records partnering agreements, complementary objectives, and actions required of partnering participants. During follow-up meetings the note taker records agreements in sufficient detail to determine who agreed to what action in what period. The note taker also tracks unresolved issues and what action is required by whom to move the unresolved issues toward resolution.

The note taker may be provided by the facilitator, the contractor or the EFLHD. It is helpful for the note taker to possess a working familiarity with construction and engineering terminology and be someone who is not required to make technical contributions to the partnering team.

- *Special Contributors*—The partnering team may invite specialists to the partnering session to provide technical expertise on an as-needed basis.

Equality of Organizations

Equality of organizations is an important concept in team composition. In early partnering situations, contractors would often seek assurance that they could not be out voted in partnering meetings. Professional facilitation ensures that all ideas are given a fair hearing. In addition, decision making should always be based in consensus rather than majority rule. Decision making by consensus is particularly important in partnering teams where the EFLHD and client personnel out number contractor personnel.

Partnering Participant Roster

The participant roster is a very useful list. It can be used as a single source list for the initial invitation to the partnering meeting. Later, the roster can be used as a distribution list for the minutes of a partnering meeting. Facilitators often use the roster as a call list for information gathering or coordination.

► *Partnering Team Roles Checklist*

Roles to be Filled

☐ Facilitator

☐ Note taker/recorder

☐ Client/owner

› *Executive management*

☐ EFLHD

☐ Contractor

☐ Client/owner

› *Project management*

☐ EFLHD

☐ Contractor

☐ Client/owner

› *Subcontractors with key involvement*

☐ Subcontractors

› *Critical functions*

☐ Design

☐ Scheduling

☐ Utilities

☐ Other:

► Partnering Participant Roster

› _____
name title organization

phone fax address

› _____
name title organization

phone fax address

› _____
name title organization

phone fax address

› _____
name title organization

phone fax address

› _____
name title organization

phone fax address

› _____
name title organization

phone fax address

› _____
name title organization

phone fax address

› _____
name title organization

phone fax address

› _____
name title organization

phone fax address

Phase I—Partnering Design

The first phase is where the partnering design is created.

The first design concern is selecting the facilitator. If independent third party facilitators are used, they may provide a standardized approach or they may custom design the partnering process for the project. Custom design will reflect the needs of the project and nearly always require one or two days of design time. If project personnel are leading the partnering process, they may know the essential information that they need without any additional planning time.

The partnering design is concerned with questions of: Who is involved? Are the right people involved? Is the partnering team well balanced? Will the client be present? What is the nature of the project? What expectations do the partners have for the project? What expectations do the partners have for each other? What kind of issues are likely to arise? What kind of rules and procedures should this partnering team operate under? What are the differences between partners? In what ways are they similar? Information gleaned from these and other questions is used to create an agenda for the partnering workshop.

Much of the design work is done by the facilitator. This work is focused on what is required to achieve a successful partnering agreement, a set of partnering process rules, the creation escalation procedures, the set of complementary objectives, and the implementation plan for the partnering project.

The shaping of the workshop also depends on some general demographic data. The number of participants who will be in the workshop helps the facilitator organize the session and prepare sufficient sets of participant materials. The design is not only affected by the number of people but also by their role as well. Consequently, it helps the facilitator know participants' routine job responsibilities so that workshop activities can be structured to take advantage of everyone's strengths. In addition, the facilitator needs to know whether the participants can support the decisions that they make.

The methods used to collect this data may vary. The facilitator may interview key partners or meet with each partnering organization as a group. Surveys may be used to collect the information that is needed. Interviews invariably require the most time for data collection and are usually the most expensive method. Group meetings may take as long as interviews. Surveys will typically consume the least amount of time. Each method has distinct advantages and is used for specific reasons.

► *Phase I—Partnering Design Checklist*

Facilitator Coordination

- ☐ Hire Facilitator
- ☐ Facilitator given participant roster with name, title, address, and phone of team members
- ☐ Coordinate schedule for the first partnering meeting, set date

date of first team development meeting

- ☐ Provide basic information to help create agenda for first meeting

project name

no. of participants

project description

location

size

complexity

project duration

- ☐ History with partners
- ☐ Decide on measurement/data collection strategy with facilitator
 - face to face interviews/relationship building with facilitator
 - phone interviews with principal partners
 - other data collection methods as needed
- ☐ Facilitator develops agenda for first partnering meeting
- ☐ Review partnering agenda with facilitator
- ☐ Setup post-meeting communication coordination methods for handling distribution of minutes, agreement, action items, etc.

Phase II—Team Development

Team development in partnering has a set of specific and desired outcomes. These outcomes include:

- Establish good working relationships.
- Create a partnering agreement that specifies how the partners will work together. The partnering agreement may have a minimum of one and up to three parts. Part one is an uplifting statement of three or four lines describing the purpose of partnering. Part two lists the rules for working together in a partnering meeting. Part three describes how problems will be solved and decisions made in normal operations.
- Identify and document a set of escalation procedures that describe what to do and who to talk to when decision making or problem solving is blocked. Escalation procedures carry the same commitment as the partnering agreement.
- Establish a set of complementary objectives that clearly identify the interdependency of all partners. This document spells out the shared purpose of the partnering team's members. The complementary objectives are agreed to in the same spirit as the partnering agreement and may be attached to the partnering agreement as a part of the fundamental agreements of the team.
- Provide training in partnering which may include: communication, teamwork, decision making, problem solving.
- Create an implementation strategy that defines the next steps in the partnering process to ensure that desired results are achieved.
- Assure that any anticipated or real issues are identified and handled or placed on future agendas for resolution.

In the team development phase, expectations for the project are defined. The scope of this thinking goes beyond the team development phase into the implementation phase and lasts the life of the project. Expectations are defined in a synthesis of rules for proceeding and goals for achieving. The COE is a leader in defining his or her expectations. What does the COE want out of the partnering process? These expectations have a direct impact on two parts of the partnering process.

1. First, the COE's expectations guide day-to-day partnering attitudes and activities on the job site.
2. Secondly, how any partner communicates his or her expectations through the partnering agenda of follow-up meetings has a major impact on what the partnership gets out of partnering. This is especially true of individuals in the leadership role such as the COE and counterparts from the contractor.

COE Communications Expectations

How the COE expresses his or her expectations to partners and stakeholders also has a major impact on the outcomes of the partnering process. The following is recommended:

- Develop strategies for maximizing impacts on the partnering process. Think in tactical terms. What impact will this decision have on the day-to-day operations of the partnership? Think in strategic terms. What impact will this decision have on the long-term needs of the project?
- Stay focused on the facts when dealing with issues. Often project concerns are expressed as opinions or feelings. Work with partners to convert feelings and opinions to measurable, fact-based information.
- Be honest. Let your partners know what works and what doesn't. In reality, three options exist. An individual can say "No," "Yes," or "I don't know, but I'll find out." Avoiding issues, providing incomplete information, providing misdirection, or choosing not to communicate decreases the effectiveness of partnering.
- Provide timely follow-up and responses to requests from partners.
- Hold frequent partnering meetings until unresolved issues are fixed.
- Partners need to recognize that partnering meetings are not intended to be a substitute for following required contract procedures. Contract procedures creating unanticipated delays or difficulties should be evaluated for equitable adjustment to all parties.

Partnering Meeting Documentation Helps All

Complete documentation of the partnering meetings helps everyone. This documentation should include:

- What issues were discussed. Each issue should be documented to the extent that in any future meeting all partners know:
 - who raised the issue;
 - what the nature of the issue is;
 - what the resolution of the issue is;
 - key dates for required follow-up or when the issue is expected to be resolved.
- A note taker is required for each partnering meeting. The note taker does not need to record everything said at a meeting. Only key decisions, problem solutions or other agreements should be recorded. Note takers should confirm that what they have recorded is agreed to by all partnering participants before the meeting concludes. Notes of partnering meetings should be provided to the COE and contractor within three working days of the partnering meeting.

Resource Management

Resource management is also an issue during the implementation of partnering. In order for partnering to be successful, it requires a time commitment sufficient to create a strong working relationship among team members, to create a partnering agreement, establish escalation procedures, and work through project issues. Not only must these things be established, they must be maintained as a normal part of the project management process.

► *Phase II—Team Development Checklist*

Who Leads the Team Development Process?

- ☐ Independent facilitator
- ☐ EFLHD representative
- ☐ Contractor's representative
- ☐ Owner's representative
- ☐ Alternating between administrator and contractor

What is the Length of the Partnering Team Development Process?

- ☐ Three days
- ☐ Two days
- ☐ One day

What is Covered?

- ☐ Partnering training
 - Partnering definitions and fundamentals
 - Partnering communications
 - Decision making and problem solving tools and techniques
 - Relationship development
 - Partnering limitations within contract requirements
- ☐ The partnering agreement
- ☐ Rules of the road
- ☐ Role and responsibilities of each partner
- ☐ Complementary objectives
- ☐ Decision making and escalation procedures
 - Who to contact
 - When to escalate
- ☐ Identify key issues for future resolution
- ☐ Partnering follow-up plan
- ☐ Routine follow-up meeting schedule

Phase III—Implementation

The frequency and scheduling of formal partnering follow-up meetings are key considerations. Typical formal partnering programs have a minimum of three formal meetings following the team development session.

The three formal partnering meetings include:

1. The first routine meeting is scheduled 30 to 45 days following the team development session. The purpose of this meeting is to reinforce partnering concepts, strengthen team work, and list potential issues to be resolved. At this meeting partners may decide on a regular schedule of formal partnering meetings. The decision to schedule a series of formal meetings will depend on the nature of the partnering relationship and the size and scope of issues facing the partnering team. The length of the meeting is determined by the agenda. Typically, formal meetings do not last more than one day. Schedule as many meetings as are necessary to resolve issues. Keep meetings as short as possible.
2. A midpoint project review meeting covers how the project is going. This meeting is an opportunity to compare baseline and midpoint partnering evaluation data to uncover any trends of concern. At this time, the partnering team may also review project specific issues.
3. An end-of-project review meeting is set to debrief the partnering process based on lessons learned during the project. The final meeting at the conclusion of the project is scheduled to celebrate the accomplishments of the project, review the partnering process, and make recommendations for future partnering sessions on other projects. The agenda determines the length of the meeting. The meeting may last from one-half to one day.

Small projects of less than three million dollars in scope do not typically have more than three meetings. Formal partnering on projects smaller than one million dollars are most likely mediation meetings. These should be short, high impact sessions focused on resolving specific issues. The scope of informal partnering on small jobs must reflect the judgment of the COE and the contractor.

► *Phase III—Implementation Checklist*

Implement the Partnering Follow-up Plan

- ☐ Adequate number of meetings scheduled to resolve issues and reinforce partnering practices
 - Maintain open communications
 - Reinforce and support job site partnering
 - Solve problems
 - Make decisions
 - Coordinate efforts
- ☐ Define expectations for all partners from Headquarters to project site
 - Communicate expectations to project personnel
 - Develop strategies for enhancing the long-term impacts of partnering on this and future projects
 - Develop tactics for enhancing partnering in day-to-day operations
 - Help all partners express project concerns in measurable fact-based terms
 - Involve key contributors early
 - Reward partnering behavior and celebrate successes
- ☐ Document decisions and problem resolutions between partners that occur outside meetings. The documentation should include:
 - Who
 - What the issue is
 - How the issue has been resolved or what needs to be done
 - Key dates for follow-up or when issue is resolved
- ☐ Keep stake holders informed
 - Facilitator
 - EFLHD Management and Staff
 - Client/Owner
 - Contract Management and Staff

Phase IV—Evaluate

Partnering evaluation has two primary purposes. First, partnering evaluation should identify those things that help increase the efficiency and effectiveness of partnering. If it follows that partnering is a method of project management, then improvements in partnering should help increase the effectiveness of project management. Therefore, the intent of measurement and evaluation of partnering is to discover ways to improve the overall quality of project management. The benefits of this approach for the COE are that less time is required to manage a project. Quality, cost savings, profit, safety, and relationships are also improved. This means that the information gathered in the evaluation process is primarily for the use of the COE. Therefore, the data collected should be helpful to the COE. Further, this information helps others improve partnering strategies throughout the division and all of Federal Lands Highways plus promotes understanding of the impact of partnering on the industry as a whole.

An effective partnering measurement system should:

- Minimize any additional work required of project management to collect data.
- Provide meaningful information to the COE that helps improve project management, develop skills in project personnel, and point to needed process changes that would help streamline procedures.
- Point to the need to change the system components of project management. Partnering evaluations may show that changes in contract administration, reporting requirements, contracts, organization and structure would be helpful.
- Help build morale by identifying improvements that are within the control of project personnel to change.

Possible Partnering Topics for Evaluation and Measurement

The measurement system is comprised of six parts which reflect the classic benefits of partnering. The measures of overall effect include: profit, cost savings, quality, schedule, and safety. The sixth component is a process measure that acts as an early warning system to identify potential problems through the measurement of relationships.

Data to determine the five classic benefits can be derived from existing project reports. Relationship measures are not currently a part of project performance data. Therefore, a short questionnaire is required to collect this data.

Objectives of the Partnering Evaluation and Measurement System:

- To generate information that is useful to the COE's for the ongoing improvement of all present and future partnering efforts so that claims are eliminated and all partners benefit.
- To create a partnering evaluation system that minimizes the amount of time required by the COE's to complete while maximizing the results.
- To develop a system of measurement that gives stakeholders a report of the effectiveness of partnering processes so that their future support is encouraged and enhanced.

What to Measure

Create a measurement system that minimizes the amount of time required by project personnel to collect and provide the desired data for measurement. The outline below identifies the kind of data which may be collected to provide an analysis of each partnering benefit.

1. Profit
 - Contractor data
2. Cost Savings
 - Claims history
 - Number of CM's
 - Contract growth
3. Quality
 - Cost of quality
 - Degree to which specifications were met
 - Design corrections
 - Satisfaction with the project
 - Accomplishment of partnering goals
4. Schedule
 - Project completion within the schedule
 - Effective use of resources
5. Safety
 - Number of incidents

6. Relationships

- Teamwork
- Communication
- Flexibility
- Decision making
- Problem solving
- Facilitation

A Questionnaire, Short & Sweet

The questionnaire should be constructed so that answers are on a rating scale. In addition, the questionnaire should also allow for an open-ended response. In this way people can add comments that they feel will help add to, clarify, or explain their responses.

► *Phase IV—Project/Partnering Evaluation Checklist*

Evaluation to Increase the Effectiveness of Partnering

- ☐ Measurements are scheduled to be taken periodically throughout the project life cycle
- ☐ Choose measurements that focus on one or more of the following areas:
 - Quality
 - Cost savings
 - Schedule
 - Relationships
 - Safety
- ☐ Use the results of measurement as a guide for change
- ☐ Report successes to all stake holders

Data Collection Strategy

- ☐ Who will provide data
 - Facilitator
 - The contractor
 - Stakeholders
 - Owner

Quarterly Reporting System

- ☐ All individual projects are to be combined into a quarterly report that covers all projects
- ☐ Distribute quarterly report to all who champion partnering

Evaluation to Increase the Effectiveness of Partnering for the Future

- ☐ Communicate discoveries to others

Appendix:

Sample Partnering Agreements

A-2

Partnering Team Agreement

Project

We, the members of the Partnering Team, agree to work together cooperatively within the established guidelines. Our goals are to complete a quality construction project on time and in a safe manner. All problems/issues will be resolved in an open, honest, and fair manner. This team will apply the "Golden Rule": Treat others as you would have them treat you. It is the intent of this team to resolve all issues on this project at the lowest level of responsibility. We hope that our combined efforts add value to each team member and the completed construction project.

Guidelines

Be open, honest, trustworthy, and professional. Maintain a positive attitude in dealing with problems and solutions. Be courteous and considerate. Be flexible in dealing within limits of our authority. Escalate appropriately.

Team Members

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Partnering Charter

Baltimore–Washington Parkway Improvement Project

Construction Project Team



Our Mission

We, the Partners of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, at Route 410 (BW 1B16, C14) commit to work together to construct a road improvement project that respects historic and natural park values. We also commit to developing a Team which demonstrates to the nation a road project of the highest attainable quality that ensures stewardship of the land.

Our Guiding Principles

As Partners, we agree to:

- Respect others and their perspectives
- Be open and honest with each other
- Listen with an open mind
- Encourage open participation
- Take responsibility without guilt or placing blame
- Carry the positive past. Discard the negative
- Focus on an issue until closure
- If a decision is reached, adhere to it

Our Shared Goals

- Share ideas and concepts. Work together
- Involve all parties associated with the project in the Mission
- Timely completion
- Listen and cooperate
- Strive to improve the Partnering Spirit of all Team members
- Minimal impact on community and motorists
- Work with the US Park Police and Team members to produce the safest project possible (for public and employees)
- No litigation
- Economic satisfaction for all parties
- Timely decisions
- Pride and quality in construction and end product
- Minimize impact to park resources and environment
- Celebrate successes

Signed in Greenbelt, Maryland, 16 April 1996.

Facilitated by Leading Attitudes, Inc.

Partnering Charter

The Baltimore-Washington Parkway

National Park Service

Federal Highway Administration

Flippo Construction Company

We the partners of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway Improvement Project agree to:

- Provide a quality project for our clients, on time and within budget
- Appreciate and promote Park values in the construction of this project
- Provide a safe and enjoyable working environment for everyone involved in the project
- Ensure a safe traveling environment for the public, with minimum disruption of traffic
- Strive for a good working relationship and effective communication with each other
- Seek quick resolution of disputes at the lowest possible level

Further, we agree:

1. To protect historic and natural resources of the Park
2. That Flippo will provide FHWA with daily and nightly schedule updates, updates of any changes occurring during shifts, and, at Wednesday progress meetings, Flippo will update its 2-week look-ahead schedule.
3. That Flippo will maintain snow fencing around trees designated for protection, meet all MDE E&S control regulations, and follow EPA regulations for hazardous waste handling and disposal.
4. That FHWA will be open in its cooperation and communications with Flippo, and fair in its interpretation of issues.
5. That FHWA and NPS will share any innovative ideas for improving the project with Flippo, and
6. That FHWA and NPS will make a commitment to Flippo's success on the project.
7. To hold regular, monthly partnering meetings to evaluate the status of this agreement and the partnering relationship. These meetings will take place at Flippo's site office, at 8 a.m. on the last Wednesday of the month. An attempt will be made to hold meetings at an alternate site, if necessary, to facilitate the attendance of Don Miller and Gary Klinedinst. A partnering team, with a member from each of the principal parties, will be established to take a special leadership responsibility for the partnering relationship. Any member of the team may request a review of the partnering relationship or any aspect of it at any time. (A sample evaluation form is attached to this agreement).

8. That personnel on site will be empowered to make decisions within the delegations of authority contained in the award documents and that those decisions will stand. The lateral and vertical levels of authority and the times for resolving issues at these various levels shall be as follows:

Proj. Superintendent	Project Inspector	24 hours
Proj. Manager	Project Engineer	48 hours
Proj. Manager	COE	5 days
Proj. Manager/V-P for operations	Construction Eng.	5 days
V-P for operations	CO	5 days
V-P for operations	Division Engineer	10 days

Five Things We Need/Five Things We Offer

Flippo requests:

1. Openness, cooperation, communication, and fair interpretation of issues.
2. Trust from our partners.
3. Expediting dispute/problem resolution with a sense of urgency.
4. Innovative ideas from all parties.
5. A commitment to Flippo's success from the other parties.

Flippo Offers:

1. Experienced, professional people for the project.
2. Resources: equipment, people, materials.
3. Strong commitment to safety.
4. Pride in what we do—QUALITY.
5. Commitment to the customer, a 25-year reputation, and cost-saving ideas.
6. Fair treatment of our customer.

FHWA Requests:

1. Accurate weekly schedules and notification of planned work.
2. Timely response on cost proposals or charge requests, with the understanding that FHWA needs time for review.
3. That Flippo control, coordinate and supervise subs.
4. Understanding of FHWA's internal process.
5. Understanding by NPS of what is required to perform the work.

FHWA Offers:

1. An open mind to the contractor's proposed changes to methods.
2. An opportunity for the contractor to control his own work.
3. To NPS, a completed job that meets expectations.
4. To NPS and Flippo: FHWA expertise.

NPS Requests:

1. Respect from the other parties.
2. Understanding and appreciation of Park values and the NPS mission.
3. Responsiveness to problem resolution.
4. Information from all parties, to help in making good decisions.
5. That FHWA and Flipflo welcome our participation.

NPS Offers

1. Respect for the other parties.
2. Patience and explanations of what the NPS wants for the project.
3. Responsiveness to the need to resolve issues.
4. Expertise and information not already in the possession of FHWA.
5. Involvement and time to be available to the other partners.

Partnering Charter

The Roanoke River Parkway

Our mission, as the partners of the Roanoke River Parkway Project, is to build a quality project which is environmentally sound, aesthetically pleasing, and profitable to the contractors, and to build it on time, within budget and without claims.

In our relationship as partners, we agree to:

- Maintain a positive attitude, with trust, cooperation, and teamwork among the partners;
- Keep communications open to ensure the flow of good information, with no surprises;
- Deal honestly with each other, telling the truth and following through on our commitments;
- Expedite resolution of conflicts, settling disputes at the lowest possible level.

In building the project, we agree to:

- Create a working environment that is safe for everyone involved in the project and for the public;
- Protect ecosystem integrity through the use of native plants;
- Provide timely, accurate testing information;
- Build a project that is smooth in all ways, but especially in the final paving.

In order to maintain a good partnering relationship, we agree that our Partnering Team will be Laura Clark, for the prime contractor, and Nelson Clark, for the owner. They will be responsible for tracking the partnership through a semi-annual formal evaluation conducted by mail (a sample evaluation form is attached to this charter), and for following up should any problems arise in the relationship.

In order to ensure good communication, teamwork, and cooperation, we agree that:

1. Beginning with March 14, a monthly meeting will be held at 10 a.m. on the second Thursday of each month for all parties to share information, coordinate activities, and review schedules. These meetings will be at the Explore Park office, or at other mutually agreed upon locations.
2. English will assume responsibility for setting and distributing the agenda. Items for each month's agenda will be submitted to English's project engineer, Leslie Rice, by the second Tuesday of the month.
3. Minutes of each meeting, after being reviewed by Nelson Clark, will be mailed to all parties by Leslie Rice.

In order to ensure expedited conflict resolution, we identify the following lateral and vertical levels of authority and time frames for resolving problems:

Project Forman	Project Inspector5 hour
Gen. Supt.	Project Engineer	1 hour
Proj. Manager	Project Engineer	1 day
V-P, Bridges	COE	2 days

Further, we adopt the following rules for conflict resolution:

1. Conflicts will be resolved at the lowest possible level.
2. Unresolved problems will be escalated by both parties in a timely manner, prior to causing project delays.
3. There will be no jumping levels of authority.
4. Ignoring a problem or not making a decision is not acceptable.
5. Problems and potential problems will be identified right away, before time and materials have been invested.

