



**Collaborative
Leaders
Network**

Tools for
Community Transformation

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Community Transformation

Stage 3 Tools

Sample group charter

[PROJECT]

Advisory Group Charter

Purpose

The [WORKING GROUP] will develop a Purpose and Need statement for the [PROJECT] and identify multiple alternatives that address that purpose and need.

The [WORKING GROUP] will also help the project team in selecting the wisest course of action and preferred alternative. The preferred alternative will reflect consideration of various community goals, issues, environmental factors and concerns, and find the appropriate balance among competing interests.

Advisory Group Goals

Advise [CONVENER] about key aspects of the project, provide a community perspective on key considerations, and be a sounding board for project deliverables.

Work towards consensus among [WORKING GROUP] members on the desired project goals, alternatives, construction phasing, and mitigation measures to include in the EIS.

Project Outcome

The process will be considered a success if:

- The [WORKING GROUP] establishes clear, consensus-based recommendations on the best alternatives to include in the EIS;
- The public is engaged in a meaningful way in evaluating the proposed project alternatives and in reviewing and commenting on the project EIS;
- Project decisions fit into the context of the surrounding communities and recognize and respect the unique transportation needs along the corridor;
- The project schedule takes the least amount of time and makes the most effective use of limited project funding;
- Appropriate regulatory and government agency staff is involved throughout the process to avoid surprises that lead to delays.

Terms of membership



Members agree to volunteer until the initiation of the EIS environmental review process and possibly through the EIS process.

A member's position on the [WORKING GROUP] may be declared vacant if the member:

- Resigns from the [WORKING GROUP] (this should be in writing and forwarded to the [CONVENER])
- Fails to attend more than two meetings without prior notice

In a case where a member's position is declared vacant, the [CONVENER] may appoint an alternative representative from the same interest group to fill the position.

Advisory Group Operating Guidelines

Convening of Meetings

- Meetings will be held at the time and place chosen by the [WORKING GROUP] in the course of their meetings.
- It is anticipated that there will be [INSERT NUMBER] meetings leading up to the official opening of the environmental impact statement preparation process. Once the EIS is underway, it is anticipated that the group will meet quarterly.
- [WORKING GROUP] members will be informed of meetings through email or direct mail, depending on his/her preference, at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

Communication

- Meetings will be advertised in the [LIST MEDIA AND/OR LOCATION].
- Project documents and notices will be posted on the project website.
- Email: [CONVENER] should be copied on all correspondence, and if [CONVENER] chooses to open a dialogue via email, all [WORKING GROUP] members will be copied.

Conduct of meetings

- Meetings will be open to all.
- Meetings will be facilitated.
- Informed alternates are acceptable and encouraged if the [WORKING GROUP] member cannot attend.
- All cell phones will be turned off during the meetings.
- After all meeting agenda items have been addressed, time will be provided for non members in attendance to voice their opinions.
- Meetings will end with a clear understanding of expectations and assignments for next steps.



- Meetings are expected to be two to three hours and not exceed three hours. Extension of time, in 15 minute increments, will require the consent of the majority of members attending that meeting. Consensus will be indicated with a show of hands.
- The consultant will keep a record of meeting attendees, key issues raised, and actions required. Comments from individual members will generally not be attributed and a verbatim record of the meeting will not be prepared.
- The previous meeting record and a meeting agenda will be forwarded to members of the [WORKING GROUP] at least one week before the next meeting. Any changes to the record of the past meetings shall be in writing and forwarded to the [CONVENER] prior to the next meeting.

Meeting Ground Rules

- Speak one at a time – refrain from interrupting others.
- Wait to be recognized by facilitator before speaking.
- Facilitator will call on people who have not yet spoken before calling on someone a second time for a given subject.
- Share the oxygen – ensure that all members who wish to have an opportunity to speak are afforded a chance to do so.
- Maintain a respectful stance toward towards all participants.
- Listen to other points of view and try to understand other interests.
- Share information openly, promptly, and respectfully.
- If requested to do so, hold questions to the end of each presentation.
- Make sure notes taken on newsprint are accurate.
- Remain flexible and open-minded, and actively participate in meetings.

Roles and Responsibilities

THE [WORKING GROUP] is an advisory group to [CONVENER]:

[WORKING GROUP] members agree to:

- Provide specific local expertise, including identifying emerging local issues;
- Review project reports and comment promptly;
- Attend all meetings possible and prepare appropriately;
- Complete all necessary assignments prior to each meeting;
- Relay information to their constituents after each meeting and gather information/feedback from their constituents as practicable before each meeting;
- Articulate and reflect the interests that advisory group members bring to the table;
- Maintain a focus on solutions that benefit the entire study area;
- Present its recommendations for the project at the end of the planning process. The presentation would include subjects such as: project’s Purpose and Need Statement, alternatives to be studied in the EIS, mitigation measures, and phasing plan. The

[WORKING GROUP] shall select from among its members a presenter or team of presenters.

[CONVENER] and the consultant team agree to:

- Provide [WORKING GROUP] members the opportunity to collaborate with other agencies and groups on making recommendations for the project;
- Effectively manage the scope, schedule and budget;
- Keep [WORKING GROUP] partners informed of progress;
- Provide documentation to support recommendations;
- Provide technical expertise;
- Brief local decision makers and produce briefing materials and reports;
- Provide early notification of [WORKING GROUP] meetings and provide ten working days to review and comment on technical reports and other documents;
- Conduct public meetings necessary to inform and engage the community.
- Manage logistics for meetings; and
- Explain the reasons when deviations are taken from [WORKING GROUP] recommendations.

Communication

[WORKING GROUP] members will be informed of meetings through email or direct mail, depending on his/her preference, at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

- Meetings will be advertised in the [LIST MEDIA AND/OR LOCATION].
- Project documents and notices will be posted on the project website.
- Email: [CONVENER] should be copied on all correspondence, and if [CONVENER] chooses to open a dialogue via email, all [WORKING GROUP] members will be copied.

Decision Making

The [WORKING GROUP] is primarily advisory. In those areas where it has some decision-making authority, members will strive to reach agreement by consensus at a level that indicates that all partners are willing to “live with” the proposed action. Partners will strive to work expeditiously and try to avoid revisiting decisions once made. If agreement cannot be reached on a particular issue, [CONVENER] will retain final decision-making authority.

Conflict Resolution

When an issue arises that cannot be easily resolved, [WORKING GROUP] members agree to:

- Remember that controversial projects are unlikely to receive funding, so the intent of all parties is to resolve issues so the project can be funded.



- Determine if the issue should be resolved within or outside of the [WORKING GROUP] and participate however is appropriate.
- Ensure the appropriate decision makers are at the table to resolve the issue.

[Download Sample Group Charter](#)

Sample operating guidelines

**[WORKING GROUP]
Operating Guidelines
[DATE]**

Purpose:

This document describes the purposes and procedures agreed upon by the members of the [WORKING GROUP]. It has been drafted to help the [WORKING GROUP] meet its legislatively assigned tasks in a timely, deliberate, and constructive manner.

What [WORKING GROUP] Will Do:

The goal of the [WORKING GROUP] is to develop [PROJECT GOAL OR PURPOSE]. A successful outcome of our [WORKING GROUP] deliberations will be:

- [PROJECT OUTCOME]
- [PROJECT OUTCOME]

Membership:

The members of the [WORKING GROUP] are:

Name:	Affiliation:	Island:
First Member		
Second Member		
Etc.		

[WORKING GROUP] Operations Team:

An Operations Team exists to help expedite logistics, finances, and management of the [WORKING GROUP] comprised of the following individuals:

Name:	Function:
First Member	
Second Member	
Etc.	



Roles and Responsibilities:

The [CONVENER] has approved [WORKING GROUP] through [DETAIL APPOINTMENT OR SELECTION PROCESS].

Only duly appointed members may participate in decision making for the [WORKING GROUP].

[WORKING GROUP] Members:

To ensure that the viewpoints of our constituencies are fully and consistently articulated, and to help build trust and momentum, [WORKING GROUP] members commit to make their best efforts to:

- Attend all scheduled task force meetings;
- Stay for the duration of meetings;
- Be prepared to participate fully in the [WORKING GROUP] sessions;
- Keep their various constituents regularly updated on substantive issues prior to/and or subsequent to participation in [WORKING GROUP] meetings;
- Communicate their concerns regarding scheduled agenda items to a designated Operations Team member prior to scheduled meetings if they are unable to attend;
- Communicate travel or schedule conflicts to a designated Operations Team member as soon as such conflict is known; and
- Review proceedings of the meetings prior to voting to approve or amend same.

The Operations Team:

The Operations Team will serve the [WORKING GROUP] members by planning and scheduling task force meetings, developing and posting agendas, assisting with scheduling presentations by resource persons of interest, facilitating logistics for site visits, maintaining a [WORKING GROUP] website, preparing and distributing minutes of task force meetings and stakeholder sessions, and coordinating [WORKING GROUP] responses to media, legislative, and other external inquiries.

[CONVENER] Roles:

- Provide general administrative support for the [WORKING GROUP] activities;
- Provide logistics for the [WORKING GROUP] meetings, including securing meeting sites and arranging meals;
- Coordinate and fund travel for the following [WORKING GROUP] members. [LIST OTHERS, IF APPROPRIATE];
- Facilitate the invitation and appearance of technical experts or other [WORKING GROUP] identified resource persons to attend scheduled [WORKING GROUP] meetings;
- Facilitate the communication needs of the task force, such as drafting and distributing [WORKING GROUP] letters;



- Facilitate the implementation of [WORKING GROUP]-approved actions that fulfill the task force’s responsibilities as spelled out in [REFERENCE ENABLING ACT OR LEGISLATION];
- Prepare reports required by [REFERENCE ENABLING ACT or LEGISLATION]; and
- Fund the co-facilitators.

The Co-Facilitators:

Co-Facilitators will assist the Operations Team prepare for and manage meetings, help identify issues and interests, help narrow options, and, to the greatest extent possible, facilitate achieving consensus among the Task Force members. They will do this by:

- Encouraging that the fullest possible range of perspectives are brought to bear on all discussions, including the perspectives of those affected by the decisions or policies at issue;
- Ensuring that no one individual or group is allowed to dominate the discussion to the disadvantage of others;
- Remaining impartial on the substance of issues being discussed, while proactively ensuring that members collectively decide which issues are discussed and which recommendations are considered;
- Ensuring that members of the [WORKING GROUP] understand that they cannot use the facilitators to influence the substantive outcome and agreements being sought;
- Encouraging members of the [WORKING GROUP] to build and maintain consensus;
- Encouraging the fullest disclosure and exchange of information that is vital to finding solutions.

Schedule:

With flexibility, and subject to revisions, we intend to meet on the following dates in 20__ :
[LIST MEETING MONTHS, PERIODS, OR DATES]

Operating Principles/Guidelines:

The success of our efforts will depend, to a large extent, on our ability to achieve mutual understandings and reach agreements that transcend our personal interests. To maximize our prospects for success, we agree to the following courtesies and process agreements:

- We will listen with care and sensitivity to the full range of all members’ interests.
- We will share factual, technical, or scientific information that will help lead to agreements.
- We will not monopolize discussions or dominate the floor.
- We will seek and develop recommendations that are responsive to our legislative mandate.



- We will refrain from disparaging remarks or personal attacks on individuals inside of or external to the [WORKING GROUP].
- We will remain open to new ideas.
- We will offer possible alternatives when we cannot agree with a particular idea.
- We will communicate and coordinate with our own constituencies.
- We will attend all meetings on time and stay for the duration of the meetings.
- We will participate in good faith.
- We will discuss our positions on matters of the [WORKING GROUP] interest and agree on how to characterize those positions as a group before communicating them to parties external to the [WORKING GROUP].
- We will set aside a period for comments from non-[WORKING GROUP] members at the end of the business meetings as time permits.

Consensus Decision Making:

Consensus decisions are decisions that all of us can support, or minimally, for which there is “no objection.” Consensus is most likely to emerge if it is based on a thorough understanding of each others’ interests and concerns.

Communications:

We will not make representations on behalf of the [WORKING GROUP] to media or public officials that have not been vetted by the group (or unless this prerogative is delegated to members of the Operations Team).

Work Groups:

We agree that smaller work groups may be formed to develop options, or packages of options, to address or improve the definition of certain issues and to assist with drafting of written products related to the [WORKING GROUP] work. Any participant of the [WORKING GROUP] will be able to participate in any work group should they choose. Working groups will be afforded opportunities to conduct their efforts within the agendas of duly noticed meetings in a manner consistent with Sunshine Law requirements.

Work groups will report back to the main body at regular intervals to ensure that their efforts are in accord with the collectively determined tasks.

[Download Sample Operating Guidelines](#)

Stage 5 Tools

Maximizing meetings with resource people

The facilitator can help the group leadership maximize the benefit of interactions with high-value resource people outside the group (i.e., technical experts) by considering targeted and strategic questions like these in advance:



- What kinds of information do you want the guest resource person to provide to this group to help it accomplish its work?
- What questions would you pose to trigger discussion on these points?
- What does this group have to offer this resource person?
- What do you want to have gotten out of this by the time the conversation is over (by way of agreements, commitments of support, financial assistance, invitations, access to research or data)?
- How might you distribute questions across the working group to give more members the opportunity to interact directly with the resource person? Who is the best group member to raise each question (presuming it can be tied to a particular group member's expertise or interest)?
- In what ways might this resource person assist in the implementation of the report recommendations?

Stage 6 Tools

Debriefing the project

In an effort to improve future endeavors, a post-project completion debrief and evaluation is developed by the facilitation team and approved by the convener team staff and working group leadership.

- Questions in participant evaluations usually ask respondents to identify peak experiences, epiphanies, and assess the quality of the overall project design.
- A separate debrief and evaluation process is targeted specifically to the convener team and includes a more technical assessment of facilitator/process strengths and weaknesses.
- At the debrief, the facilitator may opt to offer an assessment of “next steps,” particularly when acting on these issues would likely benefit the larger community.
- Ministerial loose ends are addressed to ensure that contract terms and conditions have been satisfactorily addressed as a precondition to receiving final payment for work completed.



Providing closure

The closure activity during the final meeting provides opportunities for participants to:

- consolidate their learning
- note their most important lesson or memorable experience
- reinforce the confidence they have gained in themselves
- validate the strength and power of the relationships they have cultivated through this process
- honor the group's efforts, courage, and accomplishments, and appreciate everyone's investment of time
- reflect on the group's aspirations for advancing the work its members just completed

Closing statements from the facilitator offer an opportunity to:

- praise and celebrate the group's accomplishments and the effort it took to achieve them
- share a few personal feelings (and identify them as such)
- formally end his/her engagement

Closing statements from the convener may include:

- information about funding for specific, follow-on activities
- an explanation of additional resources and possible roles for the current participants
- a status update regarding the convener's continued support or disengagement from the project

