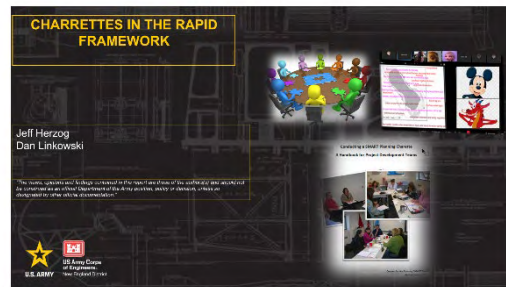


Scoping a RAPID Study? Let's Talk Charrettes!

21 May 2026

Q&A Summary

This webinar provided an overview of the charrette process under the new RAPID planning framework. Presented by Dan Linkowski (LRD Chief of Planning & Policy and Director, Inland Navigation PCX) and Jeff Herzog (New England District Program Manager/Planner), the webinar covered the vision for the use of charrettes in RAPID planning: how they set teams up for success, how charrettes can bring efficiency to teams, and the adaptability and flexibility of charrettes.



This summary of the Question/Answer session of the webinar is not a transcription; questions and responses have been edited and reordered for clarity. The summary also includes questions and responses from prior PCoP Webinars on the use of charrettes or workshops to engage the Vertical Team and propel study decision-making in order to serve as a comprehensive, up-to-date resource.

Key Resources:

- [Conducting a Risk Informed Planning Charrette - USACE Handbook](#)
- [KMP RAPID Guidebook](#)
 - [New Study Orientation and the Scoping Charrette](#)
 - [Design Scoping Charrette](#)
 - [Evaluation and Comparison Workshop](#)
- [Collaboration and Public Participation \(CPP\) Community of Practice Knowledge Management Portal site](#)
 - [CPCX Facilitation Resources](#)
 - [Collaboration and Public Participation Center of Expertise \(CPCX\) Public Website](#)
- [District Public Involvement Specialists](#)
- [USACE Public Involvement & Conflict Resolution Training Offerings](#)

Project Partner Participation & Engagement

Are tribes expected to attend charrettes, or only the non-federal sponsor?

Tribes, the non-federal sponsor, resource agencies, and other key groups should all be invited to attend any planned charrettes. Participation is not guaranteed, but the charrette is a meaningful opportunity for engagement. It should not, however, be treated as a box-checking exercise for required coordination. Remember that federally recognized Indian Tribes are sovereign nations entitled to Government-to-Government consultation.

Are non-federal sponsors expected to attend the “NLT 30-Day Meeting” (i.e., Federal Interest Determination [FID] coordination meeting with the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works) and/or initial scoping charrette if it is prior to the signed FCSA?

The non-federal sponsor should always be invited to charrettes unless there is a compelling reason not to include them. The more the non-federal sponsor engages with and understands the USACE process, the better the partnership and study outcomes will be.

Is there official policy or guidance that defines who exactly should be invited to charrettes and workshops?

The [Charrette Handbook](#) includes recommendations on attendance. There is no prescriptive policy, as the appropriate participants will vary based on the intent of the charrette, partner availability, and study-specific circumstances.

Is it realistic to organize a well-attended charrette with external partners within the 45-day FID timeframe, given schedule and budget constraints?

The charrette format and scope should be tailored to the specific needs, timing, and stakeholder/partner group for each study. There is no one-size-fits-all approach, and flexibility is expected.

Should the team evaluate whether they are trying to accomplish full study scoping within the FID timeframe, or just accomplish the required FID scoping?

This will impact the definition of “well-attended” because your targeted audience may be smaller. If you have a spinoff, new phase, or existing project, then perhaps your FID is more rigorous, and you have a larger audience to accomplish more towards the DP1 milestone.

Charrette Planning, Format, and Logistics

For a hybrid charrette, is it better to start with the in-person component or the virtual component?

Either approach can work. Starting virtually can be useful for establishing a shared framing before arriving for an in-person meeting. Conversely, an early in-person engagement can provide valuable input from a broader variety of team members and stakeholders to ground subsequent discussions and decisions. In either case, pre-planning and having relevant information prepared in advance are essential to a productive charrette.

Will mitigation plan formulation—which cannot begin until project impacts are known—be nested within the overall study schedule?

Yes. Mitigation planning activities should be identified during the Design Scoping Charrette and factored into the scope, schedule, and budget for the feasibility level analysis and design phase.

How can study teams select the right facilitator for their charrette when looking outside their district?

First, the planning team should determine where in the study process they are and then reach out to the relevant [business line Planning Center of Expertise \(PCX\)](#) to discuss considerations for scoping and planning the charrette, including developing objectives and any suggestions the PCX may have for a facilitator. In addition, teams can work within their district and MSC to find similar studies, determine whether they had a charrette, and, if so, identify the facilitator.

If a planning team is unable to find a facilitator after taking these steps, they can reach out to Maria Lantz (CPCX), Hunter Merritt (CPCX), Stacy Langsdale (CPCX), or others in the CPCX, all of whom are available to help the team find a facilitator. When coordinating with the CPCX, study teams should reach out early so there is ample time for them to find a facilitator who is available and will be a good fit. Teams can connect with the CPCX via their district's [Public Involvement Specialist](#).

What factors should study teams consider when determining the scale and length of a charrette?

It depends. If a study team already has their problems, opportunities, objectives, and constraints (POOCs) and screening criteria identified and has already determined an initial focused array of

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alternatives, a 3-4 hour virtual charrette to discuss anticipated issues or challenges would likely be sufficient. Alternatively, a team closer to the beginning of the study process may want to consider conducting a 1-3 day in-person charrette. Consider virtual meetings held beforehand to lay the groundwork, especially if they cannot afford a longer in-person charrette. In general, charrettes are versatile and flexible to the needs and constraints of the team. However, while there is no minimum length, as scaling increases, teams should look more closely at the results they're trying to accomplish to determine if they actually need to hold a more costly in-person charrette (i.e., is an in-person site visit required to inform the discussion).

What USACE-allowed scheduling tools are available for coordinating the availability of charrette participants?

[Doodle](#) has a free option that allows users to poll participants on up to 20 date/time options, and [When2Meet](#) is a free, simple scheduling website that many have used as well.

Conducting a Charrette

What tools can study teams use to learn more about conflict de-escalation in preparation for a charrette?

Conflict de-escalation starts with preparing ahead of the charrette: knowing who is coming, foreseeing any issues, and understanding the personalities and histories of those who will be in the room. A good way to do this is to check in with some of the participants, including the sponsor, and address any potential conflicts in advance by arranging the room and setting up breakouts accordingly. In the room, a facilitator can work on conflict de-escalation as the need arises by asking questions to identify underlying issues and interests, establishing and enforcing ground rules, and working through problems with the person or people involved during a break.

The CPCX has a "[Facilitation 101](#)" presentation resource as part of its curriculum that includes further strategies and tactics for conflict de-escalation.