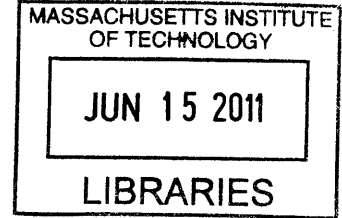**Urban Development Partnerships**
Challenges for Leadership and Management

By

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Master of Architecture
University of Melbourne, 2003

Bachelor of Planning and Design
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Challenges for Leadership and Management

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ABSTRACT

'Partnership' is a term which is used very liberally in the context of large scale urban development.
Mixed-use, brownfield projects, transit-oriented development, urban regeneration: all these projects
require partnerships of a sort. This thesis reviews definitions of partnership and outlines benefits and
shortcomings. In addition, managerial tools, group work processes, and leadership strategies are
discussed with a view to understanding what the most effective approaches are to working in
partnership.

Managing consensus across organization boundaries and over long project durations is difficult. Indeed,
it is arguably an amplification of dealing with the internal workings of a multi-disciplinary company.
Approaches differ from building collaborative cultures, focusing on formal structures, and strengthening
social and political networks. In reality, all three are always at play. However, circumstances, culture,
and personal leadership preferences, will contribute to why one strategy might dominate in a given
situation.

The thesis finds that partnership in urban development is a reality which no sector has the luxury of
avoiding. However, it may be possible to increase the scope and benefits of partnership, particularly in
the making of great urban places. To do so will involve rethinking this mode of working to extend the
breadth of activities. It will involve a broader range of partners representing a greater variety of
interests and bringing wider capabilities. Inevitably, this will add further complexity. In order to assist
leaders and managers in the middle of such contexts, a managerial framework has been developed. It is
both a diagnostic and strategic tool to deal with the integration challenges, political and cultural
dynamics of partnership situations.

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Chapter 1- Overview: Purpose, Context, Method & Outline

Purpose:

There is an anecdote which I have heard from several management educators. It formed the core of the welcome message from the Dean of MIT Sloan at the Sloan Fellows orientation program in 2010: *the skills which brought you success so far will not be the same skills you require to succeed in the next decade.* For me, this means two distinct transitions. First, I must move from managing a functional team as well as projects to becoming a manager of managers. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, it also means being more adept at navigating the complex landscape of external partners and stakeholders beyond those I have had dealings with to date.

This thesis examines issues in the management of partnerships for implementation of complex urban development projects. Urban development is inherently multi-faceted and includes infrastructure, real estate, social and economic development. Further, the imperative of climate change and misgivings about impacts of 20th century suburbanization of cities are driving new sustainable approaches to development. These involve integrated solutions with high interdependency of the elements which make up our cities. Depending on the context, not all projects require all elements to be considered sustainable. However, the kinds of projects in which I am interested professionally and for the purposes of this thesis, certainly contain at least two elements and have implications for the others.

Context:

I have often wondered whether there could be a more inter-disciplinary activity than the planning, building and management, or governance of cities. Is there a process and artifact which is more wholly representative of its citizens than a city? Cities are one imprint of our society and they reflect what we value and how we organize ourselves. Just as the Egyptians, Romans, Chinese and other ancient civilizations before us left great artifacts in their cities, so too do we with the daily choices we make about the types of development we engage in as a society. This raises an interesting question: what type of city would you like to leave for future generations? Would it be towering mid-town Manhattan, the charming 19th century parts of Cambridge and Boston, business-as-usual late 20th century suburban forms of Southern California or Florida, or indeed something altogether different?

Contemporary sustainable urban development approaches consider a project's impact at three broad scales. The first is the site and its immediate surrounds. Secondly, the capacity and needs of the city or region are considered in relation to transport, utility and social infrastructure – the foundations required for urban living. Finally, the drive to rethink the paradigm of conventional development at the highest level comes from many sources. On the positive side, there is a new appreciation of the role of cities in driving creative economies. See, for instance, Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2004). Conversely, there has been growing concern over a number of decades about both broader societal impacts and global-level climate impacts which are seen as being significantly derived from the proliferation of auto-dependent, socially isolating suburban development (Putnam, 2000 and Kunstler, 1993).

Matching land use and intensity with transportation infrastructure is a foundation of sustainable development. Typically, this means densification around sources of public transport. To generate significant impacts they generally occupy a site larger than just one building, and often include local precinct-based low or no emissions waste, water and energy infrastructure, as well as high performance buildings. Economically, the foundation is in a mix of uses which contributes to an accessible distribution of jobs, residences and other uses across the city. Socially, the aim is for mixed demographics and, as such, measures to include affordable housing are often included. In short, these projects knit together multiple interests and often have multiple interdependent elements.

A consistent theme in sustainable urban development projects is the need to work in partnership with a variety of organizations for implementation. These partnerships come in many forms both formal and informal. All large scale projects, for instance, have a high degree of informal partnerships. They may also be formal in the sense that there is a particular form of partnership contract. A common form of the latter type is public-private partnerships for the delivery of large infrastructure projects. However, even in the formal setting, many associated with such projects articulate the need to know how to work "in partnership" rather than relying on the clauses of a contract. This thesis is primarily concerned with approaches to managing being "in partnership"; it is about the issues and processes which are encountered everyday by those whose occupation is partnership.

One type of project, for example, is the redevelopment of a precinct around or on top of a train station. Redevelopment of train stations involves leveraging the infrastructure around a transit stop, with the

objective of providing increased intensity of development, a mix of uses, and increased patronage. Outcomes are lower private vehicle trip rates (and therefore lower carbon emissions), lower vehicle ownership rates (and therefore lower costs of living), not to mention the provision of a more walkable urban village-like environment. In the urban studies literature, such projects are part of movements variously referred to transit-oriented development, smart growth, and traditional neighborhood design.

I came to MIT Sloan seeking a general management education with a focus on innovations in how the public and private sectors collaborate to deliver the kind of city development described above. I will leave MIT Sloan acknowledging that there are indeed a range of innovations which can be deployed in urban development – smart growth tools, enabling or even incentivizing zoning, clever contracts, and a range of municipal financing approaches to name just a few. However, as governance tools these are all aspects that we could categorize as strategic design (Van Maanen 2010). They encourage and incent certain outcomes. These approaches have been well documented by Hank Dittmar and Gloria Ohland (2004) and Robert Cervero(2004) among others. Further, as formal governance structure differs in each jurisdiction, it is not necessarily possible to take one set of approaches and apply them directly in a new setting. There are also some locations that have seen little development despite similar structures being in place.

The real breakthrough in implementing urban development seems to come when there is a consensus and alignment of many different interests – public, private and civic. Are there process innovations in achieving consensus, alignment of interests, excitement, enthusiasm which are sustainable over the long period that urban development projects take to implement? Seeking an answer to this question is, then, the principal aim of this thesis.

Method:
Literature from a broad variety of sources has been reviewed. These come from the disciplines of organization studies, leadership, urban studies, community planning and management. Through this review, I have sought to understand three principle concepts. First, what scholarly work has been undertaken on organizing partnerships, their benefits, and pertinent issues for management. Secondly, what are the models for working in teams or with groups of stakeholders. And finally, what are the models for personal action in such settings where there is an underlying presumption that leaders and managers have no absolute authority. Each of the works I have uncovered articulates a framework for

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what works. These works approach similar issues but from different experiences and contexts. The audiences differ and so does the language. Some are sage-like, seeking disciples for reform of the greatest extent possible. Others are conceptual and aloof, and more still are concrete in style creating how-to handbooks. Gaining similar perspectives, but with different expression, is a benefit of an interdisciplinary approach.

Much of the leadership and management literature stresses the need for an approach which builds people's enthusiasm and motivation, rather than utilizing one's executive authority. This maximizes the chances that people will work at their highest potential, rather than (grudgingly) executing orders. The same is particularly true when it comes to working in partnerships. Arguably the situation is amplified. There usually is no single person or party which has ordained power within a structure. In fact, it is not always the case that there is even a clearly articulated structure. Power is distributed across a range of organizations, and indeed across the people within them. Certainly, though, there is a common geographical place of interest and this forms the kernel of foundation for partnership. Therefore, it makes sense that a non-executive style used by multiple leaders would be required for successful partnerships.

In addition to my reading of the literature, I have interviewed fourteen practitioners from both the private and public sectors. I spoke with each for approximately one hour with a series of guiding questions but the interview was not conducted in a conventional style. My interest was to gain an appreciation for how they approached and thought about partnerships in the context of their work. And, specifically, what they felt was required to implement large complex urban development projects. What I learned from my interviews, together with my own reflections, are used as material to contrast and compare with ideas put forth in the academic literature.

Organization:
This thesis has principally been written to reflect on experiences, explore new academic territory, and provide personal professional guidance. In analyzing and synthesizing the material, I have tried to articulate *managerial* frameworks such that a better understanding of the implementation of complex sustainable urban development projects results. These frameworks are in addition to those of urban planning and design with which I have been working for the past fifteen years. As managerial

frameworks, they are focused on moving projects from plans to on-ground outcomes. Lastly, these are the issues which are pertinent to the contexts I believe I will face in the coming years.

The organization of this thesis is as follows. The literature review forms Chapter 2. This draws from authors representing many disciplines and perspectives. The material is put into three categories – partnerships, group work and processes, personal action. Chapter 3 reviews practitioners' perspectives. Chapter 4 is a reflection and interpretation on the data of academic literature, and practitioner opinions. Here comparisons are made, implications drawn, and frameworks for future approaches are developed. Throughout chapters 2, 3 and 4 I have added further context to the discussion by explaining the types of issues encountered in the course of my professional experience in the public and private sectors. It also specifically examines how partnerships could be made better, as well as providing guidance on managerial issues. Finally, chapter 5 concludes the study by reflecting on the learning journey that this thesis has provided and attempting to answer the question *what would I do next?* if given the opportunity to lead a large scale urban development project.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Literature has been reviewed that deals with several aspects of the topic. First, broad definitions of partnership are outlined in order to frame the discussion, along with benefits and pitfalls. The majority of the chapter deals with what is required for success, common working processes, management tools and leadership strategies. In keeping with undertaking a thesis in management, rather than urban studies, I have sought literature which deals with partnerships in urban development as well as other contexts in order to see whether the issues are similar or if there are significant differences across industries. On balance, I find there to be more similarity than difference. Differences, when they arise, are due to subtleties of context rather than anything substantive.

The types of partnerships described in this chapter are a recent phenomenon. They have arisen from an imperative to find new policy implementation methods which involve the private sector, following reactions to the initial wave of privatization in the 1980s and early 1990s. Both efforts have been a product of small-government political rhetoric in the English-speaking world from the early 1980s onwards. With specific regard to the urban development industry, this imperative was also a practical reaction to several poor outcomes in the mid-century period. First there was increasing recognition of the failures of large scale government-built housing, known in the US with a derogative tone as "projects". Secondly, several cases of "slum-clearing" involved demolition of what we would now describe as charming old neighbourhoods. These urban renewal programs which delivered new highways and offices were recognized as sub-optimal outcomes. In Boston, the area incorporating Government Center and "the Big Dig" is an illustrative example. Given these factors and the long duration of most of the projects, whether in urban development or another industry, it is not surprising that most texts are from the 2000s, with some from the late 1990s.

There is little literature which proposes an overarching framework for partnerships per se. Nor are there reams of analytic data. Instead, most work is observational by academics and researchers or reflective from practitioners. Authors include academics who study organizations, leadership and group work settings. Examples include Ancona et al, Sutton and Van Maanen. Given the pragmatic nature of the topic, many scholars have chosen action research as a method and write of their involvement in workshops and change efforts in business and government workplaces. Scharmer, Senge, Heifetz et al, Huxham and Vangen all sit in this category. Most of the contributors to the handbooks collated by

Susskind et al (1999) or Schumann (2006) are practitioners and write of their experiences, though some also hold academic positions. Others are indeed former senior practitioners who now have academic postings, such as Kamarck or Kromer. Scholars who write directly of urban development, or closely related contexts such as infrastructure, include Bloomfield, Fainstein, Frances-Kelly, Huxham and Vangen, and Landry, to name a few.

Definitions:

What constitutes a public-private partnership can vary enormously from formal long term contractual arrangements, to highly informal coalitions. Googins and Rochlin (2000) go so far as to claim that what can be seen as partnership is so lacking in clarity as to defy definition, with vast idiosyncrasies in arrangement, composition, and little agreement on what constitutes effective partnership.

Informal partnerships are often collaborations for an innovation agenda. They are not contractual in nature, but they cause cross-sector work to occur because an organization in one sector realizes it does not have the constituency, capacity, legitimacy or all three to carry out its mission (Dienhart 2010). Urban setting examples include campaign coalitions for cities, such as those that could be found in Detroit or Cleveland, where there is a mission driven approach to reversing decline.

Definitions of a formal partnership are most akin to long term contracting over infrastructure items. In the UK or Australia, Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) or Private-Finance Initiatives (PFI) for tollways, new utilities such as waste treatment plants, and social infrastructure projects, such as hospitals and schools, are examples of formal arrangements. This type of partnership may have a collaborative design phase but can quickly move to formal operations and compliance with starker divisions. Bloomfield (2006) suggests that there is a fundamental difference with this kind of partnership in that companies which engage in these activities with governments also have obligations to their shareholders to shift as much contract risk as possible to the government. Therefore, in her view, there is little collaboration in this type of partnership.

In urban regeneration projects, the partnership usually involves the right to develop publicly owned land for a number of years. In my experience, there are formal contractual negotiations, and often periodic table-thumping moments of restatement. However, long term regeneration projects run as long as fifteen to twenty years, sometimes more, and involve periodic masterplan reviews as well as frequent

detailed architectural design or public open space design processes. Each of the stages has a compliance element, but, on the whole the process is more innovation oriented and therefore almost by definition requires collaboration. As such, neither party can risk becoming too entrenched on any single issue as they are likely to be looking for reasonableness and flexibility from their counterpart on another issue in the near future. Edelenbos and Klijn (2009) note that this is the dominant issue for urban renewal PPP projects.

Benefits

Claims of almost boundless potential are found in descriptions of partnerships. Austin (2000) goes as far as stating that cross-sector partnering will be the collaboration paradigm of the 21st century. For Googins and Rochlin (2000), cross-sector partnerships are the vehicle to mediate changing roles and responsibilities of the different sectors. They both seem to imply that formally the roles and responsibilities of the sectors are still tied to older conventions and that partnerships provide an informal way of prototyping or experimenting with new divisions of responsibility. Nevertheless, they suggest partnerships are *the* development model for achieving just and sustainable communities and an answer to a system of public, private and non-profit interaction which is otherwise marked by competition, conflict and growing power imbalances. The economic definition of partnerships is that the benefits of cooperation will outweigh the costs (Edelenbos and Klijn 2009). Or, put in another fashion, the sharing of information, resources, activities and capabilities by organizations in two or more sectors will achieve outcomes that could not be achieved by organizations in one sector (Bryson, Crosby and Stone 2006; Huxham and Vangen 2005). For Huxham and Vangen (2005), this is the concept of collaborative advantage.

Partnerships are described as managerial tools for flexibility (Greve, 2010; Smith, Mathur and Skelcher, 2006). When operating well, they allow for quick response times to reallocate work where it can be best and most efficiently produced. They can provide an open and entrepreneurial management environment particularly for public sector organizations (Smith, Mathur and Skelcher, 2006; Kamarck, 2007). In such settings public officials are able to focus more on the outcomes than on traditional bureaucratic concerns such as procedural compliance. Further, given the degree of interaction which occurs across the sectors and organizations during a partnership, they provide opportunity for networking, learning about other partners that might otherwise not occur under traditional divisions.

Challenges and Pitfalls:

Partnerships, however, raise all sorts of difficulties. It can be exceedingly difficult to engage a diverse group of partners in collaborative change (Senge et al., 2007). When there are more parties involved, problem definition becomes more complex (Edelenbos and Klijn, 2009). If excitement is garnered during the early phases when there are almost boundless possibilities, then frustration can be the counterpart during the operations and delivery stages (Smith Mathur and Skelcher, 2006). Micromanagement, as each party seeks to ensure that their interests actually materialize during the crucial period of delivery, is one problem. Another can be the lack of focus. This is what Huxham and Vangan (2000) characterize as "collaborative inertia". Potapchuk and Crocker (1999) note that often in community planning projects new collaborative consensus approaches will be used during planning phases, but be left to rely on conventional mechanisms for implementation. Such situations rely on individuals, firms and departments to work independently and hold true to the collective vision. In practice, this can lead to a slow dilution of both the group's collective energy and original vision.

One concern arising from increased flexibility is the potential for public sector managers to infringe on conventional democratic processes. Public delivery agencies, as opposed to government departments, are usually established to work in partnership with the private sector to implement a government policy within a certain geography (Smith, Makur and Skelcher, 2006), implying that the conventional government apparatus and divisions of responsibility are not able to deliver effectively.

Special purpose development authorities or agencies are common in urban development partnerships for large or complicated projects. Such development agencies are often not open to third party appeals and other forms of public scrutiny in conventional city planning. Agencies have strong accountability upwards to their departmental or ministerial "shareholder". However, they are frequently weak when it comes to connections with local communities and users. In this sense Smith, Mathur and Skelcher (2006) argue that partnerships have a "democratic deficit" in public governance procedures. Indeed, arguably this has been a significant cause of backlash in Melbourne regarding the Docklands. Melbourne's Lord Mayor, Cr. Robert Doyle, has called for authority over Docklands to be taken away from Vicurban, the redevelopment agency, and handed to Melbourne City Council ("Doyle Calls for Council to take on Docklands", 2009). In Sydney, a 50 hectare waterfront project is proceeding under the Barangaroo Delivery Authority and is attracting similar criticism. See, for instance, a quote from the recent article "Murky Waters of Barangaroo" in the Sydney Morning Herald:

The more that is known about the approval process for Barangaroo - ordinary planning rules
circumvented, last-minute approvals signed by the minister before caretaker rules come into force
for the election, a court case undermined by ministerial fiat - the less confidence it inspires.
(Editorial March 16, 2011)

The form of partnership structure is not always at the discretion of the participants. Huxham and Vangan (2000) note that for the officials involved that they are often left to deal with a type of partnership which was decided on by political machinery without their input. The same is true for private sector participants who want to participate in public-private partnerships. This is a cost of access to such work. They may have some suggestions and input, but the decisions will be made by others. Nevertheless, Frances-Kelly (2010) points out that successful outcomes can be found occurring under a myriad of arrangements and, therefore, warns that time and energy spent on governance structures can actually be a distraction. What is more important, in her view, is early, deep and sophisticated engagement with the those effected locally as well as a broader range of formal participants.

The scale of requirements demanded by the public sector from the private sector partner can lead to scarcity of competition. Bloomfield (2006) notes that many partnerships rely on significant upfront financing and construction on the part of the private partner and therefore the pool of eligible parties can be small. This is especially so in urban development. For instance, the largest urban regeneration projects in three Australian cities have all been awarded to the same company. Lend Lease has been awarded the contracts for developing Victoria Harbour at Docklands in Melbourne, Barangaroo in Sydney, and the Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland's showground redevelopment in Brisbane. The athletes village for the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000 was also a joint venture between Lend Lease and Mirvac.

Requirements for success:

Scholars outline a range of characteristics of successful partnerships. In short, they describe the need for perfect alignment of social, economic and political contexts, combined with outstanding, sensitive leadership and project managerial qualities exhibited at both the organizational and individual level. This is not a working environment for the fainthearted. For those of us drawn to such situations, the remaining sections in the chapter outline these requirements in more detail.

Crosby and Bryson (2005) identify three conditions required for any significant cross-sector project. First, and perhaps most significant, is effective navigation of the policy change cycles. That is, only to attempt great challenges when the project is politically palatable. Secondly, there is the careful design and use of forums, a subject discussed in more detail later in the chapter. Forums includes both large public and semi-public workshops as well private one-on-one meetings used for different purposes depending on the stakeholders and their differing levels of involvement. Finally there is the exercise of several different leadership capabilities.

Googins and Rochlin (2000) suggest that there are six criteria for effective partnership: clear goals, obtaining senior level commitment, frequent communication, assigning professionals to lead the work, sharing and committing resources, and evaluating results. For high performance teams within organizations, Ancona and Bresman (2007) provide a similar list, but place a particularly strong emphasis on exterior boundary spanning activities. Dienhart and Ludescher (2010) focus on collaborative nuances that includes using members' differing capacities and legitimacy to convene groups, define rights and responsibilities, as well as distributing the right to define, judge and evaluate. Huxham and Vangan (2005) describe five themes which can lead to either pain or reward in successful collaboration: common aims, power, trust, membership structures, and leadership.

How to work in partnership:
Greve (2010) notes that sociologists wonder about how partnerships play out within organizations and how the informal rules that structure relationships are influenced by partnerships. Edelenbos and Klijn (2009: 310) outline a series of open questions which managers face in such circumstances: "Should they be generous in including interested parties, or should they deny access to certain actors? Should they strive for decisiveness and speed in the process, or should they instead take the time to build support among individuals who have a stake in the project? Should they be resolute about the content of the project and the course it is to take, or should they demonstrate flexibility and allow the content to be molded by external circumstances?"

To investigate the topic of how to work in partnership, I have reviewed work which deals with issues of innovation processes and problem solving in group contexts, as well as collaborations across multiple parties. There may be evidence, though I have not come across it, that divisions across organizations and sectors are profoundly different to those which operate across several departmental silos within one

organization. Huxham and Vangen (2005) certainly support the view that the issues are very similar whether the setting is within or across organizations.

The main difference would seem to be that working across sectors and organizations amplifies the challenges found within organizations. However, the fundamental issue of resolving and managing multiple people, parties, languages, understandings and agendas are similar. When more parties and sectors are represented, the processes can be quite political, requiring adroit and sensitive management of potential conflicts and misunderstandings.

Structure, or strategic design:

Several scholars point to a need for some form of structure for partnerships. Huxham and Vangen (2000) note that structures that bring organizations together, such as those working arrangements effected by contracts or memoranda of agreement, can influence or even induce behavior and outcomes they open or limit the number and type of interactions. Dienhart and Ludescher (2010) suggest a form of governance which is functional and project-oriented, and therefore presumably with limited scope and time. Such governance is collaborative in that it does not take place within any one sector, and neither is it controlled by any one sector (Dienhart and Ludescher 2010; Huxham and Vangen 2000). Each sector needs the other, and, each can foil the project by withdrawing their commitment.

Open and loose structures that allow organizations or individuals to freely come and go will make it difficult to implement clear agendas and resolve differences (Huxham and Vangen 2000). By contrast, structures with controlled membership, working groups, ordained leadership or boards may be able to gather agreements more quickly. However, if this occurs at the exclusion of a single key stakeholder, there is potential for the whole process to be derailed (Huxham and Vangen 2000).

Formal Process and Habits of Work:

Edelenbos and Klijn (2009) offer a useful distinction between project and process management. The former is more directive goal-oriented and time-rigid, where the guiding hand of process management focuses on the ability to react flexibly to changing circumstances. This approach also places a premium on bringing all parties together. From interviews with practitioners involved in several Dutch urban development projects, they claim that process management is by far the most successful style for urban
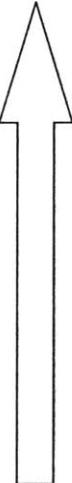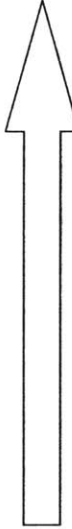
renewal projects given the extent of stakeholder relationships. The focus of such a style is managing interactions and the strengthening the network of the people involved.

Huxham and Vangen (2000) define process as the formal and informal instruments such as committees, workshops, seminars, emails, through which a collaboration's communications take place. This includes the lens of culture (Van Maanen, 2008) which refers to those ways of working which occur without having been specifically chosen or designed.

The careful design of a project's stages and processes is important in empowering people by providing access points for their participation. This is particularly so in urban development where the choice of when and how to engage local communities, who have historically often been excluded, in precinct redevelopment proposals can be critical. The style of such engagements is also critical. Bureaucratic meetings can inhibit true participation (Huxham and Vangen, 2000; Susskind et al., 1999). Conversely workshops, particularly involving open engagement and design, can both provide a useful forum for collective input, and in the process help develop members' common understandings and definition of issues (Huxham and Vangen, 2000; Senge et al., 2007; Brown, 2008).

There are several models of group work which could be loosely defined as being processes for engagement, design, innovation, or some combination of all three. These include generic facilitated brainstorming and visioning workshops (Moore et al., 1999) as well as quasi-proprietary techniques such as the "Place Audit" and "Power of 10" activities developed by the firm Project for Public Spaces (PPS.org), "Appreciative Inquiry" associated with Case Western Reserve University (http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu), design charettes of the type proposed by the Council for New Urbanism (cnu.org), or ideation and design thinking processes for which the design and innovation firm IDEO is famous (Brown, 2008). Note that the first is determinedly public and akin to an analog form of crowd-sourcing, the next two are definitely cross-sectoral, cross-organizational and often public, and the last will generally be between client and firm, but certainly be multi-disciplinary. Common elements of these processes include a lack of lecturing, opportunity to contribute ideas, everyone's ideas being recorded and respected, and that ultimately the ideas are translated into concrete action plans to be implemented (Moore, Longo and Palmer 1999). All techniques have at their root a belief that leaving individuals to work on their own, especially single-discipline professionals, is the most ineffective method of solving complex problems.

Proponents of each will hail the differences, but each approach has similar stages. And, all emphasise that the process is not linear, but iterative, particularly in stages one and two. My reading of the generic stages follows in Table 1.

Table 1: The generic stages of group project work processes		
	Preparation: Membership, agendas, objectives, process agreement. The potential of the partnership can be won or lost by poor choice of working partners and by gaining agreement with key representatives as to the nature of working, agenda and objectives (Susskind 1999).	
	Stage 1 – Issues and questions generation, context and materials discovery, inspiration. This is a critical phase in which to foster an egalitarian atmosphere of openness and possibility. The nature of this phase is very open and typically is a "no idea is a bad idea" time. Every idea has merit. This is a phase which IDEO is famous for disallowing the words "no" or "but". It is a stage which Robert Sutton (2011) describes as one where it is crucial not to question.	Repeat Process (as req'd)
	Stage 2 – Ideation, experimentation, design options, iterate with more questions, trial and error, solutions testing, feedback. Visioning solutions, gathering ideas, fashioning into tangible goals, educating (particularly required if in a public process), voting, and working into an implementation plan (Moore, Longo & Palmer 1999) are key objectives. Senge et al (2007) suggest systems thinking, shared visions, and mental models are key tools.	
	Stage 3 – Implementation, execution, production, delivery In this stage, Robert Sutton (2011) notes that it is crucial not to question once the decision has been made about the direction in which to go. This is the stage when efficiency and delivery count. In collaborations with many parties, gaining the agreement to proceed, and indeed having each party deliver on their portion is critical to ongoing success. Collaboration will be most tested for its effectiveness at this time. Deriving the proposed solution was a demonstration of collaborative advantage, but poor execution can quickly reduced the partnership to a state of inertia (Huxham and Vangen, 2000).	
	Review: Monitor the execution Compare with original objectives. Observe unintended consequences, changes in context, and new evolving requirements. Redefine problems and seek a new process.	

Commentary on the stages of group work diagram:

These processes have been designed to be used over time scales of a few hours, days, weeks or perhaps months. However, we can also read this as a diagram for the implementation of urban development projects which take place over years. IDEO can rapidly deliver a series of prototypes in days, and then reconvene for review and further iteration. Urban development projects do not have that luxury because "prototypes", or stages, take 3-5 years. This probably explains the conservatism of the industry to experiment with new products such as different street types, apartment configurations, and building types. The best that can be done is to produce rapid drawings and models, and indeed this is what happens in a charette. However, the best long range projects do include periodic reviews, and lead to the process being revisited as depicted in Table 1.

Senge et al (2007) note that collaborative change projects require getting representatives of the entire system in question in a room. This is challenging because of the vast resources and time required, but also because people see the world with different perspectives. In such settings, the telling of personal stories and detailed concerns can help foster mutual understandings (Forester 1999). Team processes can foster interpersonal work, but it is also noted that little is known about the most effective methods to open minds, hearts and personal wills to effect change (Senge et al 2007; Scharmer 2007). Even with a willingness to participate, an inability to bring an open mind to such processes can stymie the flourishing of other possibilities (Senge 2006; Schwarz 2006).

Expedience and the urge to get things done can cause decisions to be made too quickly in forums, suppressing debate and actually leading to negative effects on ownership (Huxham and Vangen 2000; Straus 1999). For both leadership groups, and individuals, rushing is normally associated with not taking enough time for sensemaking or diagnosis (Heifetz, Grashow and Linksy, 2009). On a positive note, however, some pressure is helpful in promoting task-focused activity and delivery outcomes (Huxham and Vangen, 2000). Ancona (2010) similarly acknowledges the benefits of and need for decisive individual leaders, even in the context of group work and distributed leadership, and warns "don't throw Caesar out with the bathwater". What seems to make the difference is who exerts pressure, how much, the manner in which it is conveyed, and its strategic timing and use.

An important critique of all these processes is that those which are borne from a particular professional discipline will always bias certain outcomes. For instance, design-led processes will ultimately privilege

those that hold the pen to draw. Similarly, facilitators in conventional workshops, such as visioning sessions, also wield obvious power in being able to open and close discussion, choose to record or not certain comments, and to choose what to emphasize or not. However, what is being opened or closed are ideas expressed in words, which in comparison to drawings and sketches, are a much more broadly accessible and understood form of representing concepts. Participants might not necessarily recognize whether their idea has actually been translated into drawing. They might not even know how to read a drawing. Who is in the position to choose the facilitator is in a position of power. Where a facilitator comes from and their background is also an important consideration.

The problem of professional bias has caused Project for Public Spaces, a placemaking practice based in New York, to develop processes which are secular and unaligned with any particular professional grouping. Their processes are informed by sociological approaches and focus on obtaining observations from users, no matter who they are or where they come from. Senge et al (2007) suggests one way around professional biases is to use simple systems models which are relationship diagrams. But even these presume a certain level of literacy with managerial, engineering-like illustrations. For instance, I now understand that when first confronted with diagrammatic graphs and 2x2 matrices from a business school educated manager, I afforded these artifacts more credibility than was deserved. This critique is not to devalue such tools and processes, or their outcomes. It is to suggest that a truly inclusive collaboration will include not only many opportunities for participation, but also a variety of opportunities suited to the diversity of people, age groups, and parties involved. For projects which are large and public, a combination of open and creative workshops, formal written submissions, opportunity for anonymous notes, tweets and put-your-spot-on-the-map type exercises taking place at community barbeques, should all be considered as part of the armature of information sourcing and collaborative working processes. In this study, I have focused on processes at the organizational level. Including a detailed study of community engagement techniques would be adding another significant field. However, there is common ground to be found when it comes to workshop methods.

Organizations and Participants as Instrumental Forces:
Austin (2000) notes that the power of collaboration comes from combining partners' core competencies in mutually reinforcing ways. Key business contributions are seen as problem analysis, planning, prioritization, structure and discipline, whereas those from public sector often bring bridge-building and an array of political skills key to stakeholder management. However, informal distributed leadership

from across all segments of the respective collaborating organizations is important as participants will not find clear-cut, easily enforced solutions or centralized direction (Bryson, Crosby and Stone 2006). Googins and Rochlin (2000) suggest this puts the private sector at an advantage given its resources and skills. This may be true in terms of resources, however it has also been noted that business leaders may face disadvantages in such situations due to differences in style and culture from those in the public sphere (Collins 2005; Austin 2000)

Culture:

Cultural issues abound in partnerships as differences in objectives and institutional backgrounds emerge (Edelenbos and Klijn, 2009). Several scholars point to obstacles such as differences in languages and cultures, ideologies, goal orientations and values (Googins and Rochlin; Dienhart and Ludescher 2010; Senge et al 2007). It takes investment and concerted effort to overcome such differences. As the level of engagement increases, so does the level of complexity, which in turn requires heightened demands on the part of those negotiating and managing the projects. There can be great struggles working with sectors that have different ideologies. By contrast, where some of the actors are already working with each other on other projects there may be imbalances in the social network within the group (Huxham and Vangen 2000). This can lead either to productive smoothing, or plays for power. Senge et al (2007) suggest the need to build conceptual frameworks together which not only clarify understandings, but build community in the process. They also note that allowing time and space for participants to explore emerging ideas and to have unplanned conversations is of equal importance to strategic frameworks.

Leadership

Collaborative processes require both sponsors as well as champions. The former brings prestige and authority, and the latter drives collaboration using strong process skills (Crosby and Bryson, 2005; Bryson, Crosby and Stone 2006). Huxham and Vangen (2000) note the person or organization given the role of leader within a collaboration or partnership is likely to develop greater understanding of all aspects of the project, as well as greater influence and command over the working processes. Who has this role, therefore, and how they enact their duties is a critically influential factor in terms of the success of the project. In this sense, the leader's role is an enlarged version of the workshop facilitator.

Personal requirements:

If partnerships present a different kind of organizational context, it should follow that this requires a different kind of approach by the individuals involved. Austin (2000: 46) provides a useful description of the personal challenge:

> *Reaching consensus in a public-private partnership will often test the patience of business leaders used to quick decision-making processes. Entering into such partnerships is analogous to doing business in a foreign country. The culture, the language, the form of interaction are different, and the most successful international business people are those who study, understand, and respect the different cultural norms and expectations. Furthermore, they learn at least the basics of the other's language and culture to communicate effectively. Their resultant broadening of leadership, communication negotiating skills, and general knowledge makes them better managers back in the business.*

The leadership framework for cross-sector collaborations (Crosby and Bryson 2005) is the only framework I have found which is specifically designed for the type of work which Austin's businessman faces. It includes eight capabilities:

1. Leadership in context – understanding the social, political, economic and technological 'givens'
2. Personal leadership – understanding self and others
3. Team leadership – building productive work groups
4. Organizational leadership – nurturing humane and effective organizations
5. Visionary leadership – creating and communicating shared meaning in forums
6. Political leadership – making and implementing decisions in legislative, executive and administrative arenas
7. Ethical leadership – adjudicating disputes and sanctioning in courts
8. Policy entrepreneurship – coordinating leadership tasks over the course of policy cycles

This person is perhaps not a "man of steel", but certainly has superhero-like infinite capability and adaptability. Adaptation, both in terms of personal flexibility, and the ability to manage a project so that its process is open to change are seen by many scholars as critical skills (Edelenbos and Klijn 2009; Heifetz, Grashow and Linksy 2009).

Other scholars stress political skills. Austin (2000) notes key skills are bridge-building, an ability to ensure participation and build relationships, widening and deepening the network to create value, and achieve

accountability. Collins (2005) makes an argument for a legislative, rather than executive form of leadership. This relies on powers of persuasion, ability to build political currency and shared goals and interests to create the conditions for the right decisions to be made. In his model, the pinnacle of this style is being able to get people to follow when they have the right not to. Sensemaking and an astute political sensitivity to context are critical in these different perspectives. Interestingly, both Austin and Collins note that leaders who become capable in this mode, will also be far more effective in an executive context.

Detailed workplace leadership strategies:
Huxham and Vangen (2000) observed three strategies for individual leadership when it came to managing and influencing others. First, simple actions such as handing out prepared notes, or shrewd questioning are the ways in which individuals can steer and influence a meeting or collaborative workshop. They also note that depending on the manner in which these actions are carried out, and provided others do not find offence, that these can be very effective strategies to carve out one's leadership position and political power in contexts which have little formal structure. Secondly, they note there will always be some participants who feel strongly about being empowered in group settings. This offers an opportunity for some to take on the role of championing the need for facilitated group processes, or indeed play the role of facilitator of a process such as those outlined in the above section. Convincing others of the merits of such processes may even involve attempting to shift the mental models of some participants. This in itself can be a courageous act to the extent that it involves questioning others' assumptions, and takes the project off course. A note of caution, however, it is beholden on a leader before embarking on a workshop process that such events are carefully planned and considered with the appropriate membership (Straus 1999). Political capital can be quickly lost by mistakes or omissions from the invitation list. In four-capabilities language of Ancona et al (2006), these are all skills of "relating".

Huxham and Vangen (2000) outline a series of subtle leadership issues which are distributed across members of a collaborative project. These relate to representing and mobilizing one's organization. In their view, there are a few rules. First is that the person representing an organization should not change. Secondly, continuity is critical in maintaining strength of the network of people involved. Thirdly, the person leading must be authorized to represent the interests of the firm and have enough standing internally to mobilize its resources to deliver on any promises made.

Building culture and commitment from members of a collaboration:

Huxham and Vangen (2000) observe that the complexity and enormity of collaborative projects can be so overwhelming as to distract participants. Secondly, within the collaboration forums themselves, it is beholden on all participants to exercise leadership and ensure enthusiasm from their colleagues for the project at hand. Maintaining the energy of a project has much to do with enlivening the project culture and building social and political capital in order to keep momentum. Bryson Crosby and Stone (2006) note that activities like celebrating small wins are critical to nurturing a trust-building environment.

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In summary, the benefits of partnerships are by no means given. At best they provide the advantage of achieving a goal which is beyond the reach of any single participating organization. At worst, they muddy the waters of work and produce a procedural and political mess, leading to inertia and outcomes of dubious value. Success is difficult and depends on many factors. These include an amenable political climate, willing participants and a sharing of objectives, understandings and language across participants. There are group work processes which have been discussed which are models not just for professional usage, but for critical engagement with the community. Given the broad range of partners and individual participants, each with their own preferences, a wide variety of working tools is recommended to ensure that all involved have an equal ability to contribute. Finally, individuals, at all levels, are required to exercise leadership. This can take many forms. There is a broad range of leadership qualities required, and, given the complexity of projects, there should be an equally broad range of opportunities to apply them. However, the extent of authority and ability of each individual to represent and deliver on commitments can be enabling for a partnership, or indeed constraining. Effective partnerships will most likely require successful and careful distribution of leadership tasks.

Chapter 3: Field Data – reflections on conversations with practitioners

Informal interviews were undertaken with developers, planners, agency directors and civic organisers. Most have been connected with transit-oriented development projects in Washington DC and Los Angeles, but also some in Boston. I also had the opportunity to interview two key executives from an Australian headquartered company involved in several partnership projects around the world, including significant urban regeneration projects in Melbourne and Sydney. Further, there have been a range of practitioners I have heard in other forums not directly related to this thesis. For a list of practitioners interviewed, together with others indirectly related to this project whose ideas have been drawn upon, please see Appendix A.

All practitioners are actively involved in large scale urban development projects. Their experience ranges from transit-oriented development projects of just 2 hectares, to city scale 50 hectare renewal projects and everything in between. Discussions covered a broad range of material from personal histories, how they came to be involved in their work, local political and market conditions which have provided the context for development, what partnership meant to them and what they thought made partnerships effective. I was also interested in how the organizations with which they were associated went about trying to build the skills of their personnel to work in such situations.

While all interviewees were asked questions regarding their approach to managing in a partnership context, many of the responses were not framed in management language. However, it was clear in several instances by the descriptions of their actions that they were indeed astute leaders and managers who understood in detail the nuances of working in partnership contexts. Some were more than happy to frame their insights in a subjective and personal manner. Others were more comfortable with describing their work in a seemingly objective context. Overall, the respondents sense of what was important to ensure success – in this case project implementation - was similar to what the literature suggests. This is not surprising, given that much of the literature came from academics involved in ethnography, social or action research, whose findings are informed by observations of real life situations. Some of the literature also came from practitioners who are involved in academic work too. However, the contexts of scholarly observation differed with those experienced by the practitioners I interviewed in place, time and industry. This factor has certainly led to subtle differences.

Why Partnerships for Urban Development?

Respondents differed on questions of the purpose of a partnership, depending on which sector they represented. For all three metro agencies, development of land associated with train stations fulfilled three objectives. First, it was about raising money for the organization to spend on its core activities of providing rail services. "Monetizing what is sitting in the ground" was one phrase used for transforming undeveloped land. Secondly, all respondents believe that these activities will lead to an increase in ridership from new users of the development (residents in the case of housing projects, workers in offices, and patrons of shops and entertainment areas). They also believe that in making station areas more amenable, residents of the existing catchment will be more inclined to use public transport. Finally, in one case, it was also seen as part of a critical debt retirement program.

Private sector respondents tended to see partnerships with government landowners more as a necessity than a choice. They acknowledged that governments are simply not going to sell land to a developer without a set of policy-fulfillment objectives and conditions. If developers wanted to operate in cities with access to rare, often large, and well serviced plots of land in otherwise built-out locations, cooperation and partnership with government was simply part of the deal.

Local government professionals, however, operate from a position which relies on the private sector to deliver most of any project in which they are involved. One respondent noted that he would often remind his staff that the private sector developers were the people who would actually build the lines his planners were drawing. Further, he noted that there is no such thing as a 100% public sector developed urban development project. (The closest which ever came to this in the US would be the public housing projects of the earlier 20th century and post-war period). Another US public sector respondent noted that the expectations of the level of public sector involvement also dropped significantly as one moved from the east to the west coast of the United States.

Public sector professionals working for delivery agencies, as opposed to local government city planning departments, were all former private sector developers. They were at pains to make the latter point clear. One respondent described how he had tried to build new industry respect for his organization by meeting with developers to show them that he "was one of them, and not just a faceless bureaucrat". This correlates strongly with my own experience at VicUrban, the Victorian Government's Sustainable Urban Development Agency in Melbourne. I well remember a manager of mine reminding staff that their email addresses ended in ".vic.gov.au" and not ".com". Many in such organizations see themselves

as a bridge between sectors like actors who could speak both languages. Having a shared language is, indeed, an important aspect of such roles. People are attracted to these organizations because of the opportunity to work on projects which have city, national, or sometimes even international significance. One respondent described the attraction to him of his organization as being both the quantity and quality of land the agency had to develop.

The deals these organizations are involved with are large, and so there is a sense of size and importance to the city. Additionally, urban regeneration appeals to the benevolent streaks of character within development professionals. Such projects provide an opportunity to work on developing best practices and have broader objectives than conventional commercially driven single building real estate development.

Pitfalls and Challenges:

For public sector respondents, there were a few constant challenges. The first was ensuring that any request for proposal or bid stage had the right balance between being totally defined in objectives and outcomes, or alternatively too open. Two of the real estate directors of metro agencies described how they would often use a two-stage process on more complex projects. This would make a joint design and feasibility phase possible where the parties could get to know each other and see if an acceptable development and financial solution could be achieved. If not, either party could withdraw before moving into the much longer and more difficult delivery stage. In one instance, the processes now being used are open book with pre-agreed rates of return. This means that potential private sector partners are not tendering based on lowest cost bids, with little transparency of how numbers were calculated. Instead, appraisals can focus entirely on the 'capabilities of the team' during the selection process, and proposed 'built outcomes' during the design and negotiations phases.

One metro real estate director noted that he tried to stay away from involvement with public sector redevelopment agencies. In his view, they simply added another layer of bureaucracy and little, if any extra value. A private developer described a tri-partite arrangement for one project which was made difficult because of clashes between the two public sector organizations involved. He vowed never to enter such an agreement. Interestingly, these comments echoed those of a private sector respondent who felt that any partnership, or joint venture, needed to lead to a whole which was greater than the sum of the parts. The greatest risk they saw was in partnering with an organization which had similar

skill sets. In such circumstances there was a high likelihood of work being duplicated or resources being wasted over arguments of interpretation. And so it seems that this sentiment is shared both in public-public relationships as well as private-private ones.

A metro real estate director noted the biggest concern for developers in working in multi-agency projects was confidence that there were enough resources allocated by the public parties. To this end, he had spent a lot of time and energy ensuring that the different agencies made pre-commitments to a project and jointly issued public requests for proposals. On other projects, he felt he needed to bring the silos together from within his own agency, plus the developer and staff from the local government jurisdiction to ensure an outcome. In both circumstances, it seemed his attitude and approach was of a network orchestrator trying to mitigate or minimize issues which arise out of poor relationships. He felt the closest he could get to a recipe for success was when he could also add the right consultant team for credibility, and have early engagement with the end users.

One public sector real estate respondent noted that if one was not careful there could be pressure to make a deal when it was not worth it. He felt strongly that one should not be afraid _not_ to make a deal if it is not in the public's interests. This was all the more interesting given that he had spent decades in the private sector before the current role. "Our [public sector] motivations", he said, "are different [to the developers]". A similar view was proffered by one the private sector developers who felt that if their efforts at collaborative approaches were met with bureaucratic or contract-heavy responses, that one also needed to know when to withdraw from a situation. "Partnerships can be fantastic and a way to change the world, but they don't always work. Staunch cultural differences can be a problem. You need to be prepared to walk away."

On process:
One private developer described the differences between project management style in the extreme as being single person accountability like an entrepreneur. Process management, on the other hand was more corporate and involved a lot of "relay baton changing". He described himself as an agnostic, depending on the situation but did note that in large projects in which there is local community interest that it was important to engage, and that further, there are always good ideas which come out of such processes. Though he would not say it outright, my interpretation was that his approach was results driven but that he was aware of the need and benefits of stakeholder processes.

A preference for focusing on outcomes, rather than process, was a common sentiment. However, this may also be an issue of nomenclature as all respondents talked of the importance of workshops, regular communication and culture building activities which I would categorize as being part of the process of achieving effective outcomes. This is also consistent with the definitions provided by Eldenbos and Klijn (2009). One private sector respondent described how he needed to ensure he spent enough time in contact with each project group to make sure they continued to see the big picture rather than getting "weighed down by the minutiae of day to day issues". In his words, this meant a focus on outcomes rather than process. However, it was his process – one which he valued - of achieving the result.

When questioned how to maintain enthusiasm and energy in a very long project, one private sector respondent noted that difficulties usually arise when personnel change. Understanding of earlier objectives, agreements or decisions can be easily lost. Further, even in circumstances where the earlier objectives are still understood, "new egos may feel that there is a newer better set of aims which should be pursued". Therefore, there was a need for workshops, off-site working groups to refresh, re-energise, and revisit project strategy.

On building social or political capital:
It is significant that in reviewing my notes that such a large proportion of interviewee comments were in reference to the skill of relating. Clearly this is an aspect of work which everyone felt was so critical that whether they realized it or not, much of the time was spent discussing this topic. And, this occurred despite the fact that my line of questioning was rarely directed to this aspect of their work. The comments outlined were more often in response to questions regarding what they felt was "most important" in order to achieve a certain outcome.

One private sector responded noted that it was "culture, not contract" which was important. Another, whose work is solely focused on urban redevelopment projects noted that managing the consultant team to deliver plans, specifications, contracts and the building process was just a technical problem. The real challenge, in his words, was to be able "to sit down with people who don't like you and show them how to like you by the end of the meeting". He described using different 'languages' to communicate with people of varying position and background. This included golf with some, sitting down for tea with others, listening and participating in business forums with others still. He appeared

absolute in his belief that personality and listening were the two most important things in the business of building development projects.

One public sector respondent told of how he managed to achieve agreement from regional groups. To achieve this, he described the most critical aspect was to build a team and the culture of the team. "Getting people to tell tales of themselves" and "focusing on silly life experiences", were his techniques for breaking down exterior professional personae and to make everyone realize people on the other side of the table were also human. He felt there was a significant need for respect and humor. Treating the kick-off meeting as a team building exercise was critical. And, to do so, he said he began with the telling of personal stories to help the team learn something more about the people with whom they were working. One technique he described as "snickers bar diplomacy". That is, informal discussion meetings over a snack, rather than indirect forms of communication such as email. By way of example, he felt he had inherited an agency with a significant reputation deficit in the industry. To counter this, he said he had spent 18 months trying to build confidence in the broader industry about the direction in which his agency was moving. He wanted to show the private sector that he was concerned about their views. That required meeting others involved in the projects, or simply members of the broader industry, one-on-one. Ultimately, this respondent felt, the difference between a project implemented, and one that failed, came down to leadership. Ironically, however, failure was seen as most likely to be because of political issues out of one's control.

One respondent had previously spent many years managing shopping centres and described how this involved having to keep many different business owners happy. In his current role, this respondent described how much time is spent garnering agreement for coalitions of businesses around local development issues. When asked what activities led to success, there were two responses. First, "work really really hard and get the details right in delivery. No one will thank you for a job not done quite right". Secondly, in the process "it does not hurt to be really really nice and to just treat people well. You never know when you might come across them again, but people will do more for you if you are nice about it". This person saw little to be gained by using a forceful personality. These actions were of someone who has always had to build a followership through performance and charisma, never having had ordained authority over constituents.

Another private sector respondent described developing a "culture of listening and community" as being essential. Acknowledging that they work in partnership with governments, he also noted an issue was broadening the staff's realization that the "triple bottom line" of social and environmental outcomes as well as profit was critical given that that is what governments are interested in today. Of another type of partnership, he noted that from an equity investment perspective they had long term business relationships with sovereign wealth funds around the world which place an emphasis on reliability and consistency. He felt that the critical elements for developing partnership sprang from "ensuring a similar outlook early on with strong communication skills". To this end, he noted that there were parallels with any personal relationship. He described that in private sector joint ventures and partnerships there is a long "courting phase" where each party works out whether a relationship could work or not. In public-private partnerships, however, the bidding stage is highly formalized and for the most part forbids informal interaction for probity reasons. This can be problematic because often those who run the bid or tendering processes are not the same people who manage the project on the public side.

One public sector respondent could only be described as an exceptionally open and generous public servant in the best sense of the term. While he acknowledges that he has spent a lot of time preparing the ground for initiatives (whether this be for his staff, or himself), he takes no glory for this work. He stated that he does not think it is really possible for a planner or council to build consensus around an idea. In his view, ideas had to come from the community first. Council is, then, simply a conduit to channel the energy that already exists within the locale. He stated that "the most important thing is to get the information out there and to contribute". I interpret this as one way of providing leadership of ideas. When asked about what techniques he used to do that, he replied quickly that he tries never to turn down an invitation to meet or talk. (I could certainly believe this given the almost instantaneous personal reply to my request for a meeting). He also said that while he was initially attracted to planning because of involvement in the big picture regional planning issues, that he equally felt the invigorated by getting out to talk with both happy and disgruntled citizens, having coffee and sandwiches in the process. The strongest impression I had of this official, was of someone who firmly believes they are in the service of something larger than themselves.

On facilitation and running workshops:

Discussions rarely got to talking about actually running or facilitating workshops. There were two significant descriptions of facilitation processes and the value of workshops. To this I also draw on my own experiences as both a participant and a facilitator.

On workshop processes, one public sector respondent noted that a design charette was a good tool where there is an existing political consensus around a project's importance. However, in the event that this is lacking, a charette can simply turn into a forum for conflict. Therefore, build social and political capital around the subject of a project first, and then proceed to a planning and design process. He warned not to try to do both simultaneously. This was an interesting reflection given that so many proponents of such processes claim that building consensus is *the* benefit of workshops. Still, there may be a difference in objective here. Planners talking about consensus building techniques may not necessarily have a preferred or desired type of outcome in mind, other than consensus itself. A developer, or public official responsible for ensuring delivery of new development, has the presumption of significant development as an outcome no matter how open to engagement the processes they may be.

A public sector respondent working in a planning function described how planning processes should always be led by a citizen chair. To the extent that it was possible, they would always choose someone who was not biased and could perform a facilitator's role effectively.

In my own work, there is no doubt that I found it immeasurably easier to facilitate meetings on projects for which I was not responsible. In such settings I could be quick, attentive and helpful in easing a negotiation over a familiar subject matter but for a project in which I personally had very little vested interest. Where I have facilitated meetings for projects I was managing, there is no doubt that the audience has been more passive looking for direction and decisions. I imagine that this is for a few reasons. First, when I am in a position of authority it seems to me that others expect and look to me to stake out a position. Secondly, I may well have not run such meetings in a sufficiently open manner. A third reason could be that people who are used to getting quick decisions are unlikely to jump easily into an open, discursive interaction just because you have decided that this a better way of working. Habits are slow to change. Indeed this is why I question whether it is ever possible for a facilitator to come from the working group. The reality, however, is that resources and situational demands will usually

dictate that external facilitators are the exception rather than the rule. Therefore, in the future I will need to work harder in such situations to cultivate forums for productive discussion rather than direction and make the rules of engagement very clear.

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In conclusion, the respondents fell into a several categories beyond official titles and the sectors represented. But, both had much in common. One group could be described as "strongmen" of the development industry. These are engineers, project managers and financial deal makers by background. Despite all their rhetoric about focusing on outcomes (and not process), what was common to them were concerns about what scholars describe as social and political capital building activities, and network orchestration. I interpret this as a gap between what they see as the reality of their occupation – getting "stuff" built and being accountable for it - and how they actually spend most of their day achieving such outcomes, which is in fact by relating. The other major group of respondents see their role in the public service both figuratively and literally. To that extent, they understand that to be "in service" will inevitably involve a lot of time relating to those being served – the community.

It is clear from the collective experience of the respondents, as well my observations, that relating is a core competency for anyone involved in multi-party projects. Relating is important in any context with many people. What seems to make partnership projects more difficult is the range of people, backgrounds, cultures, agendas, and ways of working. In short, developing shared understandings is not easy. Technical project management skills are an assumed minimum requirement, but one cannot succeed without flair for nurturing good relations. Whether leading organizations involved in a project, facilitating parts of a process, or managing implementation stages, what separates success from failure is understanding and working with differences in people and organizational cultures. With a distributed leadership model, it is possible to succeed in such settings if a leader's or facilitator's skills are somewhat lacking, provided someone else can assist. If someone's relationship management skills are lacking at times, it may be possible to make up with well executed apologies. However, it is not possible to outsource the art of relating to others on a permanent basis. Repeated social or political infringements will only end in failure.

Chapter 4: Interpreting the data & new frameworks

Partnerships are here to stay

It is not clear from my readings and interviews that partnerships represent a significant benefit to any party in particular. However, it seems that whether one thinks partnerships are of benefit or not is somewhat beside the point. In the context of urban development, a conjunction of interests suggests partnerships will be the dominant instrument for delivering large scale projects at least in the foreseeable future. The community has heightened expectations regarding social, economic and environmental outcomes as well as the quality of buildings and public spaces in development projects. Governments want to be seen to be delivering more yet spending less. Both Australia and the United States are among the lowest taxing nations among the OECD countries, and there is little sign that this is about to change. Finally, the private sector seeks access to dwindling land supply in cities which are mostly built out. Partnerships, as imperfect as they may be, will remain a necessary, if not increasing, instrument to shape the urban landscape. The broader questions, then, are: How could they be of greater benefit? How could they be less a source of inertia, and a greater source of advantage? And, how can leaders and managers be more effective?

This chapter consists of sections which broadly attempt to answer these questions. Throughout, I draw upon my own professional experiences to reflect on the issues which have been raised, as well as to think about future possibilities. The chapter reflects on major issues identified in the literature and interview data which are deserving of greater elaboration than could be afforded in chapters 2 and 3. It is organized according to the following sequence of topics:

1. Challenges
   a. Local democracy issues
   b. Scale of requirements and scarcity of competition
   c. The socio-political context
   d. Workshop processes
2. How we think about partnerships
   a. The current situation as viewed from the data
   b. Strategies to get more out of partnerships
3. A Management framework
4. Using the Framework

Challenges

Local democracy issues: The perception of a lack of democratic or truly consultative process certainly lies at the heart of community misgivings about many, if not most, large urban development projects. Indeed, this was a central theme in Jane Jacobs' now seminal 1961 rail against modern development entitled *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Special purpose agencies, and their private sector partners, are seen by planning critics and academia as a flout of the system. Such agencies are often not beholden to the same level of scrutiny or public process compared to conventional city planning. Indeed this is seen by governments as a necessary trade off in order to achieve the special purpose - development. But does it have to be this way?

In Melbourne, and elsewhere, periods for public comment and third party appeal rights have been taken out the approval process in projects such as the Docklands. Victoria is unusual in the English-speaking world in allowing third parties to appeal planning permits beyond Council jurisdiction to an administrative court. Removing this capability was presumably seen by legislators as a necessary part of achieving large scale implementation. However, a lack of appeal rights does not mean that wholehearted public participation and consultation cannot be a part of an effective planning and urban development process. Indeed, at the very least, it can mitigate later community backlash. Fred Kent, of Project for Public Spaces, argues that development cannot be effective without public participation. He bases his argument on the grounds that it is impossible to understand the issues at play in a place without asking its users and interested parties. Indeed, one can be convinced of the benefits of public engagement for ideological or for pragmatic reasons, or indeed both. For the pragmatists, a convenient side effect of engagement is "buy-in" and producing a community sense of having been consulted.

Scale of requirements and scarcity of competition: This is a serious issue for urban development for several reasons. At the project level, it is certainly true that large projects can only be undertaken by the largest of developers. Therefore there are situations in which there are few partners to choose from. This is a problem particularly in smaller countries where the number of large developers is likely to be less than in larger countries. A more significant problem, however, is that large areas of the city that have only one private sector developer partner run the risk of limiting the social and economic opportunity to the broader community as an unintended consequence of what may otherwise be a more efficient way of expending public resources in partnerships. This is a large topic in itself, and one

that I and others have been working on for a long time (VicUrban, 2010). A later section in this chapter looks at one model for wider participation in projects.

*The socio-political context:*Crosby and Bryson (2005) are of course right about the need to get the timing right. This thesis is being written from the perspective of someone working in an agency where it goes without saying that our role is to deliver on the business plan, which has in turn been negotiated with our shareholder, the government. For advocates, lobbyists, or community organizers, this is about understanding the difference between when enough momentum has been built for an issue or project, and when more needs to be built. For the private sector, this is about being able to read the winds of community and political concern to know how to both ride the waves, but more importantly, detect early warning signals and not be caught out like, for instance, BP was with Brent Spar or Nike with concerns about labor in their factories.

One of the respondents suggested that a city council planning department is merely a conduit to channel the energies of the community. I found this humble, but also somewhat troubling. It seems to suggest there is little role or possibility for government to provide ideas leadership. It also suggests for the practitioner that if one wants to work on transformative urban projects, one must first find an amenable geography and constituency. For the private sector this may be somewhat obvious, albeit perhaps in the reverse. If a developer is zealous about a certain product, they will move to where there is a market for it. Or, more likely, they will develop products attractive for the market geography in which they are situated.

For the policy-driven public sector and for those of us educated to imagine better solutions, this is problematic. The quandary is how to promote a type of urban development which is preferred by professionals, when there may be little sign of it already in the city, and "the community" may not be calling for professionally preferred development. Yet, this is *the* 21st century challenge for the United States and Australia (and other new world countries) – how to wean the population off a city development form which is carbon intensive and auto dependent. It seems there are a few choices: One could take the proposal seriously to only look to the community for ideas leadership for change. Secondly, one could propose the issues, such as urban sprawl and the wasteful use of resources, and then ask the electorate for their views on how it would be best solved. Finally, one could undertake what in fact most of the respondents described – communication, ideas leadership, workshopping and

the building of consensus. Ultimately, this entails listening, moulding ideas to local responses, constant engagement, and the dissemination of ideas. The literature suggests this is an adaptive change process in which specific solutions or outcomes must be left somewhat malleable. However, it does require sponsorship and champions: For ideas, for building support for change, for facilitation, for solution building, and finally for leadership throughout implementation.

At a personal level, this makes me realize that if I want to work on a certain type of project then I have two options. First, move to a location where it is most likely to occur. This seems intellectually easy, but not ultimately of benefit to my home country or city. Alternatively, the work I engage in both individually and organizationally must be more facilitative and open to change. It must assist in leading others to new ideas, while remaining open to the possibility, indeed likelihood, that I and my organization may be led to a different outcome. The latter option is more complex, messy and requires comfort with the uncertainty that politically sensitive public sector organizations are often afraid.

The Workshop Processes: Most organizations and corporations have a single stated mission and public set of core values. However, this does not prevent the real possibility – indeed likelihood – that there will be subgroups of differing views in the organization. Different functions bring with them assumptions and value differences derived from a variety of cultural sources including educational background and professional association. An organization which houses more functions is more likely to encounter issues concerning collaboration and communication because each group brings its own assumptions and jargon to any project. I felt this very strongly when moving from an architectural office to a public sector developer. The latter had not only designers, but development managers, social and economic planners, public affairs, accounting, finance and marketing. There were common motivations which brought people to the organization in the first instance. However, these, alone were not always enough to bridge the gaps in understanding and modus operandi. It has taken me years, including the current year at MIT Sloan, to come to an understanding about the professional perspectives of some of my colleagues. Indeed, given how long most of us spend in training before really being expected to work in a multi-disciplinary fashion, why should we expect ourselves to be able to understand others with any depth or speed? Understanding this problem seems to me to be a significant part of what is required to keep an open mind.

The problem of open minds is also derived from the socio-political context of a partnership. Representatives may well be sent to a workshop to present a certain agenda. In my experience, this happens particularly in partnerships but can also arise in internal teams. People may have been given instruction to proffer a particular view and hold the company, or departmental line. They may not have much, if any, flexibility or ability to compromise, negotiate and make a deal. Again, this is certainly a context which I have experienced. In such situations, it does not make sense to attempt to use group powers of persuasion to paint someone into the corner when the real blockage may not even be in the room.

On balance, even considering these shortcomings, group workshops remain the best method I have seen to address both issues. They assist in developing shared understandings of each other's work by the process of idea dissemination and group discussion of solutions. Secondly, being witness to one's workmates sense of reason may be the best way of stimulating a group member to become an advocate for an alternative solution on return to their organization.

How we think about partnerships:

Current situation

It is not clear from the interviews, or indeed my own personal experience, that private sector developers see partnership with the public sector as much more than a necessity. Conversely, the public sector is often prone to seeing the private sector with suspicion and moralistic judgment. Governments will rarely sell land to developers without conditions. Indeed, governments see the disposal of land as an opportunity to directly implement a project to demonstrate the benefits of their public policy objectives.

This raises the question: How are major urban development projects truly a partnership beyond current rhetoric and jargon and not just a division of roles between those who possess a scarce good – land – and those who want to use it for their own ends? I see the following as arguments for partnerships. Historically, the public sector has led many urban projects which performed poorly in implementation due to the disconnect between neighbourhood or masterplan vision, and the viability of the real estate and infrastructure which it relied upon. Therefore, partnerships which brought public sector oversight of the vision and masterplan, but allowed its shaping by private sector actors who had knowledge of what was feasible, seemed to achieve the best of both worlds. Battery Park City in New York is seen as one such example of a project which stalled for decades with a prescriptive public sector masterplan, but

which was later restarted with private sector input (Fainstein 2001). For the public sector, there is also the perceived if not actual added bonus of reallocating resources, and risk, to the private sector in the process. The more strategically minded private partners also see each project as a part of an ongoing series. For them, compromising to achieve better partnership is part of a company's long term business plan.

Strategies to get more out of partnerships:
An area of further research and consideration is how the private sector could work more strategically with the public sector for more than just access to land and development approvals. Examples might include assisting in building legitimacy within the broader constituency, or indeed providing more resources for local engagement activities. A broader view could consider what local community groups and NGOs might offer a company, and indeed the public sector, as adjuncts or complements to the existing set of functions and skills of the partnership. For instance, a common critique of "new places" is that they are soul-less, desolate and lacking in life. This happens even when the state of physical development has been of a high standard. Most developers from both the public and private sides come from design, engineering, construction or finance backgrounds. They are used to dealing with static conditions, and assume that the life will flourish later after the build is complete. Concentrating on the social life of places does not come naturally and is often seen as a distraction to the concrete challenges of public space and property building. And yet we all know the old real estate adage that what is valued most is location, location, location. But this is rarely, if ever, derived purely from the state of the physical place. It is the social and economic life of spaces to which people are attracted.

Some of the cases which have resonated strongly with me since arriving at MIT Sloan have been of those large corporations which have been working in partnership with NGOs and governments. The purpose of such collaboration has been to achieve multiple objectives which were positive for business as well as the broader community. Examples of Nike and Walmart come to mind. The need to work together is often initially sparked by public embarrassment. But, after the shock, better ways of doing business have been realized. In the case of Nike, this has led to admirable new materials and labor standards. In the case of Walmart, a new, different kind of consumer demand is being served by adapting the supply chain to produce sustainably sourced goods. Given their scale, the ripple effect in multiple industries across the globe is enormous. These are not corporate social responsibility add-ons, but fundamental changes to the way of doing business to derive more value and expand markets. Indeed, in both the

cases, neither firm is actually publicizing in any significant manner the activities that they are pursuing to mitigate social and environmental problems.

Urban development can learn from these examples of the product world. One of my respondents stated in a public forum (David Rolls, 2010) that he knew that a critical element of making places great was investing in public spaces both from a design and construction perspective, as well as in the economic mix of tenants and programming of activities. He went on to say that unfortunately upfront investment was anathema to a net present value calculation, but his organization knew that this was what was required to build great urban places. In his words, "This is where your DNA needs to kick-in and the calculator is left in your brief case."

It is difficult to quantify the financial benefits of such indirect investments. But it is also unrealistic to expect a private developer to be the only provider of solutions to local urban issues. Indeed, would the community really want a private developer to be sole responsible party for the success of an urban area? I think not. Could it be possible to seek alliances with other organizations to make better use of the projects in which both public and private developers are involved? I think the answer to this must be yes. But, first, one must make a shift in mindset from partnership as a necessity, to one of choice. Second, the definition of what is being achieved through urban development would need to expand from its current primary focus on the planning and delivering of buildings and physical infrastructure, to include an equal focus and recognition of the importance of achieving a balanced mix of social and economic interests. Third, the parties constituting partnerships in urban development partnership need to be expanded.

The breadth of partners involved in an urban project should include more than the minimum of public and private parties required to simply build a place. Partners could be involved with those life-providing activities such as the programming and management of open spaces, be involved in discussions regarding the mix of development, assist in sourcing tenants through a broader network of political capital. One concern would be that when other groups develop an interest in a project, they may build a powerbase which challenges the authority of those limited number of partners with a lot to lose. However, history suggests that a backlash against closed-shop projects will arrive eventually anyway. Another side benefit of expanding the parties to partnership is that it also provides another way of mitigating the social and economic issues that scarcity of competition can exacerbate.

A Management Framework:

In this section a framework is outlined to assist leaders in the management of partnership projects. It is based on the three lenses concepts (Ancona et al 2004) but here is translated into a two-by-two managerial matrix specifically for urban development partnerships. Figure 1 is a diagram to assist in better understanding the position that one occupies in a working context. The process of thinking about position is most important, not the precision of the diagrams. In this sense, it is not meant to provide prescriptive courses of action but instead be used as a thought provoking tool for broad analysis and strategy.

Figure 1: Diagnostic framework for partnership work context
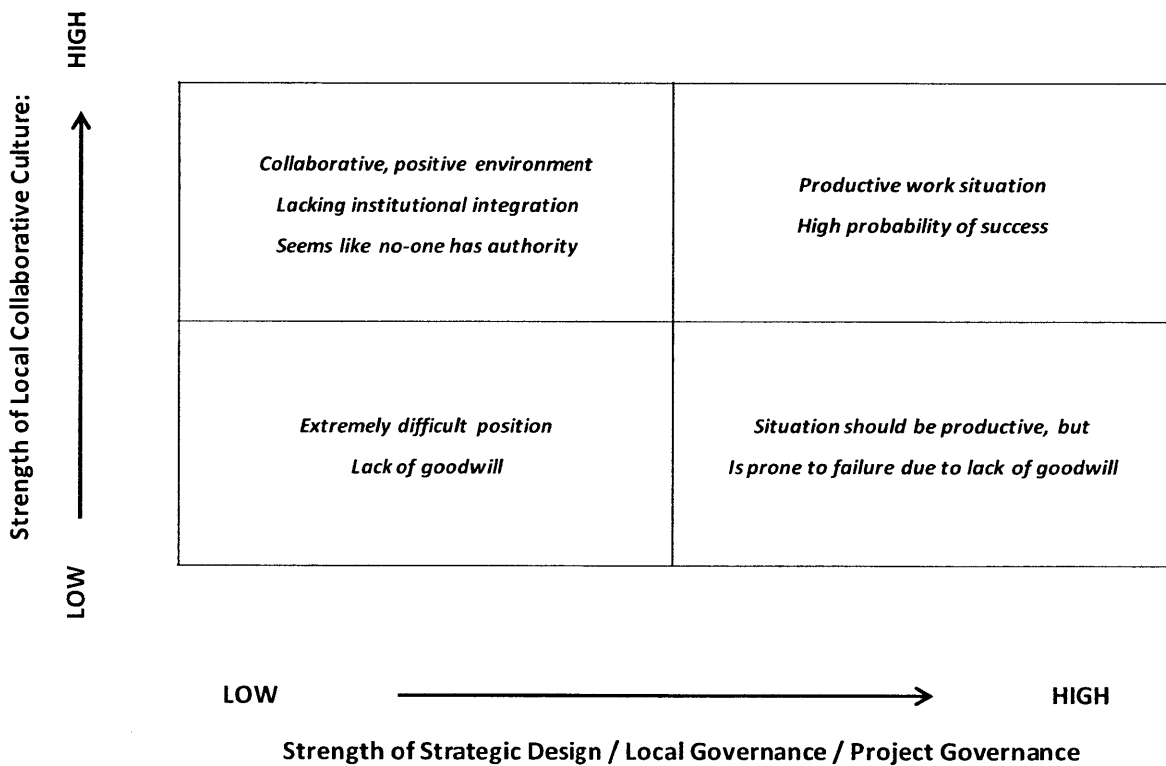
One must first assess the state of the culture within a city. This is represented on the y-axis in terms of strength of collaborative culture and institutional disposition to development. For instance, one respondent commented that the presumption of a role for the public sector was much stronger on the east coast, in contrast to the west coast, of the United States. Questions which assist in understanding the position here could be:

- How do the city planners refer to their counterparts in engineering and transport departments?

Are there ready examples of productive working collaborations with other departments & agencies?

- Does the language of developer / government seem antagonistic?
- Is there evidence in the city of projects which have required extensive collaborations? Is there strength in the network of public, private and civic actors?
- Do the projects' proponents seem wounded or enthusiastic about their experiences working in this city?
- Would they attempt another similar project?

For those in the middle of a long partnership project, warning signs of potential trouble could be:

- Have there been changes in personnel in any party involved in the project?
- Is the mood of the community changing?
- Are there changes in the political leadership of the city?

One could argue that changing the culture within a single medium sized company is difficult enough. Changing the culture and operation of a city or region is probably impossible for a single individual to attempt. Therefore, the culture of a place should be taken largely as a given, though the disposition of that culture towards one's activities can certainly change depending on one's mode of operation. This is discussed further on in the chapter. This leaves the strategic design of partnership projects to be assessed.

Strategic design in the context of partnerships refers to how a city's institutions have been organized to interact with each other as well as third parties. One could describe this as the nature of local governance. This is unlikely to change unless there is a new government with a reform agenda. It also refers to the formality of arrangements with private and non-profit sector partners. Diagnostic questions to ask include:

- Are the relevant city functions – eg city planning, engineering, road and public transport planning – housed together in one organization?
- Are they cross-functionally organized by geography? Or are they "silo-ed" according to function?
- Are there appropriately authorized special project governance arrangements in place?
- Are there legislative or planning ordinances which require consensus-based multi-party approaches to community planning?

- Have cooperative working groups been established which include a broad array of interest groups? Or, are relationships secretive and kept to a minimum of necessary parties?

The Grattan Institute report (Frances-Kelly, 2010) noted that governance structures are less important than one might think in city projects, and in fact can be a distraction. Indeed, successful cities have a variety of governance arrangements. Time and effort, in their view, was better spent on public engagement, rather than attempting to influence the arrangements of departmental and Council responsibilities.

In the US, governance arrangements for the delivery of urban development projects differ from state to state, and indeed from city to city. It is certainly true that a common theme in each jurisdiction has been the level of community engagement. However, it is also true that in each of the cases I have examined, the level of structural integration of transport planners, builders, asset managers and operators is significantly more than is found in Melbourne. For instance, in Los Angeles, the metro agency has responsibility for planning, building, maintaining and operating all roads, bus and rail lines. This is not to say that silo mentalities do not exist within these more integrated structures – of course they do and this is indeed borne out in the interviews which were undertaken. However overcoming barriers to implementation can be easier when both strategic and cultural settings are conducive to working together.

In general, it should be easier to move in a clockwise direction from the lower left quadrant in Figure 1. That is, moving up the y-axis by spending time relating and building a culture of collaborative will. Attempting to move across the x-axis first will appear heavy handed, because it will involve appealing to authority to determine structural relationships before building the support of peers.

Figure 2 presents what a contextually responsive working strategy might be along the axes defined in Figure 1. The approaches outlined – playing to strengths, building special arrangements, building goodwill, building social and political capital – are arguably ways of working successfully within a quadrant. The framework suggests where emphasis is needed given the context of culture and governance which is largely beyond one's control.

Figure 2: Partnership strategies to deal with contextual shortcomings

	Build Special Arrangements •May require special agreements and other instruments to articulate roles and responsibilities •Will depend on your, and your organisation's ability to enthuse several other parties of a project's merit •Beware, lack of formality can lead to situations where a participant is mistakenly left out •Network orchestration will be key	**Play to Strengths** •Play to institutional and personal strengths •Light touch •Avoid "politicking" or being too instrumental •Let strength of existing arrangements be •Focus on clear leadership behaviour and strong management
Strength of Local Collaborative Culture: HIGH ↑ LOW	**Build Social and Political Capital** •Focus on building relationships first. If successful, then look to formalising working structures •Attempting to build structure first can be seen as trying to use authority •Likely to feel frustration with work like "wheels are spinning" over same issues without traction	**Build goodwill** •Success will depend on your ability, to build enthusiasm, empowerment and commitment in a context which may be cynical about you •Listening and understanding partners issues to (re)build trust will be essential •Network orchestration will be key

LOW ⟶ HIGH

Strength of Strategic Design / Local Governance / Project Governance

Using the framework:

Edelenbos' and Klijn's (2009) view is that process management is part of what is more generically termed network management. They take the structure of a network as given and therefore focus on how to manage the interactions between parties. In my framework, this is akin to presuming that one's position on the x-axis is fixed, and efforts to make a situation more effective involve pushing one's position further up the y-axis. This is also consistent with one of my respondent's statement that "partnerships are about culture, not contract". I agree that this is the right approach but would add that once one establishes a strong y-axis position,all parties' involvement can be made easier if some efforts are also made to strengthen the structure itself. That need not be in legal form such as contracts, but instead be in commitments to project working arrangements such as regular working group sessions, joint organization leaders' meetings and other such methods. The following are three examples that illustrate these issues in real development situations.

A case from the source data:

At the Washington Metro, Steve Goldin was operating in an environment with other state agencies where there was a level of interest in developing a particular station. However, the groups had not worked together before. Therefore, he first approached the situation by trying to orchestrate some common objectives for the site. This involved meeting with counterparts, building rapport, interest, and commitment to work together (represented by moving from position 1 to 2 in Figure 3). Then, in order to make the process of partnership with the private sector smoother, he managed to get the group to agree to some set rules and procedures for the project (represented by moving from position 2 to 3 in figure 3). This is project-level governance. It started with the issue of the joint request for proposal which came from the local city, two Maryland State departments and the Washington Metro which in itself represents the tri-state region. Trying to jump straight to the joint RFP would not have been possible without first having moved up the *y*-axis of culture building.
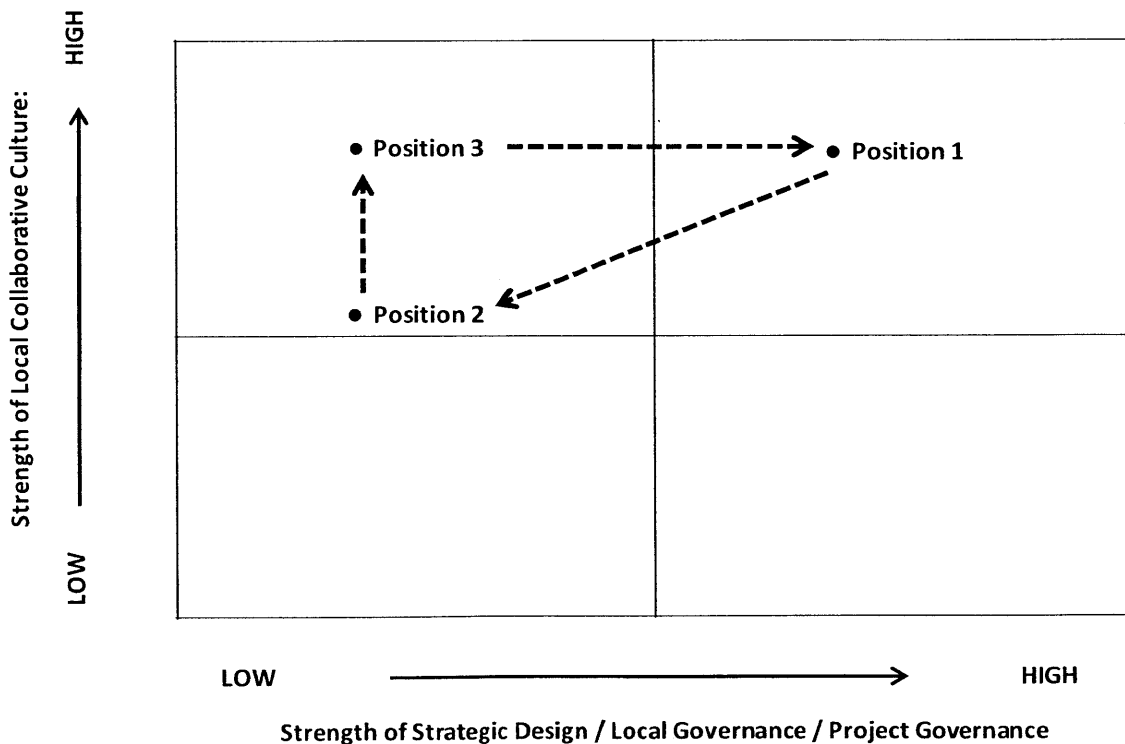
Figure 3: Working at the Washington Metro

Strength of Local Collaborative Culture: HIGH / LOW

Position 1, Position 2, Position 3

LOW — HIGH

Strength of Strategic Design / Local Governance / Project Governance
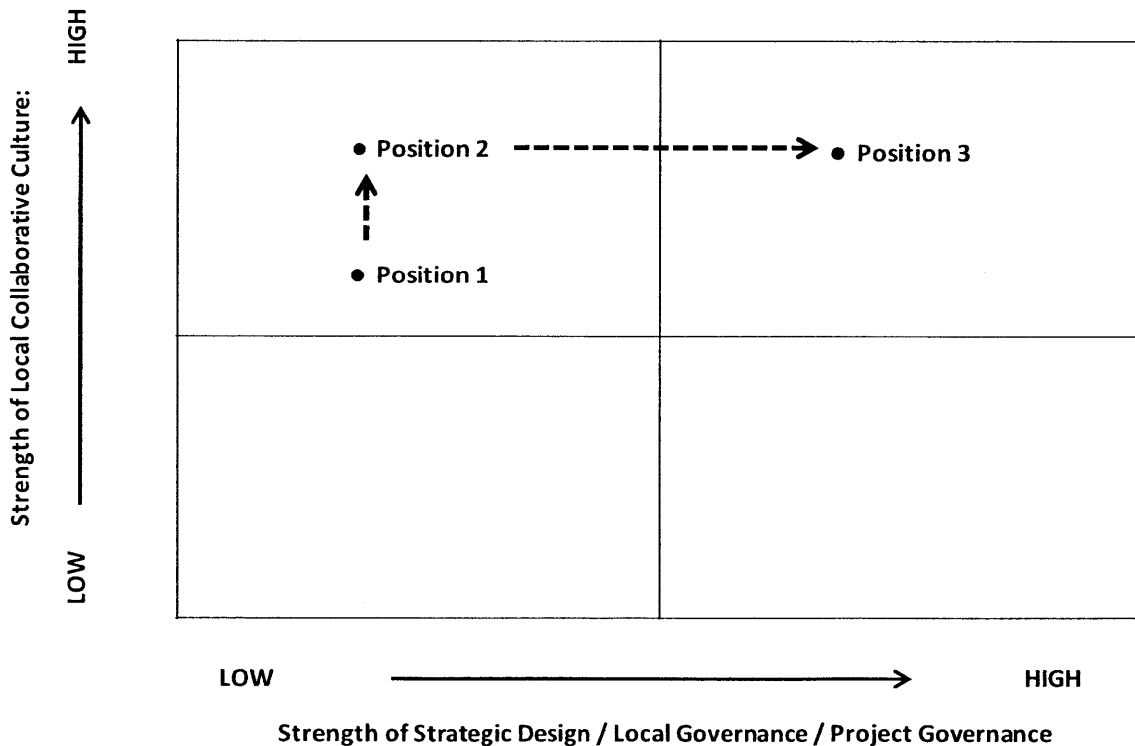
A case from the source data:

Lend Lease is in partnership with VicUrban on a portion of Melbourne Docklands known as Victoria Harbour. It is a twenty year project which began in 2001. They have built one of the largest clusters of highly rated environmentally performing buildings anywhere, but, to their admission, the pedestrian experience is not strong. There is a lack of urban life compared to other parts of the city and, despite many well-designed buildings and spaces, there is a sense of homogeneity in the area. Over the duration of the project their own aspirations have grown and, significantly, the community expectations have changed. Leadership has changed as well. The masterplan and development agreement were executed when both organizations had different leadership at all levels. Attempting a renegotiation of the masterplan was potentially fraught with danger as the relationship between VicUrban and Lend Lease had become more operational and compliance focused (represented by moving from position 1 to 2 in Figure 4).

Figure 4: Lend Lease and VicUrban at Docklands

Strength of Local Collaborative Culture: HIGH ... LOW

● Position 3 - - - - - - - - - - -→ ● Position 1

● Position 2

Strength of Strategic Design / Local Governance / Project Governance
LOW ——————————→ HIGH

To overcome the above mentioned problems with the project, Lend Lease first concentrated on gaining agreement for a review of the project, then sought to make sure the right parties were included in such a review, and finally undertook a design process which they believed was most advantageous. In order to achieve the outcome they desired required culture building activities (represented by moving from position 2 to 3 in Figure 4). Their leadership describes the focus as being on outcomes, not process. However it is clear from what they describe as key elements such as "recruiting the right people", "gaining agreement to involve other parties", "facilitating a 2-day offsite workshop" – that these were all critical steps in a process needed to achieve the outcome. The process (represented by moving from position 3 back to position 1 in Figure 4) was successful in achieving a negotiated revised masterplan and development agreement. Only time will tell whether it is successful in making a lively urban place.

A case from personal experience:

Transit-oriented development (TOD) in Melbourne: The problem in Melbourne is that both the strategic design (governance structure) and the culture of the organizations which need to be involved make achieving agreement and integrated solutions extremely difficult. Any potential TOD project would require coordination of Department of Transport (rail planning), VicTrack (asset owners & managers), Metro (operator). It would also be likely to involve the Department of Community Planning and Development, and VicUrban (redevelopment agency), as well as a private developer. In addition, there would be a complex and difficult planning permit process with the local city government. Further, depending on how major surrounding roads might be effected, input from VicRoads may also be required. This represents a political challenge of herculean proportions. It may not be technically insurmountable, but it will require a clear approach and a determined effort to be successful. I would plot the current context on the framework as shown in Figure 5 below at position 1.

My analysis leads to the conclusion that for transit-oriented projects to be delivered in Melbourne, exceptional relationship building skills are required to construct a political support base (represented by moving from position 1 to 2 in figure 5). Under the kind of structure that is currently in place, the only way to resolve certain matters would be to draw upon agency CEO level personnel, something which is unlikely to happen. And, this presumes that the leaders of each agency are, in turn, of like minds in the first place. If this is not the case, then issues of disagreement would require ministerial or even premier-level intervention. This is a highly unlikely scenario to occur.

Figure 5: Transit Oriented Development in Melbourne.
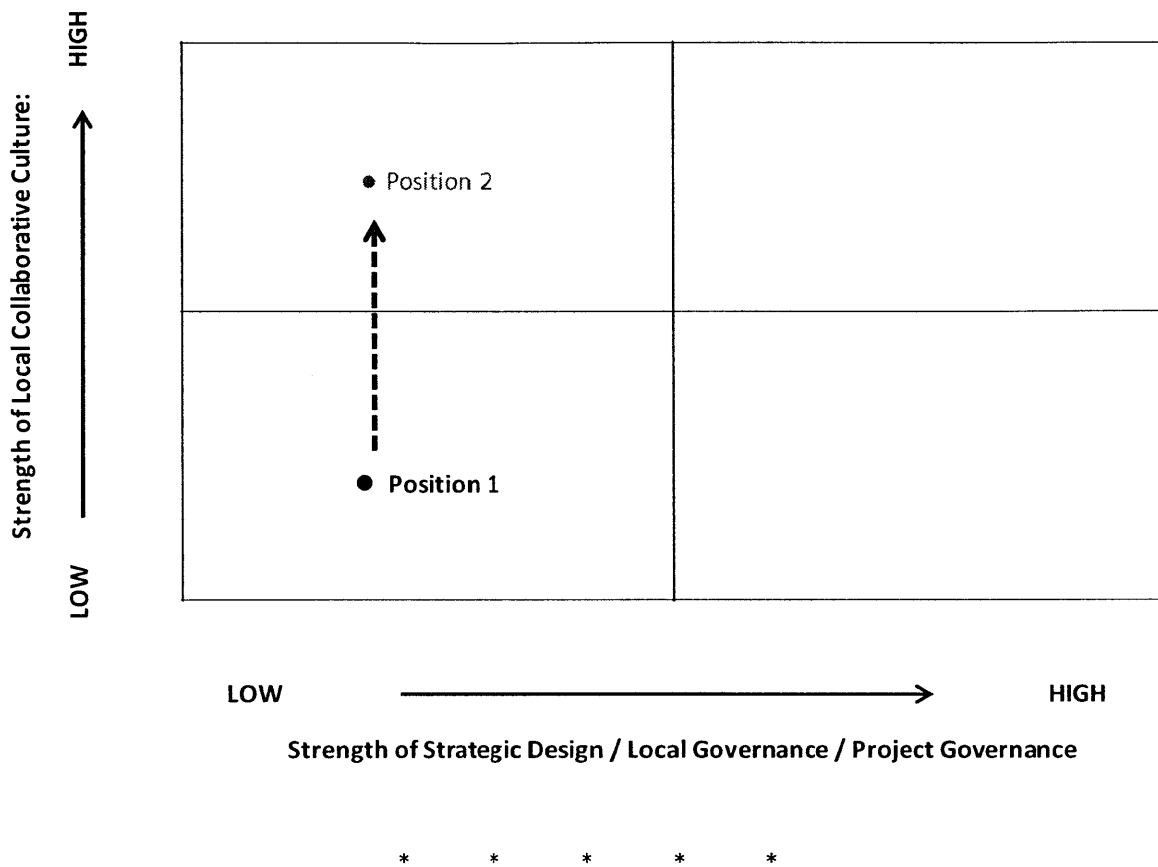
In summary, it would appear there is indeed scope for increasing the potential and benefits of partnerships in urban development. However, this will involve rethinking of partnership as choice, rather than a necessity. Parallels and lessons can be learned from other industries. The example of consumer product producers and retailers with complex, yet contentious and visible, global supply chains was discussed. There, solutions have been found which provide examples of successful high impact multi-party projects without clear lines of authority.

The first part of the chapter discussed the shortcomings and pitfalls of partnerships. Many of these concerned the constraints of the political context, and its impact on attitudes and willingness to participate. The managerial framework outlined in the latter part of this chapter is a diagnostic and strategic tool which partially deals with these challenges. However, like all diagrams, it is a simplification. It is easier to plot one's course than to actually undertake the relating, or indeed achieve agreement

about new ways of working. For myself, at least, it has provided a worthwhile analysis of the context of my work. Using the three lenses concepts, it elucidates a broader local political, or even regional, exterior context for an organization. Personally, this has provided an extension to much of my classroom learning at MIT Sloan which has focused on exterior economic contexts or the relations within firms.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Undertaking this thesis has greatly broadened and deepened my understanding of managing complex projects. Partnerships, multi-organizational and cross-sector collaborations are messy, necessarily indefinite, and difficult contexts in which to work. To succeed requires patience and an appetite – not just tolerance – for managing uncertainty. It requires politically adroit relationship building skills. There is no silver bullet. Methodical hard work, stamina and a personality fit to withstand, cope, and even relish the challenges and unpredictability, seem to be requirements of the trade.

There are a range of project working methods or instruments which assist in building and maintaining consensus and enthusiasm for a project. In truth, however, these are not a solution in themselves as some authors would have us believe. They do not necessarily provide certainty of outcome. They are important ingredients to be carefully deployed in a process which requires constant leadership which is sensitive – adaptive – to changing circumstances of context. The list of individual leadership qualities discussed in the preceding chapters are too expansive and all-encompassing to be embodied in any single person. Practically these requirements can only be met by the collective involved in a project. This is an absolute case for distributed leadership.

However, there is a danger of concluding that there is no certainty within this murkiness and nor are there methods or techniques to utilize. A more deliberate practitioner, partner, or leader, does have at their disposal many tools. Understanding and being able to unpack complexity may come easily to people who have innate sensitivity and alertness to changing circumstances. However few individuals will be able to compete with the capability of a diverse group of people – sensors – whose information and ideas can be synthesized and categorized with learned methods and frameworks.

The great personal benefit of undertaking this research has been to provide me with a broad, albeit incomplete, survey of work on partnerships. The literature, common issues, and commentary from scholars working on similar problems, but mostly in other industries, has provided an excellent set of data points for review. Further, interviewing practitioners from my own industry who are working in a different socio-political context has confirmed that problems and solutions are more common than one might expect. Whereas I arrived with a sense of trepidation that the field was full of Donald Rumsfeld's

infamous "unknown unknowns". I now feel the breadth of my exposure to the topic is more known than unknown. Therefore, armed with this new knowledge and confidence, the question is:

What would I do next?
Understand the socio-political context from a broader set of perspectives. This occurs at several levels. First, and perhaps most importantly is what Crosby and Bryson (2005) described as navigation of policy cycles. All times have particular ideas which gain currency and momentum. It also true that not all ideas will have their time. If one chooses a career dealing with urban problems of city-scale significance, then one must be prepared to not only provide ideas leadership, but also be savvy enough to wait for the right time to advance these ideas or, alternatively, adapt one's ideas to the issues of the times.

At the project working level, the framework outlined in Chapter 4 is one way of thinking about changes in circumstances. Its purpose is to attempt to identify potential impacts earlier than one might otherwise be able to. Managerially, this is akin to listening and recognizing weak signals or early stage trends. Sensemaking via diagnosis, information scanning, opinion scanning, tapping ones network are all ways of understanding the context in which one is working. It seems that there is no single perfect approach. Using a variety of qualitative and quantitative techniques is the key, as each has their own biases. Taken as a whole, a greater and more accurate picture can be gleaned. Hopefully, if used methodically, such an approach will allow me to determine courses of action which allow for subtle evolutionary adjustments to direction before involuntary acute changes are made by outside influences. In terms of partnership membership, I would be a vocal proponent of thinking broadly about the possibilities that multiple parties bring to a project.

The entire year at MIT Sloan has confirmed and deepened my understanding of the need to think analytically about the social and economic model of urban development. This was a core idea in a VicUrban working paper which was produced entitled Building Activity Centres – Strategies for creating strong local communities and economies (VicUrban, 2010). I note that a recent Harvard Business School working paper (Alusi et al 2011) on sustainable cities reviewed eight international case studies and concluded that downfalls of all the sample projects were that they were real estate driven, lacked governance arrangements to facilitate delivery, and had an absence of what would be the social and economic drivers for the visions which had been drawn as architecture and landscape. In short, they were imagineered. One technique to mitigate this in visioning workshops is to ask participants to

imagine what could be done in 3 months, 3 years and 10 years. The purpose of such an approach is that changes which can be achieved in 3 months are programmatic and not physical. A 3 year time horizon allows for some minor physical changes, but is more focused on business and social attraction strategy. Only the 10 year horizon allows for serious concentration on planning, design and real estate development solutions. This study has confirmed for me the importance of being able to describe these scenarios in great detail as the basis of any viable partnership project.

On group process:

This has been a major topic of learning. I would be both more willing to use the workshop tools and collaborative processes, and also much more selective about when and why I would use them. I have been witness, subject, collaborator, leader and sometimes facilitator of some highly productive cross-organizational workshops. I have also played similar roles in sessions which were lacking an agenda and a clear sense of purpose. In some instances, participants did not even know why they were there and what they were supposed to achieve. While those situations were uncomfortable at the time, I now realize the full extent of how this latter type of workshop does more harm than good. It advertises incompetence, can lead to loss of enthusiasm from member individuals and groups, loss of confidence in the broad leadership of an enterprise, and quite possibly reduced commitment to further workshops at a later stage when they may be really needed. It is, of course, true that much work is conducted "on the fly" in an all-too-busy work context. However, I now view such group processes for their strategic partnership value, beyond any pure project management or problem solving function. To this end, I would be much more careful about managing the execution of such events.

So when should such workshops be used? The answer to that I believe is early as well as towards the end of each stage of the process. They must be used early before people have reached conclusions about the direction of a project, but not so early that participants have not yet had time to consider the issues and be well enough versed to make meaningful contributions during a workshop. I always suspected that some of my more community-minded colleagues suffered from thinking that all workshops were good because of the buy-in and energy they generated. I am now both more convinced of this value, but also more concerned about the false expectations and damage that can be done if workshops are not well timed.

At VicUrban, group workshops were often effectively used in the planning and visioning stages of a project. When it came to what was termed "delivery", which others might describe as the business end of proceedings or implementation, there was rarely any questioning of conventional methods. Indeed, feasibility models and other financially-based project tools tended to be opaque to members of other disciplines within the project team. I see no reason why such workshops should be used to bring innovation to these stages since considerable data confirms that status quo systems seem to be the blocker to implementation. It seems to me that workshops at major stages beyond the visioning stage are useful to not just stimulate new ideas and collaboration but also to cause review of those aspects which come to be taken for granted in projects.

I would also like to challenge those respondents whose view is strictly outcomes focused and specifically not process-oriented. Focusing on either one at the expense of the other provides just half the picture. However, it seems particularly pertinent in urban development projects that so much success is determined by the winds of community and political support. A seemingly positive project outcome brought about by destructive ill-considered process can sacrifice partnership relationships as well as public perceptions. Such *outcomes* set up considerable implementation headaches for others to deal with later. However, as noted in Chapter 3, it was of interest that the same outcome-focused people focus also on culture building processes. It was instructive to me to hear several extremely busy people in very important roles all describe the same types of techniques – one on one for coffee, chocolate bars, sandwiches – as actually being the most important tools to get things done. These were all network management, social and political capital building activities which, according to the literature, are process techniques. Indeed, perhaps this is yet another issue of shared understanding of terms.

Seeking formalization – on strategic design or project level governance
Much of what has been summarized regarding group process deals with content development and culture building activities. In my hometown, I believe that significant blockages to projects are not only cultural but also significantly structural and mirror how different public sector departments and agencies relate to one another. From several sections of government, I have heard state departmental working groups described as being a bureaucratic death knell for any project. This may be the case. However it is also true that my organization had identified lack of communication with a number of arms of government as being a "key blockage" to moving projects forward. Clearly there needs to be much stronger incentives for cross-departmental cooperation as well as efforts to build a collaborative

culture. I was particularly impressed by the data obtained by interview regarding both Los Angeles and Washington Metro projects. In both instances, there were sophisticated project level or organizational arrangements which helped provide positive working environment for partners.

Leadership:

The leadership aspects of developing successful urban projects suggests the 'leader' must be superhuman. Yet none of us are able to perform to the level required to be "perfect leaders" for successful collaboration and partnership. Here the concept of distributed leadership is pivotal. While allowing anyone within a project structure to exercise and demonstrate leadership, an astute leader will learn much about the organization and those within it. The year at MIT Sloan, coupled with several previous experiences, have provided many opportunities for 360 degree feedback. These have confirmed the need to seek out staff who can complement my weaknesses not just in technical skills, but also in leadership qualities.

Areas for further research:

In this project, I focused on the kinds of people whose roles I would like to emulate. These were all people with considerable experience and in talking to them I was able to gain some insight into their modes of operation. As I hope my next step is into a position of greater formal leadership than before, I believed it would be useful to hear from those exercising leadership in partnership contexts. However, I am certainly aware that there is always a gap between what people say and do, even if it is said with great sincerity. As such, there is an information shortfall at the project level. If I were to conduct this as a longer, more in-depth study, I would be interested to reconstruct a sample project by understanding its detailed sequence of events and to interview several participants of different rank who worked on the project. I would be particularly interested to correlate findings from across the partnership membership within a particular case study which was seen as successful. This type of project reconstruction may yield findings of greater depth. Alternatively, obtaining independently sourced data on a project in which I have participated could be particularly useful. It would not only yield new perspectives on familiar territory, but also my impact on the culture, process and outcomes.

Appendix A: Interviewees

Developers:

John Hrovat, Principal, Urban Partners Los Angeles

Rod Leaver, Chief Executive Officer, Lend Lease Australia, Sydney

Christopher Leinberger, Founding Partner, Arcadia Land Company and Fellow of the Brookings Institution

David Rolls, Chief Executive Officer, Lend Lease Development Australia, Sydney

*Ted Tye, Managing Partner, National Development, Boston

Civic / Non-profit:

Pamela Kahn, Executive Director, Ballston Partnership, Virginia

*Fred Kent, President, Project for Public Spaces, New York

Public Sector Delivery Agency Real Estate Leaders:

*Mark Boyle, General Manager of Development, Parking & Planning MBTA, Boston

Steven Goldin, Director of Real Estate, Washington Metro, Washington DC

Roger Moliere, Director of Real Estate, LA Metro, Los Angeles

Planning & Transport

Fred Salvucci, Former Massachusetts State Secretary of Transport and Infrastructure, Boston

Robert Brosnan, Director of Planning, Arlington County

Con Howe, Former Director of Planning City of New York and City of Los Angeles

Politicians

Kenneth Reeves, Former mayor and current councilor Cambridge City Council, Massachusetts

denotes people with whom small group meetings were held.

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