A Coordination Procedure Design

A Guide for Service Coordination in Apalachee Ridge Estates Neighborhood

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As requested, we have developed a Coordination Design and Resolution Procedure for the coordination of scheduling among the Neighborhood Services Partners in Apalachee Ridge Estates. The procedure we have designed would be utilized to head off any challenges that might occur throughout the scheduling of facilities and services among the multiple providers in the community. These challenges could include the coordination of budgeting cycles, operating budgets or any other issues that might prevent the ease of coordination. The procedure would be a used as an element of the Joint Management of Services Agreement, which will be drafting in pending workshops.

The procedure proposes that the Neighborhood Services Partners meet three times yearly to develop a schedule of coordination for the services and facilities in the neighborhood. Therefore, there would be a meeting each term—a meeting each fall/winter to develop a schedule for spring activities; a meeting each spring to develop a schedule for summer activities; and a meeting each summer to develop a schedule for fall/winter activities.

Enclosed you will find a guideline for using and following this procedure plan. This includes its purpose, the process stages and diagram, information on process management and recommendations for the institutionalization of the process. We hope that you will find that this procedure is something that is useful for making the scheduling process in Apalachee Ridge Estates Neighborhood more productive and pleasant.
1.0 Proposal Purpose
There are instances in which many agencies come together to address a common social concern. These cases can involve turf wars and other conflicting views of the roles and responsibilities. This procedure is a mechanism for resolving conflicts in a manner that is driven by the stakeholders. Stakeholder-driven solutions provide innovative alternatives that may not surface through traditional formal procedures, such as litigation or arbitration. There is a need for innovation and flexibility in developing ways to maximize service delivery for social concerns. Therefore, this dispute procedure can be used as a guideline for assisting agencies in the coordination of schedules for neighborhood services and facilities. The objectives of this procedure are:

- To achieve a resolution that is acceptable to the stakeholders (fair, workable, satisfies interests, mutually beneficial)
- To keep transaction costs minimal (i.e. saving time, money, resources)
- To enhance relationships through understanding interests and feeling the best possible solution has been reached

2.0 Definitions
Arbitration is a formal hearing conducted by one or more arbitrators. Each disputant states its position and furnishes evidence to the arbitrator. The arbitrator makes the final decision of how the dispute is to be resolved.

Critical Issue refers to any issue that arises of significant proportion at or during any stage in the resolution process, which requires special attention or focus outside of the basic stages as outlined in the process design.

Facilitation refers to an informal but structured process in which a neutral party assists others in shaping a mutual agreement.

Formal Procedure is any procedure that cannot be settled by an informal technique such as mediation. Formal procedures include litigation or any other legal proceeding, which may be used to settle or resolve disputes.

Informal Negotiations refers to two or more parties in conflict speak directly with each other about their differences in an attempt to identify joint interests and develop a plan for resolving the conflict.

Litigation is a formal hearing in a court of law in which lawyers representing the disputants present narrowly focused arguments in a highly formalized and structured process. The judge makes the final decision based on the formal presentations.

Mediation is an informal, but structured process in which one or more impartial third parties assist disputants in talking about a conflict in negotiating a resolution that addresses disputes regarding the needs and interests of the parties.
Mediated Settlement Meeting is a one in which a mediator addresses the issues and concerns of the neighborhood services partners that are causing an impasse in negotiations concerning scheduling of services and facilities.

Schedule Plan refers to the document that will be produced each fall/winter, spring, and summer term that outlines the specific agreements made by Neighborhood Services Partners regarding what services will be made available, where they will be available and the timing and target population of each.

Stakeholder is an individual or a party who is directly, indirectly, or feels that they are impacted in some way by processes that exist or are expected to occur. They are also referred to as “participants” in this document and are actively involved in the process.

3.0 Participants
The main participants in the procedure consist of the Neighborhood Service Partners, the appropriate neighborhood Action Teams and other entities as needed.

- Boys & Girls Club
- Leon County School Board
- Community Neighborhood Renaissance Partners
- Parks & Recreation
- City of Tallahassee
- Neighborhood Justice Center
- Education Action Team
- Community Facilities and Services Action Team
- Process Manager

4.0 Proposed Process
The proposed procedure is initiated prior to the beginning of each term. It occurs three times yearly, during the fall/winter, spring, and summer terms. There are four stages in the scheduling process. These stages, responsible parties and a brief description of responsibilities are outlined below. As an attachment to this document is Exhibit 2, which shows the flow of decisions in the procedure design.

Stage 1: Initial drafting of schedule plan
At this first stage, the Process Manager will draft a preliminary schedule of events, activities and facilities for the term. The manager brings the Partners to a meeting to clarify and build upon this skeletal plan.

Stage 2: Coordination Meetings
The Process Manager facilitates the Coordination Meetings, where informal negotiations are used as the method of reaching agreement for scheduling. The negotiations take place between Neighborhood Services Partners and the chairpersons from the two Action Teams. If these negotiations are successful, then the parties proceed to Stage 3. If negotiations are not reached, then the parties move on to other alternative methods. The methods that may be used include:
Coordination Procedure Design

a. Mediated Settlement Meetings— a volunteer mediator is introduced to assist the parties in identifying underlying issues and reaching some agreement through consensus building. If this alternative is successful, then the parties re-enter the process at Stage 3; if this alternative process fails then the parties are urged to seek a formal procedure to resolve the dispute (See Section 4.1).

b. Formal Procedures—an individual outside of this process is used only if other alternatives are exhausted and fail at bringing the parties to an agreement. At this point, the parties are no longer included in the process.

Stage 3: Draft review
At this stage, the Process Manager brings together all of the information that was generated at the meetings to form a draft of the proposed scheduling plan for the term.

Stage 4: Finalization
The Process Manager seeks approval of the final schedule by the Action Team chairpersons and the Neighborhood Services Partners for the schedule.

It is important to note that Critical Issues Meetings can be held at any point throughout the procedure. The Critical Issues Meeting alternative is not anchored to a specific stage in the resolution process. Instead, it is a floating mechanism that can be used at any point throughout to discuss and/or resolve opportunities or disputes concerning issues that are timely or unique and require immediate or special attention.

4.1 Mediator Selection
The Process Manager will solicit a volunteer mediator from one of many resources in the city. These options include the Neighborhood Justice Center, individuals from the Community Neighborhood Renaissance Partnership, a Neighborhood Planner from the Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department, or an individual from the Florida Conflict Resolution Consortium.

4.2 Mediator Responsibilities
The mediator will establish a protocol that will be followed during the meeting or series of meetings. The mediator will be responsible for providing a mediation report, which specifies the number of agencies represented or present at the meeting, the nature of the dispute(s) identified by the parties, the options and strategies developed by the group for resolution, and the methods used for seeking agreement among meeting participants.

5.0 Procedure Management
Since there are many private and public, managing the procedure will be essential. The chain of command and process for decision-making should be made clear. Therefore, a Process Manager will be utilized to direct the process through each of the four stages when mediation is not necessary.

5.1 Process Manager Selection
A Neighborhood Services Specialist on staff at the City of Tallahassee’s Office of Neighborhood and Community Services will serve as the Process Manager. This individual will be selected by the lead Neighborhood Planner from the Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department and will be replaced as needed.

5.2 Process Manager Responsibilities
This individual will be in charge of facilitating the Coordination Meetings, compiling responses and input from these meetings into a working schedule, and finalization and distribution of the schedule plan. In addition, the manager will be in charge of maintaining ongoing dialogue regarding the outcome of the meetings and any disputes to the Neighborhood Planner. The Process Manager is also responsible for the facilitation of any Critical Issues Meetings that are necessary. It is the position of the Process Manager to suggest mediation for Mediated Settlement Meetings and to process any requests from process participants regarding the use of a third party to settle disputes. A yearly evaluation report should be prepared by the manager that summarizes the efficiency or inefficiency of scheduling at each term throughout the entire year of service.

6.0 Process Resources
Adequate time and financial assistance are imperative for making the procedure efficient and successful. The subsections below provide options for timing, scheduling and the acquisition of financial resources.

6.1 Timing
The procedure could last anywhere between three weeks and two months depending on the level of cooperation from the participants. Other factors also include the length and frequency of meetings. The timeframe is flexible, and can be adjusted, but we recommend a finalized, approved schedule be developed and circulated two months prior to the beginning of each term. A possible schedule for scheduling of terms is given in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheduling Term</th>
<th>Term Begins</th>
<th>Term Ends</th>
<th>Coordination Meeting to be held</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall/Winter</td>
<td>September</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>February</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>April</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The best case scenario would involve a good drafting of the schedule based on the services matrix provided in the case specific design, a successful coordination meeting, draft review and schedule finalization. Alternative scenarios would involve the need for formal negotiations or mediation for agreement. Litigation is the resolution technique of last resort because it is a process that drains time and resources. If litigation is factored into the process, a time frame cannot be determined. Legal proceedings can last for years.

6.2 Financial Resources
The Process Manager will solicit the volunteer services from neighborhood residents, Community Partners, such as the Community Neighborhood Renaissance Partners and educational institutions, and governmental entities. If volunteer services are exhausted or unavailable, the Process Manager will have to request funding from the City of Tallahassee.

7.0 Procedure Institutionalization

Acceptance of the entire coordination procedure must be sought before it is used in the planning process in Apalachee Ridge. Acceptance of the procedure The Process Manager will initiate the acceptance of this procedure design. After the Neighborhood Services Partners and the Action Teams have approved its contents, the manager will seek approval of the procedure and its contents from the lead Neighborhood Planner. If approved by these parties, the procedure will be adopted as an element of the Joint Management of Services Agreement. The entire Joint Management of Services Agreement will be taken to the Neighborhood Association for final approval and, then becomes a part of the neighborhood plan in the Apalachee Ridge Estates Neighborhood. To encourage parties to accept and participate in the procedure, it might be necessary to provide some incentives. Participants will be reminded that acceptance of a framework for coordination will ultimately result in better service delivery to the neighborhood and the formulation of good relations with other agencies and entities, as potential funding opportunities and joint ventures can be discovered and explored.

As stated previously, there must also be acceptance of the coordinated schedule each term. To encourage this approval by all parties, the incentives as listed above might be useful. However, another incentive would be to include a City official in the Coordination Meetings when the scheduling is done.