GP-1

DEFINITIONS AND TERMS

GP-1.01 GENERAL

Wherever in these General Provisions or in other Contract Documents the following terms or abbreviations are used, the meaning shall be as follows.

GP-1.02 ORGANIZATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Anne Arundel County

Anne Arundel, Maryland, a body corporate and politic. References herein to "the County" shall be interpreted as meaning Anne Arundel County.

Department

Anne Arundel County Department of Public Works.

GP-1.03 DEFINITIONS

Additional Work

Increase in quantities of Work above those shown in the Proposal Form.

Advertisement

The public announcement, as required by law, inviting bids for Work to be performed or materials to be furnished.

Anne Arundel County Standard Details

Detail drawings showing standard methods of construction for water mains, sanitary sewers, storm drains, roads, streets and erosion control measures.

Award

The decision of the County to accept the Proposal of the lowest responsive and responsible bidder for the Work, subject to the execution and approval of a satisfactory Contract therefore and Bond to secure the performance thereof, and to such other conditions as may be specified or otherwise required by law.

Base Course

The layer or layers of specified selected material of designed thickness placed on a subbase or a subgrade to support a surface course.

Bid

A statement of price, terms of sale, and description of the supplies, services, or construction offered by a vendor to the County.

Bid Board

A bulletin board displayed in an area to which the public has access and on which is posted solicitations or announcements of availability of solicitations or both.

Bid Bond

The security in the form approved by the County and executed by the Bidder and his Surety and paid for by the Bidder. The Bid Bond, when required, shall be in the amount designated by the County as a guarantee on the part of the bidder to enter into a Contract with the County, if the Work of constructing the improvement is awarded to the Bidder.

Bidder

An individual, partnership, firm, or corporation formally submitting a Proposal for the Work contemplated, acting directly or through a duly authorized representative.

Bid Form

The approved form on which the County requires bids to be set forth and submitted. See also Proposal Form.

Bid Item

An item of Work specifically described and for which a price, either unit or lump sum, is quoted by the Contractor. It includes the performance of all Work and the furnishing of all labor, equipment and materials described herein or described in any Supplemental Specifications or Special Provisions.

Bridge

The word "bridge" shall mean any bridge or highway grade separation structure and shall embrace the sub-structure and superstructure and the approaches thereto, and such entrance plazas, interchanges, overpasses, underpasses, connecting highways and other structures which the County may deem necessary in connection therewith, together with all property, rights, easements, franchises, and interest acquired by the County for the construction and operation of such bridge.

For the convenience of and definition by the County a bridge will also be known as a structure more than 20 feet in length. The County's definition of length shall be the out to out dimension of the floor or from back wall to back wall of abutments. For arches, the length shall be the clear span. For box culverts and batteries of pipes, the length shall be out to out of outer walls and out to out of shells of outside pipes. For lengths, all dimensions shall be parallel to the centerline of the roadway. The dimensions of handrails will not be taken into account in measuring bridge lengths.

Business

A corporation, partnership, individual, sole proprietorship, joint venture, or any other legal entity through which commercial activity is conducted.

Calendar Day

Every day shown on the calendar, Sundays and holidays included.

Change Order

A written order to the Contractor, signed by the Engineer on behalf of the County, ordering a change in Work from that originally shown by the Plans and Specifications that has been found necessary. If the Work is of a nature involving an adjustment of price or time, a Change Order to the Purchase Order shall be executed.

Change Order to the Purchase Order

A written authorization to the Contractor duly signed and executed by the Purchasing Agent authorizing the obligation of funds for the change to the Contract, and the modification of the Contract time allowance. The Contractor shall not proceed with the stipulated Work until the Change Order to the Purchase Order is received.

Channel

A natural or artificial watercourse.

Chief Engineer

The Chief Engineer of the Department of Public Works, or his designee as appropriate.

Construction

The process of building, adding, altering, converting, relocating, renovating, replacing, or restoring of real property in which the County has an interest.

Construction Strip

An area adjacent to the right-of-way or easement temporarily acquired for the use of the Contractor during the execution of the Work. This area is shown on the Plans for interpretation and clarification of the Plans.

Contingent Item

Any item listed in the Contract Documents and included in the Bid for the purpose of obtaining a Contract price. Such bid constitutes tender of an exercisable option to incorporate such items into the Work in accordance with stated terms at bid Contract prices without regard to quantities.

Contract

Any agreement entered into by the County for the procurement of supplies, services, construction, or any other items and includes:

- 1. Awards and notices of award;
- 2. Contracts of a fixed-price, cost reimbursement, cost-plus-a-fixed-fee, fixed-price

incentive, or cost-plus incentive fee type;

- 3. Contracts providing for the issuance of job or task orders;
- 4. Leases;
- 5. Letter Contracts:
- 6. Purchase orders;
- 7. Supplemental agreements with respect to any of these;
- 8. Orders; and
- 9. Grants.

Contract does not include:

- 1. Collective bargaining agreements with employee organizations; or
- 2. Medical, Medicare, Judicare, or similar reimbursement Contracts for which user eligibility and cost are set by law or regulation.

Contract Bond

The approved form of security, executed by the Contractor and his Surety or Sureties, guaranteeing complete execution of the Contract and all Supplemental Agreements pertaining thereto. Contract Bond shall also mean the same as Performance Bond.

Contract Documents

The written agreement executed between the County and the successful bidder, covering the performance of the Work and furnishing of labor, equipment and materials, by which the Contractor is bound to perform the Work and furnish the labor, equipment and materials, and by which the County is obligated to compensate him therefore at the mutually established and accepted rate or price. The Contract shall include the Invitation for Bids, Notice to Contractors, Instructions to Bidders, Proposal, Contract Forms and Bonds, General Provisions, Technical Specifications, Standard Details, all special provisions, all technical provisions, all Plans, Addenda, and Notice to Proceed, also any written Change Orders and Supplemental Agreements that are required to complete the construction of the Work in an acceptable manner including authorized extension thereof.

Contract Drawings

See definition of "Plans."

Contract Item (Pay Item)

An item of Work specifically described and for which a price, either unit or lump sum, is provided. It includes the performance of all Work and the furnishing of all labor, equipment and materials, described herein or described in any Supplemental Specifications or Special Provisions.

Contract Modification

Any written alteration in the specifications, delivery point, date of delivery, Contract period, price, quantity, or other provision of any existing Contract, whether accomplished in accordance with a Contract provision, or by mutual action of the parties to the Contract. It includes change orders, extra Work orders, supplemental agreements, Contract amendments, reinstatements, or options/renewals.

Contractor

The party of the second part to the Contract; the individual, partnership, firm or corporation undertaking the execution of the Work under the terms of the Contract and acting directly or through his, their, or its agents or employees.

Contract Time or Completion Date

The number of calendar days shown in the Proposal indicating the time allowed for the completion of the Work contemplated in the Contract.

In case a calendar date of completion is shown in the Proposal, in lieu of the number of calendar days, such Work shall be completed by that date.

Controlled Access Arterial Highway

The term "controlled access arterial highway" shall mean a major thoroughfare of two or more traffic lanes in each direction having the same characteristics as an expressway except that the conflict of cross streams of traffic need not be eliminated at every intersection by means of grade separation structures.

Controlling Operation

An operation of either major or minor proportions, which at the particular time under consideration has a controlling effect on the progress of the Project as a whole.

County

The term shall mean Anne Arundel County, Maryland, a body corporate and politic.

County Roads

The term shall mean any public road in Anne Arundel County excluding those roads in other municipalities and State Roads, title to which, or the easement for the use of which, is vested in a public body and governmental agency by grant, condemnation, dedication, or by operation by law.

Culvert

Any structure not classified as a bridge which provides an opening under any roadway.

Day

Calendar day unless otherwise designated.

Developer

An individual, partnership, corporation, or other non-County entity who, under agreement(s), constructs public improvements that are to be incorporated into the County's systems.

Domestic Manufacture

When referring to metallic items such as structural steel, pipe, reinforcement, bridge rails, etc., the term "Domestic Manufacture" is intended to mean those metals whose final alloying has taken place within the confines of the Continental United States.

Drainage Ditch

In general, any open watercourse other than gutters, constructed beyond the limits of cut or fill slopes for excavation or embankment, as indicated by the typical section shown on the Plans.

Easement (Right-of-Way)

A grant of a right of use of the property of an owner for a certain purpose at the will of the grantee.

Engineer

The term shall mean the designated representative of the Chief Engineer, or their duly authorized agents, said agent acting severally within the scope of the particular duties entrusted to him.

Equipment

All machinery and equipment, together with the necessary supplies for upkeep and maintenance, and also tools and apparatus necessary for the proper construction and acceptable completion of the Work.

Expressway

The term "expressway" shall mean a major thoroughfare of two or more traffic lanes in each direction, designed to eliminate principal traffic hazards, and shall embrace all bridges, tunnels, overpasses, underpasses, interchanges, entrance plazas, approaches, and other structures, which the County may deem necessary to the operation of the expressway, together with all property, rights, easements, franchises and interests acquired by the County for the construction and operation thereof, and having the following characteristics: (a) a median divider separating opposing traffic lanes to eliminate head-on-collisions and sideswiping; (b) grade separating structures to eliminate the conflict of cross streams of traffic at all intersections; (c) points of access and egress limited to predetermined locations; (d) vertical curves of lengths sufficient to provide long sight distances; and (e) shoulders of widths adequate to permit vehicles to stop or park off traffic lanes.

Extra Work

Work which was not provided for in the original Contract.

Extra Work Order

A written directive covering extra Work, the performance of said extra Work or furnishing of materials involving extra Work. Such Work may be performed at agreed prices or on a force account basis as provided elsewhere herein.

Federal Agencies

Whenever, in these Specifications, reference is made to any Federal agency or officer, such reference shall be deemed made to any agency or officer succeeding in according with law to the powers, duties, jurisdiction, and authority of the agency or officer mentioned.

Fixed-Price Contingent Items

These unit prices are established and prescribed by the County to compensate for the cost of Work and materials that may or may not be necessary for the proper completion of the Contract, and the quantities of which are not amenable to reliable quantitative estimating prior to the construction. The fixed-price items are shown on the Proposal with the estimated quantities, fixed-price, and the estimated total cost imprinted prior to the issuance of the Contract Documents to Bidders.

Gutter (As it pertains to roads)

Any prepared open watercourse, whether paved or not, constructed inside of the shoulder line in embankment or contiguous to both the shoulder line and the base of the cut slope in excavation sections. For the purpose of clarification of the above definition, a section shall be considered to be embankment when the elevation of the extended shoulder slope is generally at or above the existing ground surface and shall be considered in excavation when the elevation of the shoulder line is below the existing ground surface.

Holidays

The following days are recognized as holidays by the County: New Year's Day (January 1); Martin Luther King's Birthday (Third Monday in January); Washington's Birthday (the third Monday of February); Good Friday; Memorial Day (last Monday in May); Independence Day (July 4); Labor Day (first Monday in September); Veteran's Day (November 11); Thanksgiving Day (and following Friday); Christmas Day (December 25); all days of general and congressional elections (not primary elections) throughout the State; all days designated as legal for State employees by the Governor and approved by the County Executive.

If a legal holiday falls on a Sunday, the following Monday shall be considered a holiday. If a legal holiday falls on a Saturday, the preceding Friday shall be considered a holiday.

Inspector

The authorized representative of the Engineer assigned to make detailed inspection of any or all portions of the Work, or materials thereof.

Invitation for Bids

Any document, whether attached or incorporated by reference, used for soliciting bids under procurement by competitive sealed bidding and small procurement procedures including requests for quotations.

Invitation for Quotation

Invitation for Bids.

Laboratory

Any testing laboratory of the County or any other testing laboratory, which may be designated by the County.

Labor and Material Bond

See definition for Payment Bond.

Maintenance Bond

The approved form of security, executed by the Contractor and his Surety or Sureties, guaranteeing the replacement or repair of any unsatisfactory Work or materials for a required period of time.

Major and Minor Contract Items

Major Contract items shall be the original Contract item of greatest cost, computed from the original Contract price and estimated quantity or lump sum price and such other Contract items next in sequence of lower cost, computed in like manner, necessary to show a total cost at original prices and quantities of not less than 60 percent of the original Contract cost, and all other Contract items shall be considered as minor items.

Materials

Any substances specified for use in the construction of the Project and its appurtenances.

Minor Structure

Includes: catch basins, inlets, manholes, retaining walls, steps, fences and other miscellaneous items.

Notice to Contractors

The advertisement for Bids for all required Work or materials. Such advertisement will indicate the location and magnitude of the Work to be done or the character and quantity of the material to be furnished and the time and place of the opening of bids.

Notice to Proceed

A written notice to the Contractor of the date on or before which he shall begin the prosecution of the Work to be done under this Contract.

Owner

Anne Arundel County.

Payment Bond

The approved form of security, executed by the Contractor and his Surety or Sureties, guaranteeing payment to all persons supplying labor and/or materials to the Contractor and to any Subcontractor of the Contractor in the prosecution of the Contract and all Supplemental Agreements thereto. Payment Bond shall also mean the same as Labor and Material Bond.

Performance Bond

See definition for Contract Bond.

Person

Any individual, business, union, committee, club, or other organization.

Plans

The official approved plans, profiles, typical cross sections, Working drawings and supplemental drawings, or exact reproduction thereof which show the location, character, dimension, and details of the Work to be done, and which are to be considered as a part of the Contract supplementary to these Specifications and which are identified as such.

Prime Coat

An application of liquid bituminous material.

Profile Grade

The trace of a vertical plane intersecting the top surface of the proposed wearing surface, usually along the longitudinal centerline of the roadbed. Profile grade also means either elevation or gradient of such trace according to the context.

Project

The term shall mean the construction, reconstruction, relocation or extension of Anne Arundel County Public Facilities (highway, water, sewer, storm drain, building systems, parks, parking lots, dredging or any combination thereof). Also referred to as Development, Capital or Capital Improvement Project(s).

Proposal

The response by an offeror to a solicitation of the County. The response may include but is not limited to an offeror's price and terms for the proposed Contract, a description of technical expertise, Work experience and other information as requested in the solicitation. As used herein the word "proposal" means "bid" and the offer of the Bidder submitted on the prescribed Proposal form to perform the Work and to furnish the labor and materials for the consideration of payment at the unit prices stated and submitted by the Bidder on the prepared Bid Schedule.

Proposal Form

The approved form on which the County requires proposals to be set forth and submitted. See also Bid Form.

Proposal Guaranty

The security designated in the Proposal to be furnished by the Bidder as a guaranty of good faith to enter into a Contract with the County, if the Work is awarded to him. A Bid Bond or Certified Check is the acceptable methods of providing a Proposal Guaranty.

Punch List

Written tabulation of Work remaining to be performed under the Contract, executed change orders, and/or force account directives.

Purchase Order

A written official authorization signed by the Purchasing Agent which obligates funds for construction of the Contract.

Questionnaire

The approved form or forms upon which the Contractor shall furnish the information as to his ability to perform the Work, his experience in similar Work, the equipment to be used, and his financial condition as related to his ability to finance the Work.

Railroad Grade Separation

The term "railroad grade separation" shall mean any overpass or underpass which shall eliminate any railroad grade crossing, and shall embrace the overpass and underpass structure and the approaches thereto, and such entrance plazas, interchanges, connecting highways and other structures which the County may deem necessary in connection therewith, together with all property, rights, easements, franchises and interests acquired by the County for the construction and operation of such railroad grade separation.

Responsible Bidder or Offeror

A person who has the capability in all respects to perform fully the Contract requirements, and the integrity and reliability, which shall assure good faith performance.

Responsive Bidder

A person who has submitted a bid under procurement by competitive sealed bidding which conforms in all material respects to the requirements contained in the Invitation for Bids.

Right-of-Way

The area, which has been acquired and reserved by the County for use in constructing the proposed improvement and appurtenances thereto.

Seal Coat (As it pertains to roads)

An application of liquid bituminous material followed by an application of cover coat aggregate.

Setback Line

A line established by law, deed restriction or custom, fixing the minimum distance of the exterior face of buildings, walls and any other construction from a street or highway right-of-way line.

Slopes (As it pertains to roads)

The graded area beyond the shoulder or curb and extending from the shoulders or curb to the natural undisturbed surface of the ground.

Special Provisions

Special directions, provisions or requirements peculiar to the Project and not otherwise thoroughly or satisfactorily detailed or set forth herein.

Specifications

The general term comprising all directions, provisions and requirements contained herein, together with such as may be added or adopted as Supplemental Specifications.

Standard Detail Drawings or Standard Details

The term shall mean the current edition of the Anne Arundel County Standard Details. The Maryland State Highway Administration Standard Details shall apply if Anne Arundel County does not have a Standard Detail for the particular items of Work.

Standard Specifications

A book of Specifications intended for general application and repetitive use.

State

The State of Maryland acting through its authorized representative(s).

State Highway System

The term "State Highway System" means that system of roads which are from time to time owned by the State and which the State Highway Administration by resolution from time to time designates as State roads to be maintained and operated by the State.

State Road

The term "State Road" means any public road included in the State Highway System.

Street

A general term denoting a public way for purposes of vehicular travel, including the entire area within the right-of-way.

Structures

Bridges, culverts, catch basins, drop inlets, retaining walls, cribbing manholes, end walls, buildings, sewers, water mains, service pipes, under drains, foundation drains and other features which may be encountered in the Work and not otherwise classed herein.

Subcontractor

Any individual partnership, firm, or corporation undertaking the construction of a part of the Work under the terms of the Contract, by virtue of an agreement with the Contractor (or Subcontractor) who, prior to such undertaking, receives the consent of the Surety and the approval of the County. The term "subcontractor(s)" means subcontractors or suppliers at any tier.

Sub-base

The layer used in the pavement system between the subgrade and the base course.

Subgrade

The material in excavations (cuts), embankments (fills), and/or foundations immediately below the first layer of sub-base, base or pavement or bottom of pipe, foundation, or other structure, and to such depth as may affect the structural design.

Substructure

All of that part of the structure below bottoms of bearings of simple and continuous spans, skewbacks of arches and tops of footings of rigid frames, together with the back walls and wing walls.

Superstructure

All of that part of the structure above bottoms of bearings of simple and continuous spans, skewbacks of arches and tops of footings of rigid frames, except as noted above for substructure.

Superintendent

The executive representative of the Contractor authorized to receive and execute instructions from the Engineer, and who shall supervise and direct the construction.

Supplemental Specifications

Additions and revisions to the Standard Specifications. Generally include new or improved procedures, construction items or materials developed subsequent to the publication of Standard Specifications or specific specifications for a specific Contract.

Surety

The corporate body bound with and for the Contractor, for the full and complete performance of the Contract, and for the payment of all debts pertaining to the Work. When applying to the Bid Bond, it refers to the corporate body, which engages to be responsible in the execution by the bidder of a satisfactory Contract.

Surface Treatment (As it pertains to roads)

The application of one or more seal coats with or without a prime coat.

Titles (or Headings)

The titles or headings of the sections and articles herein are intended for convenience of reference and shall not be considered as having any bearing on their interpretation.

Traffic Lane

The portion of a traveled way for the movement of a single line of vehicles.

Trench

An excavation made for the purpose of installing or removing pipes, drains, catch basins, etc., and which is later refilled.

Utilities

The term shall mean storm drains, sanitary sewers, water mains, gas mains, electric and telephone lines, television cables, and traffic signal conduits and their appurtenances.

Value Engineering

See Value Engineering Incentive - Construction, GP-4.10.

Vendor

A supplier of goods and/or materials.

Work

Work shall be understood to mean the furnishing of all labor, materials, equipment, and other incidentals necessary to the successful completion of the Project and the carrying out of all the duties and obligations imposed by the Contract.

Working Day

A calendar day upon which, in the opinion of the Engineer, weather and soil conditions are such that the Contractor can advantageously Work more than half of his current normal force for more than 5 consecutive hours on a major Contract item then being performed, or the remaining principal Work to be done. No Working days will be charged on: Saturdays, Sundays and County recognized holidays unless Contractor actually Works more than 5 hours thereon.

Working Drawings

Stress Sheets, shop drawings, fabrication details, erection plans, plans for false Work, forms centering, cribs, cofferdams and masonry layouts, bending and placing drawings, and bar schedules for reinforcing steel and any other supplementary plans or similar data which the Contractor may be required to furnish.

In order to avoid cumbersome and confusing repetition of expressions in these Specifications, whenever it is provided that anything is, or is to be, or to be done, if, or as, or when, or where "contemplated," "required," "directed," "specified," "authorized," "ordered," "given," "designated," "indicated," "considered necessary," "permitted," "suspended," "approved," "acceptable," "unacceptable," "suitable," "unsuitable," "satisfactory," "unsatisfactory," or "sufficient," it shall be taken to mean and intend "contemplated," "required," "directed," "specified," "authorized," "ordered," "given," "designated," "indicated," "considered necessary," "deemed necessary," "permitted," "suspended," "approved," "acceptable," "unacceptable," "suitable," "unsuitable," "satisfactory," "unsatisfactory," or "sufficient" by or to the Engineer (with the approval of the County).

The sub-headings printed in these Specifications are intended for convenience of reference only, and shall not be considered as having any bearing on the interpretation thereof.

GP-1.04 ABBREVIATIONS

AAN American Association of Nurserymen

AAPA American Association of Port Authorities

AAR Association of American Railroads

AASHTO American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials

ACI American Concrete Institute

ACSP Asbestos Cement Sewer Pipe

AI Asphalt Institute

AIA American Institute of Architects

AIEE American Institute of Electrical Engineers

AISC American Institute of Steel Construction

AISI American Iron and Steel Institute

ANSI American National Standards Institute

APA American Plywood Association

ARA American Railway Association

AREA American Railway Engineering Association

ASCE American Society of Civil Engineers

ASHRAE American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Engineers

ASLA American Society of Landscaping Architects

ASME American Society of Mechanical Engineers

ASTM American Society for Testing and Materials

ATA American Transit Association

AWG American Wire Gauge

AWPA American Wood Preservers Association

AWWA American Water Works Association

AWS American Welding Society

AGC Associated General Contractors of America

BCCMP Bituminous Coated Corrugated Metal Pipe

BCCMPA Bituminous Coated Corrugated Metal Pipe Arch

B&S Brown and Sharpe Wire Gauge

BOCA Building Officials & Code Administrators International, Inc.

CACP Corrugated Aluminum Culvert Pipe

CIP Cast Iron Pipe

CISP Cast Iron Soil Pipe

CMP Corrugated Metal Pipe

COMAR Code of Maryland Regulations

CRSI Concrete Reinforcing Steel Institute

CSPX Concrete Sewer Pipe, Extra Strength

CSPA Clay Sewer Pipe Association

DIP Ductile Iron Pipe

EEI Edison Electric Institute

EIA Electronics Industries Association

EPA Environmental Protection Agency

FAA Federal Aviation Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation

FCC Federal Communications Commission

FHWA Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation

FRA Federal Railway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation

FRP Fiberglass Reinforced Plastic

FSS Federal Specifications and Standards, General Services Administration

FTA Federal Transit Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation

HDPE High Density Polyethylene

HI Hydraulic Institute

IEEE Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers

IES Illuminating Engineers Society

IPCEA Insulated Power Cable Engineers Association

IRT Institute for Rapid Transit

ITE Institute of Transportation Engineers

MBMA Metal Building Manufacturers' Association

MIL Military Specification

MSMT Maryland Standard Method of Test (as developed by the State Highway

Administration)

MUTCD Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

NBFU National Board of Fire Underwriters

NBS National Bureau of Standards

NEC National Electric Code

NEMA National Electrical Manufacturers' Association

NFPA National Fire Protection Association

OSHA Occupational Safety and Health Administration

PB Polybutylene

PCA Portland Cement Association

PCCP Prestressed Concrete Cylinder Pipe

PE Polyethylene

PTSP Plastic Truss Sewer Pipe

PVCP Polyvinyl Chloride Pipe

RCSP Reinforced Concrete Sewer Pipe

RCCP Reinforced Concrete Culvert Pipe

RLMI Reflector and Lamp Manufacturers' Institute

RPM Reinforced Plastic Mortar

SAE Society of Automotive Engineers

SAWP Society of American Wood Preservers

SHA	Maryland Department of Transportation, S	State Highway Administration
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SSPC Steel Structures Painting Council

TCP Traffic Control Plan

UCPX Unglazed Clay Pipe, Extra Strength

ULI Underwriters' Laboratories, Inc.

USSG United States Standard Gauge

USSWG United States Steel Wire Gauge

VE Value Engineering

VECP Value Engineering Change Proposal

END OF SECTION