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Title: Guidance on Building Consensus and Converging Proposals

1. Motivation: The C++ community thrives on diverse perspectives to ensure the language evolves coherently and serves its vast user base effectively. Historically, many significant C++ features have originated from the vision of individual authors. However, as the language and its user base grow in complexity, proposals originating from a single source or specific corporate context may inadvertently optimize for a specific domain at the expense of broader applicability.

To avoid the risk of creating "dialects" or late-stage design conflicts, we aim to foster earlier collaboration. The goal is not to mandate co-authorship for its own sake, but to ensure that high-impact features benefit from cross-domain scrutiny before they consume significant plenary time.

2. Principles and Recommendations: We propose the following guidelines to encourage convergence and enhance the review process:

Scope-Appropriate Engagement:

- **Small/Localized Features:** For bug fixes or features with localized impact, single authorship remains efficient and appropriate.
- **Broad/Strategic Features:** For features affecting core language semantics or widely-used library components, authors are strongly encouraged to validate their design against use cases outside their immediate organization early in the process.

Proactive Unification (The "No Surprise Competitors" Rule):

- Authors should actively check for concurrent or past proposals in the same domain.
- If multiple papers exist addressing the same problem (e.g., competing concurrency models or networking libraries), the authors are expected to communicate *before* bringing the conflict to the full working group.
- The ideal outcome is a unified proposal, or at minimum, a joint paper explicitly detailing the trade-offs between the two approaches.

Consultation with Experience:

- **Long-Tenure Members:** Authors are encouraged to consult with long-term committee members who understand WG21 norms, history, and political dynamics. They can flag "landmines" and help frame proposals in ways that resonate with the broader committee.
- **Generalist Review:** Authors should seek feedback from individuals with a broad base of knowledge across the entire language and library, rather than just deep experts in a single domain. Domain experts may have "optimized" views that conflict with general usability.

Rationale and Breadth:

- Proposals for large features should include a "Design Scope" section in their rationale. This section should articulate why the design is general-purpose rather than niche, and acknowledge alternative designs considered.
- While co-authorship is a strong signal of consensus, it is not required. A single author citing feedback from diverse reviewers (e.g., "Thanks to X from Embedded and Y from HFT for review") is equally valid.

WG/SG Chair Guidance:

- **Facilitation over Mandate:** Chairs are encouraged to act as **matchmakers** rather than gatekeepers. When identifying competing or overlapping proposals, Chairs should facilitate introductions between authors working in similar spaces.
- **Encouraging Convergence:** Chairs may request that authors of competing proposals attempt to unify their designs or produce a comparison paper before scheduling further time for the individual papers.
- **Prioritization:** Priority should be given to proposals that demonstrate they have addressed the "Broad Consensus" principle, reducing the burden on the committee to adjudicate avoidable conflicts.

By embracing these practices, we can ensure that C++ continues to evolve with a strong, coherent direction, reflecting the collective wisdom and diverse needs of its global community, while still valuing and enabling individual contributions.