



TPC Architects, Inc.

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TPC Architects, Inc. Newsletter

Construction Spending Up For Third Straight Month

WASHINGTON (AP) - Builders began work on more homes and the government boosted its investment in federal construction projects in November, marking a third straight monthly increase in construction activity after a dismal summer. Construction spending increased 0.4 percent in November, the Commerce Department said Monday. Still, building activity is only 2.3 percent higher than in August, when it had fallen to the lowest level in a decade.

Monthly Economic Update

December lived up to its promise as one of the better months of the year for stocks, with the S&P 500 gaining 6.53%. It was a strangely quiet time on Wall Street, and the biggest news item of the month was good news for investors. It didn't take long for President Obama and Congressional Republicans to reach a tax compromise, one with demonstrable benefits for all Americans. In December we learned that the jobless rate had increased; however, by the end of the month, initial claims were at a two-year low. Home sales improved, and so did retail sales. Optimism was back, or at least pessimism did not reign. (This material was prepared by Peter Montoya Inc.)

Quote of the Month

"Great things are done by a series of small things brought together." - Vincent Van Gogh

PROJECT DELIVERY METHODS

Have you ever been confused with the methods in which projects are designed and constructed today? Very likely you have been. Thirty years ago most church projects were accomplished in a "traditional" matter, with the church selecting an architect, who then assembled his team and designed the project. The completed "construction documents" we then issued to bid to several general contractors (GCs), and the church selected a GC based on price along with other criteria. Today we refer to this approach as "Design-Bid-Build". But there are several other approaches that a church can consider today. This month's newsletter provides you with an overview of these project delivery options.

OVERVIEW

Please click on the following link for a "Church Development Options" summary (matrix). Here you will find a comparison of five different approaches. Although there are other various "hybrids" that you may encounter, these five methods represent the common methods of delivering a church project. Here they are:

1. **Design-Bid-Build** - Traditional
2. **Design-Bid-Build** - With Pre-Construction Estimating Service by General Contractor
3. **Design-Build** - Traditional
4. **Design-Build** - Customized (*TPC often recommends this method for Design-Build projects*)
5. **Design-Build** - Hybrid or Specialized

Not all church projects are alike nor have the same needs. A small tenant improvement project has less intense project delivery needs than a new worship center. Also, the success of a design-build approach does depend on the caliber and experience of both the general contractor and the selected design-build subcontractor.

As you review the Church Development Options summary you may be interested in a few of TPC's observations along with some basic advice. Read on.....

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You'll notice in the matrix the varying degrees of connectiveness between the architect / project designer and the church. We encourage you to carefully consider your design needs, from master planning (ministry and campus) to building design concepts to agency entitlements to final documentation, and be certain that you receive the coaching and communications directly with your architect.

PROJECT COST CONTROL

Clearly this is best accomplished with a qualified general contractor on the design team. It should begin during the early planning phase and continue through the final construction bid phase. Be careful that this control is not weakened by the project delivery method you select.

**PROJECT COORDINATION & COMMUNICATION**

We have found that good old fashioned communication between the key design team members (including the church, the contractor and with other consultants) is essential for a successful project. Always evaluate the potential for good communication with the method you select.

TEAM MEMBER'S QUALIFICATIONS

There are pros and cons of design-build subcontractors designing the mechanical, plumbing and electrical systems for a church project. In many cases, especially with smaller projects, you will find that qualified subs are available and will provide a good design service. For larger or more complex projects some caution is appropriate. As an example, the design of the mechanical system for a large worship center entails many special features, not the least of which is a quiet environment. Combined with proper zoning, energy management, and coordination with other special systems, the availability of qualified mechanical subcontractors is reduced.

The photographs used in this article are of the recently completed Children's Education Building at Adventure Christian Church in Roseville, CA.

Next Month: Ground Up or Adaptive Use?

I encourage you to contact me personally with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

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