

35

Contract Administration: Getting Started

GREGORY SWITZER, AIA, NCARB
with **ROBERT T. SUTTER, AIA, NCARB**

Like contract documentation, the contract administration phase of a project requires a different set of competencies from the earlier phases of a project. The competencies required during this phase are less focused on the aesthetic of the project and more administratively focused and entail looking at issues of costs, schedules, and code compliance.

The administration phase is critical to the success or failure of the project. Contract administration, the last phase of a project, is often one phase the client remembers. If this phase is successful in the client's mind, the client will likely consider the entire project successful. However, if this phase is unsuccessful, no matter how well the team performed in earlier phases, it is this failure that the client will likely remember.

THE PERMIT PROCESS

When it comes to the permitting process, most jurisdictions have different requirements. Before design professionals proceed with design or prepare documents, they should understand what is required and how long it will take to obtain approval for a permit application. If designers invest in some advance planning and develop a clear understanding of a particular jurisdiction's permit process, they may actually help speed permit applications along by knowing when to use resources provided by the jurisdiction and by ensuring that contractors plan for inspections.

Permit applications involve much detail, not only in terms of the information the applicant must provide, but also in terms of the administrative steps through which each application must pass. Be certain to consider the following elements:

- *Applicable codes, federal law (ADA), and local requirements*
- *Proposed "use" of the facility versus that for which it may be presently approved*