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is a serious disparity between the number of staff hours required for the tasks, activities, and deliverables for the scope of work, and the fee the client has in mind. This is the time, before a contractual agreement has been signed, to come to agreement on the detailed work and the costs associated with it. Either the design firm may need to alter its approach to the project, or the client may need to rethink the fees it anticipated for the scope of work.

CONTRACTS WITH CLIENT AND CONSULTANTS

Once the client, design firm, and consultants are in agreement about the scope of work and detailed tasks, activities and deliverables, contractual agreements should be finalized so that all parties understand their baseline agreement. Contracts legally bind the client, design firm, and consultants together. The contract should document all agreements that address expectations, scope of work, and the plan for executing the work. The firmer the understanding and agreement on these issues among all parties, the less likelihood there is of misunderstandings during the course of the project. The contract is a legally binding document, but it should also be viewed as a tool, to be referred to over the course of the project when questions about scope or methodology arise. It is the baseline understanding among client, design firm, and consultant firms. If conditions or expectations change during the course of the project, the contract can and should be modified to reflect changes to the baseline.

DESIGN TEAM

Design projects are a team effort. The best teams function like a well-oiled machine—each part working in the right way and at the right time with the other parts. The project manager's role will be easier and the opportunity for a successful project greater if this level of performance can be achieved. It will also be a more rewarding project for all involved.

The first step in structuring the design team is to select the right number of individuals with the right skills and experience for the work. Ideally, the individuals will also have the right attitude and motivation for the project. The project manager will probably work with the management of the design firm or discipline leadership, depending on the organization of the firm, to establish the team. The size of the design team, and the number of hours of work required of each member of the team, is directly proportional to the magnitude of the overall effort and the time frame in which the work is to be com-