



11th Street Bridge Park, Image credit: OMA and LuxigonImage

CONSTRUCTION ADMINISTRATION

Preserving community principles in construction

It is important to uphold community principles through construction. In the construction contracting stage, the design team can work with the client to specify parameters, such as a preference to hire locally or from training/apprenticeship programs, to ensure the community gets direct economic and workforce development benefits from the project. Designers can also partner with the client to modify the bidding process to prioritize locally owned firms or minority- and women-owned business enterprises (MWBE).

The threat of value engineering can also loom large for some more high-priced but necessary items. Taking the time to clearly articulate community priorities to contractors early in the process is a way to communicate what elements are of highest importance to the perceived success of a project.

During construction, when dealing with tough value engineering choices, refer back to the vision created at the beginning of the project to help keep the project on track and in support of co-created goals and aspirations. If possible, consult the stakeholder advisory group during construction. Explaining tradeoffs and the reasons for decisions can go a long way in maintaining the trust that has been built with key community members.

A contractor experienced in community-based projects can improve the process of meeting budget and stakeholder vision. When possible, list desired experience in working on community-involved projects as criterion during contractor selection.