



DIVERSIFIED
CONSTRUCTION

PREPARING FOR YOUR NEXT
COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION
PROJECT: **A CHECKLIST**

Top Things to Consider and Plan Before Starting a Commercial Construction Project

We know commercial building construction and renovation can be daunting. This guide is meant to help you approach the process with the right information in hand.

Before any drawings are made or equipment fires up, commercial construction often starts with an initial meeting between the project owner and their commercial contractor. This is a thrilling phase, where you get to share your vision and many possibilities can be explored.

Having a bird's eye view of the overall project in mind will help you get the best results from day one. You'll enable your contractor to put pen to paper immediately, working towards your dream results. So, let's take a look now at the top things to consider before you start on your commercial construction project.

1. Begin with Goal Setting

Having clear goals and desired outcomes for a project is always the first step to good planning. Being specific in what you want helps your contractor get started, fast, and provide a comprehensive and accurate estimate for you. With this in mind, here are the first two things you should consider.

The Scale of the Project:

Discussions of scale will be different for different types of projects. For your first meeting, it's best if you come with a basic outline of the size and complexity of the project in mind. Consider things like:

- Total square footage
- The current state of the property or parcel
- Specialty needs, like commercial kitchen appliances or medical equipment



"Our company has had the pleasure of doing many projects with you in the past 10 years. What we truly appreciate, beyond the quality you deliver, is the promise of keeping it in budget and on schedule. This is a rarity in your field. I never worry about a project when you and your team are on it."

Dean N. - Wedding Day Diamonds

Features & Design:

While this is not the time to get bogged down in minutiae, it IS the time to lay out your overall vision for the project. Think about how you want the final space to look along with its feel and function. Do you want an open floor plan or one with many private offices? If it's a warehouse - what's the split of warehouse versus office? Whatever your vision, sharing it right away will help ensure the right goals are set from the get-go.

2. Will You Need an Architect?

It's possible your project may need an architect, depending on the scope of work. Knowing that early on will help with both timing and budgeting. Here are two things to consider to help determine if an architect is necessary:

Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing (MEP's)

If you are working with any MEP's, either alterations or new installation, an architect is usually required to ensure every requirement and regulation is met.

Ingress and Egress:

If access points to the property are being modified, it is likely we will need an architect on board to help plan the changes and create a permit document to submit to the city.

For smaller renovations, a simple one-page plan is often all that's needed. An expert contractor can help you get the appropriate architect on board for this, if needed.

Larger or more complex projects may require a feasibility study, space planning, or design services. When your commercial contractor understands these needs from the very first meeting, they can get the Team together faster and improve the overall outcomes of the project.

3. Estimating Project Costs

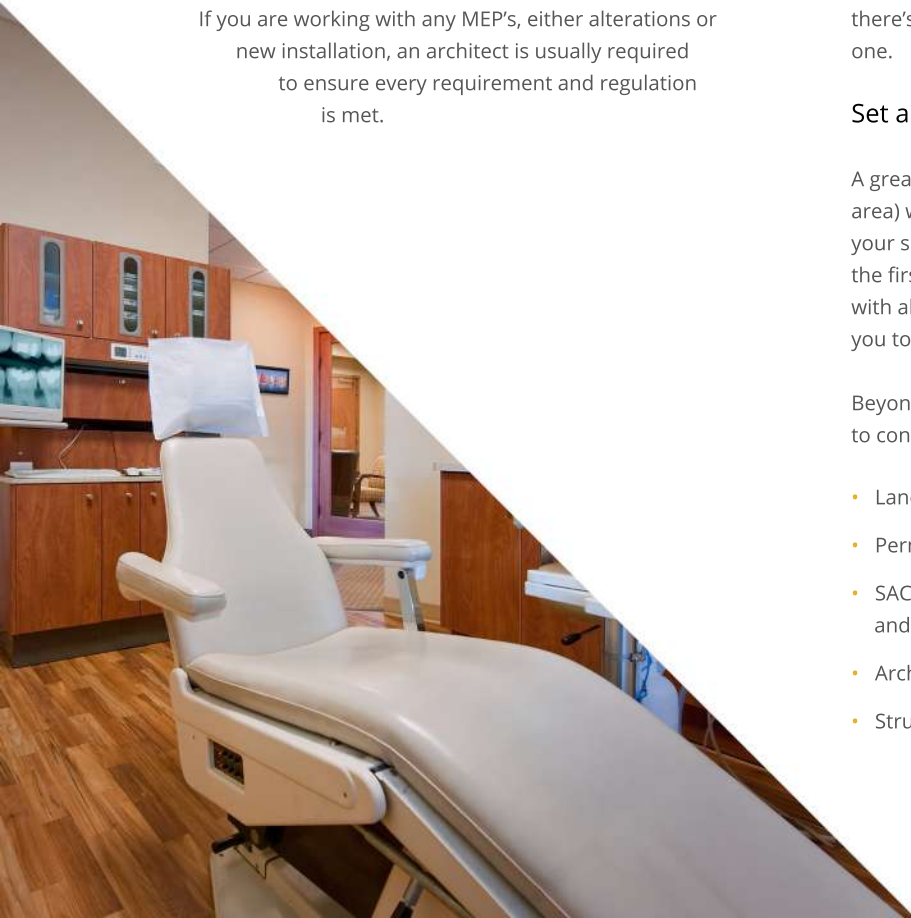
The greatest constraint on most projects is budget. To that end, the next two considerations are focused on ensuring there's a solid outline for the project's financing from day one.

Set a Realistic Budget

A great contractor (hopefully us if you are in the Minneapolis area) will be happy to help you establish a budget based on your scope of work. However, it's helpful if you can come to the first meeting with an idea of what you're comfortable with already. This way, they can use their expertise to guide you towards budget-friendly decisions.

Beyond construction costs, these are some other cost centers to consider that may apply to your project:

- Land/ property acquisition
- Permits
- SAC/WAC Charges (Sewer and Water Access Fees)
- Architectural design
- Structural design
- Private or public utility usage and/or modification fees
- Hazardous materials survey and/or abatement
- FFE (Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment)
- Low voltage – voice, data, sound, security, A/V, TV's, POS, etc.



Think About Financing

Most commercial construction projects require financing to some degree. If you have a plan or a banker in mind, letting your construction partner know in the first meeting will help them make suggestions and plan accordingly. An experienced partner should also be able to make recommendations of bankers, if needed.

4. Setting a Realistic Timeline

Your contractor will want to know your desired timeline right away. However, much like with budget, being realistic is key. The commercial building construction process often takes longer than one may think. With these final two considerations, you can help ensure your project timeline goals will be met.

Planning, Permitting, and Financing Time

The pre-construction phase is usually the longest phase of a project. First, getting any architectural plans drawn, reviewed, and finalized can take one to four months. Then there's permitting; depending on the municipality, this usually takes 2-12 weeks. Lastly, once a permit is in-hand, mobilization of subcontractors can take 1-3 weeks, depending on the project size and complexity.

Of course, with expert planning, some of these requirements can be worked on concurrently, shortening the timeline.

Construction Time

As for setting a realistic timeframe for construction, commercial buildings vary greatly depending on their scope and planned use. Getting a contractor on board as soon as possible is the best way to get things moving. Projects that we work on are typically between 4-16 weeks in length.

5. Start Planning Your Commercial Building Construction Now

As dedicated experts with 60+ years of experience in building and remodeling commercial projects, we know a thing or two about getting a project started off right.

Once you've got some of these pre-project considerations thought through, we recommend reading [what the process looks like from start to finish here](#) to get familiar with how we complete commercial construction projects once they're underway.

If these considerations we've shared have gotten you rewed up about your own project, we're just an inquiry away from setting up that first phone call or meeting!

START YOUR PROJECT TODAY