

sp **site development contractor**

The changing role of site contractors in retail construction

wp **William Peach**



J. Masterson Construction Corporation

There was once a time when a general contractor would subcontract to an excavating company the work of rough grading the site, excavating and backfilling the building foundation, and installing the utility services. Today, in addition to the typical scope of work, the site contractor regularly handles other site related services such as building demolition, soil

remediation, retaining wall construction, concrete work, traffic signal improvements, electrical work, and landscaping. Many of these services are regularly handled by subcontractors but will be managed and coordinated by the site contractor. On retail projects in particular the site contractor is regularly responsible for all exterior work and the building contractor is responsible for the building construction. This has led to a change in the role of the site contractor from being a part of the team to being the leader of a portion of the team.

There have been a number of reasons for this change in role and a number of ways the site contractor has adapted to this

change. In the retail industry site contractors are regularly asked to act as a general contractor for the work associated with pad preparation. As site designs and regulatory requirements have become more complex projects benefit from a single company being responsible for coordination of all exterior work. As the role of the site contractor has changed many companies have expanded the services that they provide with their own staff. Some have also seen the need to hire additional professional staff, project managers, and superintendents who are able to manage and oversee a wider range of services.

For retail projects site contractors are increasingly asked to

handle all of the site related services for a project. The advantage of this approach is it creates a single point of contact for all of the exterior work. It also makes the site contractor responsible for all of the necessary coordination between various subcontractors including scheduling of the subcontractors and being responsible for the overall exterior project schedule. Another benefit for retail projects is that a site contractor can provide all of the necessary services to prepare a building pad for turnover to a tenant. Once completed the building pad can then be turned over to a tenant's building contractor for the construction of the building.

As site designs have become

more complex site contractors have become more involved in coordinating work between subcontractors. The increased amount of regulation that has evolved in recent history has also helped to encourage a single point of contact for site construction activities. Site construction is now almost always regulated on the federal, state, and local levels. The environmental reporting and monitoring that is required is often made easier by the delegation of the responsibility to a single contractor.

Many site contractors have hired additional staff and expanded the services that they provide in their new role. This allows them to handle more services in-house and have greater control over the work flow. Site contractors now use their own staff and equipment to regularly provide such services as building demolition, soil remediation, retaining wall construction. This eliminates the need for subcontractor coordination and the work can progress seamlessly.

Site contractors have also grown their professional staff to include engineers and surveyors. Engineers double as estimators and can provide value engineering and pre-construction planning services for a broader scope of services. Surveyors on staff allow site contractors to handle the field layout of the design plans. With the broader range of services that site contractors now provide they require project managers and superintendents who are able to oversee and manage a wider range of services. Project managers now not only have to understand the work being performed by their own staff but also that of all of the subcontractors that they are employing. In the same respect superintendents need to oversee and coordinate the work of multiple subcontractors as well as their own crews.

As the retail industry pushes for quicker and more efficient project delivery the role of the site contractor will continue to evolve. It seems that the retail industry will continue to use the site contractor to provide a broader array of services and be a single point of contact for site preparation. With this in mind the site contractor will need to adapt continuously in order to efficiently continue to fill this ever changing new role.



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(978) 774-8782
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William Peach, PE, is a project manager for J. Masterson Construction Corporation, Danvers, Mass.