Choosing the Right Delivery Model for Deep Energy Retrofits

Integrated Approach vs Design-Bid-Build

When undertaking a deep energy retrofit in a complex residential environment like New York City, the delivery model direclty shapes cost, schedule, and results. Ecosystem's integrated engineering and construction model offers clear advantages over the traditional design-bid-build (DBB) process, starting with a single point of accountability.

In the DBB model, design and construction are handled by separate entities, often resulting in slower timelines, fragmented communication, and costly change orders driven by misaligned incentives and siloed teams. Engineering firms complete the design before contractors bid to execute that design, leaving little room for optimization once construction begins. This rigidity makes DBB ill-suited for complex, performance-driven projects like deep retrofits, which require continuous coordination and flexibility.

Ecosystem's integrated model unites design, construction, controls, and commissioning under one roof. All of our construction managers and commissioning specialists are trained engineers who work collaborate closely with our designers from the outset. This structure fosters real-time collaboration, rapid problem-solving, and seamless adaptation when conditions or constraints change, while significantly reducing the internal burden on clients—freeing their teams while ensuring that every detail is managed with technical precision and strategic foresight.

An integrated approach allows for:

- Holistic System Design
- Continuous Service
- Streamlined Scheduling
- Optimized Construction Costs
- Faster Implementation
- Ongoing Optimization

Ultimately, our integrated approach delivers not just a building upgrade, but a strategic transformation—achieving bold performance goals while ensuring a smoother, more transparent project experience. For high-stakes projects like deep retrofits, integration isn't just a nice-to-have. It's the smarter, more effective choice.

Comparison: Integrated Approach vs DBB

Ecosystem's Integrated Approach	Traditional Design-Bid-Build
Single point of accountability - One firm responsible from start to finish	**Fragmented accountability** - Multiple parties, leading to coordination challenges
Seamless collaboration between design, construction, and commissioning	**Isolated teams** – Engineers and contractors operate independently
Holistic system design that considers how all components interact	**Siloed system thinking** – Designs often lack integration between systems
Real-time problem solving and on-the-fly adjustments	**Slow, reactive changes** – Modifications often require formal change orders
Continuous service during implementation, minimizing disruption	**Disruptions more likely** – Coordination gaps may affect operations
Efficient timeline management with streamlined scheduling	**Slower timelines** due to handoffs and miscommunication
Optimized construction costs through aligned incentives and better planning	**Cost overruns common** – Misaligned goals can lead to unexpected expenses
Reduced internal workload – Client teams are supported throughout	**Greater burden on client** – More involvement required to coordinate parties
Ongoing performance optimization post-construction	**Limited post-project engagement** – Once construction is done, support ends

ecosystem