

SD Cost Estimate Guidelines

Last updated by Andrea Bowman on Oct 10, 2024

Schematic Design Cost Estimating Guidelines

Last updated on 07/29//2020 by John Streva.

The Schematic Design (SD) estimate is intended to be a budgetary tool to help determine the feasibility of the client's Available Funds for Construction (AFC). The AFC represents the amount of funds that a client expects to spend on the construction of their project. This amount typically depicts the actual hard cost associated with the construction of the site and building, and it does not incorporate soft cost (i.e. design fees, land cost, survey cost, etc.).

During the Schematic Design phase of a project the building systems and materials are often still conceptual in nature and do not have the detailed information necessary to derive material quantities and assign cost. Due to this lack of detail, Schematic Cost Estimates are generally assembled using overall square foot cost of building components.

Square foot cost of architectural systems are derived from historical empirical cost data gathered from recently bid projects. In addition, GHC's engineering consultants should provide square foot cost for their overall building systems which can be imported into the overall estimate. For example, common SD consultant system cost categories are as follows:

- HVAC Systems
- Plumbing Systems
- Sprinkler Systems
- Lighting Systems
- Power and Distribution Systems
- Lighting Systems
- Civil/Sitework

- Landscaping

Due to the conceptual nature of Schematic Design, SD estimates should incorporate a contingency factor between 10-12%.

SD Cost Estimate Template

How to Use the Template

First download the Template file above and save it to your project folder. This file can now be modified for your project.

1. Open the template from your project folder.
2. Work your way through each line item to determine its applicability to the project. Consult with engineering consultants, contractors, estimators, or past projects for guidance on values.