

COST ESTIMATING CORE PRINCIPLES

“Over several years and dozens of projects, Spillman Farmer Architects has had the opportunity to collaborate with the Becker & Frondorf team on projects varying from small feasibility studies to complex, multi-million-dollar new building projects. B&F’s precise cost estimates and commitment to the overall project’s success helps us maintain strong relationships with our team members.”

CHRISTA KRAFTICIAN, AIA, LEED AP, PRINCIPAL - SPILLMAN FARMER ARCHITECTS

1 Work closely with the design team on an ongoing basis.

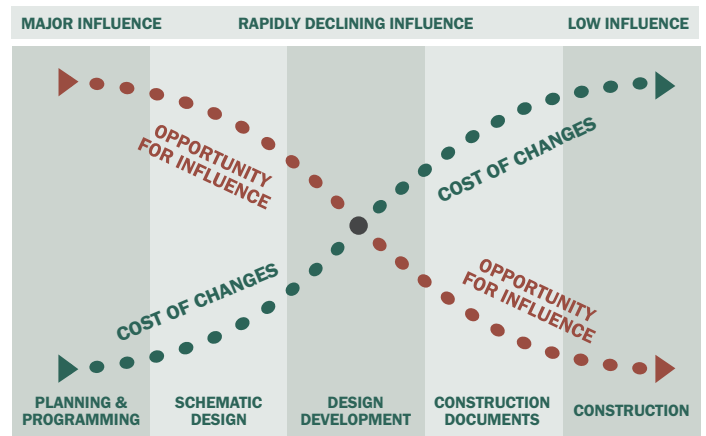
We engage early in the design process so that we can anticipate scope that is not yet designed or shown. We can come up with reasonable cost forecasts for the unknown by being involved early and on an ongoing basis with the design team. This is an important part of the process because fundamental design decisions are being made and can be altered without great difficulty at this stage.

2 Continuously monitor design decisions.

While we provide comprehensive Pre-construction Cost Estimates at specific milestones, such as Schematic Design or Design Development, we also continually monitor design so that we are aware of decisions that affect cost, and can inform the design team of the impact at the earliest possible time. We make every effort to understand the design team’s palette of materials and design intent in order to foresee cost implications, rather than simply reacting to a finished design. If requested, we also prepare a schedule for the project, and then consider the effect of that schedule on construction costs.

3 Format estimates so they can be used as a decision-making tool.

We don’t default to estimating software to develop our estimates, but take a human-based approach to estimating. In the early stages of the estimating process, we organize costs by functional systems (i.e. building structure, exterior envelope, etc.) rather than by trade or material divisions. This helps designers and owners to understand the relationship between design choices and cost.



Having reliable estimates during early phases of a project can lead to significant savings in the long-run. It is always more cost-effective to make changes during planning and design rather than in construction.

4 Provide up-to-date information on cost.

We have access to bid results and contractor pricing on a regular basis because our firm is actively engaged in managing construction projects. Our deep experience enables us to provide the best possible pre-construction information to the Design Team, taking into account such variables as escalation, union and non-union construction, the impact of LEED goals, MBE/WBE participation, the nature of construction, and the influence of government regulations on construction costs.

5 Work to your schedule.

Whether we are working for an architect, owner, or engineer, we are part of a larger design team. We remain flexible in our schedule so that design can progress efficiently.