Building with Wood is Cost-effective

Wood is increasingly the material of choice for all kinds of construction projects, from schools to senior housing centers to sports facilities and theaters. Not only is wood environmentally friendly, safe and durable, it is also cost-effective. Abundant and readily available, wood can often be locally sourced and delivered quickly. It is lighter than other materials, requiring a less expensive foundation. And compared with other materials, building with wood saves money by shortening the time needed to complete construction. Wood. It’s a better way to build.

- Grown throughout North America, wood can be locally sourced and is usually less expensive than alternative building materials.¹
- Wood building systems typically cost less to install. Wood is readily available and tends to be delivered quickly. Most communities have a large pool of qualified tradespeople with wood framing experience, which minimizes construction delays and keeps labor costs competitive.²
- Faster construction schedules help to keep costs down. Because wood is often readily available, adaptable and easy to use, construction is faster.³
- Contractors can reduce labor and material costs with panelizing, the process of assembling roof sections on the ground and then lifting them into place. Typical savings in markets along the West Coast range from $1.25 to $1.50 per square foot over conventional steel joist systems.⁴
- Using wood can save significantly on construction costs. Woodworks.org offers a cost calculator to help builders estimate cost savings from building with wood, taking into account numerous variables like material costs, speed of construction and availability of labor.
CASE STUDY

Bethel School District, Bethel, Washington

- BSD’s Clover Creek Elementary, completed in 2012, was built at a cost of $197.70 per square foot—a savings of more than $50 per square foot over the average construction cost of an elementary school in western Washington.5

- Babbit Neuman Construction Company has built several of BSD’s schools. Using wood framing for a school saves about 20 percent in materials and installation costs. For a $10-million project, this translates to a $2-million savings.6

Wood for Senior, Student and Affordable Housing

- Applewood Pointe, a 48-unit, four-story housing complex for senior citizens in Roseville, Minnesota, relied on wood not only for its affordability (a base cost of less than $80 per square foot), but for its speedy construction. The project was completed in just 11 months. Wall panels were assembled off site, then trucked in and lifted into place—in the middle of a Minnesota winter.7

- Cost savings was also the primary reason architects used wood for Spartan Village, a four-building, 800-room student housing project for the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. After comparing costs of a wood-framed system to metal studs, cold-form metal framing and long-span concrete deck as an alternative system, the project’s owner and architects chose wood because of the significant cost savings ($15/sq. ft. on a 385,000 sq. ft project) and because wood framing helped speed construction on the huge project.8

- The Drs. Julian and Raye Richardson Apartments, a 120-unit affordable housing project in San Francisco, California, provides permanent homes for formerly homeless adults. The architects never considered anything other than wood for the five-story project because of the cost savings, ease of construction and aesthetics. The design left some of the wood exposed throughout the interior for aesthetics.9

RESOURCES:

reThink Wood resource library: http://www.rethinkwood.com/resource-library/list

WoodWorks—Education, resources and technical support on non-residential wood building design: http://woodworks.org/

2 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.

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