

## Environmental Building Standards Recommendation

This is a follow up on the environmental building standard recommendation. The Youth Commission had done some research and found that the cost of building green buildings cost roughly five percent more then to not build with green materials. Here is an exact quote from the article that was found.

“The environmental impact of buildings is often underestimated, while the perceived costs of green buildings are overestimated. A recent survey by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development finds that green costs are overestimated by 300 percent, as key players in real estate and construction estimate the additional cost at 17 percent above conventional construction, more the triple the average cost difference of about 5 percent.”

There was some question as to the five percent number. So to verify the number a Youth Commissioner did some more research and found a few architects that might know the answer. Two of them responded back. First Daniel Lajoie, who is a part of Departure Design, replied back with,

“First, it's like asking how much is a car. It depends on the "shade of green". There's super sustainable projects, there are "light green" projects and everything in between. Also commercial projects vary greatly from residential (which we work on). Yes the 5% number is one that has been historically out there, however the "green" agenda has also made rapid changes making building practices / materials more cost effective. Many building construction items considered green are, in fact, the same cost as regular materials. Typically, installation is the same for green as not green.”

Then Suzanne Zuniga from replied with,

“There is no absolute number for the additional cost of sustainable building, as it depends both on what the baseline is and what the sustainable building is and both are unique to the site, program, location, etc. As a general rule of thumb I would say 5% is fairly accurate average. That said, it would be higher for smaller buildings and lower for larger buildings, in general. Many sustainable buildings have come in under budget, mostly large commercial or industrial buildings that were very wasteful to begin with. Many others have come in costing way more than 5%, mostly single family residences.”

So both responses verify that on average five percent more is the correct number. They also both say that it depends greatly on what you want to accomplish and how green you want to be.

Here are the websites of the two architects:

[www.zuniga-arch.com](http://www.zuniga-arch.com)

<http://www.departure-design.com/about.php>