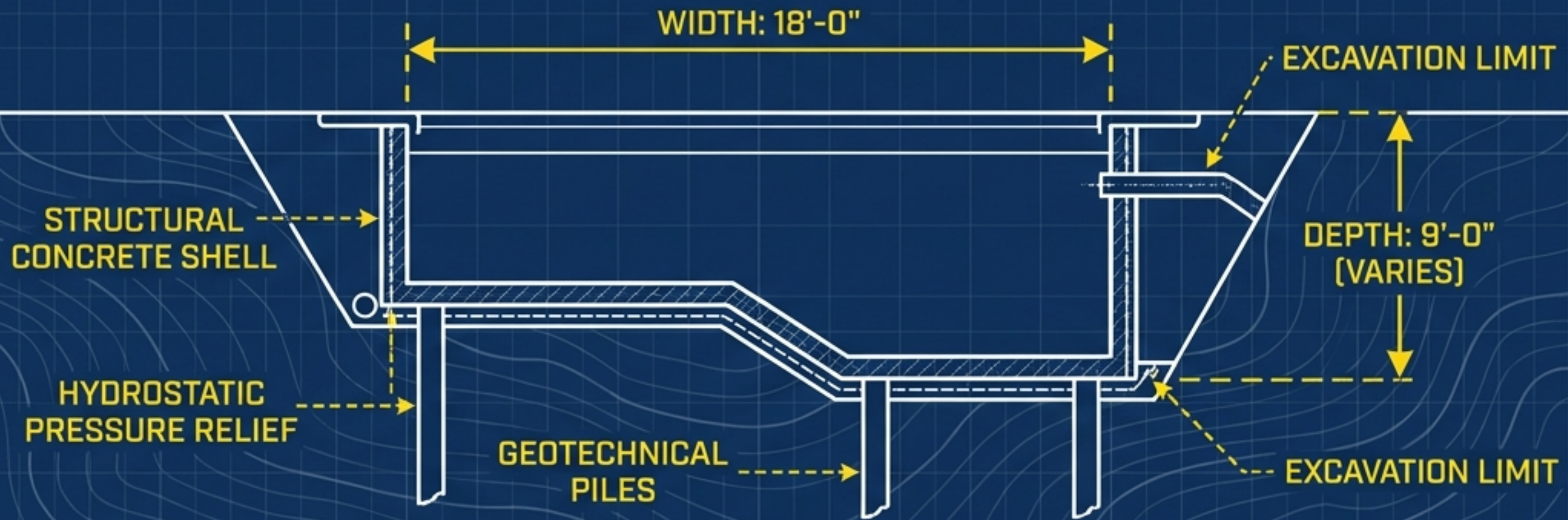


# The Blueprint Reality: The Engineering & Economics of a Seattle Swimming Pool

A diagnostic guide to navigating geology, regulations, and prevailing costs in the Pacific Northwest.



Est. Timeline: **12-20 Weeks**

Project Range: **\$95k - \$350k+**

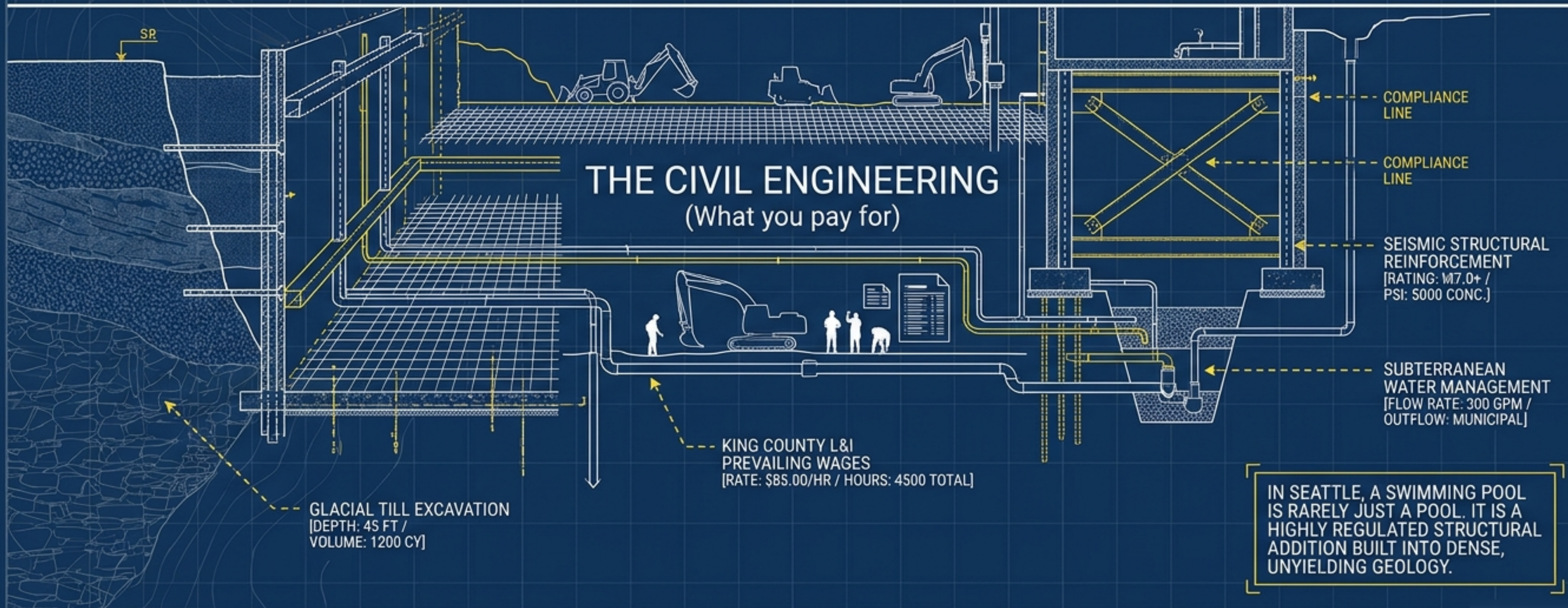
Data Year: **2026**



## THE VESSEL

(What you see).

The interior finish, the water, the lighting.



# The Macro Climate: Demand Dictates Leverage



## Current Conditions

Aggregates large, medium, and small project volume. A score over 50 indicates high market heat and contractor scarcity.



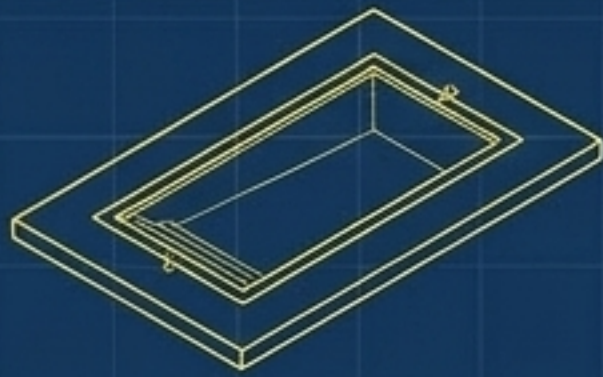
## Future Indicators

Measures inbound leads and current project backlogs. Indicates future pricing power.

The NAHB/Westlake Royal Remodeling Market Index (RMI) proves the Pacific Northwest is operating in a seller's market.

High backlogs mean contractors do not need to discount to win bids.

# Baseline Economics: The Seattle Tier Matrix

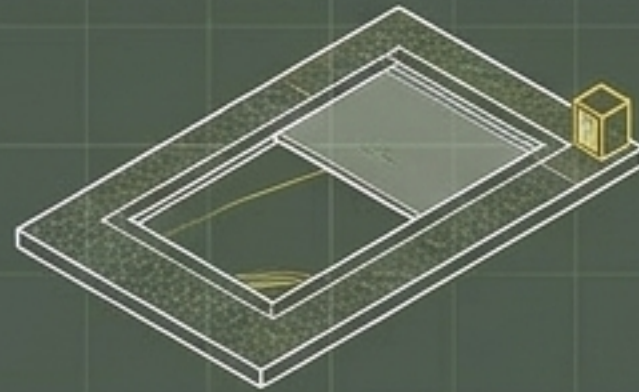


**Basic**

Cost: **\$95,000 – \$130,000**

Construction: Prefabricated fiberglass or vinyl-lined. Standard rectangle (14'x28').

Features: Basic pump, 3-4 ft concrete surround, standard fencing.

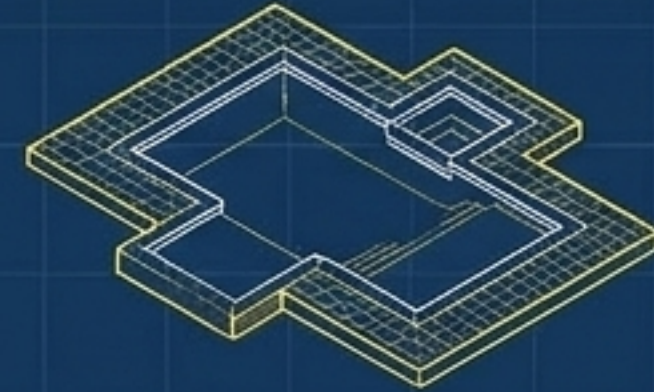


**Mid-Range**

Cost: **\$145,000 – \$185,000**

Construction: Custom gunite/concrete shell (15'x30').

Features: Auto-cover, gas heater, stamped concrete/pavers, variable-speed pump.



**Premium**

Cost: **\$200,000 – \$350,000+**

Construction: Large custom gunite with complex geometries.

Features: Integrated spa, infinity edge, travertine decking, smart automation, pebble finish.

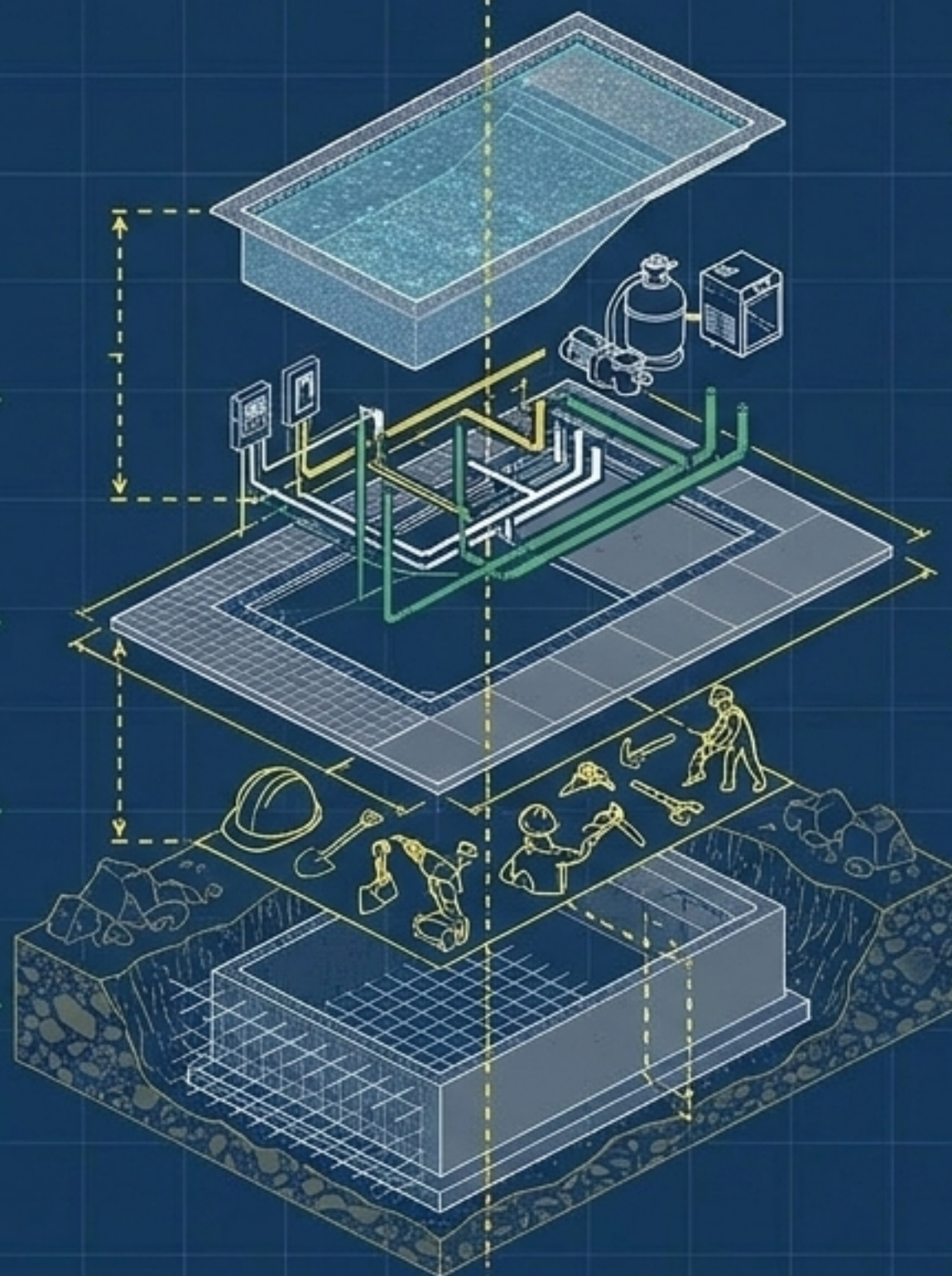
# Anatomy of a \$165,000 Build

**Filtration & Heater**  
Pumps, variable-speed tech,  
gas heating.

**Decking & Hardscaping**  
The perimeter concrete, pavers, and safety surfaces.

**Labor Constraints**  
King County prevailing wage trades.

**Excavation & Gunite Shell**  
Rebar schedule, soil removal,  
dense structural concrete.



**Interior Finish & Tile**

8% (\$13,200)

Pebble, glass bead, waterline ceramics.

5% (\$8,250)

Pumps, variable-speed tech, gas heating.

12% (\$19,800)

Sub-panels, bonding, extensive pipe schematics.

15% (\$24,750)

The perimeter concrete, pavers, and safety surfaces.

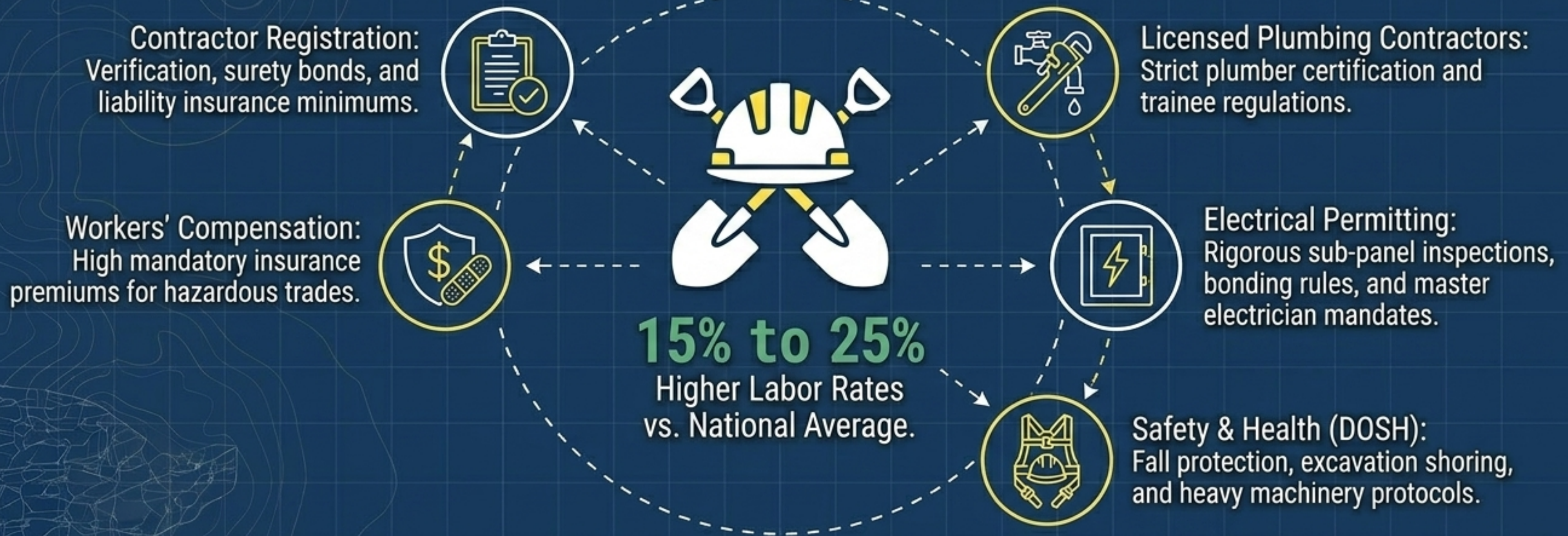
25% (\$41,250)

King County prevailing wage trades.

35% (\$57,750)

Rebar schedule, soil removal,  
dense structural concrete.

# The L&I Premium: King County Labor Economics



The high cost of living meets stringent WA L&I safety and licensing mandates, driving specialized trade wages to peak levels.

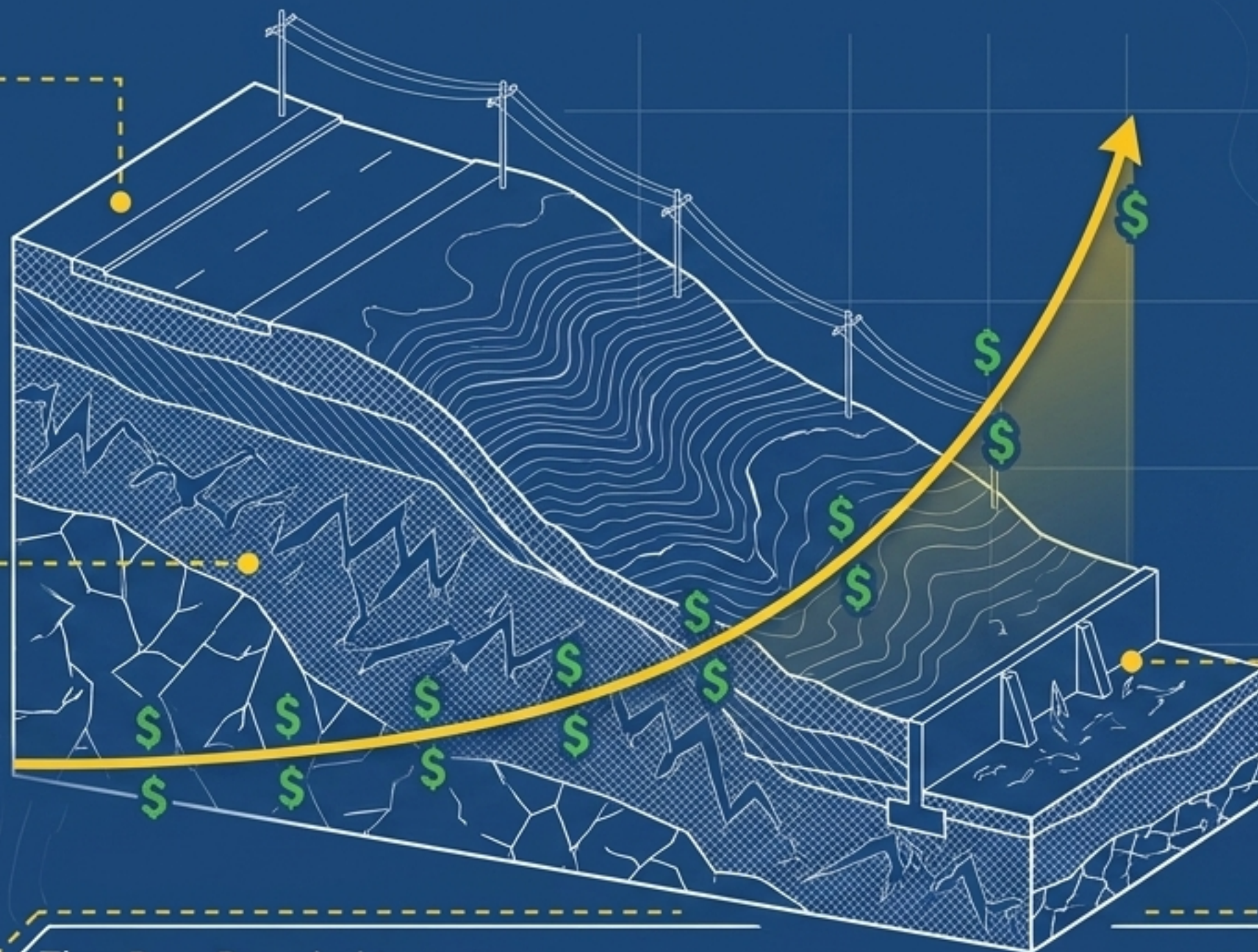
# The Geology Penalty: Glacial Till & Steep Grades



**Neighborhood Logistics:**  
Narrow streets and overhead power lines limit heavy machinery access.



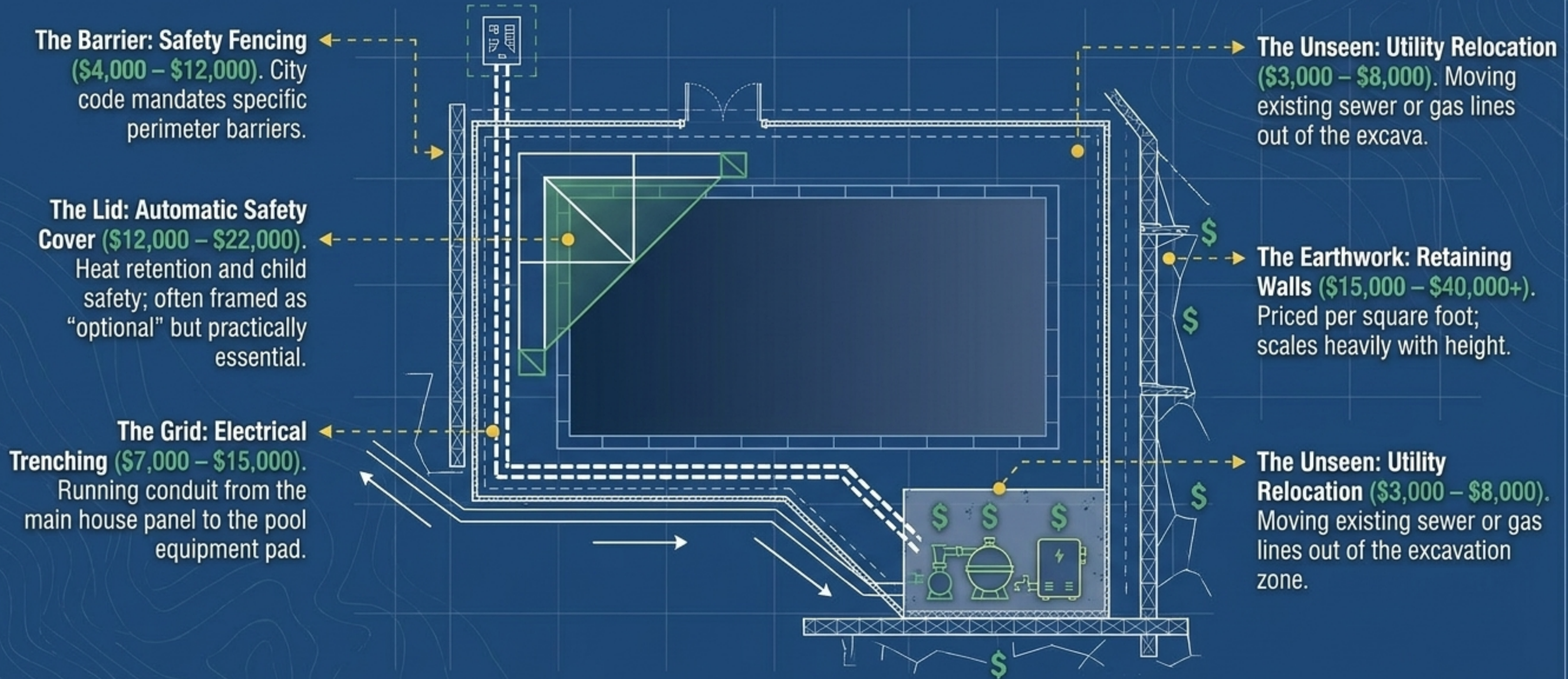
**Glacial Till:** Dense, rocky soil that breaks standard excavation equipment.



**Retaining Walls & Engineering:** Required for slope stability and seismic code compliance.

The Pre-Requisite:  
SDCI Geotechnical Reports add \$2,500 to \$5,000 before before a single shovel hits the dirt.

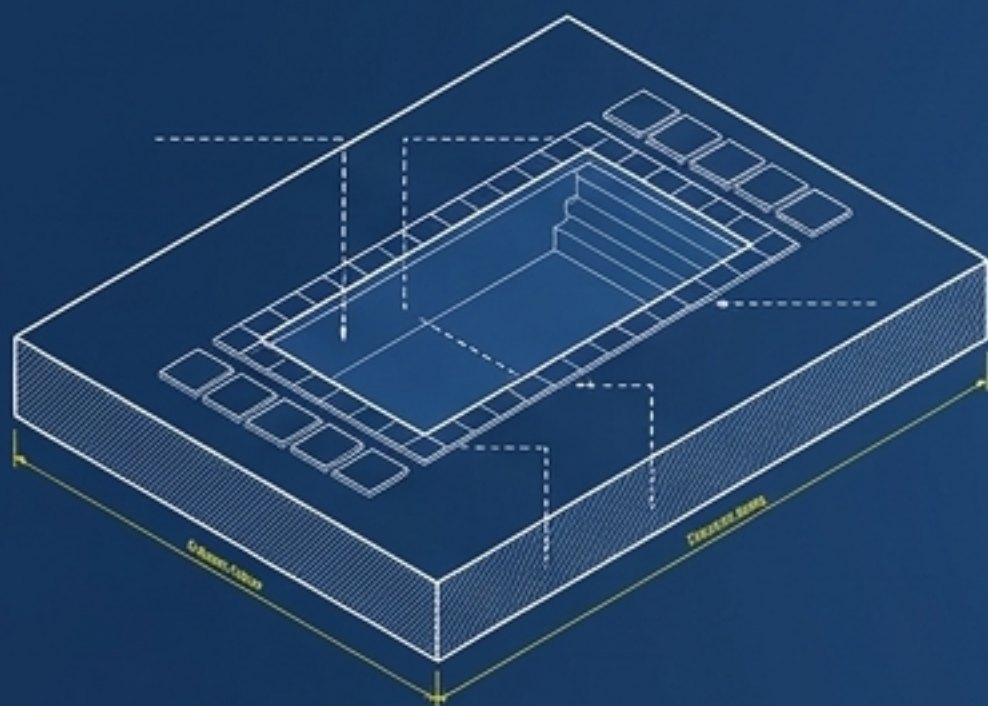
# Funding the Perimeter: Ancillary Requirements



# 2026 Case Studies: Topography Dictates Scope

## Ballard (The Flat Lot)

Total: \$135,000



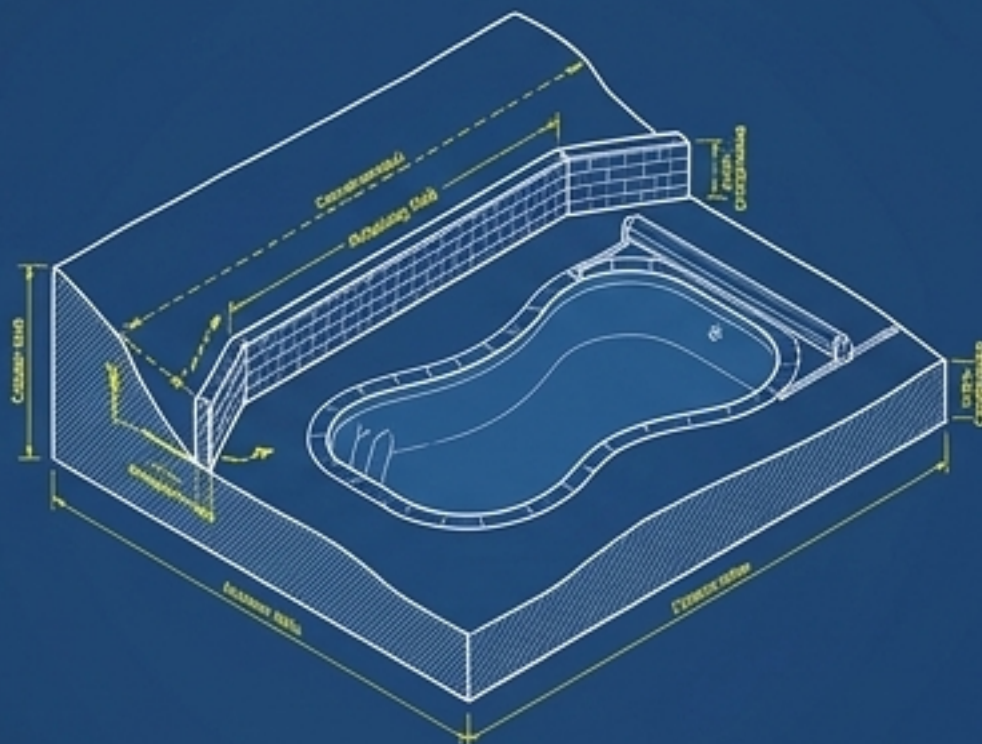
**Specs:** 14x28 Prefabricated Fiberglass. Gas heater, basic pavers.

### The Reality:

- Close to initial budget. Flat lot and predictable soil meant fast installation and standard equipment.

## West Seattle (The Sloped Yard)

Total: \$168,000



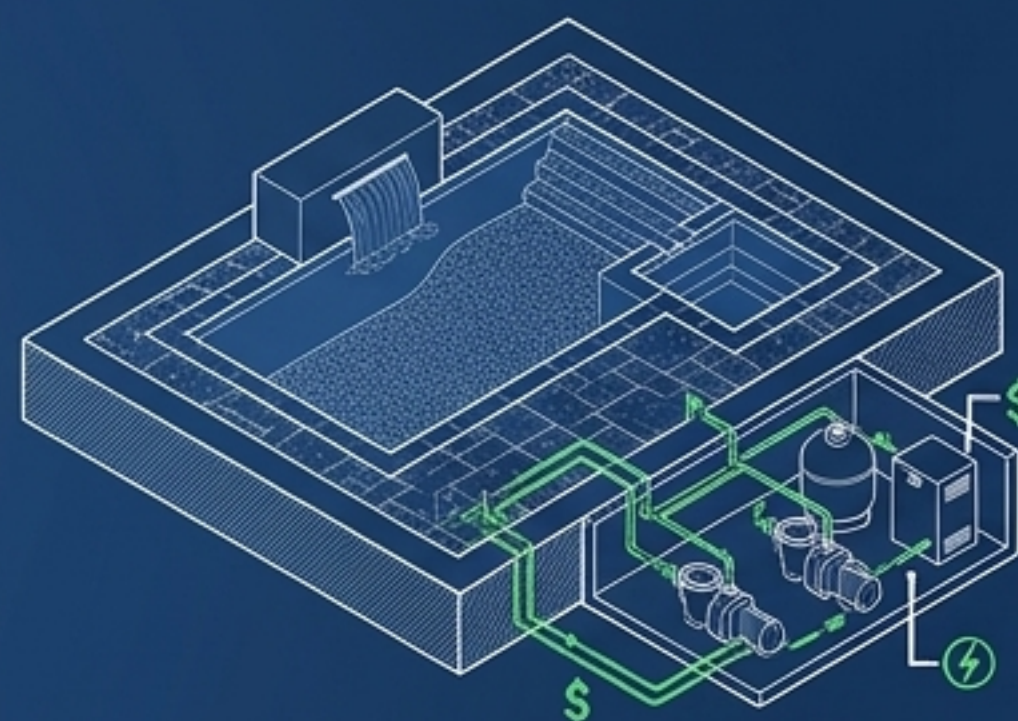
**Specs:** 15x30 Freeform Gunite. Saltwater, auto-cover.

### The Reality:

- Included an unexpected \$18,000 line item strictly for slope excavation and a small retaining wall.

## Medina (The Premium Integration)

Total: \$245,000



**Specs:** 16x34 Geometric Gunite. Integrated spa, sheer descent water feature.

### The Reality:

- High costs driven by luxury finishes (pebble, travertine) and complex plumbing automation between pool and spa.

# ERROR: SITE PROGRESS BLOCKED



**Attention Required! 403 Error:** Site conditions are preventing progress. The actions you performed triggered an automatic budget halt.

**Error 01: Unforeseen Site Conditions.** Hitting high water tables, massive boulders, or unstable soil mid-excavation. Impossible to quote with 100% certainty.

**Error 02: SDCI Permitting Delays.** Plan reviewers or on-site inspectors demanding structural revisions or geotechnical updates.

**Error 03: Mid-Flight Scope Creep.** Upgrading to travertine, adding water features, or altering automation logic after the rebar is poured.

Ray ID: Seattle-Build-2026 • Action: Deploy Contingency Funds immediately.

# The Bulletproof Quote Architecture

<input type="checkbox"/> Excavation Scope & Haul-Away	Must define who pays for the disposal of thousands of pounds of glacial till.
<input type="checkbox"/> Assumed Soil Conditions	Defines the exact hourly rate for extra excavation if boulders/water are struck.
<input type="checkbox"/> Structural Schematics	Exact gunite thickness, rebar schedules, and pipe sizing.
<input type="checkbox"/> Equipment Specifics	Exact brand and model numbers for pumps, heaters, and filters—no generic placeholders.
<input type="checkbox"/> Site Restoration	A defined plan and budget for repairing heavy equipment damage to the existing yard.

**Ambiguity in the quote is the contractor's margin of safety.  
Specificity is yours.**

# The Seattle Risk Buffer

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{[Base Shell Quote]} + \left[ \begin{array}{c} 15-20\% \\ \text{Unforeseen} \\ \text{Contingency} \end{array} \right] \\ & \text{[Shell Quote]} + \text{[Ancillary Site Costs]} + \text{[Unforeseen Contingency]} = \text{The True Budget} \end{aligned}$$

The NAHB recommends a 10–15% contingency for standard renovations on homes over 30 years old.

Due to the high-risk nature of King County excavation and stringent SDCI regulatory interventions, a 15% to 20% dedicated contingency is mandatory for a safe pool build.

**Do not authorize** ground-breaking until this cash buffer is **secured**.

# Synthesis: Budget for the Site, Not the Shell

**The Vessel:** The equipment, the pebble finish, the water.



**The Environment:** Glacial till, retaining walls, L&I prevailing wages, SDCI engineering mandates.

The fundamental miscalculation homeowners make is anchoring their budget on the cost of the pool vessel itself. The overriding meta-pattern in Seattle is that preparing the site and satisfying local compliance equals or exceeds the cost of the shell. You are undertaking a civil engineering endeavor.

# The Blueprint Reality: Final Diagnostics

1

## The Economics

A mid-range gunite pool requires a **\$145,000 - \$185,000** allocation, with **60%** of capital consumed strictly by structure, earthwork, and local prevailing wages.

2

## The Geography

King County's dense glacial till and sloped topography guarantee that ancillary costs (retaining walls, geo-engineering) are **mandatory**, not optional.

3

## The Strategy

Demand hyper-specific quotes that account for site restoration and unforeseen geology. Maintain a strict **20% contingency** to shield the project from regulatory and sub-surface blockers.

○ A successful project is one that respects the ground it is built in. ○