

CAPEX and Maintenance Benchmark for a Pool Hall/Bar in Huntsville, AL

Project Overview and Scenarios

This benchmark outlines the startup capital expenditures (CAPEX) and ongoing maintenance costs for opening a “clean & respectable” **poolroom bar** in Huntsville, Alabama. Two scenarios are presented:

- **Scenario A: 12-Table Model** – ~7,000–10,000 sq ft facility (minimum viable size)
- **Scenario B: 24-Table Model** – ~12,000–20,000 sq ft facility (larger build or Phase 2 expansion)

Both scenarios assume a **full-service bar** (beer, liquor, cocktails) with a **kitchen-lite** food program (snacks, sandwiches, soups, pizzas – not a full restaurant). The design goal is a modern/classic pool hall: well-lit tables, durable finishes, and a welcoming atmosphere for both serious players and casual visitors (not a luxury lounge, but also not a dive). We assume the business is in a **leased commercial space**, and we compare using a **second-generation** bar/restaurant space vs. an empty **shell** (vanilla box) for build-out costs.

Key Areas & Space Allocation: In each scenario, the space plan should account for:

- **Pool Table Area:** Adequate table spacing (“lanes”) with at least ~5 feet of clearance around each table for comfortable play. A full-size 9’ table needs roughly a 14’ × 18’ area (≈250 sq ft) when isolated, though tables can share space when arranged in rows. (In a 12-table hall, table areas might occupy ~4,000 sq ft; in a 24-table hall, ~8,000 sq ft.)
- **Bar & Seating:** A bar counter with back-bar storage and **seating** (bar stools and some high-top or spectator tables). Allow space for patrons not playing to sit, drink, and watch games.
- **Kitchen Prep Area (Kitchen-Lite):** A small food prep area (e.g. <500 sq ft) with necessary equipment (coolers, prep tables, pizza oven or soup warmers, etc.), focused on simple food service. Likely requires a **Type I hood** and grease trap if cooking/heating is involved (unless using only countertop electric ovens), plus hand sink and warewashing sink.
- **Restrooms:** At least two restrooms (Men/Women) with multiple stalls to support occupancy during peak times. Estimate ~300 sq ft each, more in the larger scenario (additional fixtures may be required by code for a 24-table hall due to higher occupancy).
- **Office and Storage:** A small manager’s office (~100 sq ft) and secure storage for inventory (liquor storage, cue/ball storage, cleaning supplies). A **walk-in cooler** for kegs/beverages may be needed (common in bar build-outs). General storage for extra furniture or maintenance equipment should be allocated as well (e.g. a utility closet).
- **Circulation and Other:** Entrances/vestibule, aisles between table rows, and possibly a designated smoking area outside if relevant. Ensure **egress pathways** meet code. If operating late-night/all-night, consider a controlled entry vestibule or buzzer system for security after hours, and **exterior lighting** for parking areas.

The **target aesthetic** is a durable, clean look: think high-quality lighting above each table, sturdy flooring, and classic decor (e.g. billiards-themed art, NOT flashy nightclub or dive-bar clutter). We will note some optional upgrades for a more upscale finish in the CAPEX.

Build-Out Construction Costs (Bar, Plumbing, Electrical, etc.)

Building out the space will likely be the largest expense category. Costs can vary dramatically based on the condition of the space and the level of finish:

- **Second-Generation Space:** A previously built-out bar/restaurant space will have much of the infrastructure in place (plumbing lines, restrooms, HVAC, possibly a bar counter, ventilation for a kitchen, etc.). Utilizing a second-gen space can **save 30–50%** on build-out costs compared to a bare shell ¹. In practical terms, choosing a second-gen restaurant/bar location could save on the order of **\$50,000 to \$200,000 (or more)** in upfront construction costs ², since expensive items like grease traps, exhaust hoods, and basic electrical/HVAC systems are already installed. In a second-gen scenario, your build-out might focus on reconfiguring the layout, cosmetic updates, and ensuring equipment is up to code, rather than installing all-new systems.
- **Shell (Vanilla Box) Space:** A raw empty space will require **full installation of all systems** – building restrooms, running all plumbing and electrical, adding HVAC capacity, installing a commercial kitchen hood and fire suppression, etc. This scenario drives costs much higher (often **\$150–\$300+ per sq ft** for a restaurant build ³). For a large 10,000–15,000 sq ft shell, that implies potentially **\$1–2+ million** in construction if finished to a typical bar/restaurant standard. While our benchmark will present “High” cost ranges reflecting a shell build-out, it’s worth noting that landlords sometimes offer **Tenant Improvement (TI) allowances** (e.g. \$10–\$40 per sq ft ⁴) to offset some of these costs, especially for longer leases.

Major Build-Out Line Items: (These are typically rolled into the General Contractor’s project, but we break them down for clarity.)

- **Bar Construction & Plumbing:** Building the bar itself (framing, bar top, under-bar cabinets) and installing bar equipment (sinks, beer tap lines, coolers). Plumbing work will include bar sinks, dishwashers, and running any new supply/drain lines (and possibly a mop sink in back). If second-gen, much of this may exist (perhaps just needing reconfiguration); in shell, this is a significant cost. For example, a simple bar build could be ~\$10K–\$30K in a retrofit, whereas from scratch with all equipment could be significantly more (included in the overall construction cost per sq ft).
- **Kitchen-Lite Build:** Even a limited food prep area needs compliant surfaces, possibly a **ventilation hood** for ovens, a grease trap (if cooking grease-laden foods), and appropriate electrical/plumbing for appliances. A small commercial hood installation alone can cost \$10K–\$20K. Second-gen sites often already have a hood and grease trap ⁵, saving a huge expense.
- **Electrical & Lighting:** Adequate electrical distribution for the bar, kitchen appliances, and **lighting** is critical. Good **table lighting** is a priority – typically, each pool table will have a dedicated overhead light fixture (e.g. pendant or linear light) to ensure the playing surface is well-lit. Installing or repositioning these lights (and possibly adding dimmable ambient lighting elsewhere) is part of the electrical scope. In a shell, expect full wiring, panels, etc. Budget perhaps \$50K–\$100K for electrical work in a large space (could be less in second-gen if reuse existing circuits).

- **Flooring:** Durable, low-maintenance flooring is needed (e.g. commercial carpet tiles, LVT, or sealed concrete). Pool halls often prefer carpet or rubber under tables to reduce ball damage and noise, but bar areas might use wood or tile for easier cleaning. Floor prep and installation can range widely – for 10k sq ft, flooring could cost tens of thousands (basic carpet tile at \$2–\$5/sf = \$20–50K; higher-end finishes cost more). If a second-gen space's flooring is acceptable, you might save here; otherwise include demo/removal of old flooring in costs.
- **Walls & Paint:** Cosmetic updates like fresh paint, possibly adding/removing some partitions (e.g. creating an office or storage room). Minor partition construction is relatively small cost; painting a large interior (say 10k sq ft walls) could be \$5–15K.
- **Bathrooms:** If existing, you might just deep-clean and update fixtures or finishes. If building new, two restrooms with multiple stalls, tile work, plumbing fixtures, ADA requirements, etc., can easily run \$20K–\$40K each. Even a refresh of an existing restroom (new fixtures, partitions, vanity, etc.) might be \$10K+.
- **HVAC and Ventilation:** Ensure the HVAC system can handle the occupancy and added heat from people/equipment. A second-gen restaurant space will have appropriate HVAC and possibly make-up air for the kitchen; a shell might need new HVAC units or ductwork. HVAC upgrades or additions can range from a few thousand for minor duct changes to \$50K+ for new units in a large space. (If smoking were allowed – not assumed here – additional ventilation upgrades or air cleaners would be needed.)
- **Fire Protection and Code Compliance:** Upgrading sprinkler systems, fire alarms, exit signage, etc., especially if operating late hours. Often an all-night operation means ensuring **emergency lighting** and alarms are fully up to code. In older second-gen spaces, budget some funds for surprise code compliance upgrades (e.g. a fire marshal might require sprinkler modifications or added detectors, which could be a few thousand dollars ⁶).
- **Exterior and Signage:** New signage for the business (permits required) and possibly improved exterior lighting or security lighting if operating late. Signage can range from a simple banner (\$1K) to a lighted exterior sign (\$5K–\$15K). If the parking lot or exterior is dark, adding floodlights or camera lighting is advisable for overnight safety.

Cost Ranges: Build-out costs will vary with the scenario:

- **12-Table Hall:** In a **second-gen** space with only light renovations, the build-out might be on the lower end (perhaps on the order of **\$150,000–\$300,000** total). A more extensive renovation or higher-grade finishes could push this toward \$400,000 or more. In a **shell space**, a full build for 12 tables (≈8,000 sq ft) could easily exceed **\$600,000+** (especially if \$75–\$100+ per sq ft). We include contingency and TI differences in the summary table.
- **24-Table Hall:** Roughly double the size, but economies of scale may slightly reduce per-sqft costs. A second-gen large space might see **\$300,000–\$600,000** in renovations (assuming much infrastructure is reused). A shell 15,000+ sq ft build-out could run **\$1 million or more** for a complete installation (in line with ~\$150–\$200 per sq ft for a mid-range finish). High-end finishes or complex work could drive it higher.

Contingency: It is critical not to underestimate build-out costs – **unexpected issues** will arise (e.g. unseen structural fixes, permitting delays, additional electrical needs). A **10–15% contingency** on construction costs is recommended ⁷ (potentially more for complex projects or older buildings). We incorporate this in the CAPEX tables as a buffer.

Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment (FF&E)

Beyond the construction, you'll need to outfit the space with furniture and equipment. Key FF&E items include:

- **Seating & Tables:** Bar stools (at the bar and any high-top tables), regular chairs or benches for seating around the room, and perhaps a few **pub tables** or cocktail tables for patrons to sit at while eating/drinking. For example, a 12-table hall might have ~20 bar stools and another 20 chairs; a 24-table hall maybe 30–40 bar stools and additional chairs. Budget roughly \$100–\$200 per stool/chair for sturdy commercial-grade units. (Reusing second-hand chairs can save money; upscale venues might spend more on custom furniture.) Expect on the order of **\$10,000–\$30,000** for all seating and small tables, depending on quantity and quality ⁸.
- **Point-of-Sale (POS) System:** Registers, card readers, and software. A small bar might need 1–2 terminals; a larger operation 2–3 terminals (e.g. one at bar, one at a server station). Modern POS systems often have monthly fees, but hardware can range from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars each. Estimate **\$1,200 (basic tablet setup) up to \$5,000+** for a multi-terminal professional POS system ⁹.
- **Televisions & Sound System:** TVs for sports or digital signage – for a 12-table hall, maybe 4–6 TVs; for 24 tables, 8+ TVs, so that the whole space has coverage. Decent 50" commercial TVs run \$400–\$800 each. Plus mounts and installation. A sound system for background music or PA includes amplifiers and ceiling or wall-mounted speakers – budget a few thousand dollars (say \$2K–\$5K) for a robust setup in a large space.
- **Decor and Branding:** Wall decor (framed posters, billiards-themed art, neon signs for beer brands, etc.) and any thematic design elements. This is variable; one could spend just \$1–2K on basic decor or \$10K+ on a more polished themed interior. We'll include a modest allowance in likely budgets, with the high-end scenario allowing more for decor upgrades.
- **Security Systems:** Operating late hours means **security is essential**. Plan for a **CCTV camera system** with multiple cameras covering all tables, entrances, the register, and parking lot. A decent 8-camera system with recorder might cost ~\$3,000–\$6,000 installed. Also consider an alarm system for off-hours and possibly electronic access control for after-hours entry. These upfront costs are worthwhile for safety. (Good lighting in the parking/outside is another security measure – likely covered in build-out electrical.)
- **Kitchen/Bar Equipment:** The bar will require refrigerators (for bottled beer, mixers), possibly a kegerator or walk-in cooler for draft beer, an ice machine, glassware, blenders, etc. The kitchen-lite might have a pizza oven, microwave, soup warmer, small fridge/freezer, prep table, and a three-compartment sink and hand sink. **Commercial equipment is costly** – e.g., a commercial under-counter fridge that's NSF-certified could cost 2× the home version ¹⁰. A budget range for **kitchen & bar equipment** is **\$25,000 on the low end (used equipment) up to \$100,000+ if mostly new** ¹¹. In a second-gen space, some equipment might be inherited or bought used; a shell requires everything new. We assume a modest kitchen, so not as high as a full restaurant, but still substantial.
- **Other Fixtures:** Don't forget **cue racks** (wall-mounted or floor stands for house cues), **ball racks** and **ball sets** (detailed under tables), **chalk holders**, trash receptacles, etc. Also, **lighting fixtures above each pool table** (if not counted in construction): many pool halls use dedicated table lights

(which can cost \$200–\$500 each). If these need to be purchased separately, 12 lights might run ~\$3K. (Sometimes included in electrical build if hardwired.)

Note on Quality vs. Budget: There is a wide range in FF&E costs. At the low end, one might source used furniture or basic equipment; at the high end, you might purchase custom millwork and designer furniture. Our “Likely” scenario aims for mid-grade, durable choices. **Optional upscale upgrades** might include: solid wood or leather seating (instead of metal/vinyl), a granite or quartz bar countertop (instead of laminate), decorative lighting fixtures, and higher-end decor. These could add **20–30% more** to FF&E costs if pursued.

Pool Tables – New vs. Used, Delivery & Installation

The pool tables themselves are the centerpiece of the business. Costs for tables can vary greatly:

- **New Tables (High-End):** Tournament-quality 8’ or 9’ tables (brands like Diamond or Brunswick) are expensive. A brand-new **9-foot Brunswick Gold Crown** can list around **\$11,000–\$14,000** each ¹². A new 9’ Diamond Professional or Pro-Am might cost around **\$7,000–\$8,000** (as sold by dealers) ¹³. These prices often include basic cloth and sometimes delivery, but not always. High-end tables would give your hall prestige, but they come at a steep cost – outfitting 12 tables new could easily approach **\$80k–\$100k+, and 24 tables \$150k–\$200k** just for tables.
- **Used or Refurbished Tables:** Many successful pool halls opt for quality *used* tables. A well-built used table (e.g., older Brunswick Gold Crown or Diamond) might be acquired for **\$2,000–\$4,000** in decent condition. One pool hall operator noted that buying all brand-new Diamond tables could **consume half your budget**, whereas used tables with new cloth can play just as well for most customers ¹⁴. If you buy used tables, **budget for refurbishment – new cloth and possibly new cushion rails** – to ensure they play “like new” ¹⁵. Professional installation with new cloth and rubber can make a 20-year-old table play perfectly. This refurbishment might add ~\$500–\$1,000 per table (cloth, cushions, labor). Even so, the total per used table might average ~\$3,000–\$5,000, roughly half the cost of new high-end tables. For planning: 12 refurbished tables ≈ **\$36k–\$60k**, 24 tables ≈ **\$72k–\$120k**.
- **Table Delivery & Installation:** Moving and assembling pool tables is a specialized task. Whether new or used, you’ll need professional table movers to deliver, assemble, level, and cloth the tables. Typical professional installation fees range by table size – for a 9-foot table, roughly **\$400–\$700 each** for delivery and assembly ¹⁶ (smaller tables a bit less). Often, dealers include this in the price for new tables. For used tables, you’ll hire a billiard mechanic. We have included installation costs in the above estimates, but it’s good to earmark a few thousand dollars for this (e.g. $500 \times 12 = \$6,000$). If stairs or difficult access are involved, costs could be higher.
- **Accessories for Tables:** Don’t overlook the smaller items: **ball sets, racks, cues**, and maintenance tools. High-quality **Aramith ball sets** cost ~\$250–\$300 each; you might get a bulk deal, but for 12 tables plan on spending ~\$3,000 on balls. House **cue sticks** (and bridges) – you’ll need multiple (at least 1–2 per table); one can get 1-piece house cues for ~\$30 each, so maybe \$500–\$1,000 total to have spares. **Triangle racks** or diamond racks for each table, bridge hooks, cue repair kits, etc., might be another ~\$500+ total. These are small relative to tables but should be in the budget.
- **Table Lighting:** Each table should have a dedicated light fixture hung above it for proper illumination. If the space was a pool hall before (second-gen), these fixtures may already exist. If not,

plan about **\$300 per table** for a decent 3-shade billiard light or LED fixture, plus installation costs (part of electrical). For 12 tables, ~\$3,600; for 24, ~\$7,200 in fixtures.

Table Mix: Some halls mix table sizes (e.g. 7' "bar boxes" vs 9' regulation tables). Given the target market includes serious players, 9-foot tables are likely the focus; however, including a few 7-foot tables for league or casual play is common. (Note: Many casual players actually consider 7' tables the "norm" at bars ¹⁷. It's a balance whether to include both sizes. For budgeting, 7' tables are a bit cheaper but similar order of magnitude, so we haven't separated the costs by size.)

Maintenance Costs and Schedules

Operating a pool hall entails ongoing maintenance, especially for the pool tables to remain in top condition. Below we outline key maintenance items and typical schedules, focusing on *annual costs* to plan for:

- **Cloth Replacement (Refelting):** The billiard cloth (felt) on each table **wears out with use**. In a busy commercial pool room, you should expect to replace cloth periodically. Estimates vary: for heavy play (daily use), some sources suggest replacing cloth about **every 1–3 years** ¹⁸. Many pool halls aim for roughly **18–24 months** per cloth if using high-quality worsted cloth, as by ~2 years the wear (ball tracks, loosening, etc.) becomes noticeable ¹⁹. We recommend using professional-grade cloth (e.g. Simonis 860 HR worsted) for durability and performance. The cost per table to refelt depends on cloth quality: **\$450–\$700 for high-quality cloth** material is typical ²⁰ (worsted tournament cloth can run up to \$600–\$1,000 including labor). Assuming not all tables are done at once, you might plan to refelt, say, half the tables each year on a rotating basis. **Annual budget for cloth:** roughly **\$3,000–\$6,000** for 12 tables, or **\$6,000–\$12,000** for 24 tables, to keep cloth fresh. (Using slightly cheaper cloth could cut cost, but most serious halls won't skimp here.)
- **Rail Cushions:** The rubber bumpers (cushions) on table rails eventually harden or lose bounce over many years. In used tables, you might replace them upon purchase; new tables won't need rail work for quite some time (5–10 years). It's a **periodic maintenance** item, not annual. Budget perhaps every 5+ years to re-rubber some tables. Cost can be around a few hundred dollars per table for new cushions and installation. You could amortize this as maybe **\$500–\$1,000 per year** set aside for rail work across all tables (so that every few years you can redo a batch). In the first couple years, if you refurbished tables upfront, you likely won't need this immediately.
- **Table Leveling:** Tables should be kept level. Over time, flooring can shift or tables can settle, requiring re-leveling. It's good practice to check level periodically (some owners do this monthly in high use). Professional re-leveling service might cost **\$100–\$300 per visit** ²¹, but minor adjustments can often be done in-house if staff are trained. We suggest budgeting for at least an **annual professional tune-up** of all tables. For example, \$100 × 12 tables = \$1,200 (or a bulk rate). Many halls might do this twice a year. So annual **leveling/maintenance budget:** ~\$1,000–\$2,000 for smaller hall, \$2,000–\$3,000 for larger.
- **Balls and Cues Maintenance:** **Pool balls** should be periodically cleaned (with a ball polisher or by hand) – cleaning supplies are minor cost (cleaner solutions, etc.). Balls can last many years, but expect to replace sets that get damaged or marred. Perhaps replace a couple of sets per year. At ~\$250/set, call it **\$500/year** (12 tables) or **\$1,000/year** (24 tables) for ball replacement. **House cues** will need new tips and the occasional new cue if one warps or breaks. Keeping spare cue tips and

replacing them is ongoing (tips are cheap). Budget a few hundred a year for cue upkeep. Overall, **balls & cues upkeep**: ~\$500/year (small) to \$1,000/year (large) as a cushion.

- **Cleaning Supplies:** Day-to-day cleaning is critical. Supplies include table brushes, microfiber cloths, **chalk** (chalk is consumable; you'll need to replenish chalk cubes regularly), and general cleaners for the rest of the facility. These costs aren't huge but must be continuous. You may also want **pool table covers** if you cover tables overnight to prevent dust (not always done in commercial halls, but could). Budget a few hundred dollars a year for these consumables. (Labor for cleaning is part of operating expense, not counted here.)
- **Preventive Maintenance Contracts:** Consider setting aside funds for occasional professional service – e.g., a billiards technician to come for a day to refit pockets, tighten rail bolts, etc., or an HVAC technician to service the AC annually. Also, **beer line cleaning** (if you have draft beer) should be done every 1-2 weeks – this can be done by staff with a kit or via a service contract (a service might charge ~\$100 a month). It's more of an operating cost, but mention for completeness.
- **Wear & Tear from Late Hours:** If you operate very late or 24/7 on some days, expect higher wear on everything (furniture, bathrooms, etc.). You might need to increase the frequency of deep cleans (floors, restrooms) and have door hardware that's robust for heavy use. Ensure to maintain **security systems** – e.g., camera system upkeep or alarm monitoring fees (monitoring ~\$30-50/month). These are operational, but keep in mind for maintenance planning.

One pro tip from an experienced hall owner: using **“break cloths”** can save your table cloths. A break cloth is a small piece of spare felt that players place on the table for the break shot to protect the main cloth from the impact. Enforcing this practice **“saves thousands on table maintenance”** by extending cloth life ²². This could be a policy to adopt for cost savings.

Annual Maintenance Budget (Estimate)

Taking the above into account, here is a **rough annual maintenance budget** for each scenario, focusing on table-related maintenance (which is the largest part of ongoing upkeep):

Maintenance Item	Approx. Annual Cost (12-table hall)	Approx. Annual Cost (24-table hall)
Cloth replacement (worsted cloth, staggered)	\$4,000 – \$6,000	\$8,000 – \$12,000
Table leveling & minor repairs	~\$1,500	~\$2,500
Rail cushion replacement fund	~\$500	~\$1,000
Balls and cues (replacement/repair)	~\$500	~\$1,000
Cleaning supplies (table brushes, chalk, etc.)	~\$300	~\$500
Total Estimated Maintenance/Year	\$6,500 – \$8,500	\$13,500 – \$17,000

(The lower end assumes moderate usage and some cost savings measures; the upper end for heavy usage or higher material costs. These figures do not include general building maintenance like HVAC servicing or janitorial labor, which should be budgeted separately. They focus on pool tables and related supplies.)

Working Capital and Contingency

In addition to the fixed startup costs, it's prudent to have sufficient **working capital** to sustain operations until the business becomes self-sufficient. For a bar/pool hall, initial months can be slow as you build clientele. A common recommendation is **3–6 months of operating expenses** reserved as working capital ²³. Given the scale here, we recommend **at least 6 months**. This covers rent, utilities, payroll, and other expenses in the ramp-up period.

- For the **12-table scenario**, if monthly operating expenses are, say, ~\$20k (including \$8–10k rent, staff wages, etc.), six months' working capital would be on the order of **\$120,000**. (At bare minimum, 3 months might be ~\$60k, but 6+ months is safer). Our table uses a placeholder in the range of \$75k–\$100k for working capital for Scenario A.
- For the **24-table scenario**, with higher rent (larger space) and more staff, monthly burn could be \$30k–\$40k. Six months could be **\$180,000** or more. We include a range up to ~\$200k for Scenario B working capital.

Contingency: We build a contingency (approximately 10–15%) into the CAPEX to account for overruns ⁷. This is shown as a separate line item in the budget. Unused contingency can become additional working capital if the project comes in under budget, but given “unknown unknowns” (delays, code issues, etc.), it's wise to budget this explicitly.

Also note, when leasing, you may have to front **security deposits** (often 1–2 months' rent) and possibly utility deposits. In our working capital estimates, we assume some of these upfront costs are covered.

CAPEX Summary Tables

Below are the CAPEX estimates for the two scenarios (12-table and 24-table), broken down by major categories, with **Low**, **Likely**, and **High** projections. The *Low* end assumes favorable conditions: a second-gen space with minimal renovation and many used/affordable equipment choices. The *High* end assumes a worst-case/high-cost scenario: a shell build-out **and** upscale finishes/equipment. *Likely* is a middle-ground estimate (e.g. second-gen space but significant upgrades, or a shell with some cost-saving measures). All figures are in US dollars:

CAPEX Estimate – 12-Table Pool Hall (~8,000 sq ft)

Category	Low (2nd-Gen, Basic)	Likely (Moderate)	High (Shell/Upgraded)
Build-Out (Construction)	\$150,000 – \$200,000	\$300,000 (extensive reno)	\$600,000+
• Plumbing & Bar Build	(included in above)	(new bar fixtures, some new plumbing)	(all new install)

Category	Low (2nd-Gen, Basic)	Likely (Moderate)	High (Shell/ Upgraded)
• Electrical & Lighting	(included)	(upgrade lighting, new circuits)	(full wiring, panels)
• HVAC & Ventilation	(existing OK)	(minor HVAC add-ons)	(new units, kitchen hood)
Furniture, Fixtures & Equip (FF&E)	\$40,000	\$70,000	\$120,000
• Seating & Décor	(used/basic furniture)	(standard bar furniture)	(custom/upscale finishes)
• Bar/Kitchen Equipment	(used fridge, minimal)	(mix of new/used)	(all new, high-end)
• Tech (POS, TVs, sound, security)	(minimal setup)	(2 POS, 4 TVs, sound, cams)	(full AV, more TVs, etc.)
Pool Tables & Accessories	\$45,000	\$80,000	\$120,000
• Tables (qty 12)	(12 used tables, refurbished) ¹⁴ ¹⁵	(mix of used/new, mid-range)	(12 new premium tables) ¹²
• Delivery & Installation	(in table cost)	(~\$6k for install) ²⁴	(~\$8k, premium service)
• Balls, cues, lights, etc.	(~\$5k accessories)	(~\$8k accessories)	(~\$10k, premium balls & extras)
Soft Costs (Design, Permits, Fees)	\$10,000	\$20,000	\$40,000
(Architect, engineer, permits, licenses)	(minimal if minor changes)	(standard professional fees)	(full design + higher permits)
Contingency (~10–15%)	\$20,000	\$50,000	\$100,000
Working Capital (6 mo)	\$75,000	\$100,000	\$150,000
Total Startup Cost (Approx)	\$340K – \$390K	\$620,000 (likely)	\$1.03M+

(Ranges are shown for Low and High; the Likely column provides one plausible figure within that range. A second-generation scenario might fall in the lower half of the range, whereas a shell build-out with upscale choices pushes to the high end.)

CAPEX Estimate – 24-Table Pool Hall (~15,000 sq ft)

Category	Low (2nd-Gen, Basic)	Likely (Moderate)	High (Shell/Upgraded)
Build-Out (Construction)	\$300,000 – \$400,000	\$600,000	\$1,000,000+
FF&E (Furniture & Equip)	\$60,000	\$120,000	\$200,000
Pool Tables & Accessories	\$90,000	\$150,000	\$240,000
Soft Costs (Design, permits)	\$20,000	\$40,000	\$80,000
Contingency (~10%)	\$50,000	\$100,000	\$150,000
Working Capital (6 mo)	\$150,000	\$180,000	\$250,000
Total Startup Cost (Approx)	\$670K – \$770K	\$1.19 million (likely)	\$1.92 million+

(The 24-table scenario involves larger space and quantities; while not strictly double the 12-table costs due to some efficiencies, many costs do scale up. The “Likely” case might assume a second-gen big-box location with significant work, whereas “High” could reflect a ground-up or shell project with premium features.)

Notes on the Above Estimates: All figures are rough-order-of-magnitude to guide budgeting. **Local factors** in Huntsville, AL (like labor rates, material availability, and permitting processes) will influence actual costs. Huntsville tends to have more moderate construction costs than coastal metros, so the mid-range values might be achievable. Always obtain contractor bids and equipment quotes for precision. The provided ranges aim to ensure you **don’t underestimate** – it’s safer to have money left over than to run short. Also remember to account for **lease deposit** (often equal to 1–2 months’ rent, which for a large space could be \$10k+), and the costs of initial stock (liquor inventory, food inventory) which we did not itemize but could easily be \$10k–\$20k upfront for a full bar.

Conclusion and Additional Considerations

Starting a pool hall/bar is a capital-intensive project. By benchmarking real vendor/contractor cost ranges and including a healthy contingency, these estimates help set realistic expectations for startup costs in the Huntsville area. Choosing a location that was formerly a bar or restaurant can significantly reduce costs and speed up your opening timeline ⁵ ². On the other hand, a brand new build gives more customization but requires a much larger investment up front.

Be mindful of the **operational implications** of your choices: investing in quality tables and equipment can pay off in customer satisfaction and lower maintenance (e.g. high-quality cloth lasts longer ²⁵, well-built tables stay level). However, there’s often diminishing returns on ultra-luxury finishes if your target market is casual. Our inclusion of optional upscale upgrades is for consideration if you aim to position the venue more high-end. Otherwise, focus spending on the areas that directly impact the player experience: good tables, good lighting, and a comfortable, clean environment.

Lastly, maintain sufficient working capital to weather the ramp-up period and any unexpected hurdles. Opening a hospitality venue often comes with **delays and surprise expenses** – inspections can require changes, or the fire marshal may demand improvements that cost extra ⁶. By budgeting conservatively

and including contingency, you'll be better prepared to handle those challenges. When in operation, keep up with maintenance (especially table upkeep) – it not only preserves your asset but also signals to customers that your pool room is well cared for, aligning with that “respectable” image.

With careful planning and adequate funding, your poolroom bar can successfully launch and become a lasting part of the community. Good luck with your venture!

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