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## **Cost Per Square Foot**

One of the most common questions we receive from potential customers is, "How much will a new home cost per square foot?" While the question is common, it is one that we are hesitant to assign an amount to, based on the vast number of variables that affect it. While some builders may throw a SF number out there, unless you and the builder are on the same page with a very long list of details, that number is a guess at best. **We do not want to quote a price to a potential customer that looks appealing, but is lower than what they will spend in the end.** Some of the factors that greatly influence the cost per square foot are:

- **Number of Floors**
  - A ranch home is typically more expensive per SF because the cost of the roof and foundation is only split between one floor (with a 2 story, the roof and foundation cost would be split between the two floors).
- **What square footage is included in the cost per SF number?**
  - If unfinished basement SF or garage SF is included, it will make your cost per SF look very low compared to cost per finished SF.
- **Is the basement finished or unfinished?**
  - Typically, the basement is the cheapest area to finish per square foot, so if you are figuring in finished basement cost and SF, it makes the total cost per SF look very low. For example, there might be a 2000 SF ranch that costs \$250K with an unfinished basement (\$125/finished SF), and costs \$320K with a finished basement (\$80/finished SF)--the total cost of the home was driven up now that the basement is added in as finished, but the cost per finished SF appears much better.
- **Is there a deck/screened-in porch, etc.?**
  - These features add to the total cost of the house, but do not add any finished square footage (this is also true of an oversized garage). This will drive up the ending cost per SF.
- **Amount of detail/quality of products used**
  - This could possibly be the biggest variable, due to the range of products available on the market. Exterior brick and/or stone will cost significantly more than vinyl siding. There is a large range in prices (and performance) between a quality window and a cheap one. A Geothermal HVAC system can be more than twice the cost of conventional. Interior choices in plumbing fixtures, trim, flooring, etc. vary a great deal depending on taste and budget. Our best illustration of this point is that a customer could put in a kitchen (cabinets/tops) for as low as \$3K-\$4K if they really want to make the lowest price work, but it's possible to go up over \$100K for just a kitchen if someone wants to. All of these choices end up having a large impact on the final cost per SF.

There are more examples that change cost per SF, but hopefully the above gives you a few cautions to look at when you are quoted SF costs. We want to inform our potential customers the way we would want informed if we were the customer. We believe a large part of that is being as detailed as possible in the bidding process. Our desire when we price out a house, is that we and the homeowner are on the same page on all the details that are included in the bid so that there are not surprise/unexpected charges along the way.

The best way for us to give you even an accurate ballpark estimate would be to sit down with you and get a better idea on the bigger details of your new home. At that point, we could compare it to some of the other homes we have built that were similar in size, detail level, etc. and give you an approximate of where you would be at. After that, we could draw up your home (we have in-house design/AutoCAD drafting if you don't already have a blueprint), get all of the specifics of what you want in the home, and put together a solid bid price.