

NEW CONSTRUCTION UPGRADE GUIDE

WHAT TO UPGRADE • WHAT TO SKIP • HOW TO SAVE THOUSANDS

SERVING DC • MARYLAND • VIRGINIA



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Introduction

Buying a new construction home is exciting but choosing upgrades without guidance can be expensive.

Many buyers spend thousands of dollars on upgrades that:

- Don't add resale value
- Are heavily marked up
- Could be done for less after closing

This guide will help you:

- ✓ Understand which upgrades are worth the money
- ✓ Avoid common design center mistakes
- ✓ Make smart decisions for resale and lifestyle

This guide is written specifically for buyers in DC, Maryland, and Virginia, where resale expectations matter.



How to Think About Upgrades

Is this hard or expensive to change later?

Structural and behind-the-walls items are usually best upgraded now. These include square footage, ceilings, insulation, windows, and wiring.

Does this improve daily living or resale value?

Focus on upgrades you'll use every day or that future buyers expect, such as flooring, kitchens, energy efficiency, and outdoor space. If it improves neither, it's usually not worth it.

Can I do this cheaper after closing?

Many cosmetic upgrades are marked up by builders.

Lighting, appliances, tile, and finishes are often cheaper to change later.

RULE OF THUMB

Upgrade what's permanent.
Customize what's cosmetic.

This approach helps you stay on budget and avoid upgrade regret.



Best Upgrades (Worth It)

BEST UPGRADES TO CONSIDER

✓ Flooring upgrades

Hardwood or luxury vinyl plank on the main level

✓ Structural options

More square footage, higher ceilings, better insulation

✓ Kitchen upgrades

Taller cabinets, large islands, durable countertops

✓ Energy efficiency

Windows, insulation, HVAC systems

✓ Outdoor living

Decks, patios, porches, curb appeal

These upgrades:

- Improve comfort
- Hold value
- Matter to future buyers in the DMV



Worst Upgrades: Overpriced Options

UPGRADES TO SKIP OR DELAY

- ✗ Lighting packages
- ✗ Appliance upgrades
- ✗ Backsplashes and accent tile
- ✗ Decorative finishes

These items are often:

- Marked up by the builder
- Easy to replace later
- Better customized after closing

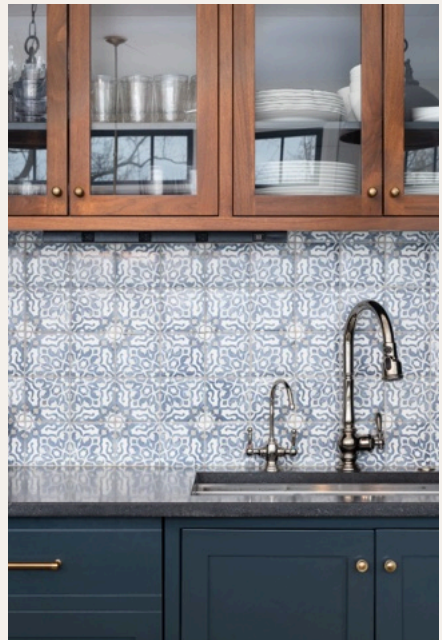
You'll usually save money and have more choices later.

UPGRADES THAT RARELY ADD VALUE

- ✗ Oversized luxury tubs
- ✗ Specialty rooms you won't use often
- ✗ Bold or highly personal design choices
- ✗ Trend-driven finishes

If an upgrade:

- Doesn't match your lifestyle
- Doesn't appeal to future buyers
- it may not be worth the investment.



DESIGN CENTER TIPS

HOW TO AVOID OVERSPENDING

- ✓ Set an upgrade budget before your appointment
- ✓ Don't make emotional decisions
- ✓ Ask for specs, not just photos
- ✓ Compare upgrades to post-closing costs
- ✓ Take breaks if you feel overwhelmed

Design centers are designed to upsell.
A plan helps you stay in control.

WHAT BUYERS EXPECT IN DC, MD & VA

In this market, buyers value:

- ✓ Neutral, timeless finishes
- ✓ Energy efficiency
- ✓ Functional layouts
- ✓ Outdoor space
- ✓ Low maintenance features

Your upgrade choices should align with:

- Neighborhood price points
- Local buyer expectations
- Long-term resale value



HOW TO ALLOCATE YOUR UPGRADE BUDGET

A smart starting point:

- 40–50% Structural & systems
- 25–30% Kitchen & flooring
- 10–15% Outdoor living
- 5–10% Cosmetic or personal touches

This keeps your money focused on upgrades that matter most



NEED HELP WITH YOUR NEW BUILD?

Choosing upgrades is one of the most expensive decisions you'll make in new construction.

You don't have to do it alone.



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