

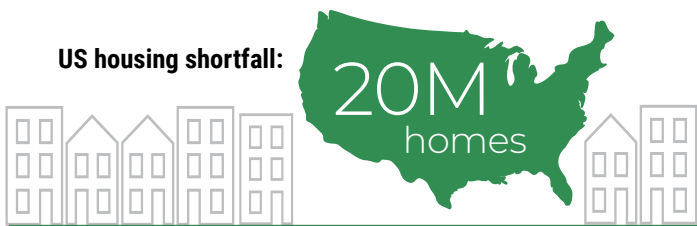
UNLOCKING HOUSING SUPPLY IN THE U.S.
BY SPEEDING AND DIGITIZING PERMITTING

ACCELERATING PERMIT APPROVAL TIMELINES TO INCREASE NEW HOUSING PRODUCTION



PROBLEM

The United States faces a housing shortfall of up to 20 million homes. Slow permitting processes deepen that shortage. Stalled projects grow more expensive the longer they wait, and higher costs discourage the new housing the country needs.



SOLUTION

San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria signed an executive order in 2023 to accelerate permitting timelines and overhaul the city's permitting process.

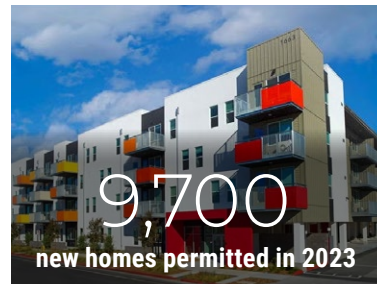
- To meet a 30-day goal for affordable housing projects, the city mapped permitting processes and clarified requirements that mattered most in order to reduce handoffs.
- The city created separate review tracks based on project complexity, so kitchen remodels and large developments were not treated the same.
- To boost capacity, the city ran expedited hiring for roles related to permitting and filled 150 vacancies within 8 months, plus contracted third-party firms for lower-complexity work.
- The city fully digitized permitting from end to end, while keeping higher-touch communication channels open for homeowners and small builders.

IMPACT

Within a year, San Diego:



Exceeded its 30-day target for affordable housing, averaging just nine days for review.



82% 
over the prior year
and its highest total
since 2005

The affordable program alone has permitted over 6,700 homes in the last three years, one third of which are completed.

CHALLENGES THIS IDEA CAN HELP YOU NAVIGATE

- Lengthy permit review timelines that stall housing projects, raise costs, and put subsidy or tax credit deadlines at risk
- High volumes of routine permits crowding out priority housing projects
- Legacy or paper-based systems that limit visibility for applicants and city staff and accumulate backlogs

ADOPT THIS IDEA: 3 KEY STEPS



**Commit to
public targets**

1

Name a goal for permitting delay reduction based on the city's best baseline understanding of current pain points and data within its permitting system.



**Institute a shot clock while
elevating user experience**

2

Earmark a team for reviewing priority permits to guarantee completion within a time frame. Assign each applicant a point of contact and offer pre-application consultations to resolve issues early, then identify where communications could further improve user experiences.



**Track and publicly
report progress**

3

Share insights on permitting volumes and delay reductions at least quarterly. This reporting should balance leading indicators of improvement with absolute signals of progress toward goals.

