

2024 Pierce County Permitting Report



Overview:

Pierce County continues to experience challenges in housing production and permitting efficiency. The number of new home starts declined in 2024, while the average time to receive a residential permit increased. Although there was a slight rebound in total private housing structures authorized compared to 2023, activity remains well below pre pandemic and peak year levels. These trends highlight the ongoing pressures on local housing supply, development timelines, and overall affordability.

Total Number of Home Starts:

During the 2024 calendar year, Pierce County issued **1,415 permits** for single-family residences. This figure represents a notable decline compared to the **2019–2023 average of approximately 1,740 permits**, signaling a significant slowdown in new home construction activity.

Average Days for Residential Permit Approval:

In 2024, the **12-month average for residential permit approvals** was approximately **103 days**, a substantial increase from **75.4 days in 2023** and **85.25 days in 2022**. This upward trend indicates a growing delay in permit processing times. When compared to the County's **target of 70 days**, the data reflects that the permitting timeline is moving further away from the desired benchmark.

New Private Housing Structures Authorized by Building Permits:

In 2024, a total of **3,207 private housing structures** were authorized by building permits. While this reflects a slight increase from **3,135 structures in 2023**, it remains well below recent years, particularly the **2022 total of 4,730** and the **2021 peak of 6,072**. This continued reduction suggests a broader slowing trend in residential construction activity across Pierce County.

Factors Contributing to These Trends:

Several factors may be contributing to the slowdown in new home construction and the increase in permit processing times. The rising cost of materials and labor has placed added strain on builders, while elevated interest rates have reduced buyer demand and project feasibility. Additionally, staffing shortages and increased regulatory complexity within local planning departments have extended review timelines. Combined, these pressures have created a challenging environment for housing production at a time when the demand for affordable housing remains high throughout Pierce County.