



DATE: May 27, 2025

TO: Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Lynnette Santos, Director of Community Development
Kristen Flores, Management Analyst

VIA: Greg Humora, City Manager *GH*

SUBJECT: QUARTERLY PERMIT AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATE
(JANUARY 2025 – MARCH 2025)

As part of City's process improvement efforts, the Community Development Department provides permit and development activity updates to the City Council on a quarterly basis. The permit and development quarterly update outlines how the City's Strategic Plan mission of delivering high-quality public services is being met through a commitment to continuous improvement of permit processes and processing times. This quarterly update highlights permit applications, issued permits, finalized permits, and process improvements for January through March of 2025.

As shown in Table 1, development and construction at the start of 2025 remained consistent with the last quarter of 2024 with 397 applications received and 415 permits issued. The total number of applications and permits for each permit type is provided in Attachment A.

Table 1 - Total Applications and Permits

Year	Quarter	Applications	Issued Permits
2025	1st Quarter	397	415
2024	4th Quarter	381	425

Review and Processing Times

Community Development continues to see success with the [MaintStar Permitting Portal](#) along with the City's instant solar permitting platform [Symbium](#). Staff utilizes the

MaintStar portal's permit tracking system to track review timeframes of permit submittals. This system allows staff to track submittal dates, the number of reviews, and the length of each review. There continues to be improvement in review and processing times for various projects. Table 2 provides the average review and processing times of additions/alterations and miscellaneous projects for both the 1st quarter of 2025 and 4th quarter of 2024. The data shows that there was an improvement in 1st quarter additions/alterations and miscellaneous permit processing times and that reviews times were consistent or improved.

Table 2 - Review and Processing Times

Project Type	Quarter -Year	Average Time for First Review	Average Processing Time (Application to Approval)
Additions/Alterations	1st Quarter - 2025	15 days	27 days
	4th Quarter - 2024	12 days	40 days
Miscellaneous	1st Quarter - 2025	4 days	9 days
	4th Quarter - 2024	4 days	14 days

Solar

The use of instant solar permitting remains consistent with previous quarters. Out of 94 solar permits issued in the 1st quarter, 38 permits were issued instantly via the Symbium platform. We continue to encourage the use of the instant permitting platform through -the instant permitting portal from our solar permit webpage. Staff anticipates a continuous increase in Symbium submittals moving into the second quarter of 2025. Standard solar submittals remain consistent with the fourth quarter, averaging a review time of 4 days and an average improvement of processing time (application to approval) of 14 days.

Table 4 – Review and Processing Times for Solar

Year	Quarter	Average Time for First Review	Average Processing Time (Application to Approval)
2025	1st Quarter	4 days	14 days
2024	4th Quarter	5 days	22 days

Accessory Dwelling Units

For Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) permit processing time, the review time for completion of first review improved. Table 3 shows that there has been a 26% improvement in time from application to approval, with a decrease from 87 days to 64 days on average. This improvement can be attributed to a variety of continuous

improvements efforts, including the staff's knowledge of state ADU law, continuous improvements to application handouts, and applicant utilization of the [ADU guidebook](#). Staff continues to look at ways to educate, inform, and streamline the development process for applicants. Process improvements are further discussed below.

Table 3 – Review and Processing Times for Accessory Dwelling Units

Year	Quarter	Average Time for First Review	Average Processing Time (Application to Approval)
2025	1st Quarter	18 days	64 days
2024	4th Quarter	19 days	87 days

Process Improvements

As part of the department's continuous goal to educate, inform, and streamline the development process for applicants, Community Development continues to make regular updates to the [department's webpage](#), including the [Interactive Development Project Map](#). The project map is still updated each month to provide important information regarding new projects and their status in the Planning process. The [MaintStar permitting map](#) also continues to be a great resource for those who desire to view properties in La Mesa with active or final projects.

In March 2025, Community Development announced implementation of a Preapproved ADU Plans program. The Pre-Approved Plans program provides five preapproved ADU plans, available to the public via [City's ADU webpage](#). The five plans provide ADU design options with a variety of architectural features ranging in size from 224 square feet to 1,199 square feet. For further options, pre-approved plans from other agencies including the County of San Diego may also be utilized. A link to the County of San Diego Preapproved Plans program is provided on the City's ADU website.

Shortly after launching the program, the Building Division received its first permit application for a preapproved 400 square foot detached ADU. Staff were able to approve the project within 8 business days from application to approval of plans.

Staff will continue to work to develop and improve this program, which will further expedite the ADU application and permit issuance process. It is expected that this new process, coupled with the City's \$2,000 ADU waiver of incurred City building permit fees, will further encourage the construction of even more ADU's in La Mesa.

Community Development is also currently recruiting a Building Inspector to further improve permit processing times. Staff will continue to monitor progress of development services and anticipates returning to Council in August 2025 with the next quarterly update.

Attachments:

1. Attachment A – Applications and Issued Permits By Permit Type