Residential & Commercial Growth

The City of Topeka Planning & Development Department issues and tracks building permit information to measure development trends and policies in the City.

Comparing 2020 to 2021, total building permits increased 1.8% from 2020 (513 vs 522). Residential permits slightly decreased 1.2% (340 vs 336). Of residential permits, 34% (114) were new residential permits. During the same period, the total number of commercial permits increased 7.5% (173 vs 186). Of commercial permits, 12.4% (23) were new commercial building permits.

In addition, both building square footage and building value can be evaluated to better understand the scale of investment in the City of Topeka during 2021.

In 2021, building square footage decreased 40.4% from 2020 (3,518,299 sq. ft. vs. 2,096,566 sq. ft.). The value of building permits decreased 14% ($203,029,665 vs. $185,090,463). However, these declining trends reflect the massive Walmart Distribution Facility ($100M, 1.8M sq. ft.) as a major outlier that was permitted in 2020.

* The Top 10 Permits table includes permits with the highest project completion cost issued to date, both commercial and residential.
Residential Growth

The total number of residential building permits issued in the City of Topeka are an indicator of housing growth. Comparing 2020 to 2021, the number of new residential building permits (by units) increased by 134% from 293 to 394. Over that same period of time, additions and alterations decreased by 4.3% (232 vs 222) and generated one additional unit.

Tracking total new housing unit types can be an indicator of more quality housing choices and affordability in keeping with the priorities of the City’s Housing Market Study and Land Use and Growth Management Plan 2040 (LUGMP).

For the decade of 2000 to 2009, single family and non-single family housing units developed at a relatively even share. From 2010 to 2019, the share of new non-single family units surprisingly dropped to only 39% of all new units. While the sample size is much smaller, This decade shows an important reversal of this trend with 75% non-single family share in 2021.

In order to evaluate 2015 policy changes made in the LUGMP, tracking the location of new residential dwelling units created within Topeka (City), Urban Growth Area (UGA), Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (3-mile ETJ), and Shawnee County is vital. The City’s share of new dwelling units compared to all of Shawnee County was 75.3% in 2021 (394 out of 523 units) compared to 72.2% in 2020 indicating continued alignment with LUGMP priorities.

Buildable prime vacant lots (BPVL) are those lots/units within the city that were platted since 1970 and currently have street access or approved benefit districts. Topeka has a sufficient supply of BPVL’s through the end of the fourth quarter of 2021 to accommodate 5.65 years of housing growth for new single-two family dwellings.
Building Permits

https://maps.topeka.org/BuildingPermits/
3-Mile ETJ, UGA, and City Boundary
New Housing Units — 2021