Development & Growth Management Report

Residential & Commercial Growth

The Planning & Development Department issues and tracks building permit information in the City of Topeka.

Total building permits issued is an indicator of development activity. Comparing June 2021 to June 2022, total building permits decreased 10.9% (256 vs 228). Likewise, Residential permits decreased 16.6% (162 vs 135) and commercial permits were nearly the same (94 vs. 93).

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

Comparing June 2021 to June 2022, building square footage decreased by 37.7% (1,390,783 sq. ft. vs. 867,106 sq. ft.). The value of building permits decreased by 31.2% ($117,313,832 vs. $80,762,146).

Much of the large discrepancy in value is due to the Washburn University School of Law, accounting for $25.5 M in May of 2021. The table below shows the Top 10 Permits by valuation through June 2022.

* 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. The number of new residential building permits (by units), when comparing June 2021 to June 2022, decreased 70.8% from (161 vs 47). Additions and alterations decreased by 5% from June 2021 to June 2022 (100 vs 95).

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). From 2010 to 2019, the share of new non-single family units surprisingly did not grow, accounting for only 39% of new units. While the sample size is much smaller, an important reversal of that trend (68% non-single family share) is taking place since 2020.

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 50% through June 2022 (47 out of 94 units) compared to 75.3% in 2021.
3-Mile ETJ, UGA, and City Boundary New Housing Units — June 2022