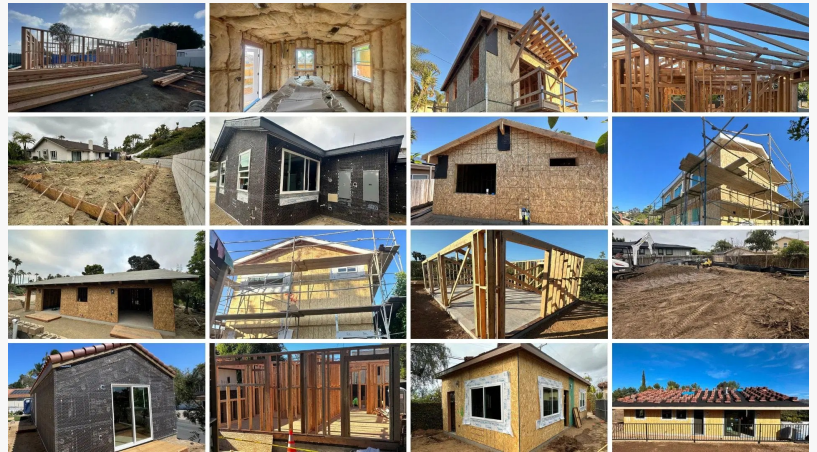


43% of San Diego Detached ADU Projects Finished Within Three Years Of Submission, New Analysis Finds

SnapADU analysis of City permit data reveals opportunities across the full path from plan submission through construction

SAN DIEGO, CA, UNITED STATES, July 29, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- For every 100 detached accessory dwelling unit projects submitted to the City of San Diego, approximately 74 received permits and 43 reached final inspection within three years, according to a new analysis by San Diego design-build firm [SnapADU](#).



Construction progress for 16 ADUs across San Diego County

The findings provide additional insight into how proposed housing projects progress from planning to completed homes, rather than measuring activity through applications or permits alone.

“

Build completion, not plan submittal, is the real measure of success.”

Whitney Hill

“San Diego has created tremendous ADU activity, and the City’s public data lets us understand that pipeline in much greater detail,” said Whitney Hill, CEO and co-founder of SnapADU. “Applications show homeowner interest, permits show approval, and final inspections show completed housing. Looking at all three helps identify where

additional support may translate into more homes.”

For its report, “[San Diego ADU Permit Data: How Many ADUs Actually Get Built? \(2020 to 2026\)](#),” SnapADU analyzed public records from the City of San Diego Development Services Department to track detached new-construction ADU projects from submission through permit issuance and final inspection. Updated through June 2026, the analysis includes projects submitted between 2021 and early 2023 that had a full 36 months of history available for review.

Among the findings:

- Detached new construction represented 45% of the approximately 10,000 ADU and JADU applications submitted from 2021 through 2025, making it the largest individual project category.
- 26% of submitted detached new ADU projects had not received a permit within three years.
- Only 24% of submitted projects reached final inspection within two years, increasing to 43% within three years.
- Completed projects took an average of 23.8 months from submission to final inspection. That excludes [feasibility](#), surveys, utility planning and design work completed before submission.

The City's public development permit records show whether a project advanced, but do not assign a cause when it stalled. Potential factors span the entire development process, including owner decisions, redesign during plan review, unexpected utility or site requirements, fire and brush management constraints, construction costs and financing.

SnapADU also compared its City of San Diego projects within the same public dataset. Among those 43 projects, 69% reached final inspection within two years and 90% within three years. Average time from submission to completion was 17.4 months, approximately six months faster than the citywide average for completed detached ADUs.

"The findings suggest that upfront planning including feasibility, utility review and project scoping may contribute to smoother project delivery," Hill said. "When the path through construction is addressed early, projects are less likely to be derailed later."

For policymakers and housing leaders, the report recommends tracking final inspections alongside applications and permit issuance. Following project cohorts over time could help distinguish plan review delays from other barriers that emerge, allowing cities and industry partners to better target improvements.

"If the shared goal is more housing, final inspection and timelines should be part of the scorecard," Hill said. "Cities, designers, builders, lenders and homeowners all influence whether a project advances from just a plan to an actual home. Better visibility can help each group improve its part."

SnapADU consulted with the City of San Diego's Development Services Business Intelligence team to verify how the public dashboard and underlying permit records are structured and counted. SnapADU independently developed the project classifications and completion analysis. The full methodology and limitations are detailed in the report.

About SnapADU

SnapADU is a San Diego-based design-build firm focused exclusively on detached new-construction ADUs. Since 2020, the company has completed more than 100 ADUs across San

Diego County. SnapADU manages feasibility, design, permitting and construction under one team, helping homeowners establish realistic scope, pricing and timelines before moving forward.

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