

How to Use Texas Private Plan Review to Speed Up Construction Permits

How GreenLite is helping builders unlock faster, more predictable permits in Texas



10 Business Days

Fastest permit (submission to issuance)



155 Saved

Days less than the commercial median permit in Texas



<1 resubmission

On average across 75+ projects

Intro

For years, Texas building departments operated without meaningful accountability on review timelines. Commercial permit applications sat in a queue for months, sometimes longer, with no recourse for applicants. In Dallas, the median commercial permit took 276 business days from application to issuance in 2023. A project that went in for permit in January might not have its permit until the following November. For national retailers, restaurant operators, and healthcare providers expanding across Texas, that kind of unpredictability made the state **one of the most frustrating permitting markets in the country**, despite its otherwise business-friendly reputation.

That changed in September 2023 when the governor signed House Bill 14 into law. HB 14 created Texas's first statewide mandate for timely plan review, and for the first time, gave developers a real path around a slow building department. Under existing statute, municipalities have 45 calendar days to complete an initial plan review. HB 14 added teeth: if a municipality fails to act within that statutory window, and another 15 days pass without resolution, the applicant can engage a state-approved third-party reviewer to complete the review in the municipality's place. The AHJ must then accept the third party's determination. This law changes the power dynamic between developers and building departments.

The same year HB 14 went into effect, Dallas's median commercial permit **timeline dropped from 276 days to 189** days, a 32% improvement. Building departments across the state began investing in additional reviewers and faster intake processes, knowing that applicants now had an alternative.

Texas followed HB 14 with additional reform in 2025. Senate Bill 840 further streamlined development review processes across the state, reinforcing the legislative intent that permitting delays are a policy problem worth solving. For developers who understand how to use the new tools, Texas permitting in 2025 looks fundamentally different from what it did three years ago.

GreenLite's Impact in Texas

GreenLite has been active in Texas across a wide range of project types: restaurant alterations, retail tenant improvements, ground-up construction, banking, and energy infrastructure. Across verticals, the same principle we eliminate correction cycles that drive delay, and proactive AHJ coordination ensures projects move through review without unnecessary holds.

Under HB 14's new framework, GreenLite's pre-submission capabilities take on added strategic value. Projects that submit plans with complete documentation, zero missing requirements, and jurisdiction-specific compliance baked in to the drawings rarely trigger the 45-day review threshold in the first place. They're reviewed faster because they're reviewed once. And when the HB 14 pathway is appropriate, GreenLite's certified Private Plan Review infrastructure is ready to step in.

Texas also represents one of GreenLite's most diverse project portfolios, with 75+ projects spanning 42 jurisdictions. From ground-up Take 5 Oil Change locations in Austin, to restaurant alterations for Dine Brands across Dallas-Fort Worth and San Antonio, to retail build-outs for Burlington and O'Reilly across North Texas, GreenLite has built a deep operational playbook across Texas's major markets, each with its own building department quirks, submittal requirements, and review culture.

150+

Business days recovered across projects

75+

Projects managed across jurisdictions and industries

10

Business days, fastest submission to issuance permit

Some of Our Projects

A National Off-Price Retail Chain

Locations: Sherman, Round Rock, El Paso, Austin, Laredo, Denton, Houston – TX

One of America's largest off-price retail chains was expanding across Texas with 10 new locations in 7 cities, each in a different jurisdiction with its own submittal requirements and review timeline. Managing simultaneous filings across markets as varied as El Paso, Laredo, and Houston meant no two building departments operated the same way.

Result: Across 6 completed permits, GreenLite achieved an average submission-to-issuance timeline of **56 business days**, well ahead of the 10–24 week market range. Four more locations are currently in progress.

World's Largest Retailer

Locations: San Antonio, Texarkana, Killeen, McKinney, Allen, Vernon, San Angelo, Donna, Alice

A massive retail operator renovating and expanding across 9 Texas locations in 9 different cities needed a permitting strategy that could perform consistently across both small markets and major metros, where retail TI timelines typically run **12–20 weeks** and no two building departments operate the same way.

Result: GreenLite managed all 9 locations simultaneously. The Texarkana location was permitted in just **47 business days** from submission with zero corrections required. Seven additional locations are currently in permitting across central, south, and north Texas.

Western Lifestyle Apparel Brand

Locations: Austin

A national western lifestyle apparel brand needed to permit a retail alteration on South Congress in Austin - one of the city's highest-profile retail corridors - under the City of Austin's review process, which is known for its volume and scrutiny.

Result: GreenLite delivered submission to permit issuance in just **10 business days**, with only 1 AHJ revision cycle. A standout outcome in a jurisdiction where retail TI timelines commonly run 8-16 weeks.

A Leading National Fast-Casual Chain

Locations: Magnolia, TX

A nationally recognized fast-casual chain with over 2,300 locations needed to navigate Houston-area permitting for a new ground-up location, one of the more competitive permitting markets in Texas, where ground-up restaurant construction typically runs 16–22 weeks.

Result: GreenLite served as the company's dedicated California permit team, managing all six filings in parallel. In Fremont, plan check completed in just **29 business days**, and the full project moved from kickoff to permit issuance in under five months.

HB 14 is the most consequential permitting reform in Texas in decades. It created a third-party review pathway, put accountability timelines on building departments, and through competitive pressure, accelerated review times across the state. Dallas went **from a 276-day median to a 189-day median** in one year. A structural shift.

GreenLite has been building in Texas through the reform period, across verticals and markets. **Our pre-submission review process**, powered by AI plan review and our growing library of Texas-specific AHJ requirements, consistently delivers permits faster than market norms, whether or not the HB 14 third-party pathway is invoked. A 34-business-day permit in Sherman. A 42-business-day permit in Sugar Land. Ground-up construction and many other projects.

For national operators with Texas growth plans, there's a new opportunity now that the state's permitting environment has genuinely improved, and it continues to improve. But the fastest outcomes still go to the operators who partner with a team that understands the market, prepares the plans correctly, and coordinates proactively with each AHJ.

Texas Project Team



Riley

Project Manager

Riley joined GreenLite in 2025 as a Project Manager, bringing deep experience in permitting and civil engineering to the role from day one.

Before joining GreenLite, Riley worked at civil engineering design firms where he was involved in permitting and designing projects across both the private and public sectors, developing a strong command of regulatory processes and technical project delivery.

At GreenLite, he has led projects across multiple jurisdictions in Texas, building strong working relationships with city and local officials that have become a cornerstone of his project success. His technical expertise, combined with the trust he has cultivated with jurisdictions over time, allows him to resolve complex issues efficiently and keep projects moving forward. This approach has translated into consistently keeping review cycles with the jurisdictions to a minimum and delivering clean outcomes for clients across the state.



Joe

Review Lead

Joe is responsible for overseeing GreenLite's team of compliance plan examiners and serving as a dedicated design professional for clients pursuing commercial building permits.

A licensed Professional Engineer with over 10 years of experience, Joe brings a disciplined, technical foundation to permitting with a career built on navigating complex regulatory environments, coordinating across multidisciplinary teams, and driving projects from design through approvals and construction.

Before joining GreenLite, Joe served as an MEP consultant specializing in healthcare HVAC system design, where he grew into a senior project management role representing project interests across all MEP systems and subsystems. He was the lead design engineer overseeing the design, permitting, and construction of over 2 million square feet of hospital, life science, and specialty facilities; work that demanded precision, regulatory fluency, and the ability to move projects forward in highly complex settings.

At GreenLite, Joe applies that same rigor to commercial permitting in Texas, where code adoption and enforcement vary widely by jurisdiction. From urban centers like the City of Austin to more remote jurisdictions across the state, Joe's compliance expertise and adaptability help clients reduce revision cycles and secure building permits faster.



Dana

Permit Coordinator

Dana brings in a wealth of regulatory knowledge and hands-on permitting experience from her previous role as Permitting Supervisor at the Manatee County Building Department in Florida. As an ICC Certified Permit Technician, Dana has worked on both sides of the permitting process, this experience offers a distinctive perspective and deep understanding of jurisdictional requirements and regulatory processes.

At GreenLite, Dana has developed experience working across multiple Texas jurisdictions, including the City of Sugar Land, City of Laredo, and City of Sherman, achieving first-round approvals or resolving all comments in a single round of review. A notable accomplishment includes successfully navigating a particularly challenging situation in which an AHJ experienced a cybersecurity attack that shut down all electronic functions, working closely and creatively with the City to secure permit approval for a

client in a single round of review demonstrating strong problem-solving skills and the ability to adapt under pressure.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Texas Private Plan Review (PPR) and how does it work?

Texas Private Plan Review, established under HB 14 (effective September 2023), allows property owners and developers to hire state-certified third-party reviewers to evaluate building plans when a local regulatory authority fails to act within required timelines, instead of relying solely on a municipal building department. Once a certified reviewer approves the plans, the jurisdiction is required to accept the determination and issue the permit. This gives developers an alternative when city plan check offices are backlogged.

What types of projects qualify for Texas Private Plan Review?

Texas PPR applies to a wide range of commercial construction projects, including tenant improvements, new commercial builds, and alterations. Qualifying projects must be reviewed by a Texas-licensed engineer or architect functioning as a registered third-party reviewer. Not all jurisdictions participate equally, and some project types, including certain life-safety-sensitive uses, may have additional requirements. Working with a permitting partner familiar with each AHJ's PPR protocols is the fastest way to determine eligibility.

How much faster is Texas Private Plan Review compared to standard city review?

Commercial permits in Texas that go through standard city plan checks can take anywhere from 6 to 20 weeks depending on the jurisdiction and project complexity. Texas PPR can compress that timeline to as little as 2 to 6 weeks. For multi-site operators running simultaneous locations across different Texas cities, that time savings per location compounds quickly across the program.

