GREENLITE

CASE STUDY · RETAIL

How GreenLite standardized multi-state retail permitting for one of the country's largest footwear companies

14 average business days
from submittal to AHJ approval

0.5
average AHJ resubmission cycles

4
permits issued across different states

THE CHALLENGE

This client operates Journeys, one of the largest teen and young adult footwear retailers in the United States, with hundreds of locations across the country in shopping centers, outlet malls, and suburban corridors.

When stores need renovation or relocation, each project requires a building permit from the local authority having jurisdiction (AHJ). For a company managing dozens of store projects per year across different states, permitting is a capacity and coordination problem that compounds quickly.

Each jurisdiction has its own codes, application requirements, review timelines, and revision processes. A store alteration in Tulare, California follows a different path than the same scope of work in Broomfield, Colorado or Cobb County, Georgia.

Incomplete plan sets that reach a building department without proper pre-submission review almost always come back with comments. Every comment round adds 2 to 6 weeks to the timeline, and for a national retailer running dozens of projects at once, that unpredictability carries a real cost. Their internal team could manage the construction work, but tracking jurisdiction-specific permitting requirements across a national pipeline was pulling resources away from higher-value priorities.

They had worked with permit expeditors before, but the model had limits. Most operated in a single market or a handful of metros. None offered the combination of multi-discipline code compliance review, jurisdiction diligence, and national reach that a portfolio like Journeys required. This client needed a partner that could own the full permitting lifecycle from intake through permit issuance, across states, without creating more coordination work for their team.

THE APPROACH

GreenLite's initial engagement was on 5 Journeys retail store alterations across various states. For each project, GreenLite's team ran jurisdiction-specific diligence to map the application requirements, fee structures, and review processes for that AHJ.

They built a permit roadmap laying out the required inputs, milestones, and dependencies. Then GreenLite's licensed professionals conducted their multi-discipline code compliance reviews covering building, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, fire safety, and structural before anything was submitted to the building department.

That pre-submission review work is where GreenLite identified hundreds of compliance findings across the 5 projects. Every finding was flagged and resolved before the plans reached an AHJ reviewer, which is how you drive down resubmission cycles and get to permit faster. All 5 projects cleared GreenLite's internal intake on the first pass, and averaged 0.5 AHJ resubmission cycles.

That kind of consistency is unusual for multi-jurisdictional retail programs, where every authority brings its own rules, review queues, and documentation standards. California proves the value most clearly. In one of the most demanding permitting environments in the country, the Tulare location cleared in just two business days.

Centralized program management gave the development team something they didn't have before: one team, accountable for every project, in every jurisdiction, at the same time. Rather than tracking multiple permit runners across multiple cities, the brand had a consolidated pipeline view and a single point of contact across all four states.

THE RESULTS

GreenLite permitted Journeys stores across California, Washington, Colorado, and Georgia, and completed projects averaged 14 business days from submission to AHJ approval, with a range of 2 to 23 business days.

Half the projects cleared with no AHJ comments at all, and not one required more than a single round to resolve minor items. For context, AHJ resubmissions are one of the most common sources of delay in commercial permitting. Each resubmission cycle can add weeks to a project timeline depending on the jurisdiction's review queue.

That outcome traces directly to what happened before submission. GreenLite's reviewers identified hundreds of compliance findings across 6 disciplines before a single plan set reached a building department. When the mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and structural issues are already resolved, there is not much left for an AHJ reviewer to flag. That is the difference between proactive compliance and waiting for corrections.

The client expanded the partnership within weeks of the final pilot permit being issued, trusting GreenLite with additional locations across new states. GreenLite now manages their ongoing multi-state permit program.

What This Means for National Retailers

Every national retailer with an active store development program faces the same problem: too many jurisdictions, too little consistency, and a permitting process that was built to be reactive. Most permit runners submit what they receive and wait for comments to come back. Every comment round costs 2 to 6 weeks, and those weeks add up fast at scale.

GreenLite's approach is different. Licensed architects, engineers, and code reviewers work through every plan set before it reaches a building department, backed by agentic AI that catches what human review alone might miss. That's what a permitting program built on Permit Intelligence looks like in practice.