BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL HOUSING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Mission Statement

The Housing & Economic Development Committee is dedicated to fostering equitable growth and opportunity across Baltimore while addressing historic injustices, such as redlining and other discriminatory policies. Our goals include eliminating vacant properties, ensuring affordable housing, promoting sustainable development, and driving economic growth, job creation, and community revitalization through equitable policies and targeted strategies. By utilizing transparent governance, collaboration, and innovative solutions, we strive to enhance the quality of life for all residents.

The Honorable James Torrence

CHAIR

PUBLIC HEARING

2/10/2026

5:15PM
CLARENCE "DU" BURNS COUNCIL CHAMBERS

25-0003R
INFORMATIONAL HEARING – PERMIT REFORM

City Council Committees

BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
Danielle McCray - Chair
Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer – Vice Chair
Sharon Green Middleton
Paris Gray
Antonio Glover

Staff: Paroma Nandi
(Paroma.Nandi@baltimorecity.gov)

PUBLIC SAFETY
Mark Conway - Chair
Zac Blanchard – Vice Chair
Danielle McCray
Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer
Paris Gray
Phylicia Porter
Antonio Glover

Staff: Ethan Navarre
(Ethan.Navarre@baltimorecity.gov)

HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
James Torrence – Chair
Odette Ramos – Vice Chair
Zac Blanchard
Jermaine Jones
Antonio Glover

Staff: Anthony Leva
(Anthony.Leva@baltimorecity.gov)

PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT
Phylicia Porter - Chair
Mark Conway - Vice Chair
Mark Parker
Ryan Dorsey
James Torrence
John Bullock
Odette Ramos

Staff: Marguerite Currin
(Marguertie.Currin@baltimorecity.gov)

LEGISLATIVE INVESTIGATIONS
Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer - Chair
Antonio Glover – Vice Chair
Ryan Dorsey
Sharon Green Middleton
Paris Gray

Staff: Ethan Navarre
(Ethan.Navarre@baltimorecity.gov)

LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION
Ryan Dorsey – Chair
Sharon Green Middleton – Vice Chair
Mark Parker
Paris Gray
John Bullock
Phylicia Porter
Zac Blanchard

Staff: Anthony Leva
(Anthony.Leva@baltimorecity.gov)

LABOR AND WORKFORCE
Jermaine Jones – Chair
James Torrence – Vice Chair
Danielle McCray
Ryan Dorsey
Phylicia Porter

Staff: Juliane Jemmott
(Juliane.Jemmott@baltimorecity.gov)

EDUCATION, YOUTH AND OLDER ADULT
John Bullock – Chair
Mark Parker – Vice Chair
Sharon Green Middleton
James Torrence
Zac Blanchard
Jermaine Jones
Odette Ramos

Staff: Juliane Jemmott
(Juliane.Jemmott@baltimorecity.gov)

CHARTER REVIEW SPECIAL COMMITTEE
Ryan Dorsey - Chair
John Bullock - Vice Chair
Zac Blanchard
Jermaine Jones
Odette Ramos

Staff: Ethan Navarre (Ethan.Navarre@baltimorecity.gov)

CITY OF BALTIMORE

BRANDON SCOTT – MAYOR
ZEKE COHEN - COUNCIL PRESIDENT

OFFICE OF COUNCIL SERVICES
NANCY MEAD – DIRECTOR
100 N. HOLIDAY STREET
BALTIMORE MD, 21202

Meeting: Resolution Hearing
Committee: Housing & Economic Development
Bill # 25-0003R

Title: Informational Hearing – Permit Reforms

Purpose: FOR the purpose of inviting representatives from the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Office of the City Administrator, the Baltimore City Fire Department, the Office of the Fire Marshal, and other relevant parties to provide information on reforms to the Department of Housing and Community Development's permit process.

REPORTING AGENCIES

Agency	Report
Fire Dept (BDCF)	
City Administrator	
Dept of Finance	
Dept of Public Works	
BCIT	
Dept of Housing & Community Development (DHCD)	

BACKGROUND

On October 21, 2025, the Housing & Economic Development Committee held a hearing on Resolution *25-0003R Informational Hearing – Permit Reform.* This hearing focused on several points of how the permit process in Baltimore has been working and what improvements and updates the Administration has been working on. Topics included:

The implementation of the Accela Permitting system
- What role did BCIT play in the discovery phase of choosing Accela
- How was the testing of the system conducted? Which staff were involved in this testing
  - How were technical issues handled – how were they resolved?

DHCD Inspection/Permit Process
- How can DHCD be more proactive in getting inspections for permits done,
- What is the current backlog
- Concerns around the use of auto permits in some instances

- o For these permits, DHCD noted that the applicant doesn't get to choose if an application is auto permitted or not and that fraud under that system would still be subject to the same penalties.
- Use and Occupancy Permits backlog currently has a 3-month timeline
  - o Permit is dependent on the applicant moving the process forward – there are issues with each applicant that drive that timeline.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Fiscal Note:

Information Source(s):
25-0003R notes 10/21/25

Analysis by: Tony Leva   Direct Inquiries to: Anthony.Leva@BaltimoreCity.gov
Analysis Date:2/9/2026

BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL

Select a Committee

25-0003R
INFORMATIONAL HEARING – PERMIT REFORM

Agency Reports

Baltimore City Council
Permit Hearing

February 10, 2026

City Council Resolution 25-0003R

Permitting Team
Cross-Agency Coordination of the Permitting Portfolio

Executive Oversight

Calvin Young
Interim Deputy Mayor, Community and Economic Development

Strategic Implementation

Justin Williams
Director of Permitting and Development Services

Permit Portfolio

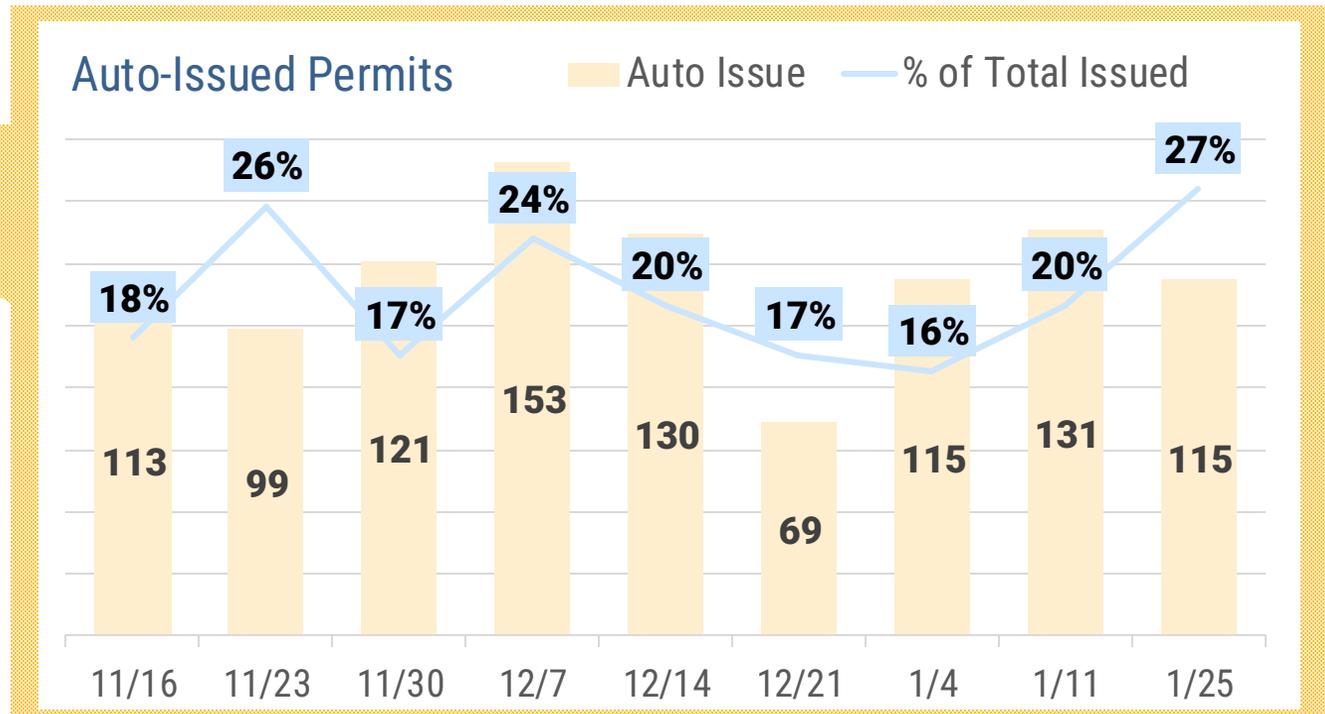|	
Alice Kennedy — Housing Commissioner	**DHCD** — Permits, Trades, and Licensing
	DOT — Right of Way Division, Minor Privilege Permits — Veronica McBeth, Director
Tim Keane — Planning Director	**DOP** — CHAP, Sustainability, Design Review, SPRC, URP Compliance
	DPW — BCNR, Water Utility Connections — Matt Garbark, Director
Leyla Layman — Interim BCIT Director	**BCIT** — Software Management (Accela, ProjectDox, OpenGov)
	HEALTH — Food Facilities & Swimming Pools — Dr. Michelle Taylor, Health Commissioner
James Wallace — Fire Chief	**FIRE** — Plans Review
	HR — Job Classifications for Permit Reviewers — Tonya Brinkley, Director

Workflow Automation

- **Auto-Issuance** for simpler permits
- **Expanded Auto-Assignment** so permits move instantly to the correct team
- **Automated Routing** for denied reviews

Process Consistency

- **Removal of Redundant Steps** such as duplicate zoning reviews
- **"Gating Rules"** for who can make changes
- **Refined Inspection Logic**

Improved Applicant Experience

- **Automated Status Notifications**
- **Clarified Application Questions and Instructions**
- **Contractor Requirement Visibility** at the intake stage

Auto-Issued Permits

Legend: Auto Issue · % of Total Issued

Date	Auto Issue	% of Total Issued
11/16	113	18%
11/23	99	26%
11/30	121	17%
12/7	153	24%
12/14	130	20%
12/21	69	17%
1/4	115	16%
1/11	131	20%
1/25	115	27%

An error has occurred.

A Plumbing Contractor is required.
A Master Gas Fitter is required.

One and Two Family Combo Permit

| 1 | 2 | 3 Exterior Work Information | 4 Trade Information | 5 Contact Information | 6 Supporting Documentation | 7 Review | 8 | 9 |

3

Cleared the Intake Backlog

Reducing untouched applications at the "front door"

Technical System and Software Integration

- Re-mapped User Roles to match agency team structures

- GIS Layer Alignment

- Automated Record Cleanup
  For statutory definition of "inactive" permits

- Public-Facing "Status Key" for better clarity on permit milestones

Staff Hiring

- Two New Construction Building Inspector I

- One New Permits & Records Technician

Permits In Application Intake Awaiting City Action

Date	Count
10/17/2025	1,093
2/3/2026	158
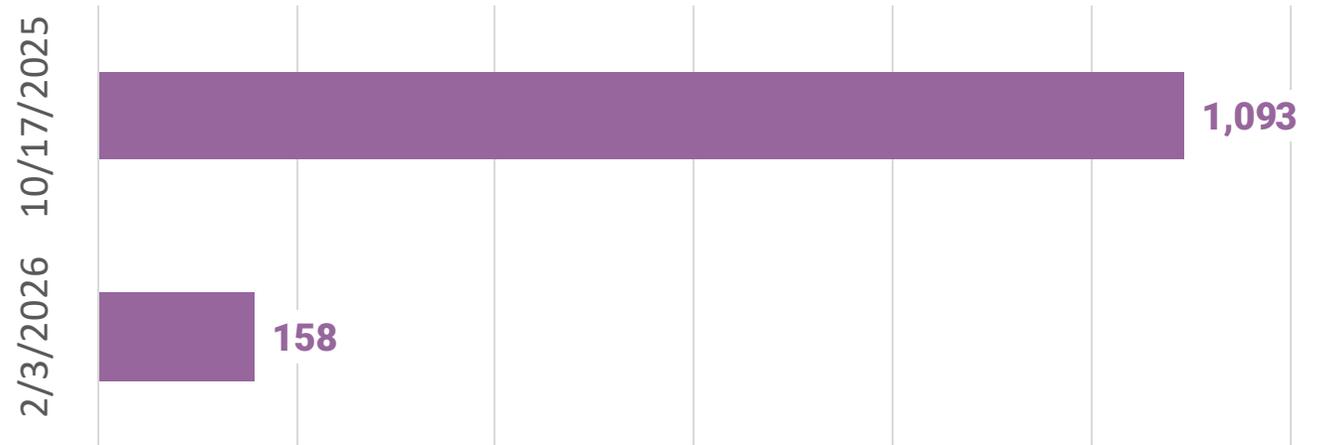
Key to Processing Status icons

- ⧖ Active (plan review not yet completed)
- ✔ Complete (not necessarily approved; expand for details)
- ✳ Previously Active; expand for details

Results: 75% Reduction in Median Days to Issue Residential Permits

Permits Issued / Median Days from Application to Issue October 2025 vs. January 2026

Permit Type	October 2025		January 2026		% Change	
	# Issued	Median Days	# Issued	Median Days	# Issued	Median Days
Residential	**1955**	**12**	**1920**	**3**	**-2%**	**-75%**
Commercial	300	80	252	80	-16%	0%
Use & Occupancy	316	87	270	60	-15%	-31%
Demolition	28	12	15	9	-46%	-25%
Temp. Event	3	65	1	0	-67%	-100%

80% of all permits are in this category

Results: 38% Reduction in Total Calls to Permit Call Center

Permit Call Center Calls by Topic – October 2025 to January 2026

Call Topic	2025 Oct	Nov	Dec	2026 Jan	Trend	Oct -> Jan Change	% Change OCT - JAN
Status Check	1,387	816	1,074	809		-578	↓ 42%
General	342	217	235	203		-139	
Contractor License	194	129	108	92		-102	
ePermits Site	64	56	46	101		37	
Trades Licensing	6	2	15	16		10	
Other	22	18	12	23		1	
Payment Link	15	3	9	10		-5	
Zoning	6	3	3	8		2	
Code Enforcement	4	3	2	2		-2	
Engineering	3	0	1	1		-2	
Total Calls	**2,043**	**1,247**	**1,505**	**1,265**		-778	↓ 38%

We know we have more work to do.
That's why we are still working on:

Accela & Technical System Enhancements

- **In-House Message Board**
- **Greater Status Transparency**
- **Adding Time Metrics to Performance Dashboards**
- **Further Refined Intake Logic**
- **Expanded Auto-Issuance**

Operational, Policy & Organizational Reforms

- **Customer Service Monitoring**: Ensure no inquiry goes unanswered.
- **Staff & Leadership Accountability Measures:** Standard service-level expectations (SLEs) across all participating agencies.
- **Website & Guidance Review/Overhaul** with clear, intuitive "How-To" guides for common projects
- **Expanded Third-Party Review** beyond Fire and Life Safety.
- **Proactive Enforcement Strategy:** Aligning Code Enforcement and State's Attorneys Office
- **Bmore FAST Advisory Board:** Re-engage industry experts for quarterly oversight
- **Pre-Approved Plan Library:** to reduce upfront design costs and review times.
- **Consolidated Permitting and Development Services Office**

BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL

Select a Committee

25-0003R
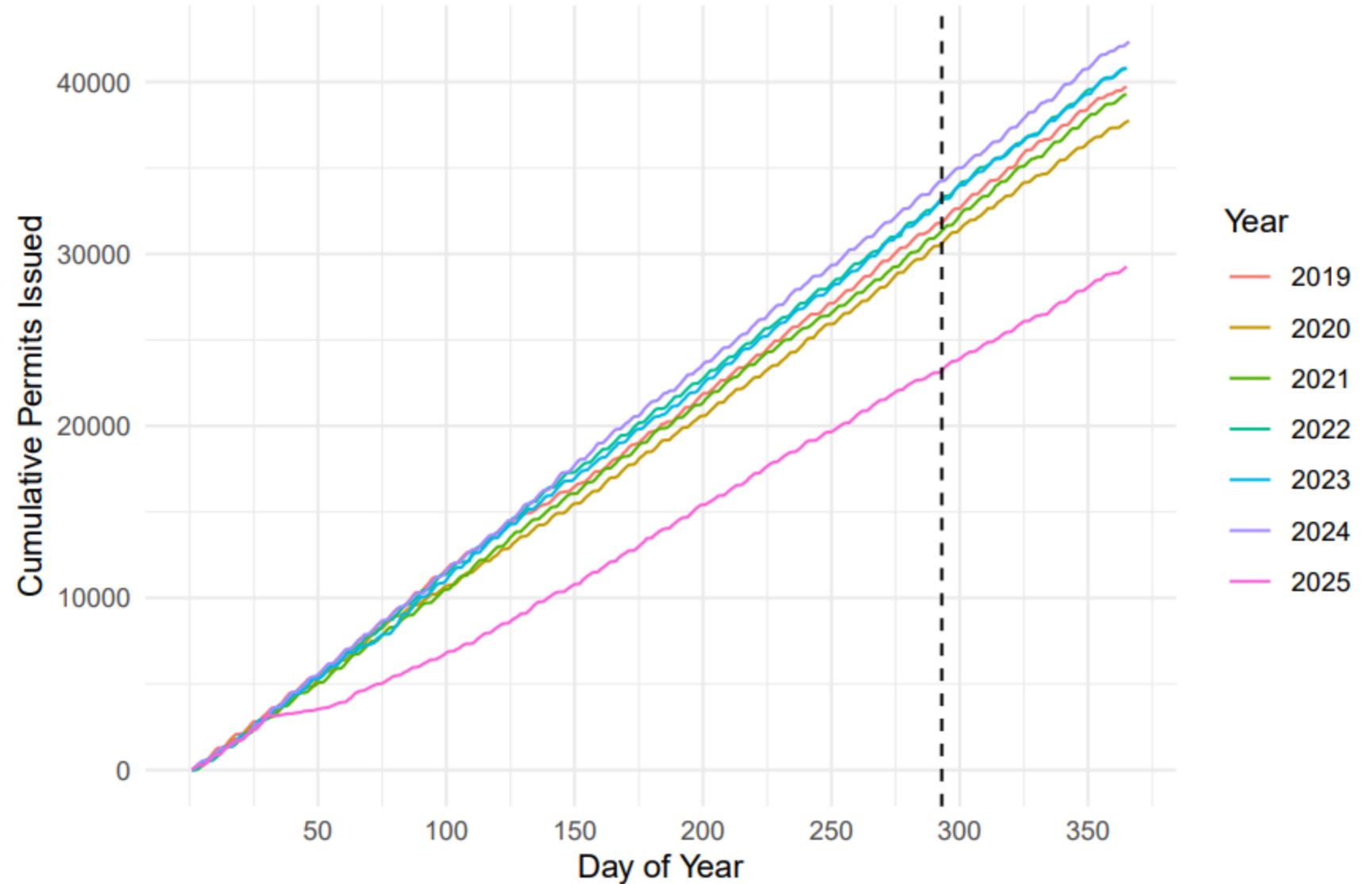*INFORMATIONAL HEARING – PERMIT REFORM*

Additional Materials

Baltimore City Permit Data

All data was retrieved from Open Baltimore's Housing and Building Permits 2019-Present dataset on January 7, 2026 and was visualized using open-source tools in R.

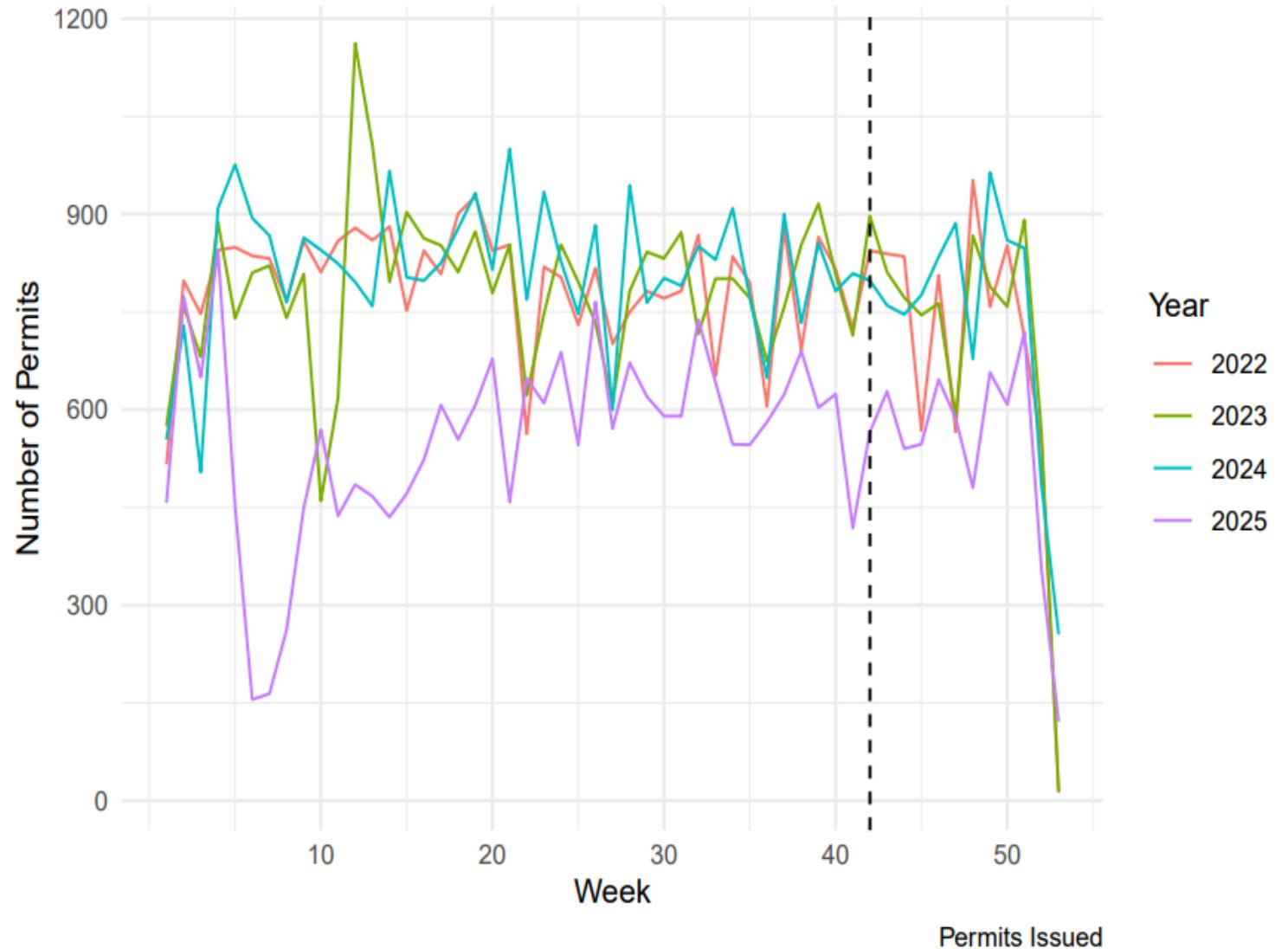# Baltimore City Permit Data

Cumulative Annual Permits Issued

*Vertical dashed line indicate when auto-issued permits were turned on in 2025 and is valid for that year only.
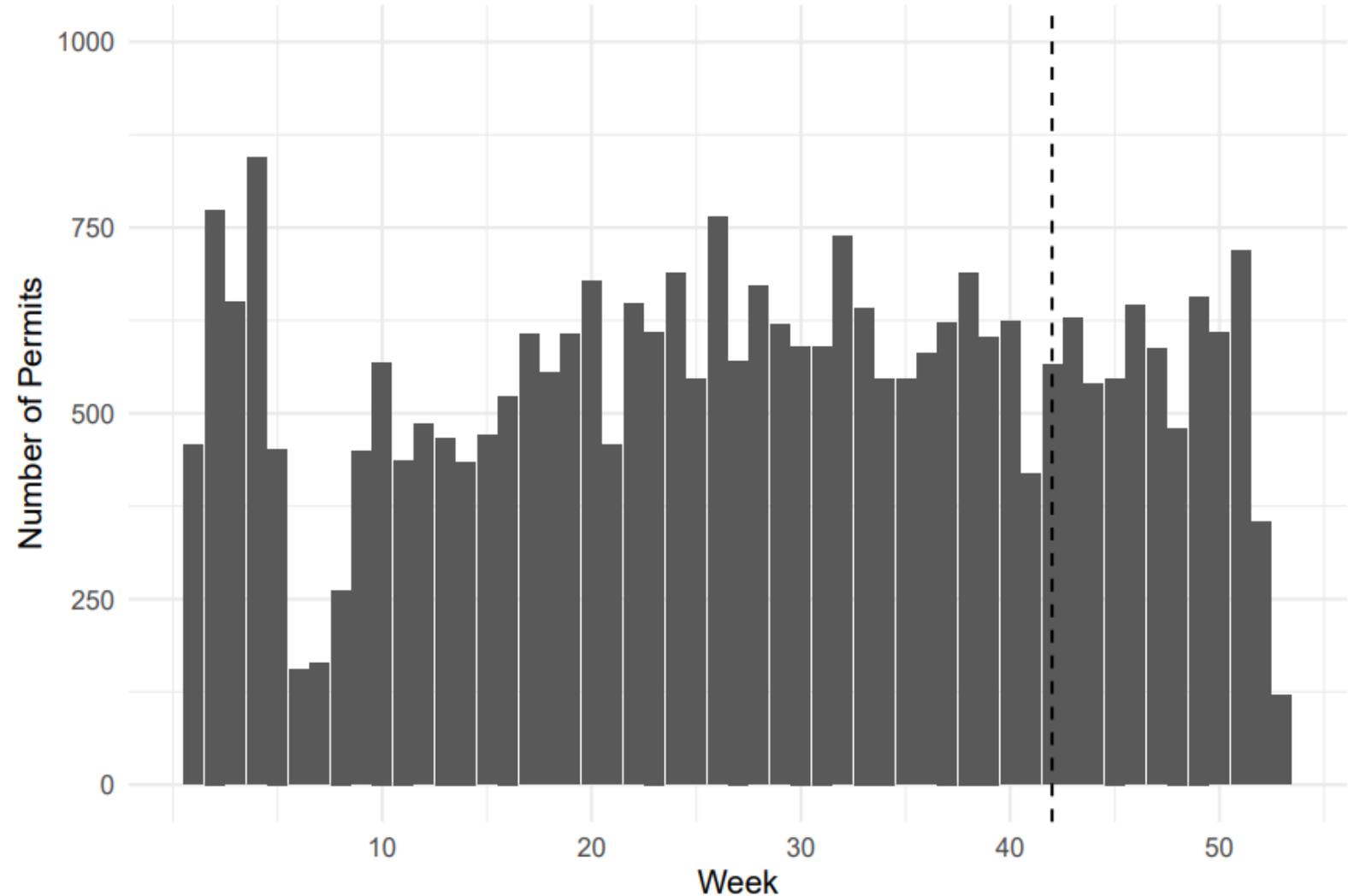
Baltimore City Permit Data

Weekly Permits Issued - History

*Vertical dashed line indicate when auto-issued permits were turned on in 2025 and is valid for that year only.

Weekly Permits Issued - 2025
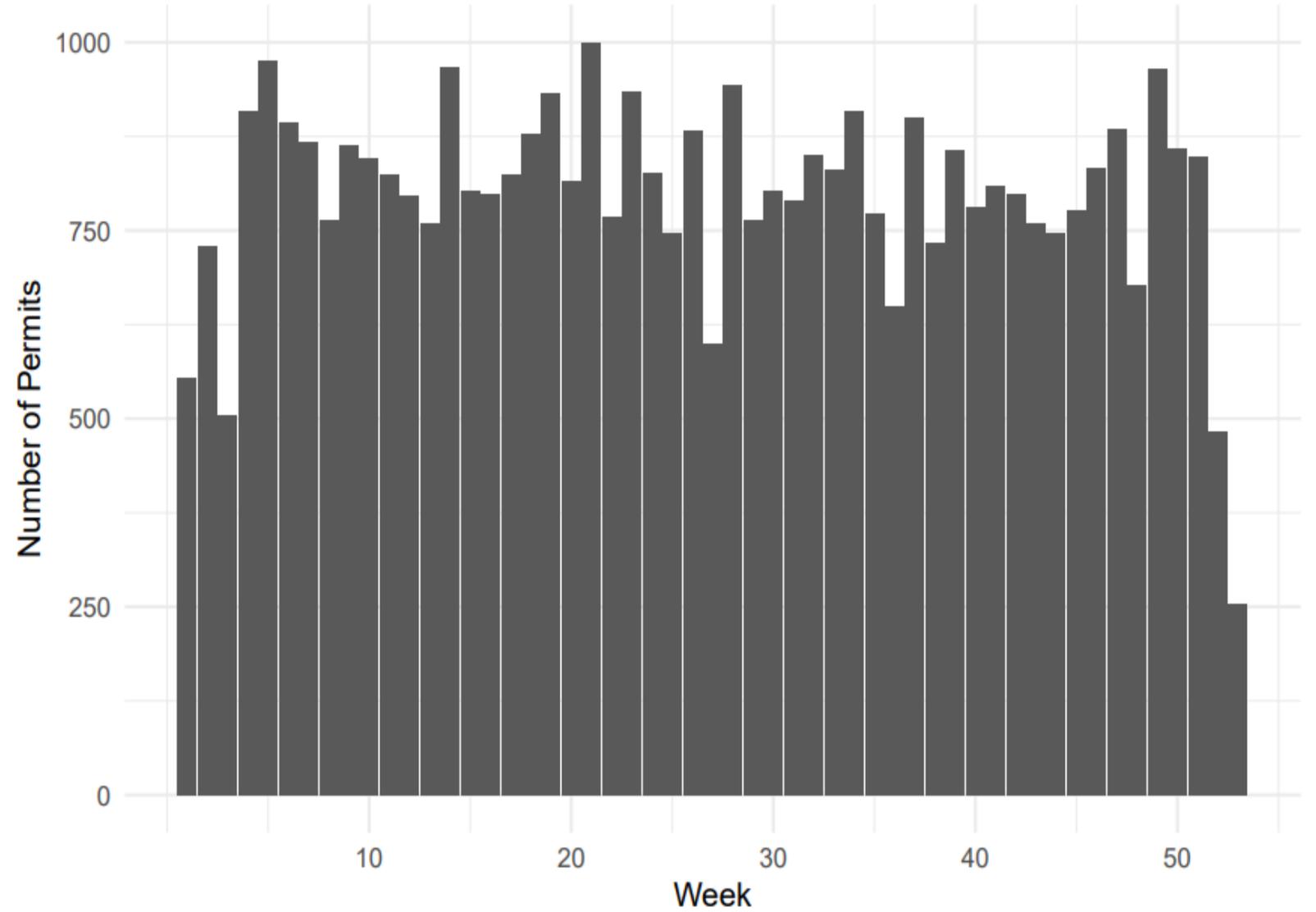
Baltimore City Permit Data

*Vertical dashed line indicate when auto-issued permits were turned on in 2025 and is valid for that year only.

Permits Issued

Permits Issued in the whole city

Table 1: Building Permits Since 2019

Year	Total Permits	Total Permits YTD	YoY Change YTD
2019	39733	39733	NA
2020	37747	37747	-4.9983641
2021	39273	39273	4.0427054
2022	40807	40807	3.9059914
2023	40758	40758	-0.1200774
2024	42342	42342	3.8863536
2025	29263	29263	-30.8889519

Permit Change by district

Table 2: Building Permits Since 2019

District	Permits_Issued_2024	Permits_Issued_2025	YoY Change YTD
13	4266	2515	-41.0
1	2862	1854	-35.2
12	3809	2478	-34.9
6	3194	2140	-33.0
14	3005	2023	-32.7
4	2346	1602	-31.7
9	4906	3373	-31.2
10	2530	1785	-29.4
8	2214	1592	-28.1
11	3239	2356	-27.3
2	1781	1298	-27.1
7	4199	3178	-24.3
5	1800	1369	-23.9
3	2174	1687	-22.4