

5.21x Permit Gap in Houston MSA — ALEX Intelligence 2026

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San Jacinto leads Harris County by over 5x in new home approvals

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THE DATA

5.21x

Ratio of Highest to Lowest County Permit Rate per 1,000 Residents (2025)

San Jacinto County’s permit rate is 5.21 times higher than Harris County’s.

This disparity reveals a fundamental shift in where new housing is being built across the Houston MSA. While Harris County struggles with regulatory friction and constrained land availability, San Jacinto County is experiencing a construction boom—driven by lower regulatory barriers, undeveloped land, and rising demand from remote workers seeking affordable, spacious alternatives to the urban core.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Building Permits Survey, county annual totals, 2025; population from U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2024 • ALEX Intelligence computation
<https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-09-16-houston-msa-permits-county-spread>



01

The Boom Is Not in the Core

The imbalance suggests that housing supply is no longer following population growth in the core. Instead, growth is being absorbed by satellite counties that offer more room, lower taxes, and faster approval processes—creating a new spatial divide in how the MSA grows.

02

The Perimeter Is the New Frontier

This trend is not temporary—it reflects a structural shift. As Harris County reaches development saturation and regulatory bottlenecks mount, the market is decentralizing. The next wave of housing growth will be defined not by downtown density, but by the ability of peripheral counties to approve and deliver homes at scale.



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