

Third Party Plan Review Program

Overview

The Third Party Plan Review Program will allow large and/or complex projects to be submitted to a qualified Third Party Plan Review Agency (Agency) as an alternative to the Inspection Services Department (ISD) standard plan review process. This will reduce permitting turnaround time and allow ISD to improve the customer experience.

The scope of authority for Third Party Plan Review includes only plan review for compliance with construction codes. It does not include reviews that fall under the purview of other City of Auburn or State of Alabama authorities (including but not limited to Planning, Historic Preservation, Public Works and Alabama State Fire Marshal). The ISD will continue to perform the field inspections and certify compliance with the approved plans.

Third Party Reviewer Certification

Currently HRGreen plan review service is the only third party plan review that will be accepted by the City of Auburn.

Third Party Plan Review Process

1. **Request to Use Third Party Review Agency.** The permit applicant for the project must request, at the time of ISD permit application submission, to use a Third Party Plan Review Agency for a project. To do so, the applicant must submit a “Request to Use a Third Party Plan Review Agency” form in an electronic format with all required application materials, including drawings, documents and supplemental materials to ISD. The same Agency must be used for the entire construction code review for the project, including architectural, structural, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, energy and fire protection, as required
 2. **Review by the City.** The City will conduct its review for requirements outside the scope of the Third Party Review, such as Zoning and Historic Review.
 3. **Transmission to the Agency.** It is the permit applicant’s responsibility to transmit all required documents to the Agency for review and to provide any additional information to the Third Party Plan Reviewer, as requested.
 4. **Transmission of Plan Review Findings to ISD.** After completion of the Third Party Review, the Agency shall transmit all final documents in an electronic format to the ISD. The final documents submitted to ISD shall include the following:
 - a. All code deficiency reports and questions that may require further information from the permit applicant of ISD.
 - b. All reports after the deficiencies have been addressed and the review is complete.
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1. A final set of permit drawings that was approved by the Agency shall be provided to ISD. One set of paper drawings and one full set in PDF format.
 2. Permit Issuance. Approval by the Agency does not automatically guarantee the issuance of the permit. The permit will be issued only once ISD has verified that required final documents have been submitted and all other City reviews have been completed and City Codes complied with to the satisfaction of ISD.

Third Party Plan Review Costs:

The permit applicant is solely responsible for the cost of any Third Party Plan Reviews. The compensation paid to the Agency for its plan review services shall not be contingent upon or affected by the conclusions reached by the Agency or the contents of any of the deliverables described in this policy.

The applicant may request a credit of a portion of the building permit fee paid to ISD, when the permit applicant elects to use Third Party Plan Review. Once the permitted work has been completed to the satisfaction of ISD and the permit has been closed. At its discretion, ISD may issue a partial refund for the cost of the review of plans by the Agency.

Third Party Plan Review Agency Responsibilities

1. Review Assigned Work. The Agency shall review the materials submitted for compliance with all applicable codes and standards. Materials for review shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - a. Architectural Construction Plans
 - b. Electrical Engineering Construction Plans
 - c. Fire Protection/Life Safety Construction Plans
 - d. Elevator Engineering Construction Plans
 - e. Mechanical Engineering Construction Plans
 - f. Energy Conservation
 - g. Plumbing Engineering Plans
 - h. Structural Engineering Plans
 - i. Project Specifications
 - j. Accessibility
 - k. Manufacturer's Installation Instructions

2. Plan Review Code Deficiency Report. The Agency shall create a Plan Review Code Deficiency report containing a list of non-complying items for each project and round of review. At a minimum, the report shall specify:
 - a. Agency's name and address
 - b. Name and contact information for the Plan Reviewer(s), including email.
 - c. Project address.
 - d. Discipline(s) for which plan review was performed.
 - e. List of items found to be non-compliant with code sections referenced.
 - f. Corresponding response from a design professional confirming that nonconforming items were corrected.

For each noted non-compliance item, the Code Deficiency Report shall cite the relevant code section(s), and the nature and the location of the deficiency. The Agency shall forward a copy of each Code Deficiency Report to the owner or designated recipient(s) and ISD. Following completion of a Code Deficiency Report, the Agency shall communicate with the owner or designated representatives to clarify the requested corrections required for code compliance.

3. Third Party Plan Review Approval Certification Letter. The Agency shall issue an Approval Certification Letter, which shall be signed and sealed by the plan reviewer. The Third Party Approval Certification Letter shall attest that:
 - a. The construction plans of the project were reviewed under the Plan Reviewer's direct supervision and in the disciplines identified in the certification;
 - b. It is the professional judgment of the Plan Reviewer that, to the best of his/her knowledge, the plans reviewed for the disciplines identified were designed in accordance with all applicable codes based upon the Third Party Plan Review performed and substantiating reports.
 - c. By undertaking a Third Party Plan Review, the Agency acknowledges that it is in compliance with all of the conditions of this program and attests that the personnel involved are qualified in accordance with the applicable statutes, regulations and this program

4. Access to Third Party Plan Review Agency. The Agency shall cooperate with ISD and the applicant and/or designated representative with scheduling meetings and/or calls to provide updates and clarification of Third Party Plan Reviews.

5. Conflicts of Interest. It shall be the responsibility of the Third Party Plan Reviewer to immediately disclose any potential conflicts of interest between the Agency and the parties connected to the project.

6. Due Diligence. The Agency shall exercise due diligence in the discharge of the duties assigned to the Agency by law and regulation and shall refrain from any arbitrary or capricious action that would unduly penalize or benefit the owner or permit applicant whose project is under the Third Party Plan Review. The Agency shall abide by the highest ethical standards in the discharge of duties as an Agency.