STRUCTURAL PEER REVIEW PROGRAM PROCESS OUTLINE

Overview

The Structural Peer Review Program is designed to streamline the permit process at the City of Chicago Department of Buildings by reducing the time and effort required for structural plan examination by DOB personnel. This is intended to be a voluntary program. The decision as to whether to use the program for a particular project will be made by the project owner. Beyond the normal permit fees, there is no additional fee to use this program. The Structural Peer Review Program is available under DOB’s Standard Plan Review, Developer Services, and Expanded Self-Certification Programs. DOB hereby reserves the right to amend, modify or delete the program as the Commissioner deems necessary. Any such changes will not affect any pending permit applications currently under review by the DOB.

Outline of the Process

1. A peer reviewer certified by DOB is retained and paid for by the project owner to perform the structural peer review (see “Reviewer Qualifications”). DOB neither selects reviewers nor does it hire structural review consultants under this program. The review must begin in time to allow the final peer review report to accompany the permit application. The owner must notify Gerard Pascazio of Developer Services, as applicable, that its permit application is being submitted under the Structural Peer Review Program. In addition, the project owner (or owner’s representative) will receive an email confirming the date and time of the project manager intake session. This email should be forwarded to city staff along with the name of the proposed peer reviewer. Staff will confirm the eligibility of the selected peer reviewer to review the project, and if approved, will reply to the owner via email accordingly. A hardcopy of this email should accompany the peer review report, drawings, and all other documentation at the project manager intake session. Clearly mark the top front page of your permit application as “STRUCTURAL PEER REVIEW PROGRAM” to enable DOB to process your plans accordingly.

2. The peer reviewer then performs the structural peer review and works with the owner and the Licensed Engineer of Record (EOR) to resolve all issues raised by the review. The structural peer reviewer shall prepare and submit a Final Peer Review Report (“Report”) to be submitted to DOB along with the structural drawings prepared by the EOR, permit application, and other documents required by the Chicago Building Code. The Report should not indicate any outstanding, unresolved issues and should be based on the final permit drawings as submitted to DOB.

3. The Report shall be specific, outline the scope and the results of the review, and shall contain all back-up information identified in the Scope of Review below. DOB reserves the right to reject any Reports that do not comply with this paragraph.
4. If the plans are being submitted under DOB’s Standard Plan Review process, a project may take advantage of a voluntary Preliminary Review. It is anticipated that for most peer-reviewed projects, the peer review would eliminate the need for examination of the structural design by DOB staff. The DOB structural staff will review the peer review report and may, in some cases, require a meeting with the EOR and the peer reviewer.

5. It is understood that notwithstanding the completion of a satisfactory peer review under this program, DOB retains the right to conduct a complete review of the structural design of any project using its own personnel. DOB will exercise this right on a random basis, only for a limited number of projects not to exceed 20% of the projects submitted to the Peer Review Program, and for purposes such as assuring structural code compliance and measuring the efficacy of the program. In the event a project is selected for review by DOB, such review shall be conducted on an expedited basis so as to preserve the schedule benefits anticipated from participation in the peer review program, and DOB will schedule a meeting (if required) with the EOR and peer reviewer within three business days of selecting a project for review.

Reviewer Qualifications

All structural peer reviews must be conducted by or under the direction of Illinois licensed Structural Engineers with demonstrated expertise in the class of the structure being reviewed. As of April 30, 2003, any person conducting a peer review must obtain proof satisfactory to DOB that the reviewer has successfully completed a structural peer review code seminar approved by the Building Commissioner. DOB will maintain a list of pre-qualified peer reviewers (individuals) for each of several different classes of project on its website. Individuals performing peer reviews shall have expertise with the technical issues anticipated in the proposed project.

Conflict of Interest

The peer reviewer’s firm and its employees, and the individual performing the peer review shall have no personal or economic interest in or involvement with the project prior, during or after the peer review. Any such conflict of interest shall be immediately reported to the Building Commissioner.

Scope of Review

The standard of care to which the peer reviewer shall be held in the performance of its services is that level of skill and care consistent with peer review services performed by licensed Illinois Structural Engineers practicing in the greater Chicago area for similar types of projects. The Report shall contain the following items that demonstrate how the review was performed and the criteria utilized:

1. Review and itemize the list of codes and standards used in the structural design of the project.
2. Review and identify structural design criteria, including loads and performance requirements.

3. Review and identify the basis for design criteria that are not specified directly in applicable codes and standards. This should include reports by specialty consultants, such as wind tunnel study reports and geotechnical reports.

4. Verify that existing conditions at the site have been investigated as appropriate, and that the design of the proposed structure is in conformance with these conditions.

5. Review and identify the structural and architectural drawings for the Project. The Report shall contain the following:

   - confirmation that the structural drawings are in general conformance with the architectural drawings regarding load conditions, and other conditions that may affect the structure;
   - confirmation that major mechanical items are indicated in the structural drawings in the manner required by DOB;
   - review of completeness of the structural drawings;
   - review of completeness of notes on materials, loadings, design criteria, and conditions;
   - review of conformance of the structural design (see below) to the Chicago Building Code.

6. Review the structural design. This review to consist of:

   - review of overall design concepts and methods, including methods of resisting gravity and lateral loads and methods of providing for lateral stability;
   - review of computer programs used and the appropriateness of their application;
   - review of the structural analysis used to determine member forces and performance parameters, such as wind-induced deformation; this review to include examination of methods and computer input and output (or, alternatively, verification by independent analysis by the reviewer);
   - complete check of the design of a few selected components;
   - general review of the reasonableness of the design of all structural components;
   - verification that the calculations documenting the design are complete.

7. Verify that appropriate documentation on the design of performance-specified contractor-designed structural components (such as certain precast concrete elements) has been obtained for inclusion in the permit submittal.
8. The Report shall also contain the following Certification Statement signed by the peer reviewer:

- “__________ [the peer reviewer] hereby certifies that I have performed the peer review in accordance with the Structural Peer Review Program and all of the requirements set forth therein. The peer reviewer performed its services consistent with the standard of care applicable to the performance of structural engineering peer review services on projects of similar size and complexity in the greater Chicago area. The peer review was limited to a review of the extent to which the design in question satisfactorily complies with City of Chicago Building Code requirements. I have further determined that the structural design is in substantial conformance with the City of Chicago Building Code.”

Signature
Print Name
Illinois License No.

9. If there is any change to the structural design provided to DOB prior to the issuance of the building permit, the Owner must obtain a new Certification from the peer reviewer.

Contact Asif Rahman, City of Chicago Department of Buildings, with questions:
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