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## **PROCEDURE: ELECTRONIC PLAN REVIEW FOR OVER-THE-COUNTER (OTC) PROJECTS**

Division of the State Architect (DSA) documents referenced within this publication are available on the [DSA Forms](#) or [DSA Publications](#) webpages.

### **PURPOSE**

This procedure (PR) is one of multiple documents that in combination describe the process and requirements for Electronic Plan Review (EPR) of projects under DSA jurisdiction. Since October 2018 the review and approval of all project applications and post approval documents have been processed in digital format through this EPR procedure, which reduces resource consumption and aligns with the sustainability policies and goals of both the Governor's Office and the Department of General Services.

### **SCOPE**

This document covers the duties of design professionals participating in EPR for over-the-counter (OTC) project applications, including how to prepare documents for submission, submit a project, and respond to plan review comments. It does not cover the duties and responsibilities of DSA staff, which are addressed in separate internal documents, nor the duties and responsibilities of external consultant plan reviewers. Similarly, this document does not pertain to projects using the conventional plan review process, including procedures for post-approval documents. These EPR subjects are addressed in the following documents:

- *PR 18-04: Electronic Plan Review for Design Professionals*
- *PR 18-05: Electronic Plan Review for Consultant Plan Reviewers*

### **BACKGROUND**

EPR is performed on the Bluebeam Studio platform, which is a cloud-based centralized location for document storage and collaboration. Bluebeam Studio is accessed via the internet using the software application Bluebeam Revu. Bluebeam Studio consists of both Projects (file storage and management) and Sessions (collaboration), both of which can be accessed with an unlicensed version of Revu, though some actions described in this PR require a licensed version.

The Bluebeam Studio platform allows internal DSA staff and external stakeholders to share, view, and collaborate real time in a single electronic location. Each submitted project will have a single Bluebeam Studio Project (BSP) and one or more Bluebeam Studio Sessions (BSS). DSA will generate a BSS dedicated to the plan review of OTC projects. This gives organization and facilitates a well-managed project from registration through certification. While various file types can be stored in BSP, the review and approval documents in BSS are required to be in PDF file format.

The BSS environment allows multiple users to concurrently access and edit a common document. Different background colors are used to distinguish the markups of each plan review discipline. Throughout this document, detailed instructions may refer to icons or buttons within the software represented by graphics. Such icons or buttons are referred to by the text that appears when hovering the cursor over the graphic.

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## ELECTRONIC PLAN REVIEW FOR OVER-THE-COUNTER (OTC) PROJECTS

### PROCEDURE

DSA offers the OTC process for eligible projects to expedite their review and approval. The design professional should refer to Policy (PL) 07-02: *Over-the-Counter Review of Projects Using Pre-Check (PC) Approved Designs* for OTC project eligibility, scope limitations, and appointment scheduling.

The instructions provided in this document specific to the Bluebeam Revu software application are based on Version 21.3. Users with other versions of Bluebeam Revu may find the interface to differ from that described herein. For version specific instructions, users may refer to prior editions of this document, which were based on earlier versions of Bluebeam Revu. Users are also advised to consult technical support resources provided by Bluebeam for the operation of Revu and Studio.

### 1. DOCUMENT PREPARATION

#### 1.1 Bluebeam Revu and Bluebeam Studio

EPR is performed on the Bluebeam Studio platform, which is accessed through the software application Bluebeam Revu.

**1.1.1** Prior to preparing drawings, the design professional shall complete the following as described in PR 18-04 Appendix A:

**1.1.1.1** Install Bluebeam Revu.

**1.1.1.2** Create a Bluebeam account with an assigned Bluebeam ID (BBID).

**1.1.1.3** Demo Bluebeam Studio.

**1.1.2** As described in this section, PDF documents must be prepared (i.e., formatted) with specific characteristics to facilitate an efficient review and approval in the EPR program.

**1.1.2.1** The required document characteristics can be achieved using Bluebeam Revu by following the directions set forth in this document and PR 18-04.

**1.1.2.2** Alternatively, the required document characteristics may be achieved using another software application; however, detailed directions for doing so are not provided in this PR.

**1.1.3** Questions or hardship concerns related to procuring software necessary to participate in the EPR program should be directed to DSA by email at [DSAEPRSupport@dgs.ca.gov](mailto:DSAEPRSupport@dgs.ca.gov) or by phone to the local regional office.

#### 1.2 General Requirements

The design professional shall prepare all documents in accordance with Section 1 of this procedure. Noncompliance will be cause for rejecting the submission per Section 2.2 below.

**1.2.1** Documents shall be prepared without digital signatures, digital certification, or other PDF security settings that prevent editing or saving operations.

**1.2.2** Files shall be named in accordance with the file naming conventions defined in PR 18-04 Tables C2.1 through C2.4. In this document, where instructions apply generally to any or all versions of a document type, an asterisk (\*) is used in place of the version number. For example, "DWG\_V\*.pdf" applies to DWG\_V1.pdf, DWG\_V2.pdf, DWG\_V3.pdf, etc.

#### 1.3 Drawing File (DWG\_V\*.pdf) Preparation

Construction drawings submitted for plan review and approval shall comply with the requirements of PR 18-04 Section 1.3.

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### 1.4 Specification File (SPC\_V\*.pdf) Preparation

Construction specifications submitted for plan review and approval shall comply with the requirements of PR 18-04 Section 1.4.

### 1.5 Form *DSA 103: List of Structural Tests and Special Inspections* (103\_V\*.pdf) Preparation

The form DSA 103 is created by the design professional using the application accessed through the DSA website. The design professional shall download the completed form from this application for plan review and approval and verify its compliance with the requirements of PR 18-04 Section 1.5.

### 1.6 Supporting Document Preparation

Supporting documents are documents that are required for plan review but are not ultimately approved as part of the application. These documents will not bear the DSA identification stamp when the project is approved. Supporting documents include, but may not be limited to, those listed on the form *DSA 3: Project Submittal Checklist* (e.g., DSA forms, cut sheets, structural calculations, hydraulic calculations, geotechnical report, original drawings of existing buildings, etc.).

**1.6.1** Supporting documents will be submitted in PDF file format when appropriate but may be in other formats when necessary. Filenames shall comply with PR 18-04 Table C2.2.

**1.6.2** Supporting documents shall comply with the requirements of PR 18-04 Section 1.6, including the preparation of supporting documents in PDF file format.

## 2. SCHEDULE AND SUBMISSION

After preparing documents in accordance with Section 1 above, the design professional shall submit project files to DSA in digital format. Prior to the project proceeding to detailed plan review, DSA will verify the document preparation and completeness of the project.

### 2.1 Document Submission

Initial project documents are submitted to DSA for plan review as described in this section. The document submission process described here is specific to the initial submission and does NOT apply to the submission of corrected documents per Section 3.2.4.2 below.

**2.1.1** Prior to submitting documents, the design professional shall schedule the OTC appointment in accordance with PL 07-02 Section 6 and the process adopted by the DSA regional office conducting the OTC appointment.

**2.1.2** After scheduling the OTC appointment and prior to submitting documents, the design professional shall register the project by submitting forms *DSA 1-REG: Registration for Project Submittal* and *DSA 1: Application for Approval of Plans and Specifications*. During the OTC scheduling process, the design professional will be provided direction from DSA on how to submit the forms DSA 1 and DSA 1-REG. The DSA regional office conducting the OTC appointment may choose to waive the form DSA 1-REG requirement.

**2.1.3** The design professional shall upload all documents required by form DSA 3 and prepared in accordance with Section 1 above two business days prior to the OTC appointment, unless an earlier submission date is required by the DSA regional office conducting the OTC appointment.

**2.1.4** Documents must be uploaded to the "Plan Review Submittal" folder in DSAbbox. The "Plan Review Submittal" folder is located within the parent folder dedicated to the design professional's use (i.e., folder name containing the "AE" designator). Refer to the [DSAbbox External Library](#), Module 1, Section 1.3 for complete information on the DSAbbox folder structure.

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**2.1.5** DSA will receive an automatic notification when the project files have been uploaded, so the design professional need not provide independent notification.

**2.1.6** If documents are not uploaded as described in Section 2.1.3 above, DSA will send an incomplete notification similar to that described in *PR 17-03: Project Submittal Appointment Process*, Section 2.2 with instructions on rescheduling the OTC appointment.

### **2.2 Document Preparation Verification**

After receiving the project documents, DSA will verify the documents have been prepared as required by Section 1 above.

**2.2.1** If the document preparation complies with Section 1 above, the project will proceed to plan review. The Lead Plan Reviewer (LPR) will upload the submitted documents to the BSP.

**2.2.2** If the document preparation does not comply with Section 1 above, the LPR will notify the design professional and identify the specific aspects of the document preparation that are inadequate and require correction.

**2.2.2.1** If the LPR verifies document preparation prior to the OTC appointment, the notification will be sent via email. When required, corrected documents must be uploaded as described in Section 2.1.4 above, within the time period specified in the email notification. If corrected documents are not received within the specified time, DSA will send an incomplete notification per Section 2.1.6 above.

**2.2.2.2** If the LPR verifies document preparation at the beginning of the OTC appointment, the notification will be communicated verbally. When required, the document preparation can be corrected by the design professional in the BSP. Alternatively, the design professional may upload corrected document files to the "A. Submission\1. Plan Review Documents" folder in the BSP as described in PR 18-04 Section B1.4.

### **2.3 Completeness Verification**

After compliant document preparation has been confirmed, DSA will verify the completeness and eligibility of the project submission.

**2.3.1** The LPR will perform a cursory review of the submitted documents to determine if they are complete in accordance with form DSA 3 and ready for plan review.

**2.3.2** The LPR will evaluate the project scope and determine if it is eligible for OTC plan review as defined by PL 07-02.

**2.3.3** Based on the findings of the evaluations described in Section 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 above, the project will proceed according to Table 2.3 below.

**2.3.3.1** If the LPR performs the evaluations described in Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 above prior to the OTC appointment, the notifications described in Table 2.3 below will be sent via email.

**2.3.3.2** If the LPR performs the evaluations described in Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 at the beginning of the OTC appointment, the notifications described in Table 2.3 below will initially be communicated verbally. If the project is found incomplete, DSA will send a follow up email detailing the specific deficient items needed for a complete submission.

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**Table 2.3: Completeness and Eligibility Verification**

		Eligibility Verification	
		Eligible	Ineligible
Completeness Verification	Complete	Project proceeds to OTC plan review at the scheduled appointment. No notification is required. See Section 3 below.	LPR notifies design professional of the evaluation findings. Project is converted to a conventional plan review process with all the associated procedural requirements. See PR 18-04.
	Incomplete	LPR notifies design professional of the evaluation findings. The OTC appointment is cancelled. When the project is complete the design professional may reschedule the OTC appointment per PL 07-02.	LPR notifies design professional of the evaluation findings. The OTC appointment is cancelled. When the project is complete the design professional may register the project for a conventional plan review. See PR 18-04.

### 3. OTC APPOINTMENT

At the time of the scheduled OTC appointment, the design professional shall arrive promptly at the DSA regional office and sign in at the front desk. DSA staff will direct the design professional to an assigned workstation in the back check room. The design professional is not permitted to use DSA equipment (e.g., desktop computer, monitors, etc.) in the back check room; however, WiFi is provided. DSA encourages design professionals to bring a WiFi-enabled laptop to the OTC appointment for their use in accessing Bluebeam Studio during the meeting.

#### 3.1 Plan Review Fees

Plan review fees as set forth in PL 07-02 Section 8 are due to DSA at the OTC appointment, unless an earlier payment date is required by the DSA regional office conducting the OTC appointment. DSA will accept fees in advance but will not proceed with the OTC project review if fees are not received by the established deadline. For information on electronic payment options, refer to *PR 20-02: Online Payments for Plan Review Filing Fees, Plan/Field Review Fee Invoices and Project Certification Re-Examination Fees*.

#### 3.2 Plan Review

During the OTC appointment, the design professional will meet with a DSA plan reviewer from each required review discipline in sequence. During this time the plan reviewers will evaluate the details of the submitted documents and provide direction concerning corrections that may be required for approval.

**3.2.1** If the document preparation, project eligibility, and project completeness were not verified prior to the OTC appointment, the LPR will first verify these per Sections 2.2 and 2.3 above prior to commencing the plan review.

**3.2.2** At the OTC appointment, the LPR will provide the design professional with the nine-digit BSP identification number for the project. This identification number provides the design professional access to the BSP and BSS as described in PR 18-04 Sections B1.1 and B1.2, respectively.

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**3.2.3** Plan reviewers may add comments to the documents in the form of markups during the OTC plan review (i.e., at or prior to the OTC appointment). These markups are used to track and explain corrections required for project approval and are the same or similar to those used by plan reviewers in the conventional plan review process.

**3.2.4** Depending on the nature and extent of plan review comments, the LPR, in consultation with the other plan reviewers, will advise the design professional on the appropriate and most expeditious method of reconciling the corrections required of the project documents.

**3.2.4.1** If the plan review comments are simple and minor, the LPR may permit the design professional to make corrections to the original submitted versions of the documents (e.g., DWG\_V1, SPC\_V1) in the BSS. Refer to PR 18-04 Section B3 for additional information on editing documents in the BSS.

**3.2.4.1.1** The form *DSA 103* (i.e., the 103\_V1 file) should not be corrected in the BSS unless explicitly authorized by and performed under the supervision of the plan reviewer. Corrections to the form DSA 103 should be made through the authoring application on the DSA website to ensure that the auto-generated list of required verified reports is coordinated with the selected testing and inspection requirements.

**3.2.4.1.2** Certain document changes (e.g., adding a page, removing a page, etc.) cannot be accomplished within the BSS environment and, when required, preclude the use of this method.

**3.2.4.2** If the plan review comments are extensive, complicated, or otherwise warrant it, the LPR will direct the design professional to prepare new versions of the documents requiring correction (e.g., DWG\_V2, SPC\_V2, 103\_V2). The new document versions must be uploaded to the "A. Submission\1. Plan Review Documents" folder in the BSP as described in PR 18-04 Section B1.4.

**3.2.5** Depending on the method used to make corrections as described in Section 3.2.4, the plan review markups will be resolved as follows:

**3.2.5.1** If the original submitted versions of the documents (e.g., DWG\_V1, SPC\_V1) are corrected and approved, per Section 3.2.4.1 above, the plan reviewers will delete all markups they have added. In this case, the design professionals need not change the status of the markups to "INCORPORATED" nor add replies to explain how each comment was addressed.

**3.2.5.2** If the corrections are made through the submission of new versions of the documents (e.g., DWG\_V2, 103\_V2), the design professional shall respond to the plan review comments by taking the following actions:

**3.2.5.2.1** Incorporate comments as required by PR 18-04 Section 3.2.

**3.2.5.2.2** Reply to comments as required by PR 18-04 Section 3.3.

### 3.3 Appointment Conclusion

Per PL 07-02, each OTC appointment is scheduled for two-hours. DSA endeavors to complete plan review and approve each OTC project within this time frame (or during the same day); however, not all OTC projects achieve approval at the appointment. Some aspects of the process are beyond the control of DSA, and some projects simply require more time. Design professionals should not assume plan reviewers will be able to spend more than the allotted two-hours because such additional time is typically obligated to other OTC appointments.

**3.3.1** If the project is approved by all applicable plan review disciplines at the conclusion of the OTC appointment, DSA will stamp and post the approved documents to the "C. Approval\1. Plan Review Documents" folder in the BSP. The approved documents will also be posted to DSAbbox.

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**3.3.1.1** The design professional can retrieve electronic copies of the stamped documents from either of these locations identified above.

**3.3.1.2** The project applicant will receive an approval of plans letter from DSA in the days following the posting of stamped construction documents.

**3.3.2** If the project is not approved by all applicable plan review disciplines at the conclusion of the OTC appointment, the project will require back check for approval.

**3.3.2.1** The back check will generally follow the procedure used for conventional plan review projects but may be modified at the discretion of the LPR in consideration of the scope of the project and the extent of corrections required.

**3.3.2.2** The design professional should consult to PR 18-04 Section 4 and *PR 24-01: Back Check Procedure for Design Professionals* for additional information.

### **4. POST APPROVAL DOCUMENTS**

DSA does not review and approve post approval documents through the OTC process. Post approval documents associated with OTC projects are reviewed and approved in accordance with PR 18-04 Section 5.

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A DSA Procedure documents a process or series of steps that DSA staff and/or external stakeholders must complete in order to fulfill one or more administrative requirements of DSA review and approval of plans and specifications and construction oversight programs.

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## ELECTRONIC PLAN REVIEW FOR OVER-THE-COUNTER (OTC) PROJECTS

### ABBREVIATIONS

BSP – Bluebeam Studio Project

BSS – Bluebeam Studio Session

EPR – Electronic Plan Review

LPR – Lead Plan Reviewer

OTC – Over-the-Counter

### GLOSSARY

#### Bluebeam Studio Project (BSP)

A digital space to store and manage project files.

#### Bluebeam Studio Session (BSS)

A collaborative digital space for reviewing, marking up documents, and tracking the status of comments.

#### Design Professional

The architect or structural engineer in general responsible charge of the project (or his or her authorized representative) and other licensed architects or engineers delegated responsibility for a portion of the work.

#### DSAbbox

A cloud-based storage site where DSA project files are located.

#### EPR Administrator

A DSA staff member who sets up BSP and BSS, and assigns collaborators.

#### Lead Plan Reviewer (LPR)

The DSA plan reviewer who verifies document preparation and performs other coordination tasks, including arranging back check when applicable. DSA assigns the LPR based on what plan review disciplines are required for the project as follows:

- Structural Safety (SS) plan reviewer for projects with SS review.
- Accessibility (ACS) plan reviewer for projects without SS review.
- Fire and Life Safety (FLS) plan reviewer for projects without SS and ACS review.

#### Over-the-Counter (OTC)

An expedited review and approval process offered by DSA for projects meeting the eligibility criteria defined in *PL 07-02: Over-the-Counter Review of Projects Using Pre-Check (PC) Approved Designs*. OTC review and approval is primarily intended for single-story relocatable buildings and other simple projects utilizing designs that have been pre-approved in accordance with *PR 07-01: Pre-Check Approval*.

#### Plan Review Tracking Table

A document (i.e., filename: *\_PR Tracking Table.pdf*) in the plan review BSS used to track the plan review status of each document. This document is for plan reviewer use only.