Office of the City Engineer Plan Review

Step-by-step user guide to electronic plan review process
PAPER PLANS ARE NO LONGER NEEDED!
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Overview
ELECTRONIC PLAN REVIEW PROCESS

The purpose of this document is to provide general information on the process for registering the Engineering firm with the iPermits Customer Portal for Office of City Engineer Plan Review, and the electronic plan review system called ProjectDox.

The electronic plan review process is broken down into 10 key steps. The process utilizes two systems: iPermits and ProjectDox. The iPermits Customer Portal is used to submit applications and to make payments. ProjectDox is used to upload drawings, receive comments, and receive approvals.

1. **Register for iPermits Portal**
   (Texas state licensed engineering firm)

2. **Submit the application in iPermits**

3. **Pay plan review down payment**
   (25% minimum)

4. **Upload plans into ProjectDox system**

5. **Complete assigned task in ProjectDox**

6. **Access plan review comments in ProjectDox**

7. **Resubmit plans to ProjectDox**
   (Repeat as needed)

8. **Obtain Private Utility signatures**

9. **Pay remaining balance when plans are approved**

10. **Download and print plans for job site**
iPermits Registration

STEP 1: REGISTER AN ENGINEERING FIRM

Before a plan review application may be submitted to the Office of the City Engineer, an Engineering Firm must have a company profile in iPermits. To create a company profile:

1. Register an Engineering Firm
2. Create a Security Administrator User Profile

3. Register Additional Firm Users
4. Activate Newly Registered Firm Users

If the engineering firm is already registered in iPermits, please skip to Step 3 on page 7.

From the iPermits login page, select the link Click here to Register next to First-time user?

On the next screen, select No to the question, Are you associated with an electrical, plumbing, or mechanical trade contractor?

Select Yes to the question, Are you associated with a Texas state licensed engineering firm? Enter your Texas State registered Engineering Firm License Number and click the Submit button.

If your engineering firm license number is not in the iPermits database, please contact the Office of the City Engineer at oce@houstontx.gov.
Complete any blank fields in the Engineering Firm Name Information section.

**Note:** the first person to register a firm will become the security administrator and sets the master PIN. Enter any 6-digit number in the iPermits PIN field and re-enter it to confirm.

Enter a **User ID** (max. 8 characters) and **Password** (6-8 characters) of your choosing and an email address. These will become your login credentials for iPermits. Complete the remaining required fields.

Check the disclaimer box and click **Submit Add** to complete registration.
## iPermits Registration

**STEP 3: CREATING ADDITIONAL USERS FOR A REGISTERED FIRM**

From the iPermits login page, select the link Click here to Register and enter the Firm License number (Refer to Step 1 for detailed instructions).

Enter the iPermits PIN if it was given to you. Otherwise check the box for PIN Override.

Choose the appropriate Security Level. **Note: users cannot select “This is my license” level without the iPermits PIN.**

Enter a **User ID (max. 8 characters)** and **Password (between 6-8 characters)** of your choosing and an email address. These will become your login credentials for iPermits. Complete the remaining required fields.

Check the disclaimer box and click **Submit Add** button to create a user profile. If PIN Override was selected, the Security administrator will be notified of the new user profile pending activation.

### iPermits Registration Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>License No</td>
<td>The license number associated with the firm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>License Type</td>
<td>The type of license held by the firm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entity Name Type</td>
<td>The type of entity (individual, corporation, or firm).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporation or Firm Name</td>
<td>The name of the corporation or firm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mailing Address</td>
<td>The mailing address of the firm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>The city where the firm is located.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>The state where the firm is located.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zip</td>
<td>The zip code of the firm's location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIN override</td>
<td>Option to override the PIN with a new user profile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User ID</td>
<td>A unique identifier for the user.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Password</td>
<td>The password assigned to the user.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Address</td>
<td>The email address associated with the user.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Disclaimer

I hereby affirm the following declaration:

I have personal knowledge of the statements made in the application. None of the statements are misleading or false. I acknowledge that issuance of the account does not excuse or approve any violation of city, state, or federal laws or regulations. To the extent that this declaration is made on behalf of a corporation or any other legal entity or persons, I certify that I have fully advised them of the contents of the application and this declaration and that I am authorized to execute this declaration.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.
From the Security Administrator’s iPermits account and select the link Corporate User Roster, located on the left side of the Online Service Menu.

The iPermits Corporate User Management screen displays all users associated with an Engineering Firm. Click on the User ID with the Pending Activation status.

Change the User Status to Active in the drop-down menu and select the Update Profile button. The user can now login to iPermits and start submitting applications for plan review.

To remove a user from the company roster, change status to Inactive and uncheck Allow User Access to the firm’s license(s).
Application Process

INITIATING A NEW APPLICATION

Log into your iPermits portal account. Under the iPermits Online Service Menu, click on the Office of the City Engineer Plan Review Application button as illustrated.

To submit a new application, click on the Begin New Application button.

iPermits system will display the applications you have submitted during the last year, with status comments in red.
Application Process

COMPLETE A PLAN REVIEW APPLICATION

Enter the required information and when completed, click the Save & Continue button.

- Enter the description from the cover sheet into the “Please describe the Proposed Development” box.
- Select your submission method. Note: you cannot switch between methods for a project.
  - If the project is in or partially in the flood zone, check the box for In Flood Zone.
  - If the project is inside COH city limits and there are trees in right-of-way, check the box for Trees in ROW to include Urban Forestry into the plan review.
  - If the project has a water plant, water wells or contract water, check the box for Water Facility.
  - If the project includes a force main, lift station or reclaimed water line, check the box for Wastewater Facility.

If you submit any incorrect information, it can result in delay of processing and/or rejection.
Application Process

CHOOSE PAYMENT AMOUNT

The page will refresh and display information about the application fee. A minimum of 25% of the plan review fee plus the administration fee is due upon finalizing the application.

Choose a payment option to generate a sales order and click on the Finalize Application button.

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ProjectDox will make the application information available on the eForm for the plan review team.
Pay the Plan Review Down Payment
CREDIT CARD OR E-CHECK

On the Shopping Cart Maintenance screen, check the box of permit(s) to be paid. Then click the Make Online Payment via Credit Card or Electronic Check button.

If an Advanced Pay Account (APA) has been established, that payment option will also be listed.

Enter the payer information and click on the Continue the Credit Card/Electronic Check Payment Process button.

You will be transferred to the Chase® PayConnexion website to complete the transaction. A receipt will be emailed to you from Chase. You may need to check your spam or junk folder if you do not receive a payment receipt from Chase.
Once the plan review down payment has been received, an invitation (see above) will be sent to the applicant to upload drawings and documents into ProjectDox. For new users, the invitation will contain a temporary password. Subsequent project invitations will not contain a password.

First-time users should note:
• ProjectDox uses pop-up windows. Configure your browser’s pop-up blocker to allow for pop-ups for the ProjectDox site.

Please use the User PC Settings guide from the login page for instructions and other browser specific settings you need to make for the ProjectDox system.
• The login page also has a link for adding a desktop shortcut to the ProjectDox site, and a link for adding it to your favorites.

Depending upon your organization’s security settings, a network administrator or IT department may need to complete the steps required for system set up.

SAMPLE INVITATION
**ProjectDox Set Up**

**NEW USER ACCOUNT**

From the invitation, click on the Login to ProjectDox link or Project Access link to open the login page using your default web browser. You can also type or paste the ProjectDox URL into another web browser.

Enter your email address and temporary password and click the Login button. (*The password is case sensitive.*)

You will be taken to your User Profile, where you must complete the required yellow fields:
- Change your password
- Create a security question and answer
- Contact information

Click the Save button to continue onto the home page.

Logging into ProjectDox a second time (and every time after that), you will use the password that you entered in your Profile page.

If you ever forget your password, click on the Forgot Your Password? link. You will be prompted with your security question.

Note: this feature requires that the user has logged in at least once and no longer has a temporary password.
Navigation Basics

HOME PAGE LAYOUT

The ProjectDox home page is divided into two main sections. The upper section is your **Active Projects List**, which displays basic information about every project you have submitted for electronic plan review as an applicant and/or the list of projects you have been invited as a design team member.

By default, the 15 most recently accessed projects are listed, with the most recent at the top. Select the **All Projects** button to view a list of all of your projects.

The Active Projects List can be sorted by clicking on the header of the column.

You can search for words contained in these columns through the **Press Enter to Search** field.

The lower section of the home page is your **Active Task List**, which displays all your outstanding tasks on projects for which you are the main applicant. The Active Task List can be sorted by clicking on the column header.

Both the Active Projects List and Active Task List are set to display a limited number of entries at a time. Use these buttons to move to the first, previous, next, or last page in the list.

**ProjectDox can be used in multiple browsers, including Chrome, Safari, FireFox, and Internet Explorer.** Review the *User PC Settings* document located on the ProjectDox login page to ensure proper set up is completed.
Your primary navigation buttons are located in the upper right corner of the home page.

- The **Back** and **Forward** buttons function much like the back and forward buttons in a web browser, taking you to the screen you previously or subsequently viewed.
- The **Projects** button will take you back to the home page.
- The **Profile** button will take you to your User Profile, where you can edit your personal information or change your password.
- The **Reload** button will refresh the current page you are on.
- The **Search** button allows you to search for a project based on the key information entered into the Project Info Page, or it allows you to search for keywords within a project.
- The **Help** button takes you to the ProjectDox Help site. Use the index or search functions to find instructions on specific aspects of ProjectDox.
- The **Logout** button logs you out of ProjectDox.
- The **Task List** button shows any tasks requiring action from you for all projects in a separate window.
Standards

FILE TYPES AND NAMING

Prior to submittal, ensure that all files comply with the following standards. Failure to meet the City’s standards may delay your review.

FILE TYPE STANDARDS

- Searchable PDF files are preferred for calculations, reports, and other supporting documentation (i.e. non-drawing files). Supported file types for the Documents are .pdf, .doc, .docx, .xls, .xlsx, etc.
- Vector pdf, .dwg, .dgn, .dwf, etc. files will be acceptable for drawings.

DRAWING STANDARDS

- Drawings should include graphical scale
- The City of Houston requires that plans be uploaded in an approved format, to scale, with an output dimension of 24” x 36”
- Standard markup names and colors will be used for each reviewing discipline for easy identification. A markup can have more than one changemark. Changemarks are created to quickly identify a markup and associated comments.

FILE NAMING

For all the construction plans in the City of Houston Right Of Way and Utilities Easements, please comply with all the standards from the Infrastructure Design Manual.

File names are limited to 70 characters. Corrected files should always be resubmitted with the SAME FILE NAME as the original submittal. ProjectDox will automatically detect changes in resubmitted files of the same name and version it. This feature allows the Engineers to overlay versions during reviews.

Note: If this is not followed the submitted file will appear as a NEW file, and not a correction to an existing file.

File names should have the page number and a brief description of what the file is. For example: 01 - Cover, 02 - General Notes, 03 - Plan and Profile. Please add “0” to single digit page numbers to avoid the page jumping from 1, 11, 12, etc. (if more than 10 pages).

_FOLDER STRUCTURE

Files are securely managed through a pre-defined folder structure, which is listed below. Users cannot rename or add folders to the structure.

All drawings should be uploaded as single page files (ex: 20 pages = 20 files) into the Drawings folder for each project. All documentation (any non-drawing files, easements, availability letters, geo-technical reports, etc.) should be uploaded as multi-page files into the Documents folder.

1. Drawings
2. Documents
3. Approved
4. Construction Services
   • As-built Documents
5. Post Permit Submittals
6. Update Signature
7. Changemark Reports
8. PDF Destination Folder
Uploading Your Files
FIRST SUBMISSION TO THE CITY OF HOUSTON

On the homepage, select the link of the project for which you want to upload your files from either the Active Projects List or Active Task List.

Click the “+” icon to view any subfolders and click the “-” icon to hide subfolders.

Click on the name of the folder you want to upload into. On the next screen select the Upload Files button.

A pop-up window will appear.
Uploading Your Files
FIRST SUBMISSION

By default, up to 5 files can be uploaded at the same time.
1. Select Choose File and navigate to the file.
2. Select the file and click Open.
3. Once all 5 files have been selected, click the Upload button.

To use the batch upload tool, click on the Install Silverlight Now link.

With Silverlight installed:
1. Click the Browse button and navigate to the files.
2. Select the files and click Open.
3. Click Upload to add the files to the folder.

A batch size is limited to 200 files or 10GB, whichever comes first. A single file cannot be more than 1GB in size.
Uploading Your Files

FIRST SUBMISSION

Once files are uploaded into a folder, thumbnail images of all the files will be visible. Next to each thumbnail is the filename, upload date and time, file size information, and name of the user who uploaded that file.

If a file is uploaded into the wrong folder, select the red “X” icon next to the thumbnail image to delete the file. The ability to delete files is permitted on the first submission only.

Individuals invited into project will not have this ability and should contact the main applicant to delete files.

To upload files into another folder, click on the View Folders button to return to the project’s main page. Repeat the process until all drawings and documents are uploaded into their respective folders.
Complete Assigned Task

APPLICANT UPLOAD

ProjectDox moves a project through a series of tasks called a workflow. Some of these tasks are attached to the applicant and others to the Office of the City Engineer’s staff.

The completion of one task signals ProjectDox to assign the next task in the workflow. Reminder notifications of an open (i.e. incomplete) task are sent via email at designated intervals.

To notify the Office of the City Engineer that your plans are ready for the pre-screen review, the applicant must complete the assigned ApplicantUpload task. The assigned task will show a status of Pending until you accept it.

From the project’s main page, click on the Workflow Portals button to display the assigned task.

Click on the Applicant Upload task link, and then click OK to accept the task.

The eForm will pop-up in a separate window.

Alternatively, tasks can be accessed via the Active Task List on the homepage.

Under the Task column, select the link for the corresponding project.

The eForm will pop-up in a new window.
Through the eForm, the main applicant can invite their design team members into the project. Enter the individual’s name and email address and then click on the Invite User link. An email will be sent to the user to create an account.

Invited users will have the ability to upload and view files, but cannot complete a task (i.e. no access to the eForm). Invited project members will also receive the same email notifications that the main applicant receives as the project moves through the review process.

If you are not ready to complete the task, click on the Save & Close button. The eForm will close and the task will remain in your Active Task List.

If you are ready to complete the task, click on the Submission Complete button. All required drawings and documents should be uploaded prior to selecting this button. Once this button is clicked, permission to upload into the project is removed until the City requests additional information.
Pre-Screen Review

PROCESS OVERVIEW

During the pre-screen review, the Intake group will review the uploaded files for completeness and compliance with the standards.

If you have met the submittal requirements, the Intake group assigns the formal review to all required disciplines.

If items are missing or corrections are required, a CorrectionComplete task notification will be emailed to you with instructions on how to resubmit to fix the issues. Please login to ProjectDox system to review the information about the submittal issues from the Intake group.

Design team members invited into the project will also receive the email notifications and they would be able to upload the drawings and documents.

SAMPLE CORRECTIONS EMAIL
Pre-Screen Review
CORRECTION COMPLETE TASK

The following steps outline how to review the comments, submit corrections, and complete the assigned CorrectionComplete task:

1. Select the Project Access link in the email to login to ProjectDox.
2. Select the CorrectionComplete task link for the appropriate project from the Active Task List on the home page or from within the project.
3. Select OK to accept the task.
4. The eForm will pop-up in a new window. Please check the Prescreen Review Notes from the Intake group in the Comments Log table.
5. Upload files as needed to the appropriate folders. Revised files must be uploaded using the same name as the original file to allow for automated file versioning.
   • You can invite the Design team into the project from the Invite to Design Team section.
6. Respond to the Prescreen Review Notes by entering the comments in the text box and selecting the Add Note button
7. Select the check box “I have uploaded the corrected documents and/or drawings as indicated below” under Task Instructions to enable the Complete Submission button.
8. Select the Complete Submission button
9. Select OK to the dialog message, Completing this task will finish your participation in this step and cannot be undone. Continue? (Select Cancel to return to the eForm)

The CorrectionComplete task is now complete and your project status will change from Prescreen Resubmit to Prescreen Review.

Email notification is sent to the Intake group to perform the prescreen review again. If no additional information is required, the Intake group approves the prescreen review and your project will move onto the formal review. If more corrections are required, the CorrectionComplete task will repeat.
Review of Plans
APPROVED OR CORRECTIONS NECESSARY

Each assigned discipline will approve or reject their review by selecting the status COMPLETED (AP) or CORRECTIONS NECESSARY (RJ). When corrections are requested, the Engineer may add checklist comments, general comments, and changemark comments to the drawings to specify the plan deficiencies.

Once all assigned disciplines have completed their review, ProjectDox system notifies the applicant and/or design team whether the plan review is approved or corrections are requested.

If all reviews have been approved, the Intake team member will apply the final Office of the City Engineer approval stamp to all of the drawings and documents. If payment is pending, the applicant will receive an Approved—Pending Payment email with instructions. When there is no payment due, the applicant will receive the Approved Plans Ready for Download email.

If at least one engineer has selected the Corrections Necessary (RJ) status, the applicant will receive an email notification of the ApplicantResubmit task with instructions on how to resubmit to fix the issues.

Applicants may track their project’s progress in the review through the reports tab.
The following steps outline how to review the comments, submit corrections, and complete the assigned ApplicantResubmit task:

1. Log in to ProjectDox.
2. Select the ApplicantResubmit link from the Active Task List on the homepage or from within the project.
3. Select OK to accept responsibility for completing the task.
4. The eForm will open. Select the Checklist Report tab to view those comments and click on the View Checklist link under the corresponding discipline name to provide responses to the checklist comments.
5. If the engineers have added any markups to your drawings/documents, you can view the markups clicking the View Changemark Items button to open the changemar viewer.
   - To view a specific markup, click on the appropriate link under the Markup column.
   - You may provide a response to each markup in the Applicant Response column.
6. You can view any comments/deficiencies noted by all the reviewing disciplines under the Department Review section.
7. When all deficiencies have been addressed, upload the revised drawings/documents into the appropriate folders using the original file name(s).
8. You can also upload a document addressing each deficiency noted by every discipline into the Documents Folder.
9. Check the 3 acknowledgement check boxes under the Task Instructions and click on the Complete Submission button to complete your task. Note: The Office of City Engineer will not receive your revised plans if this task is not completed.

An email notification will be sent to the Intake group assigning them to the step Resubmit Received. The Intake group will confirm that plans have been uploaded and the proper disciplines are assigned for the next review cycle. If any one of the disciplines rejects the review, the ApplicantResubmit step will be repeated until all the departments approve.
Download and Print

APPROVED PLAN SET

After the payment is made in iPermits system, you will receive an Approved Plans Ready for Download email indicating that you may login to ProjectDox and download your approved plans in the folder marked Approved.

To download the entire folder, select the box at the top of the thumbnails.
Uncheck any pages that you do not want to download.
When your selection is complete, click on the download icon.

A single zip file will be created of the selected pages.
Click the Download Zip File button to continue.
Select Save or Save As in the pop-up window.
The approved plan set must be printed at a minimum size of 24”x36” and kept on the jobsite throughout the duration of construction.

Each page of the approved plan set will be stamped with the Office of the City Engineer drawing number stamp on the bottom right corner.
Revisions

PROCESS OVERVIEW

When a revision is required by the applicant for a project that was approved in ProjectDox, use the Topic and Notes feature to send a request to the Intake Group.

On the ProjectDox homepage, select the project link from the Active Projects List for the appropriate project. Then click the Notes button in the toolbar.

In the pop-up window, click the Add Topic button. The screen will refresh.
Revisions
PROCESS OVERVIEW

Select OCE – Revision Requested from the Category drop-down menu. Fill in the subject line and a description of your revision request. Then select the Save & Prepare Email button.

The screen will refresh and display a list of Users/Groups. Check the box for Intake and then click the Send button.

After the Intake group reviews the revision request, they will start the workflow within the project. The applicants will be sent an email notification to upload the revised plans to the Drawings/Documents folders.

The revision plan review follows the same process as the original plan review submittal once the workflow is started.

⚠️ Office of City Engineer charges the same submittal fee for revisions. The revision fee will be collected after the plan review is approved.
Update Signatures

PROCESS OVERVIEW

When update signatures are required for a project that was approved in ProjectDox, the applicant can use ProjectDox’s Topic and Notes feature for the identified project to notify the Intake Group of its request.

Follow the steps from the Revisions process to create a new note and topic. Select OCE – Update Signatures from the Category drop-down menu. Fill in the subject line and description to send the email to the Intake group.

After the Intake group reviews the update signatures request, they will start the workflow within the project. The applicants will be sent an email notification to upload the revised plans into the Update Signature folder for the project.

For Inside City Limits projects:
1. Signatures need to be updated from the Utility companies.
2. The PE needs to specify on the cover sheet that no changes have been made with in the last year for the project and date & sign the cover sheet.

For Outside City Limits projects:
1. No Utilities signatures needed.
2. The PE needs to specify on the cover sheet that no changes have been made with in the last year for the project and date & sign the cover sheet.

POST PERMIT SUBMITTALS (For Floodplain Management Office):
After the project is approved, the inspection team may upload the inspection reports and as-built documents into the Post Permit Submittals folder of the project. The Flood Plain Supervisor will be notified when there are new files in this folder.

CONSTRUCTION SERVICES
If there are no changes in the field, download the cover sheet and have the contractor sign As-Built (The engineer can sign the Record Drawing) and upload it into the As-Built sub-folder under the Construction Services folder.

If there are changes in the field, please follow the below steps:
1. Download the approved drawing which requires changes (Note: changes must be pre-approved and must meet IDM requirements.)
2. Show the as-built condition accurately on the drawing and cloud the area.
3. Have the Engineer of Record and the Contractor sign the drawing and upload the drawing into the As-Built folder.
4. Repeat the process for all the required drawings
5. Make a revision note on cover sheet and have the Engineer of Record sign it.

Contact the assigned Inspector or Construction Services section at 832.394.9097 if you have any questions.
Thanks for using electronic plan review!

If you need further assistance, please contact us via email at oce@houstontx.gov.

Live chat is available during regular business hours (8am - 5pm) at www.hpceservices.org.
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