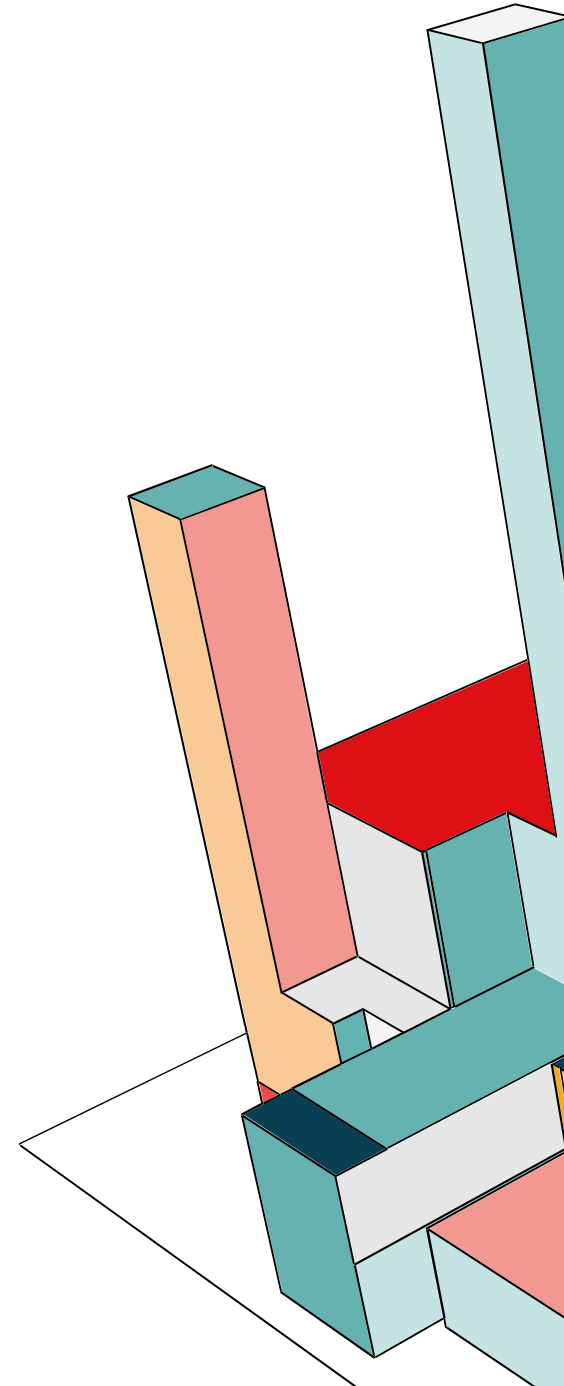# TPR PROJECT: REMINDERS & UPDATED PROCEDURES

NYSED – Third Party Review Program
October 1st, 2025

INTRODUCTION

Over the past year, the Third Party Review (TPR) Program has successfully processed more than 150 projects. As many school districts have moved into the construction phase, the review queue at SED has significantly decreased, leading to a temporary decline in demand for third party reviews.

However, with districts beginning to plan for upcoming projects in the next school year, it is anticipated that the review queues will increase once again. This will likely encourage districts to re-engage with the TPR Program during the current school year.
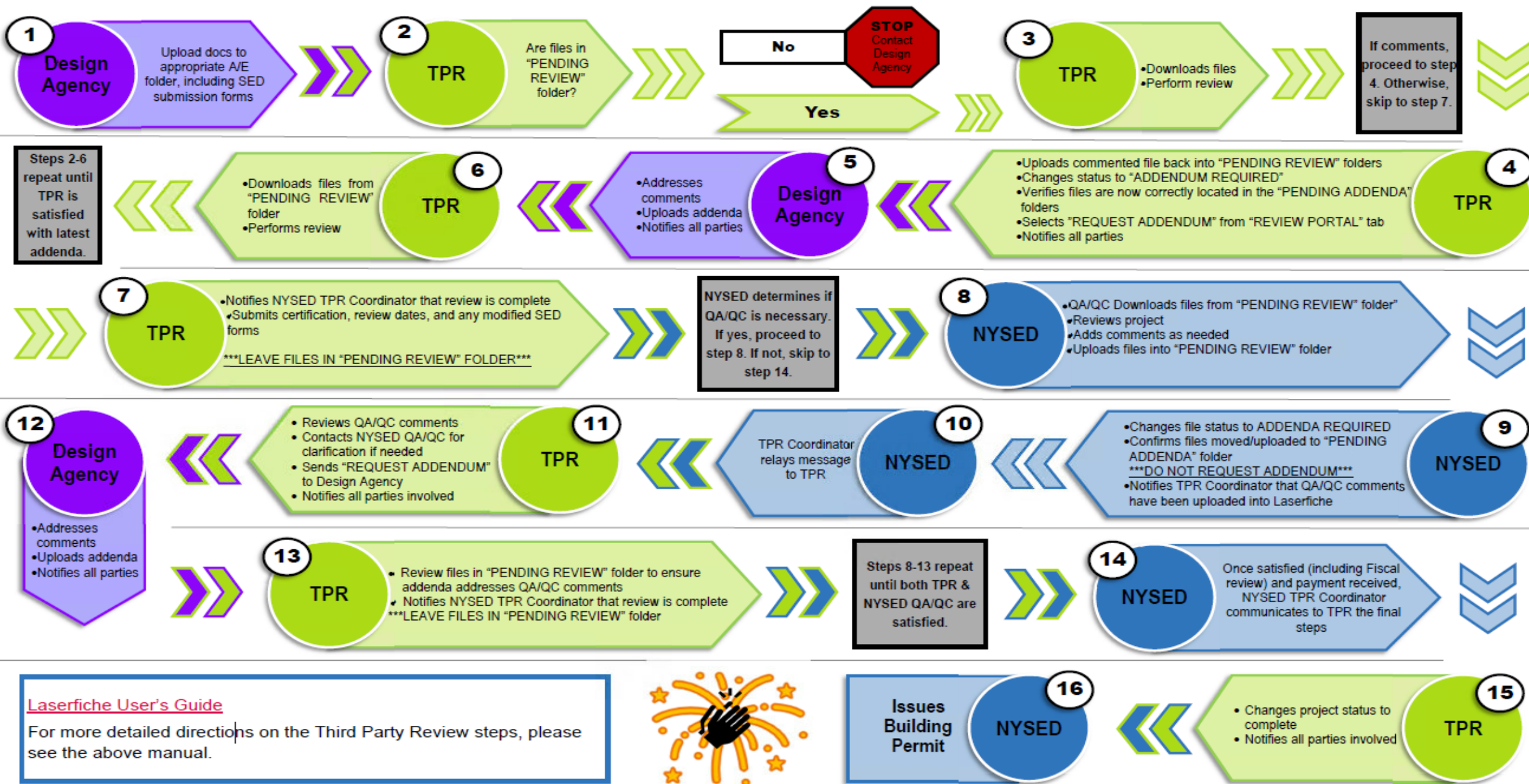
In preparation for the renewed use of the TPR Program, SED has identified areas where reminders are necessary and has implemented updates to the program procedures.

THIRD PARTY REVIEW LASERFICHE PROCESS

Third Party Review Laserfiche Process

1 Design Agency → Upload docs to appropriate A/E folder, including SED submission forms

2 TPR → Are files in "PENDING REVIEW" folder?

No → STOP Contact Design Agency

Yes →

3 TPR
- Downloads files
- Perform review

→ If comments, proceed to step 4. Otherwise, skip to step 7.

Steps 2-6 repeat until TPR is satisfied with latest addenda.

6 TPR
- Downloads files from "PENDING REVIEW" folder
- Performs review

5 Design Agency
- Addresses comments
- Uploads addenda
- Notifies all parties

4 TPR
- Uploads commented file back into "PENDING REVIEW" folders
- Changes status to "ADDENDUM REQUIRED"
- Verifies files are now correctly located in the "PENDING ADDENDA" folders
- Selects "REQUEST ADDENDUM" from "REVIEW PORTAL" tab
- Notifies all parties

7 TPR
- Notifies NYSED TPR Coordinator that review is complete
- Submits certification, review dates, and any modified SED forms

LEAVE FILES IN "PENDING REVIEW" FOLDER

NYSED determines if QA/QC is necessary. If yes, proceed to step 8. If not, skip to step 14.

8 NYSED
- QA/QC Downloads files from "PENDING REVIEW" folder"
- Reviews project
- Adds comments as needed
- Uploads files into "PENDING REVIEW" folder

12 Design Agency
- Addresses comments
- Uploads addenda
- Notifies all parties

11 TPR
- Reviews QA/QC comments
- Contacts NYSED QA/QC for clarification if needed
- Sends "REQUEST ADDENDUM" to Design Agency
- Notifies all parties involved

10 NYSED → TPR Coordinator relays message to TPR

9 NYSED
- Changes file status to ADDENDA REQUIRED
- Confirms files moved/uploaded to "PENDING ADDENDA" folder
DO NOT REQUEST ADDENDUM
- Notifies TPR Coordinator that QA/QC comments have been uploaded into Laserfiche

13 TPR
- Review files in "PENDING REVIEW" folder to ensure addenda addresses QA/QC comments
- Notifies NYSED TPR Coordinator that review is complete
***LEAVE FILES IN "PENDING REVIEW" folder

Steps 8-13 repeat until both TPR & NYSED QA/QC are satisfied.

14 NYSED → Once satisfied (including Fiscal review) and payment received, NYSED TPR Coordinator communicates to TPR the final steps

Laserfiche User's Guide

For more detailed directions on the Third Party Review steps, please see the above manual.

16 Issues Building Permit NYSED

15 TPR
- Changes project status to complete
- Notifies all parties involved

PROJECT ASSIGNMENT & NOTIFICATION PROCESS

- Once a vendor is selected and accepts a project:

  o   The project will be assigned in Laserfiche

  o   An Email will be sent to the vendor and Citi BOCES with the following attachments:

1.   Transmittal letter

  o   Includes submission details and fee information.

2.   Updated Code Certification Form (for future use when review is complete)

  o   Page 1 is for project information and where the reviewer provides their stamp certifying the project is code compliant.

  o   Page 2 is designated for data tracking. Reviewers are responsible for entering all requested dates as indicated.
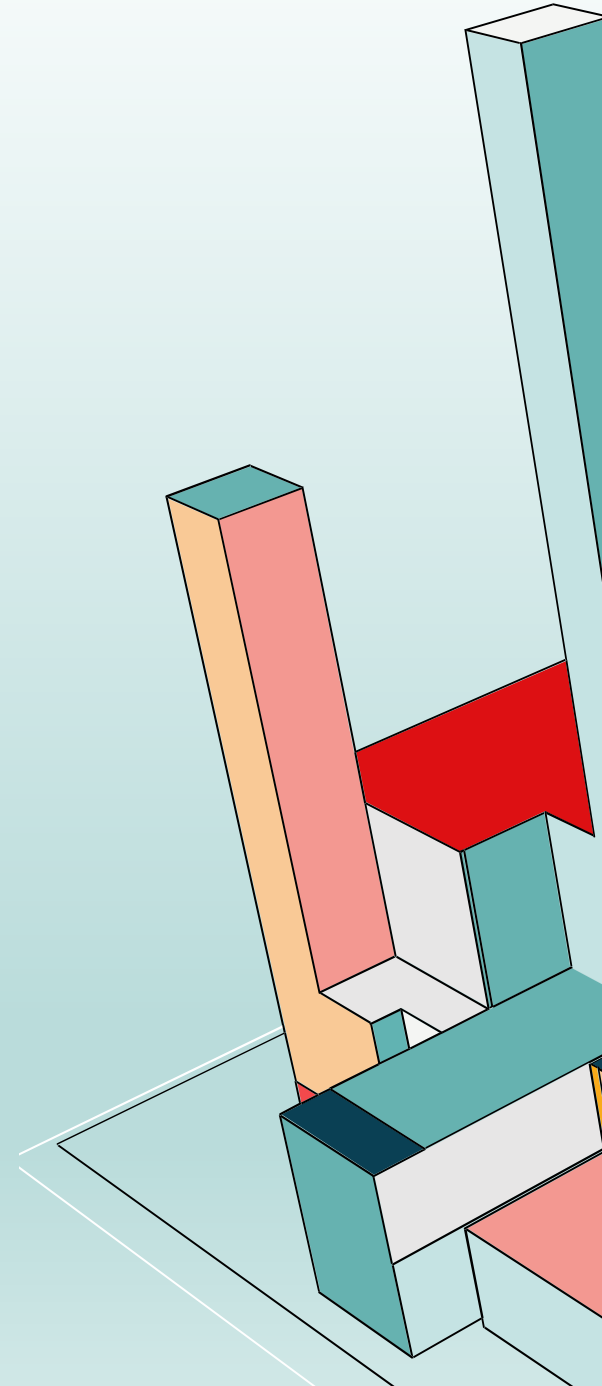
REVIEW

- Once assigned the project, the vendor has 10 business days to complete the initial review and submit comments.

- During this time, they must:

    o   Review all documents, including SED forms.

    o   Ensure all Architectural and Engineering files are separated appropriately on Laserfiche. Keep in mind (Civil and structural engineering should be included in the architectural drawing set)

    o   Verify there are no duplicates, and all files are uploaded correctly. (this should occur at every review step)

    o   Confirm that all provided information is accurate and consistent, ensuring estimates match those supplied by SED.
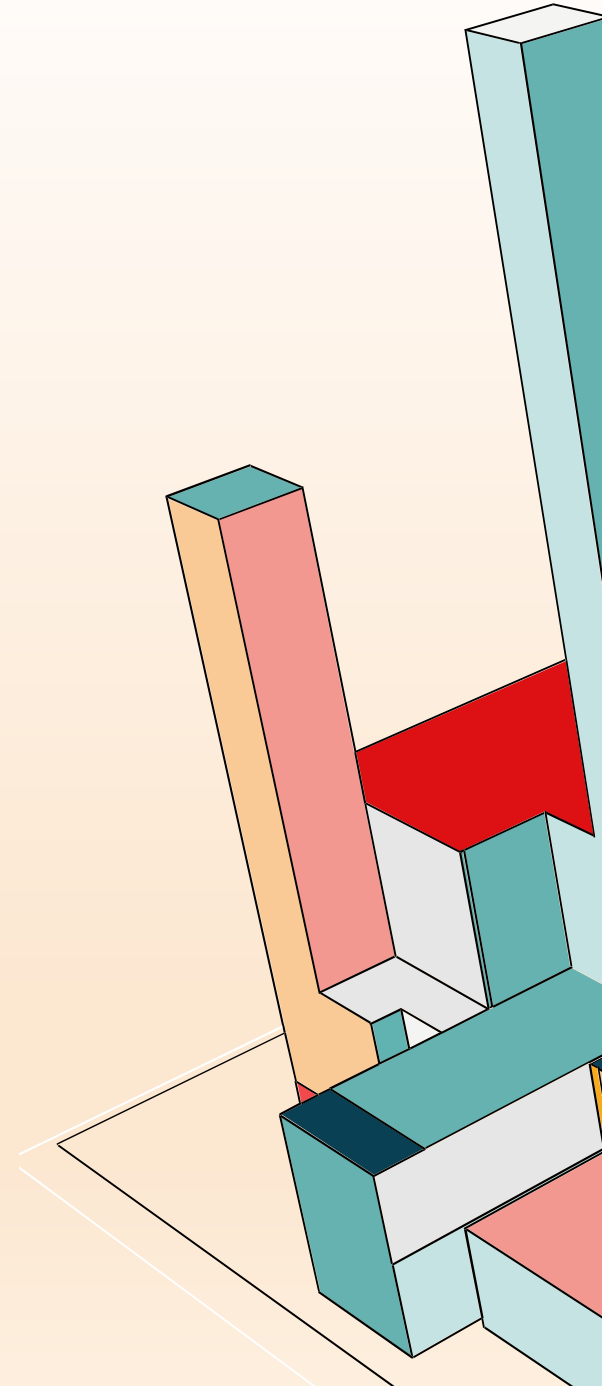
ADDENDUMS

When an addendum is needed, the commented files must be uploaded to Laserfiche.

- Upload the files requiring addendum to "Pending Review" folder:

    - A popup message will appear asking you to rename, or add as a new version: Mark as a "New Version" and click ok

    - Another popup message will appear: Click on the tab (at the top) marked Fields, find the dropdown menu for the Review Decision: mark as "Addendum Required" and click Import.

    - This will mark the file as an addendum required file and automatically move it to the Pending Addenda folder.

    - Move to the upper most level (NYSED > SED Review Number), look to your right most tab (where fields & reviewer portal are the tab names). Click on Reviewer Portal.

    - If Laserfiche is asking you to sign in, click on the link "Go to Tasks" at the top right. After it loads, click the back button

    - When signed in, find the dropdown box and click "Request Addendum" choose the trade (do not select both trades at once- it does not work correctly). Follow instructions on the screen and send the request (button at bottom)

- Notify the designers that an addendum has been issued. Be sure to send the notification via email and CC thirdpartyreview@nysed.gov, as Laserfiche automatic notifications are not always reliable.

- Please reach out to the design team one week following the addendum request; copying thirdpartyreview@nysed.gov. If the design team indicates a date by which the addendum is anticipated, the update requests may wait until then. Otherwise, weekly update requests should be sent.

- It is anticipated that the TPR vendor will review the received addendum within 5 business days.
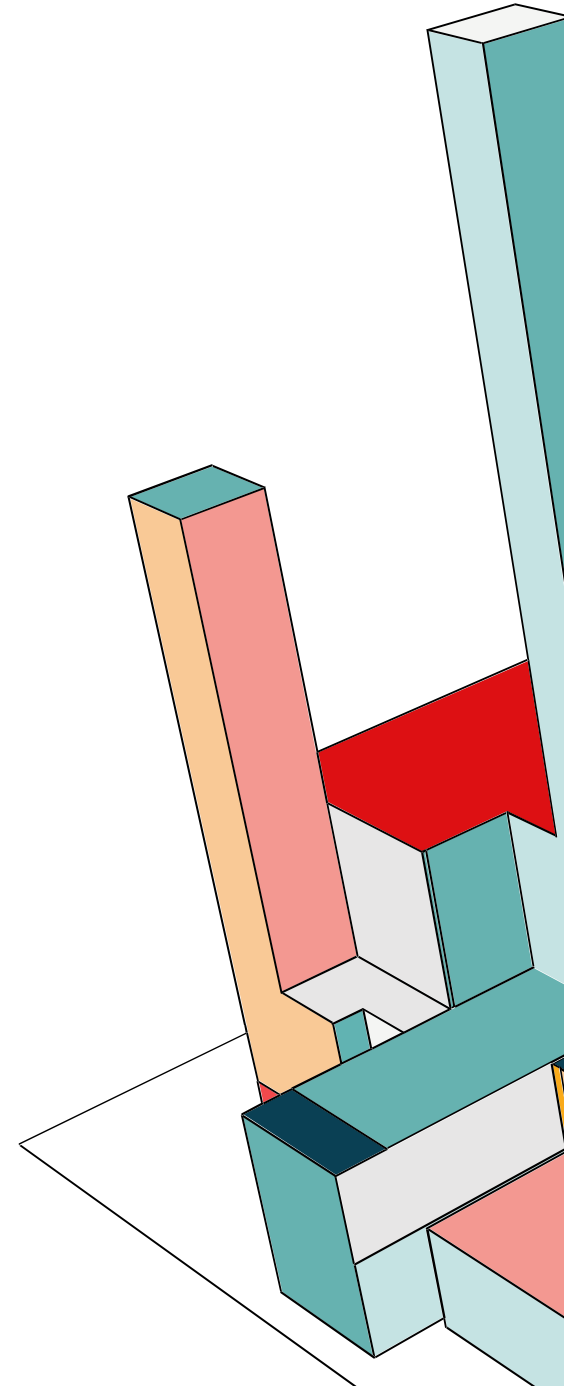
APPROVAL

- When the TPR vendor is satisfied with addendum responses, the vendor:
    - Completes the Code Certificate with stamp and dates.
    - Submits the code certification and any modified SED Forms to thirdpartyreview@nysed.gov
- The OFP Fiscal Associate review will begin at this point, if it has not already.
- If the project is selected for a QA/QC review, the TPR vendor will be notified by email that additional comments are posted in Laserfiche. Vendors are required to review the comments, issue an addendum request, and notify the designers.
- When an addendum is submitted back to Laserfiche from the designers, the TPR Vendor is required to review the responses and notify thirdpartyreview@nysed.gov if the comments are satisfied.
- If all parties are satisfied with the responses, the TPR manager will notify the TPR Vendor and the designer that the project is complete and request the TPR Vendor to change the review status in Laserfiche.
- The TPR manager will coordinate the issuance of a permit only once the Fiscal Associate has signed off and the submitting District has paid the invoice.
- Upon completion of the technical reviews (and not before), the TPR manager will notify the Vendor that they may submit their invoice for services rendered.

WEEKLY UPDATES

- Please provide weekly project updates to the TPR Manager via email for each active project. These updates help keep the TPR Coordinator informed of project progress and any issues or delays you may be encountering. Having up-to-date information on each project allows the coordinator to offer support and helps ensure that project timelines remain on track. In your update, please include:

  1. "Weekly Update" in the subject line of email.

  2. Project number and district name for each project

  3. Current status.

  4. Key milestones.

  5. Any challenges, delays, or concerns and Support needed (if any).

- In addition, please include a brief update of your firm's current workload and capacity to take on new review projects. Sharing this information regularly helps streamline the assignment process and ensures that new projects are allocated efficiently and appropriately based on availability.

REMINDERS

SED has identified the following key areas that need to be addressed, as they are crucial for ensuring a smooth-running project, on-time completion, and alignment among the project team.

COMMUNICATION EXPECTATIONS

- All TPR vendors must be responsive and available to the submitting District, the design team, and OFP. Timely communication is critical to keeping projects on schedule.

- Respond promptly to all communications. If you don't have an immediate answer, acknowledge the message and let the sender know you're working on a response.

- Delays in communication of several days are unacceptable. They create unnecessary project delays and can lead to dissatisfaction with the TPR program.

- Districts and design teams often assume that lack of response means no progress is being made—especially concerning when they have paid significant fees for expedited service.

- Maintaining consistent, proactive communication reflects positively on the TPR program and ensures smoother project outcomes.
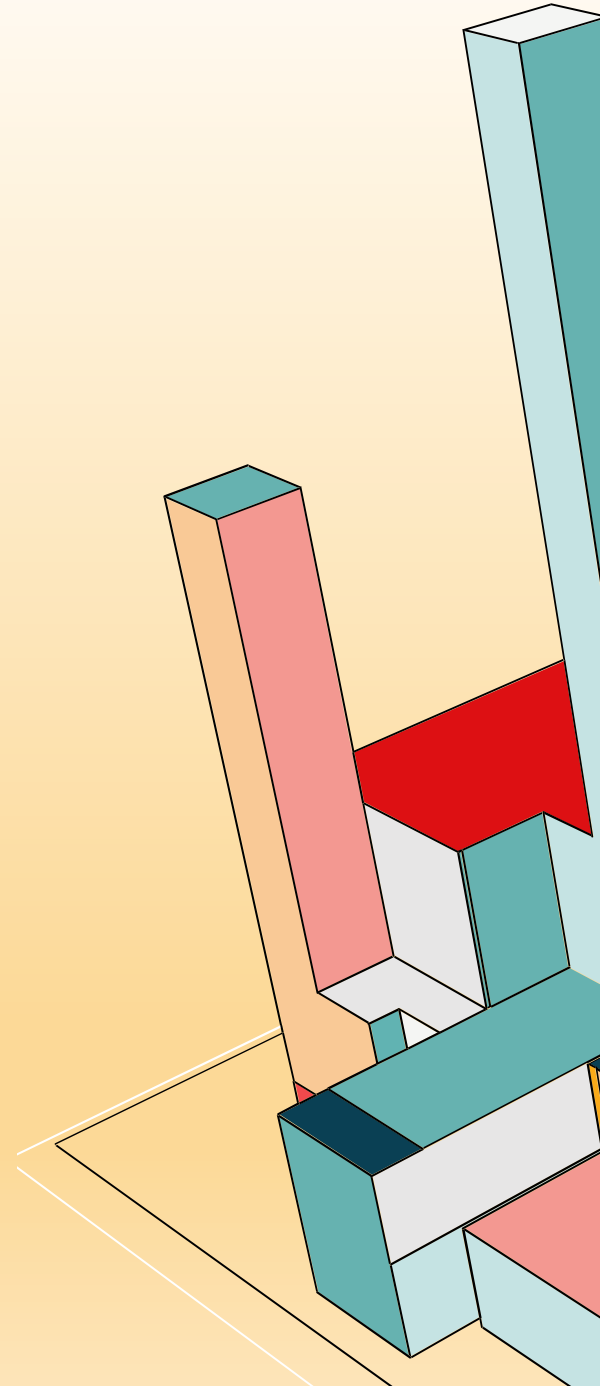
COMMUNICATION CONTINUED

- It is essential to copy thirdpartyreview@nysed.gov on all project-related correspondence and to include the district name and SED review number in the subject line. This ensures the TPR Coordinator stays informed and can efficiently locate emails to provide support when questions arise, helping to keep the project on track for permit issuance and maintaining alignment among all parties.

- This expectation goes both ways—if you notice that the district or designer is not copying the TPR Coordinator or not properly identifying the project in the subject line, please remind them to do so and include us in the email chain moving forward.

REVIEW THOROUGHNESS

- TPR Vendors must ensure that their reviews are thorough and that no critical issues are overlooked.

- In some reviews, SED has identified significant non-compliance issues during QA/QC, including serious life safety concerns. When critical issues are not addressed, SED must spend additional time reviewing the project and issuing addenda, which defeats the purpose of the TPR program and delays project timelines.

- Though this concern does not pertain to everyone, this notice should be considered a warning that continued insufficient reviews will result in elimination of future assignments.
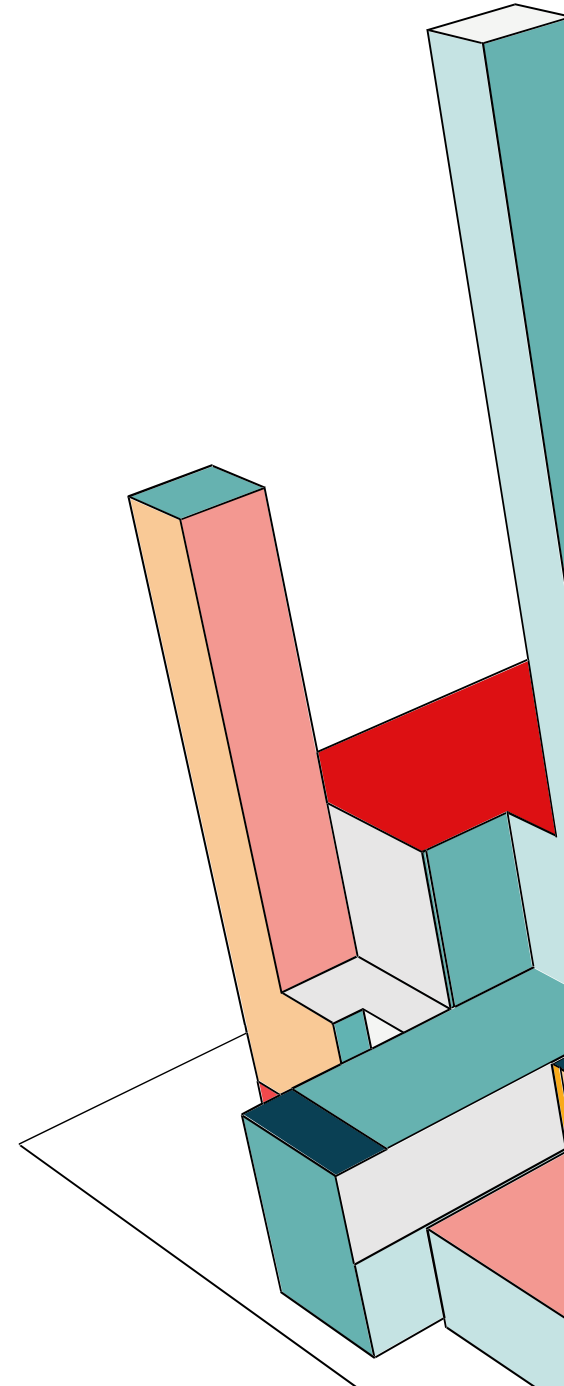
BEFORE SUBMITTING CODE CERTIFICATION

- Please re-review the entire project to ensure completeness and accuracy.

- Confirm that all reviewer comments have been fully addressed.

- Verify that all drawings are the most current versions, and that no duplicates are included in the submission.

- Please ensure that all files are placed in the "Pending Review" folder. Do not move any files to the "Review Complete" folder unless specifically directed by the TPR Coordinator. Prematurely moving files can cause issues for QA/QC reviewers, especially if an addendum needs to be issued.
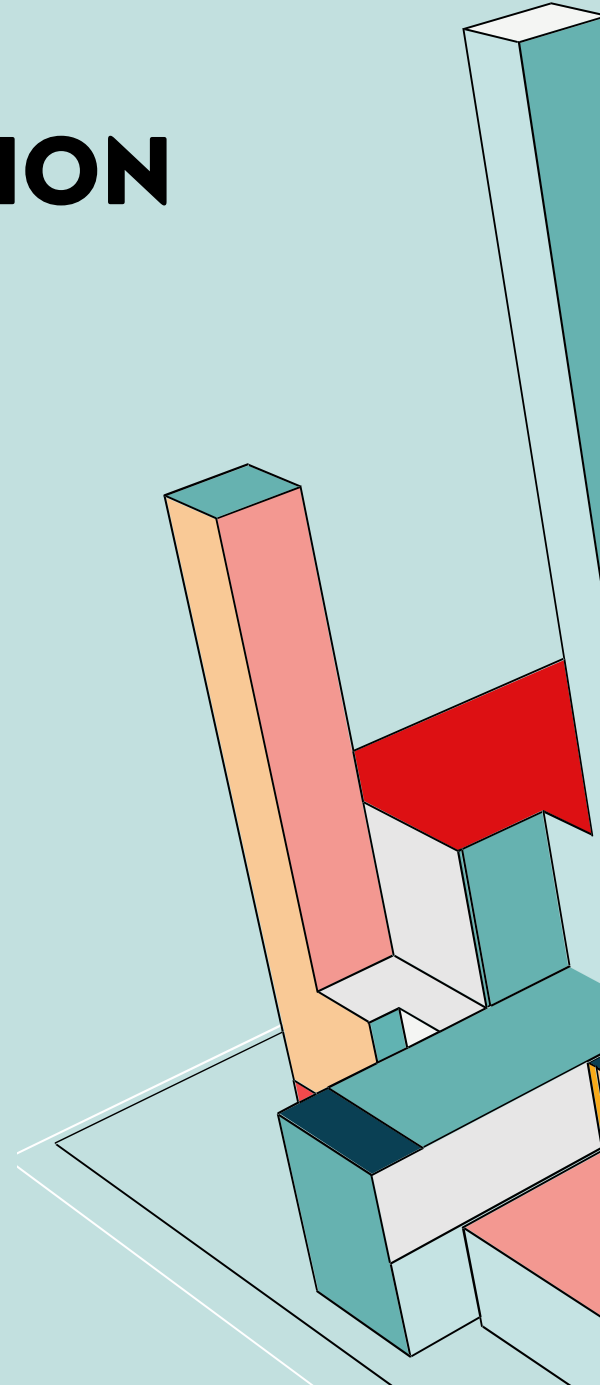
CODE CERTIFICATION SUBISSIONS

- Earlier this year, the Code Certification form was updated. The revised form now requires separate review dates for Architecture and Engineering, allowing for more accurate tracking. You must use the updated Code Certification form included with the project transmittal package. The previous version of the form will no longer be accepted.

- Ensure both pages of the Code Certification form are fully completed. The NYS Licensed Professional Engineer or Architect who performed the technical review must sign and seal the Code Certification statement.

- Please provide the requested review dates for both Architecture and Engineering.

- Please include all modified SED forms with your submission.
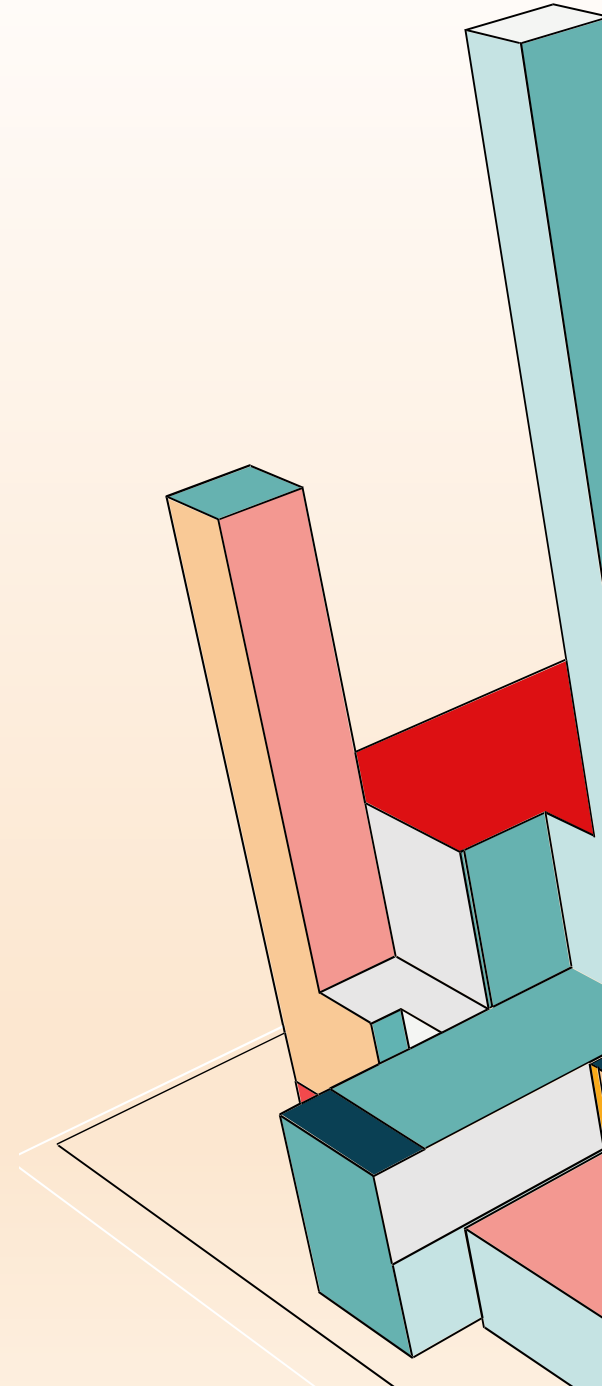
LASERFICHE FILE MANAGEMENT

- Do **NOT** move files to "Review Complete" unless directed to by the TPR coordinator.

- If files are moved before receiving direction, the TPR vendor must coordinate with Dataflow nysedsupport@godataflow.com to return the files to the "Pending Review" folder prior to submitting the code certification.

- When files are placed in the Complete folder, QA/QC cannot be performed, resulting in delays as additional time is needed to request the files be moved back.

- Please note that there have been ongoing issues with Laserfiche notifications. These notifications are often delayed or not sent at all, so we cannot rely on Laserfiche as the sole method of communication. TPR vendors must notify design teams by email—in addition to using Laserfiche—when requesting an addendum. Likewise, please remind designers to send an email notification when uploading addenda to ensure all parties are aware and timelines are not affected.

INCOMPLETE SUBMISSIONS

- In rare cases, a document set may be significantly incomplete, making a thorough review difficult or impractical.

- If you encounter a submission that is missing major portions of required documentation, generates an excessive number of comments due to lack of information, or requires an addendum that significantly changes the scope of work or project value. Pause your review immediately. Notify the TPR coordinator at thirdpartyreview@nysed.gov

- Include a brief description of the issue to help us assess and provide next steps.

- Failing to stop the review and attempting to work through issues with the design team often leads to extended project timelines and dissatisfaction from districts— many of whom are likely unaware of the underlying issues. This approach can result in significant wasted time and billable hours that exceed the value of the TPR review fee.

- In many cases, it is more effective to stop the review and request that SED return the project to the design team for correction and resubmission. This ensures clarity, preserves resources, and sets more realistic expectations for all parties involved.
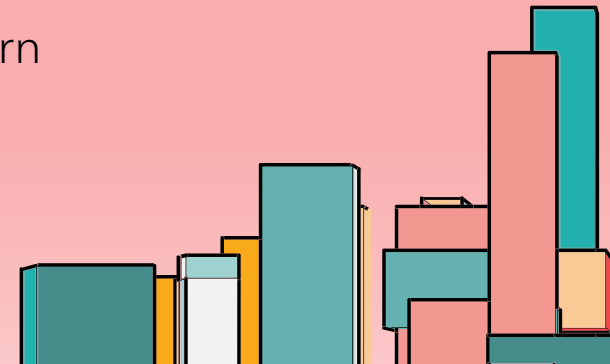
FREQUENT QA/QC COMMENTS

The following items are commonly missed during the TPR review, often resulting in issuance of an addenda and causing unnecessary delay. To avoid additional processing time, it is essential to review all your projects with these items in mind.

PRIVACY SCREENING IN RESTROOMS

- Screening of lavatories (sinks) is often overlooked by both designers and TPR reviewers, frequently resulting in the need for an addendum.

- Section S706-1(a) of the 2022 Manual of Planning Standards states that entrances to gang toilet rooms shall be screened. According to a policy statement issued on June 7, 2024, *"The Office of Facilities Planning will require that such designs preserve an individual's right to privacy for the use of both the water closet/urinal and the lavatory (sink), due to the range of privacy needs that students may have related to the use of sink/washing areas."*
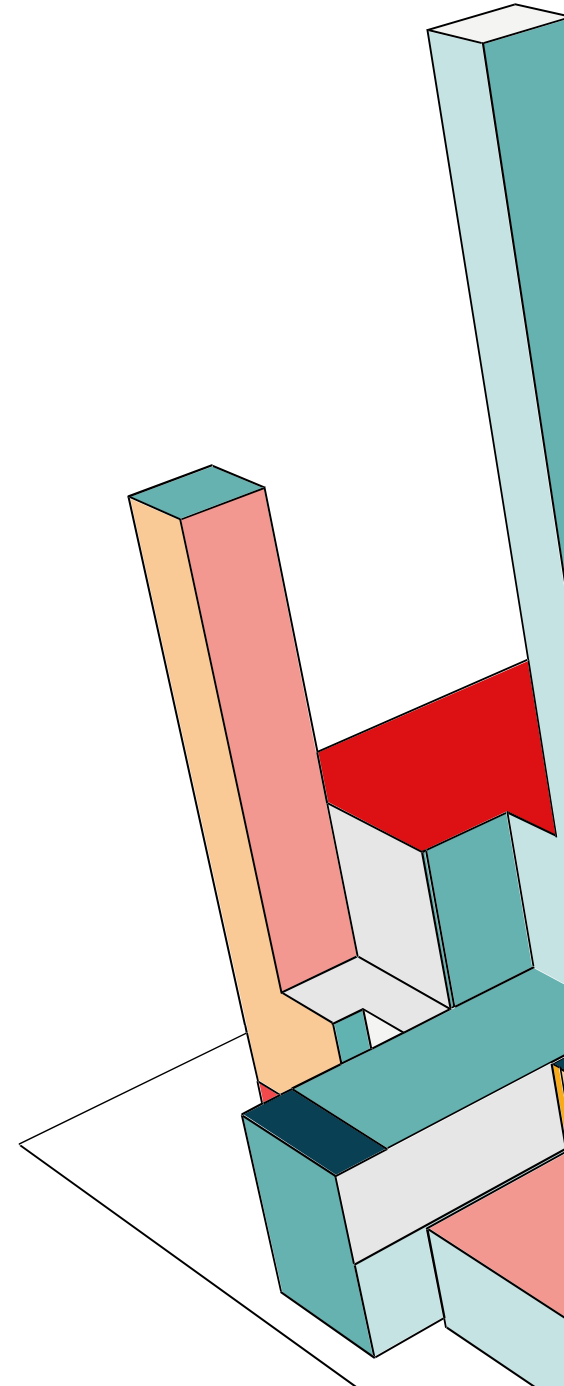
ACCESSIBILITY COMPLIANCE

- Construction plans must demonstrate compliance with ANSI Standard A117.1. Plans must include accessible routes, entrances, restrooms, parking, and other areas accessible to the building occupants.

- Restroom details are often overlooked. Plans must clearly indicate Accessibility compliance by including dimensions for turning radius, fixture heights and the location of grab bars.
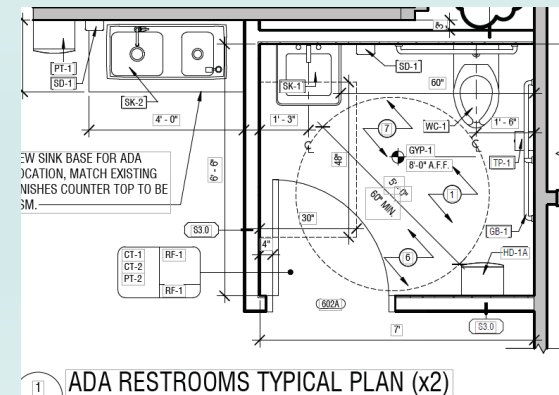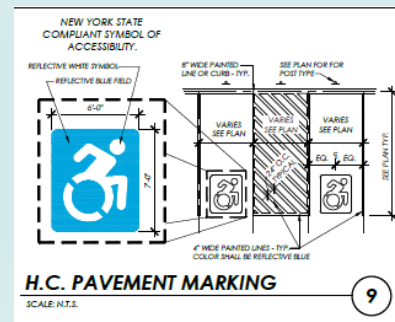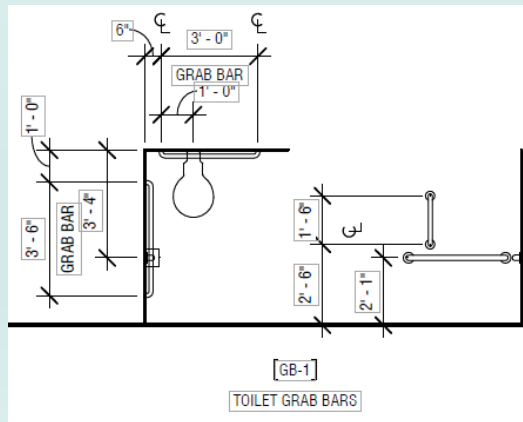
UNENCLOSED STAIRWAYS

- Existing unenclosed stairways must be evaluated and addressed to ensure retroactive compliance in accordance with Commissioner's Requirement 155.7 and the New York State Fire Code. Any noncompliant conditions should be identified, and corrective actions must be clearly documented as part of the code review and renovation process.
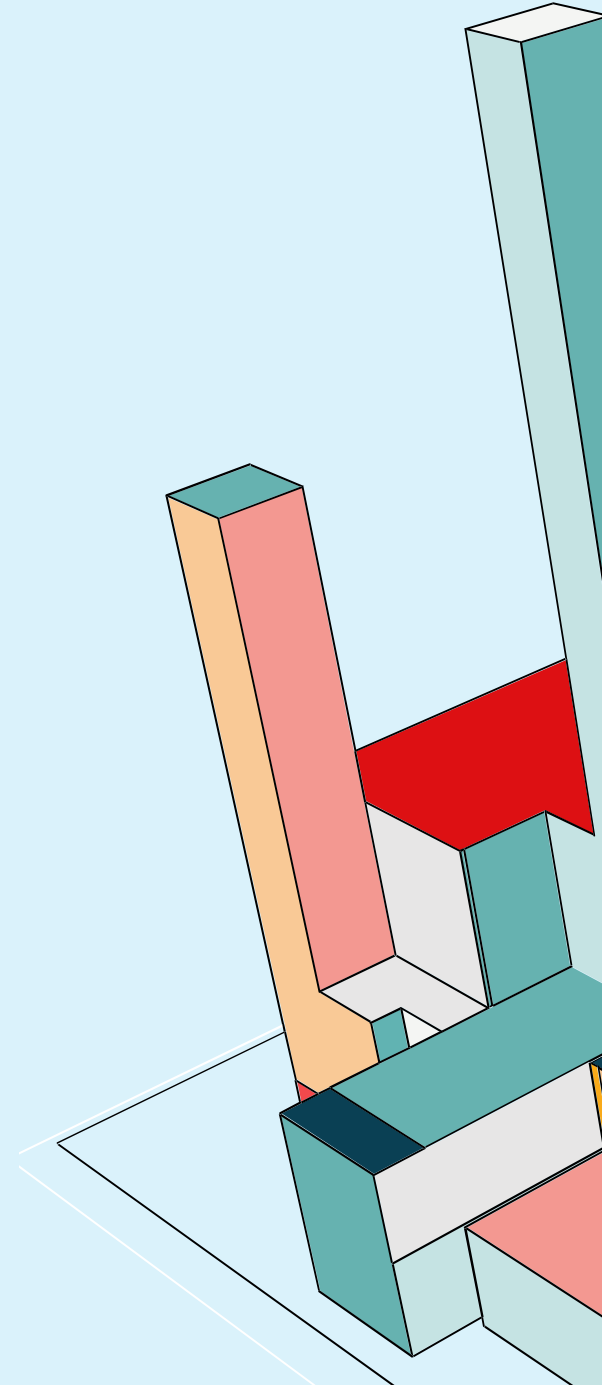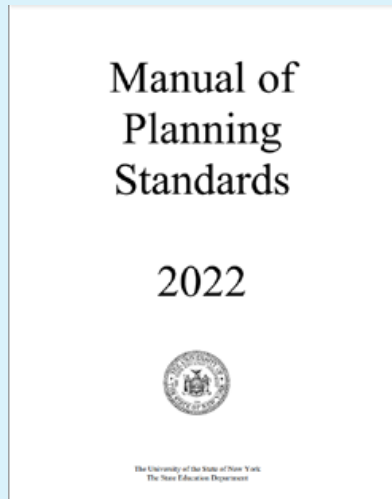
EXITING DETAILS

- Exiting requirements must be clearly shown on the plans. This includes all exterior exit doors, along with corresponding occupant loads, required egress widths, and travel distances from the most remote point of each occupied space to the nearest exit.

- Ensure that the length of travel paths, including any turns or obstructions, are accurately measured and labeled.

- Properly documenting this information is critical for verifying code compliance and ensuring safe and efficient evacuation routes in case of an emergency.
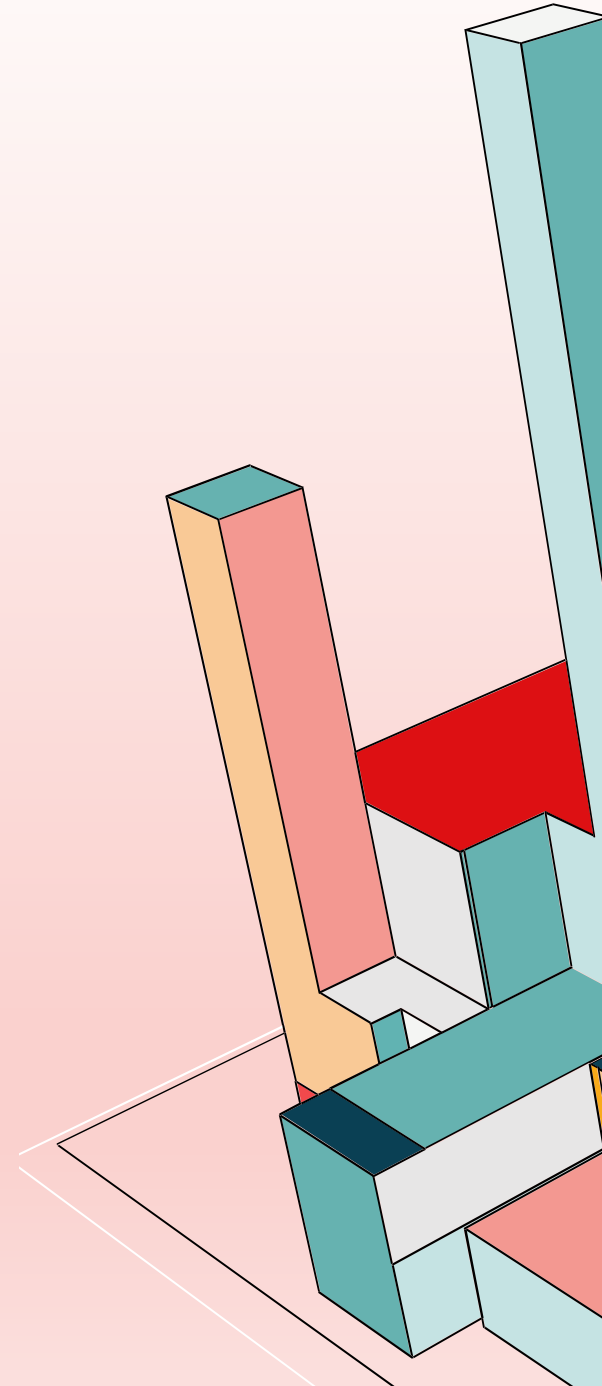
DELEGATED DESIGN

- Professional design delegation is commonly utilized in the design and construction of school facilities. Frequently delegated building components include grandstands, bleachers, modular buildings, pre-engineered metal buildings, press boxes, modular retaining walls, wood trusses, structural elements, and mechanical and electrical systems and components.

- The delegated work shall be designed by a NYS Licensed Design Professional.

- The design professional who has been delegated to design the special work shall sign and seal the drawings and provide a certification statement, that the design complies with the New York State Building Codes and the New York State Education Department Manual of Planning Standards.

FIRE AREA VS BUILDING AREA

- "Fire area" and "building area" are often mistakenly used interchangeably, but they have distinct meanings and code implications.

- FIRE AREA: relates to fire-rated separations and determines requirements for fire protection systems like sprinklers.

- BUILDING AREA: refers to the total floor area enclosed by exterior walls and areas included with in the horizontal projection of the roof or floor above. It affects zoning, allowable size, and height limitations.

- Mislabeling these on plans can result in code violations or inadequate fire protection. It's essential to clearly distinguish and label each to ensure safety and compliance.
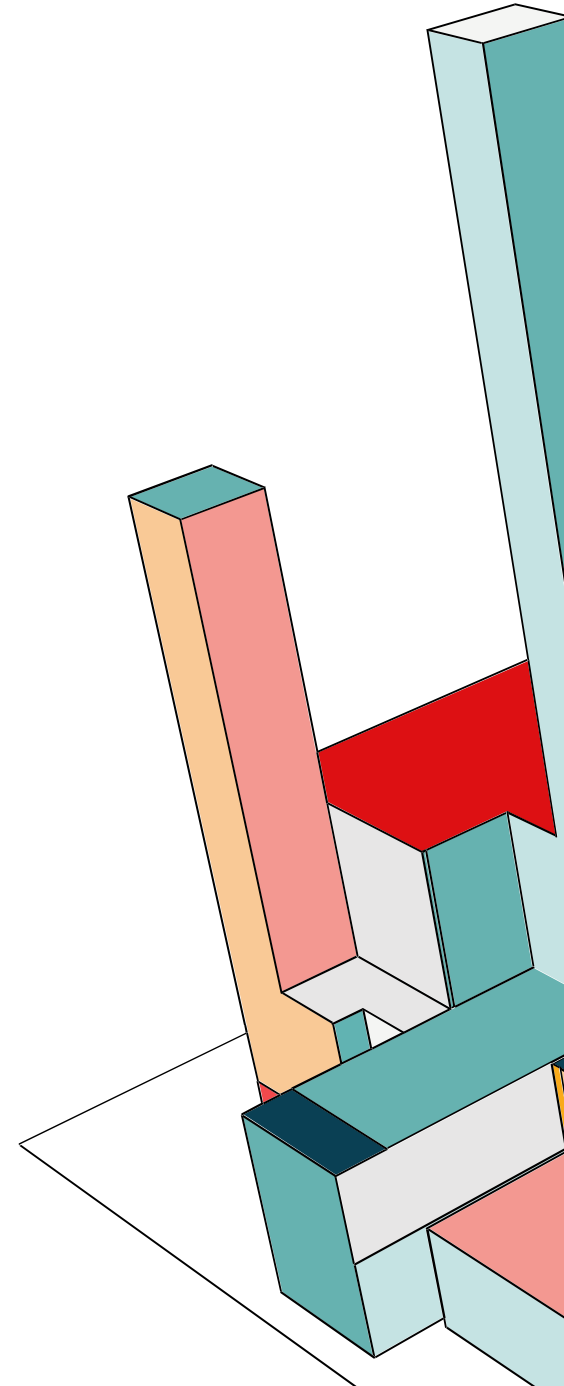
MARKING AND IDENTIFICATION

- As per NYS BC 703.7: Where there is an accessible concealed floor, floor-ceiling or attic space, fire walls, fire barriers, fire partitions, smoke barriers and smoke partitions or any other wall required to have protected openings or penetrations shall be effectively and permanently identified with signs or stenciling in the concealed space.

- Such identification shall:

- Be located within 15 feet (4572 mm) of the end of each wall and at intervals not exceeding 30 feet (9144 mm) measured horizontally along the wall or partition.

- Include lettering not less than 3 inches (76 mm) in height with a minimum 3/8-inch (9.5 mm) stroke in a contrasting color incorporating the suggested wording, "FIRE AND/OR SMOKE BARRIER—PROTECT ALL OPENINGS," or other wording.

FIRE-RESISTANCE RATING IDENTIFICATION SIGN (COMPLIANCE W/ 2020 NYSBC 703.7)

1 HOUR
SMOKE BARRIER, PROTECT ALL OPENINGS AND PENETRATIONS
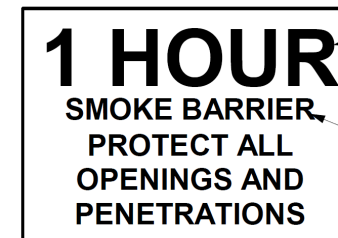
RATING DESIGNATION, REFER TO CODE COMPLIANCE PLAN FOR REQUIRED WALL RATING: 3" HIGH MIN. LETTERS WITH MIN. 3/8" CONTRASTING STROKE

FIRE-RESISTANCE RATED ASSEMBLY TYPE DESIGNATION, REFER TO CODE COMPLIANCE PLAN

# PLUMBING FIXTURES FOR OUTDOOR SEATING AREAS

- When new outdoor seating, such as grandstands, is installed, adequate plumbing fixtures must be provided. These facilities should also include family or assisted-use provisions, as well as drinking fountains.

- Portable toilets facilities may be used in accordance with the Code to accommodate up to 50% of the occupant load. Permanent toilet facilities should be within 500 feet travel distance to serve the remaining occupant load.

- The 500ft travel distance must be along an accessible path.
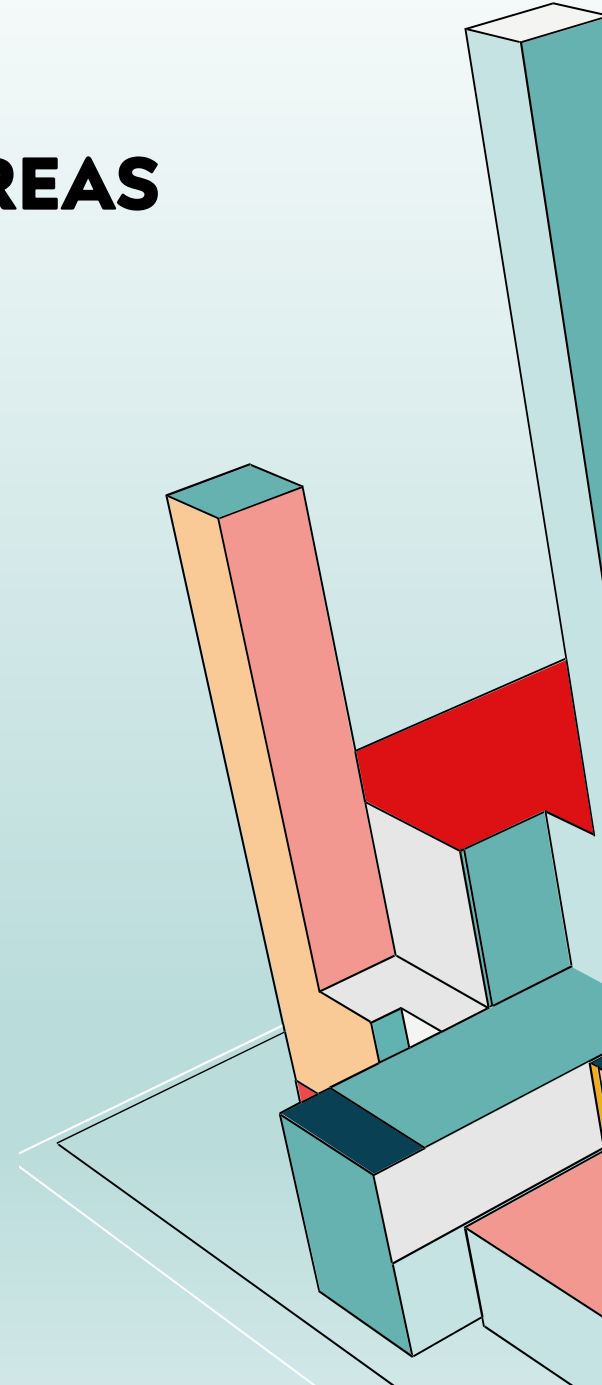
PLUMBING FIXTURE COUNTS

- When bathroom facilities are altered during a renovation, the required minimum number of fixtures for the entire building is often overlooked. It is important to evaluate the total fixture count to ensure that the renovation brings the building into compliance with code requirements–or at the very least, does not worsen an existing nonconforming condition.

| Classification	Occupancy [i]	Description	Water Closets (Urinals: See Section 419.2)		Lavatories		Bathtubs/ Showers	Drinking Fountain (See Section 410) e	Other
			Male	Female	Male	Female			
Educational	E	Educational facilities, including libraries accessory to Group E	1 per 50		1 per 50		—	1 per 100	1 service sink
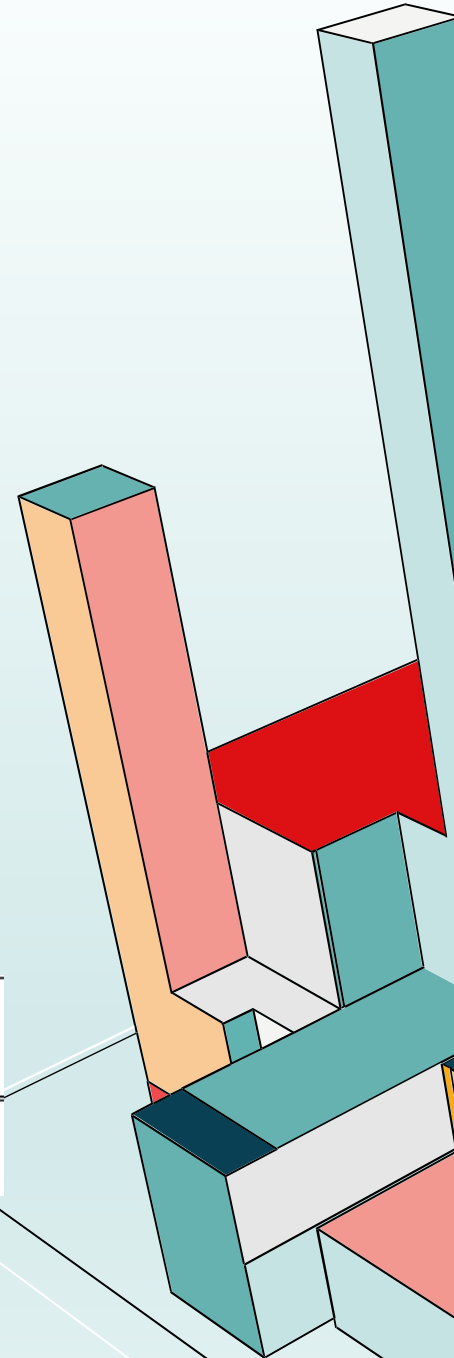
EXIT SIGNS

- Exit signs are required to be readily visible from all directions of egress travel, including on both sides of doors, particularly those that form part of an exit route or are in cross-corridors.

- Exit signs shall be placed such that when one enters the corridor means of egress, they should always be able to see two ways out in case one is blocked (i.e. Exit signs).

- Exit sign placement shall consider magnetically held-open corridor or stair doors to be closed.

FIRE ALARM REQUIREMENTS

- All fire alarm notification appliances, door hold-open devices, security vestibule transaction window fire shutters, and fire alarm initiating devices shall be clearly depicted on the design drawings. Corresponding technical specifications for each device shall be provided.

- All devices and components shall comply with the requirements of NFPA 72 – National Fire Alarm and the Fire Code of NYS.
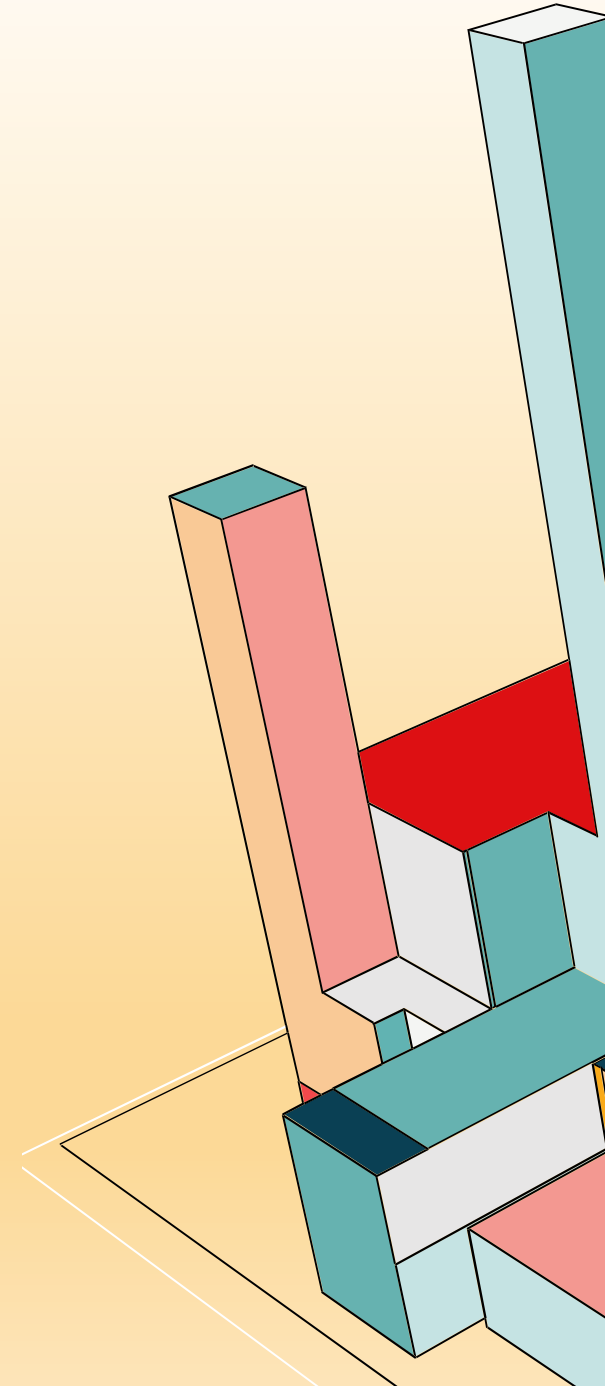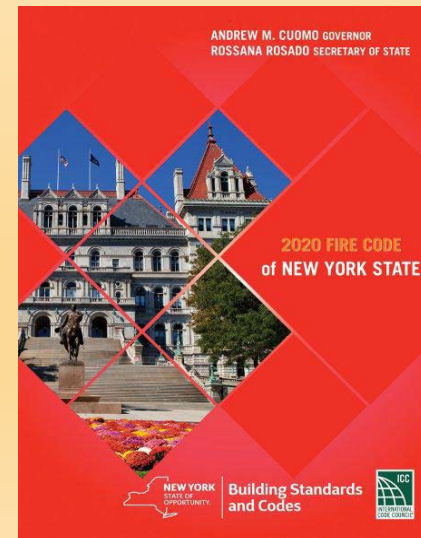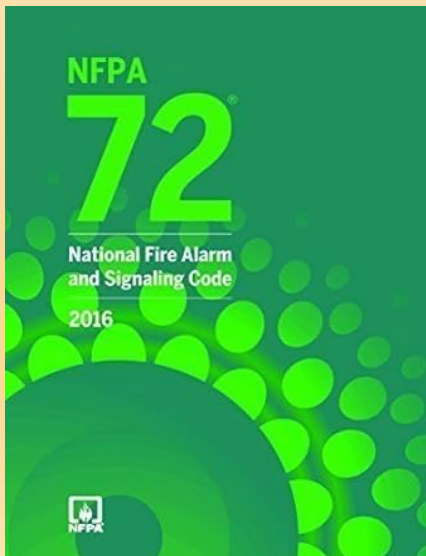
FINAL REMINDERS

- OFP is working on publishing an updated Manual of Planning Standards in the near future. Please look out for its publication and take time to review the updated requirements once available.

- Please share this presentation with all team members involved in third-party review projects.

- If you have any questions please feel free to email me at Thirdpartyreview@nysed.gov
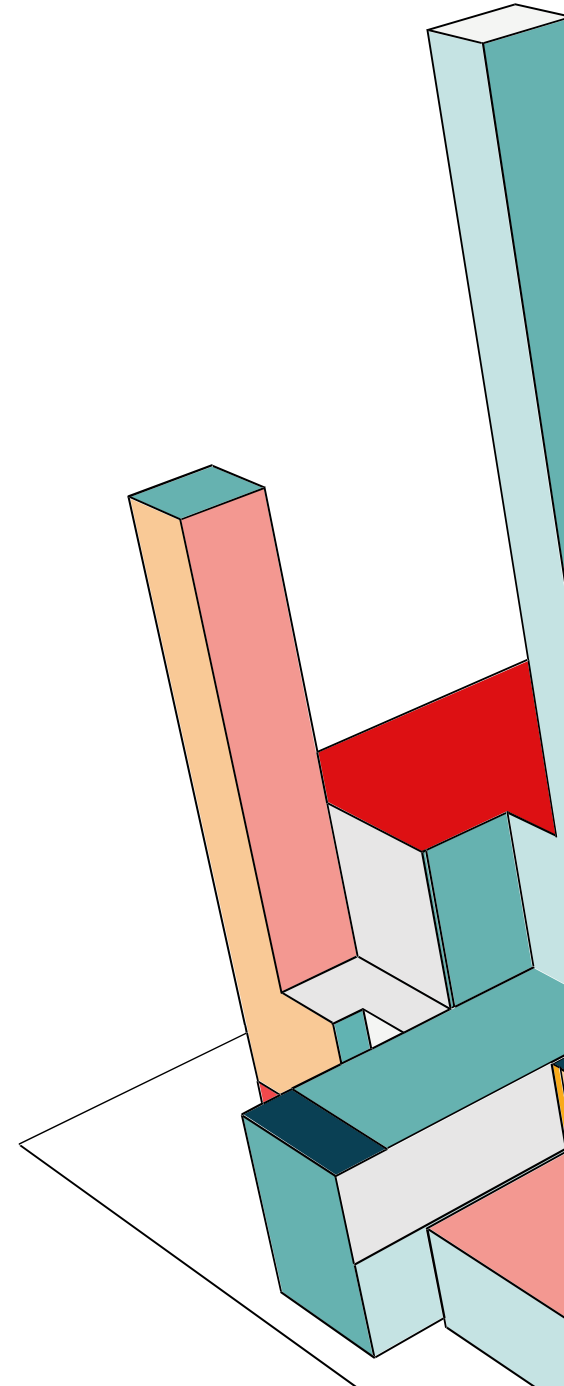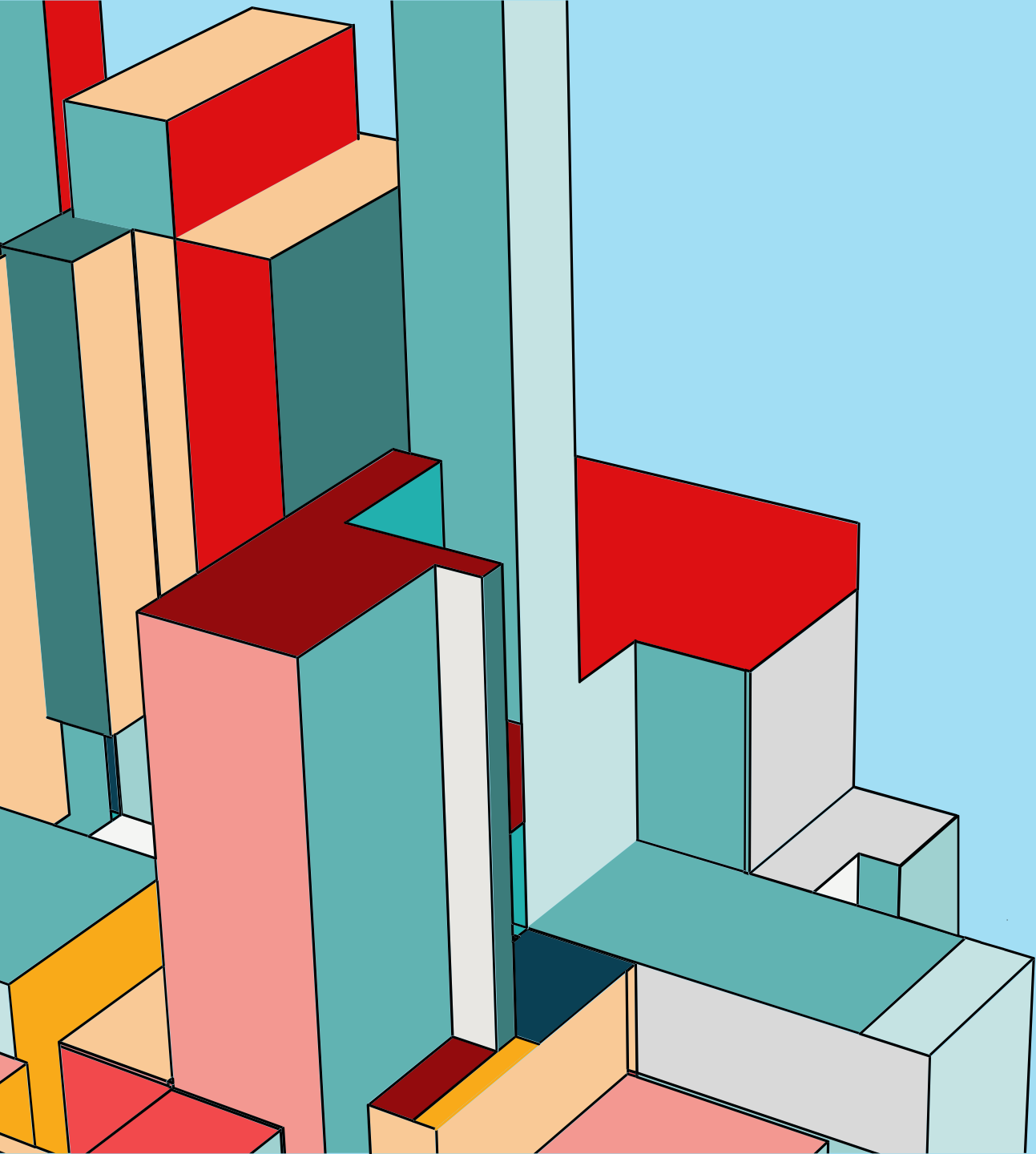
QUESTIONS?
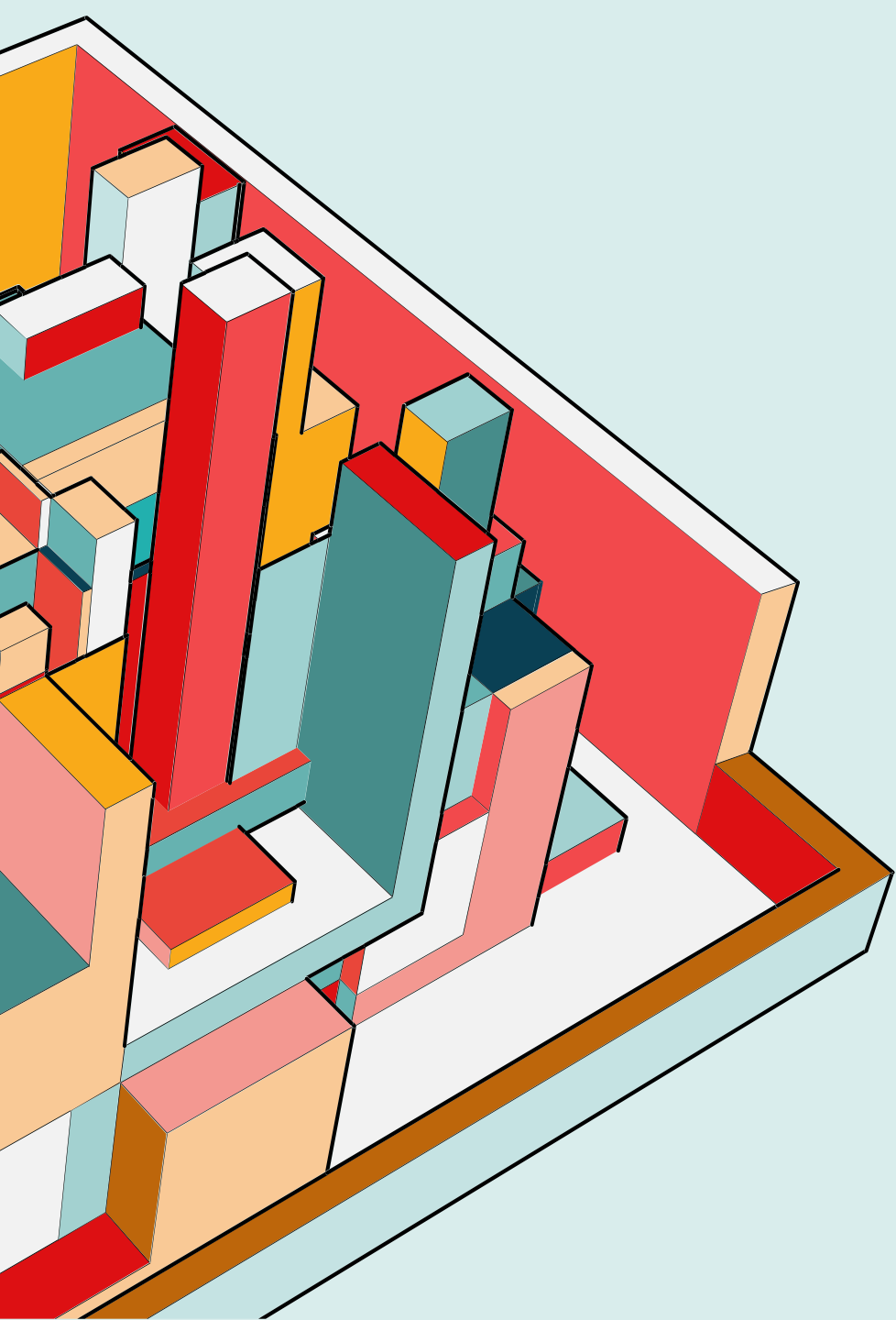
THANK YOU

Jim Pangburn

Thirdpartyreview@nysed.gov

518-473-2297