

Masonry Planning Policy (MPP) Program Battles Tilt Wall Strategically

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Is Tilt Wall Construction defined as masonry in a municipality? Well according to local municipal officials it all depends on how it is being used. If the tilt wall is only being used only as the structural component of a building, and will not serve as the veneer, then yes they consider it an allowable “masonry” structural component. But, a vast majority of cities (75%) in Texas with Masonry Planning Policies do not define Tilt Wall as an allowable masonry veneer.

The way the Masonry Planning Policy program has addressed this issue is by discouraging cities to allow tilt wall as a veneer, and encouraging all cities to require any tilt wall structural construction to be cover with a true masonry veneer laid up unit by unit and set in mortar. Unfortunately for masonry contractors and suppliers in Texas, tilt wall structural construction has become a widely accepted structural design for commercial construction. We are all familiar with the shortcomings of tilt wall structural construction, but those are shortcoming stories that need to be directed at architects, design builders, owners and general contractors who make the decisions about structural design. Municipal decision makers are typically only concerned about requiring true masonry veneers.

The Masonry Planning Policy program has been successful in getting true masonry veneer requirements into policies where structural tilt wall construction is allowed. For instance in McKinney, Texas, which was recently named the 2nd Best Place to Live in the US by *Money Magazine*, all tilt wall buildings must be covered with a true masonry veneer (see pictures). And in our Model Ordinance that the MPP program provides to municipal decision makers, it clearly states that all tilt walls must be covered by true masonry laid-up unit by unit by a mason.



Tilt wall construction being covered by true masonry. The Kroger shopping center at El Dorado and Custer Road in McKinney, Texas



Tilt wall before and after being covered with true masonry materials laid up unit by unit by a mason and set in mortar. The Kroger shopping center in McKinney, Texas.