

CAPSS Advisory Committee Meeting,

August 12, 2009

Summary Minutes

The meeting began with an update of the CAPSS team progress by Laura Samant:

- She mentioned that the next project report would be delivered to the City at the end of January 2010. This would be the task 2 report, *San Francisco's Earthquake Risk*, and it would be an updated version of the report prepared by the previous consultant team in 2001 through 2003. The project team is currently working to review specific technical issues associated with this report and to enhance how the results of the studies are presented. This would include presenting loss information in terms of building functionality and downtime and adding more socio-economic analysis.
- The project team has also made progress on task 3, updating post-earthquake repair and retrofit triggers. Bill Holmes, the leader of this task will present detailed information about this task in this meeting.
- The project team is also trying to anticipate the general areas where the CAPSS project may wish to make recommendations for mitigation, and to plan the types of analysis necessary to support these recommendations. The task 4 report, which will present mitigation recommendations for all types of privately owned buildings in the City, is due to the City at the end of June 2010. It is necessary to make plans for the analysis for this report now.
- John Paxton noted that the project team had very limited resources for Task 2, and the analysis was not being redone.

Bill Holmes gave a detailed presentation about progress on task 3, developing updated post-earthquake repair and retrofit triggers:

- The CAPSS contract has funds for detailed analysis of three buildings types. The work conducted for the three selected types will act as a model for what needs to be done for other building types.
- He presented a detailed list of possible building types that could be analyzed and reviewed issues associated with each.
- He recommended that the project analyze the following three buildings types for this task:
 - Wood frame 1 and 2 family residences
 - Wood frame residences with 3 or more residences
 - Older concrete buildings (pre 1973)
- He reviewed other issues that should be considered in this task, such as an overarching strategy, considering ground shaking in triggers, and FEMA compliance.
- More details of this presentation are available in the handout distributed at the meeting, posted at <http://www.sfcapss.org/advcommittee.shtml>.

During Bill Holmes' presentation, the following questions and comments came up:

- David Bonowitz, who is working to estimate the number of older concrete buildings in San Francisco, reported that he expected the number to be close to 3,000, but that this is still a work in progress. Perhaps 20% of these have already been retrofitted due to changes in occupancy or other reasons.
- It was noted that San Francisco considers concrete buildings constructed after May 21, 1973 to be "complying" buildings, which means that regardless of the level of damage they sustain in an earthquake, their owners will only be required to repair them, not to retrofit them. The Concrete Coalition generally considers the 1976 UBC code to be the time when design flaws in these buildings were corrected.
- Concrete and steel frame buildings with masonry infill were discussed. Estimates of the number of these buildings vary, with the upper estimate close to 1,000. This type of construction may have been favored for buildings over five stories (wood construction is prohibited above that height).
- The group discussed buildings constructed of both steel and concrete, and which category these "composite" buildings fell under. It was noted that many steel buildings have the steel encased in concrete for fireproofing, which changes their seismic performance.
- The group noted that residential UMB buildings with fewer than 4 units were exempted from the UMB retrofit ordinance, but that there were probably very few of these buildings. Small UMBs with commercial uses (such as auto repair shops) were included in the retrofit ordinance.
- The City's 1973 "complying buildings" date was discussed. It was noted that this date is unique to San Francisco. Other codes refer to ASCE 31 to define compliance, which presents benchmark years by model building type defining when each type is deemed "safe". For many building types, the consensus code date is after 1973.
- It was discussed whether red-tagging and retrofit triggers coincide. It was noted that a number of buildings in Oakland were damaged in Loma Prieta. The City required them to retrofit. The owners claimed they could not afford to do so, and the buildings, in downtown Oakland, remained empty for many years. Various social ills were attributed to their vacancy. San Francisco should try to avoid a similar situation.
- Bill Holmes clarified the goal of his work: to define clear and observable damage states that would allow engineers to consistently reach the same conclusions about whether a building needed to be retrofitted or repaired.
- David Bonowitz noted that the 2009 IBC will have upgrade triggers for lateral systems. Bill Holmes' slide titled "Issue 8" said this would occur in 2012.

Christine Deberry, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Mayor's Office, gave the committee an update on the City's response to the CAPSS report *Here Today-Here Tomorrow*:

- The Mayor's Office is ready to reintroduce legislation to encourage voluntary retrofits and fee waivers for soft-story buildings. Similar legislation went before the Board of Supervisors in 2008, but did not succeed because Supervisors asked for more clarification about which

buildings were covered and which fees would be waived. The Mayor's office sees this as a bridge to a mandatory program.

- The Mayor has indicated his support for a mandatory program in the press, but feels we need to be sensitive about when and how this is done due to the impact it will have on homeowners and businesses in the economic downturn.
- The City wants to launch a task force to look into this issue in detail, including members from this group and City staff. Someone from the Mayor's office should reach out in a couple of weeks to get this group organized.
- A question was asked about whether the Mayor supported repurposing UMB bond funds to cover retrofits for other types of buildings. She replied that the Mayor's office wants to look at this. This issue would likely need to go on the ballot, and the June or November 2010 elections are possible dates.
- The Blakeslee state measure to direct stimulus funds to support this type of retrofit was discussed. It was suggested that the Mayor's office should contact Blakeslee's office because this bill needs lobbying support.
- It was asked whether the Mayor's Office had looked at experiences of other cities, or the possibility of getting stimulus funding through FEMA. She replied that she had not looked into these issues, but others may have.
- It was asked how the committee could help move this issue forward, other than the task force. She replied that advocating for the voluntary program, helping educate the public about the importance of this issue, and conversing about this with City agencies would be helpful activities.
- It was asked what the Mayor's office thought about code requirements. She noted that the CAPSS report suggested three possible levels, and that this had been discussed but no decisions made. This would need to be discussed with DBI and others.
- It was asked whether the voluntary measure would allow owners to pass 100% of retrofit costs on to tenants. She answered that she did not think the voluntary measure addressed this issue.
- It was noted that waiving some parking requirements could help owners meet retrofit requirements.
- It was clarified that DBI does not get reimbursed for waived fees.
- She expressed willingness to share the voluntary legislation with the CAPSS committee before it was introduced to the Board of Supervisors.
- The Loma Prieta anniversary in two months was noted as an occasion where it would be good to announce progress relating to this program.

David Bonowitz requested committee members to view the website

<http://www.earthquakeretrofit.org/>

Two topics were postponed until the next meeting:

- Discussing committee priorities for the remainder of the project, and

- Discussing the draft letter to the Mayor's Office prepared by a committee member seeking an update on their response to the *Here Today-Here Tomorrow* report. Possibly this need for this letter has been superseded if discussion with the Mayor's Office continues.