

Notes from February 11, 2009 CAPSS Advisory Committee Meeting

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- Laurence Kornfield congratulated the ATC team on their work to prepare the CAPSS Task 6 report analyzing multi-family wood frame soft-story buildings and recommending measures to reduce their risk. He informed the committee that the report had not yet been released. DBI is working with the Mayor's Office and other City agencies to make sure that the details of the report are all in ship shape before it is released.
- The Mayor's Office has asked to hold a meeting with the CAPSS Advisory Committee in the next two weeks. DBI will be in touch about the schedule of that meeting. In this meeting, the committee can coordinate with the Mayor's Office and talk about the issues associated with this report and its recommendations. Probably the report will be released after this meeting.
- It was asked whether the Mayor's Office was supportive of the recommendation for a mandatory retrofit program. DBI staff said that they could not answer that, and that there were many critical elements in the report's recommendations, including incentives, funding mechanisms, etc.
- It was discussed that DBI should convene a smaller Working Group to develop the details of a how a soft-story program should be implemented.
- The issue of bond funding for seismic retrofits was discussed. Debra Walker mentioned that one City Supervisor might bring the issue of repurposing these funds for low-interest loans before a committee. This could be viewed as a stimulus for the city's slumping construction industry. The language in the 1992 ballot measure authorizing these funds for UMB buildings is rather simple, which will make it easy to change. Most of the complex conditions applied to UMB loans were developed outside of the voter process.
- Ned Fennie mentioned that the City should move forward quickly to adopt Code standards for these buildings, to allow people to begin voluntary retrofits. The Code Advisory Committee had discussed the issue in detail earlier in the day. They were conducting additional analysis of the CAPSS prototype buildings and were looking through DBI records for further examples of typical buildings.
- Jonas Ionin mentioned that FEMA grant funds might be available to support some retrofit work.
- The CAPSS project team made a presentation of changes that had been made to the CAPSS Task 6 report since the January 9 draft that committee members had seen. These changes were summarized in a memo distributed to the group.

- Questions were asked about the changes to the project's loss estimates based on the review by an independent Project Engineering Panel. The CAPSS team explained that the panel reviewed all of the elements that contributed to producing these loss estimates, analyzed how the results would change by changing various assumptions, and developed a range using a combination of analysis and professional judgment based on damage experienced due to Loma Prieta.
- It was asked whether planning incentives, such as density bonuses, would be allowable, or whether they were "spot zoning". The Planning Department representative stated that it was not clear how that would be implemented, but that conceivably it would be allowable to offer that kind of incentive.
- It was noted that the updated loss estimates make the outcome of retrofit 3 closer to SPUR's goal of 95% occupancy for a M7.2 San Andreas event. The CAPSS team clarified that the report recommended that the City adopt a standard that achieves the best performance possible while limiting work to the ground floor, except in exceptional cases. This would probably not quite achieve 95% occupancy after a major earthquake in these retrofitted buildings.
- It was noted that the database of potential soft story buildings compiled by DBI might have errors. It was recommended that the project team state in the report that it estimates that there are 4,400 wood frame buildings with three or more stories and five or more units built before the May 1973 code was in effect. It should clarify that all buildings meeting these conditions should be included in a City program, whether or not they appear on DBI's list.
- Tim Carrico requested, from a property owner's perspective, that if the City thought it might require work in upper stories in the future, that they outline what a building owner would need to do to be able to not have to redo work on the ground floor. This should be considered when code standards are developed.
- It was asked why recommended retrofits did not address liquefaction, and whether owners of buildings in hazard zones would be required to get a soils report when doing this work. It seems short sighted to spend a lot of effort retrofitting a building in a liquefaction zone if it wouldn't do any good. DBI answered that, in most cases, a soils report would not be required. Location in a liquefaction zone affects earthquake performance in a couple of key ways: (1) generally those areas experience stronger shaking that leads to more damage; and (2) soils can settle differentially, which can lead to buildings sinking or tipping. The code standards for retrofit should probably address the likely stronger shaking in these areas. Addressing the risk of tipping or sinking is very expensive. However, generally the types of retrofits being recommended in the CAPSS report can reduce or eliminate casualties; they cannot promise occupiability after liquefaction.
- Joe Maffei presented SPUR's recently released report, "The Resilient City". Joe was the lead author for the portion of that report on new buildings. There was an active

discussion about increasing seismic safety of new buildings, reducing fire risk, and other issues.