

Soft-Story Retrofit Policy Status Update

CED Committee - June 27, 2022
Item d(5)

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Management

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*Planning, Building and
Code Enforcement*

Background

- What is a Soft-Story building?
 - Existing wood frame, multi-unit residential building of two or more stories that contain 5 or more dwelling units, and the ground floor contains parking, large windows or garage doors, or other similar open floor or basement space, that causes soft, weak, or open-front wall lines.



Background

- Why are we concerned?
 - Due to the open nature of the lower-level walls, that level of the building is less able to resist an earthquake than the stories above.
 - These buildings have a greater than average risk of collapse during an earthquake, displacing and possibly physically endangering residents.



Background

- **2014**
 - City Council directed staff to explore ways to incentivize soft story building retrofits
- **2017**
 - City Council ranked the development of a soft story retrofit program as the City's overall 8th policy priority
- **2018**
 - Housing Department briefed City Council on the intent to submit a Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) application to support development of a soft story seismic retrofit incentive program
 - HMGP Application submitted to CalOES
- **2019**
 - Application forwarded to FEMA
- **2021**
 - April – contacted by FEMA to modify the grant application into two phases
 - June – revised application re-submitted
 - September – Phase 1 grant awarded

Phases

- **Phase 1**

- Inventory of Soft Story buildings
 - 1,100 structures, mostly with vulnerable low-income residents
- Development of the ordinance
 - Including both voluntary and mandatory measures
- Public outreach
 - Input on Ordinance
- Pilot submittals to FEMA

- **Phase 2**

- Construction retrofit work
 - Financial Support
 - Low disruption

Current Status

- **April 2022**

- Request for Proposal (RFP) launched to obtain consultant for much of the Phase 1 work.
- Staff member identified within current PBCE staff that meets FEMA's requirements for historic/environmental reviews.
 - Help streamline the future review process with FEMA

- **May 2022**

- RFP closed
- Respondents evaluated

- **June 2022**

- Oral interview conducted with finalists
- Consultant selected

Upcoming

- August 2022
 - August 9: return to Council with a memo to approve the proposed consultant to start work
- Winter 2022
 - Return to Council to discuss/approve the Soft Story Seismic Retrofit Ordinance
- Once Phase 1 work is complete, Phase 2 can start. Another Hazard Mitigation Grant Program application is not required.

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