

Calistoga Building Standards Advisory and Appeals Board
STAFF REPORT

TO Chair Coates and BSAAB Members
FROM Lynn Goldberg, Planning & Building Director
Clif Castle, Calistoga Building Official
MEETING DATE January 22, 2015
SUBJECT Proposed CMC Chapter 15.46, Seismic Retrofit Regulations

1 **ITEM**

2 Consider recommending to the City Council the adoption of seismic retrofit regulations
3 for unreinforced masonry buildings.

4 **BACKGROUND**

5 Identification of URM buildings

6 The State of California requires cities and counties to identify all buildings that could be
7 potentially hazardous during and after a seismic event, and adopt policies and
8 procedures to reduce or eliminate potentially-hazardous conditions.

9 As a first step in complying with state law, the Planning & Building Department identified
10 a number of structures within the city that could have at least one unreinforced masonry
11 wall (URM) and hired a testing firm to determine the presence or absence of steel
12 reinforcement (such as rebar) in these structures. In November, each building was
13 tested in four locations using ground-penetrating radar technology, which is similar to x-
14 raying.

15 As a result of the testing, property owners of potential URM buildings were notified in
16 writing that the Building Official had made this preliminary determination, and were
17 given 30 days to submit substantiating evidence, if any, that this determination was
18 erroneous. Several of the property owners were able to provide evidence that their
19 buildings were, in fact, reinforced.

20 At the conclusion of the 30-day period, the Building Official made a final determination
21 on URM buildings and advised their owners that they will be subject to the seismic
22 retrofit regulations that are currently being considered by the City. Five of the seven
23 buildings are classified as historic or appear to qualify as such (Attachment 2).

24 Draft seismic retrofit regulations

25 Staff surveyed a number of other jurisdictions' seismic retrofit regulations and
26 professional literature on the subject, and consulted with a member of the City
27 Attorney's office in drafting the proposed regulations.

28 **DISCUSSION**

29 The proposed regulations would provide procedures for the systematic review and
30 upgrading of unreinforced masonry buildings within the city to reduce the risk of death
31 and injury in the event of an earthquake. They are the minimum standards for structural
32 seismic resistance intended primarily to reduce the risk of life loss or injury on both
33 subject and adjacent properties, and will not necessarily prevent loss of life or injury or
34 prevent earthquake damage to a building that complies with the retrofit standards.

35 Within six months of receiving a notice from the Building Official to correct deficiencies
36 pursuant to the regulations, the property owner would be required to submit a building
37 permit accompanied by a seismic upgrade plan. The California Historical Building Code
38 may be used in conjunction with the seismic retrofit regulations where applicable.

39 Following the issuance of a building permit, construction would have to be commenced
40 within three months. The property owner work would be given three years from the date
41 of the notice to complete the work included in a seismic upgrade plan.

42 The draft regulations would require that nonstructural portions of a building that are
43 found to be dangerous to the extent that the life, health, property or safety of the public
44 or its occupants are endangered would have to be upgraded in accordance with the
45 City's Building Standards Codes. Tenants would also have to be notified that their
46 building may be structurally hazardous in the event of an earthquake.

47 **RECOMMENDATION**

48 Adopt the attached resolution.

49 **ATTACHMENTS**

- 50 1. Draft resolution
- 51 2. URM buildings inventory