



AGENDA REPORT

City Council

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| DATE: | May 27, 2025 |
| TO: | Mayor Martinez and Members of the City Council |
| FROM: | Councilmember Soheila Bana |
| Subject: | Seismic Retrofit Study and Program Development for Older Residential and Small Business Structures |
| FINANCIAL IMPACT: | Upon receipt of the RFP response, City staff will return with an update and a request for an appropriation. |
| PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION: | None |
| STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE: | <p>More than 15,000 homes in Richmond were built over 50 years ago—prior to the adoption of modern seismic building codes. Many of these properties may be at risk in the event of a major earthquake, particularly those with unreinforced masonry (URM) or soft-story construction. To proactively address this threat to life, property, and housing security, the City must undertake a comprehensive assessment and program design effort. Attached is a map identifying homes in Richmond that were built over 50 and 75 years ago, highlighting the scale and geographic distribution of this issue.</p> |
| RECOMMENDED ACTION: | <p>DIRECT City staff to initiate a Request for Proposals (RFP) to conduct a city-wide seismic vulnerability study and to develop an incentive and grant program for retrofitting high-risk buildings - Councilmember Soheila Bana (510-672-3490).</p> |

DISCUSSION:

More than 15,000 homes in Richmond were built over 50 years ago—prior to the adoption of modern seismic building codes. Many of these properties may be at risk in the event of a major earthquake, particularly those with unreinforced masonry (URM) or soft-story construction.

To proactively address this threat to life, property, and housing security, the City must undertake a comprehensive assessment and program design effort. Attached is a map identifying homes in Richmond that were built over 50 and 75 years ago, highlighting the scale and geographic distribution of this issue.

As part of the proposed RFP, it is suggested that the selected consultant shall perform a number of tasks, including but not limited to the following:

1. Conduct a citywide assessment estimating the number and types of residential and small business structures in need of seismic retrofitting
2. Identify and prioritize high-risk properties, such as soft-story and unreinforced masonry (URM) buildings, based on vulnerability factors and geographic distribution
3. Develop a comprehensive incentive plan to support earthquake retrofitting that includes:
 - Exploration of existing county, state, and federal grant programs (e.g., FEMA, Cal OES, CEA Brace + Bolt)
 - Strategies to connect property owners to these resources
 - Recommendations for potential local incentives or support programs

Goals of the Program:

- Protect lives and reduce injuries in the event of a major earthquake
- Minimize economic and housing displacement caused by structural damage
- Promote community awareness and equitable access to retrofitting resources

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:

Attachment 1 – List of California earthquake safety building codes and legislation enacted over the past 50 years

Attachment 2 – Parcel map of Richmond shaded by age of structure