

**TOWN OF SAN ANSELMO
STAFF REPORT
November 18, 2008**

For the meeting of November 25, 2008

TO: Town Council
FROM: Lisa Wight,  Planning and Building Director
Subject: Earthquake Retrofit Projects

RECOMMENDATION

That Council consider approval of the resolution authorizing the ABAG program and reducing permit fees for these specific voluntary earthquake retrofit improvements.

BACKGROUND

November 10, 2008: Resident and Civil Engineer Richard Stutsman gave a presentation of the earthquake retrofit plans prepared by ABAG. The ABAG plans are templates that are intended to make it easy for homeowners to have the work done and thereby help improve an older home's chances of surviving an earthquake. Staff was directed to return at this meeting with more information about possible permit fee reductions that would be an incentive to property owners to do the voluntary retrofit work and with a resolution endorsing the program.

DISCUSSION

ABAG has concluded that most homeowners are not retrofitting and those that retrofit are not doing all the work needed to significantly change the likelihood that their homes will be habitable following future earthquakes. One of the problems that homeowners mentioned in an ABAG survey was that they did not know what to do. This plan set is a tool to help homeowners know what needs to be done and it can be easily individualized for a site specific project. The ABAG plan set covers the following earthquake retrofit work under residential structures: foundation anchor bolts, cripple wall plywood panels, and lateral load straps.

Most other jurisdictions in Marin County have not yet reviewed the available ABAG retrofit plans and none waive permit fees for voluntary retrofitting.

PROPOSAL

The Town would encourage residential property owners to perform this seismic retrofit work on homes by advertising the ABAG standard plan set template.

The Town would waive permit fees for voluntary residential retrofitting where it is not required due to other site construction. This would likely encourage participation. Staff recommends this fee waiver only be applied to voluntary retrofitting and not in conjunction with remodeling and additions that trigger required retrofitting.

FISCAL IMPACT

Fees for seismic retrofit work are based on the value of the project, as declared by the property owner. For a \$15,000 seismic retrofit project, the full permit fees would be approximately \$700 and for a \$10,000 project, the full permit fees would be approximately \$500. This loss of revenue could be absorbed by a minor increase in other permit fees.

attachments: Resolution of Approval
Town Council minutes dated November 10, 2008
ABAG retrofit instructions

ITEM #7

**TOWN OF SAN ANSELMO
RESOLUTION NO. _____**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF SAN ANSELMO
AUTHORIZING THE ABAG PROGRAM FOR VOLUNTARY RESIDENTIAL
RETROFITTING AND WAIVED PERMIT FEES FOR SPECIFIC VOLUNTARY
EARTHQUAKE RETROFIT IMPROVEMENTS**

WHEREAS, San Anselmo is subject to various earthquake-related hazards including very violent ground shaking; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Geological Survey has found that there is 62 percent chance that one or more earthquakes of magnitude 6.7 or greater will occur on one of several active faults in the Bay Area in the next 20 years; and

WHEREAS, the Town of San Anselmo seeks to maintain and enhance a disaster-resistant community by reducing the potential loss of life, property damage, and environmental degradation from natural disasters, while accelerating economic recovery from those disasters; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council finds that unbraced or inadequately braced cripple wall houses in San Anselmo represent a significant earthquake risk to the safety of residents and their property; and

WHEREAS, a plan set to address seismic strengthening of wood-frame residential buildings has been developed by a committee representing ABAG's Earthquake Program, building contractors, the California Building Officials (CALBO), the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute (EERI) Northern California Chapter, the International Code Council (ICC) Tri-Chapters (East Bay, Peninsula, Monterey Bay), and committees of the Structural Engineers Association of Northern California (SEAONC).

WHEREAS, the Town Council sees an opportunity to encourage voluntary retrofitting by encouraging the use of the ABAG plan set template and by waiving the permit fees.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Town Council hereby endorses "Standard Plan A: Residential Seismic Strengthening Plan" as a prescriptive seismic strengthening plan for cripple wall bracing and foundation sill plate anchorage of light wood-framed residential structures not more than two stories in height and containing not more than two dwelling units.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Council intends to encourage and promote its use as a minimum standard for seismic retrofitting and to waive all / waive 50 percent of construction permit fees for voluntary retrofitting.

AYES:
NOES:
ABSENT:

Ted Freeman, Mayor

Barbara Chambers, Town Clerk

M/s, Breen/House to appoint Denise Young to the Parks & Recreation Commission.
Ayes: Breen, Freeman, House, Thornton Abstain: Greene

3) RECEIVE ORAL PRESENTATION ON EARTHQUAKE RETROFIT PROGRAM USING THE ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA GOVERNMENTS (ABAG) EARTHQUAKE SEISMIC RETROFIT PLANS

The Council received an oral presentation on earthquake retrofit program using the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) earthquake seismic retrofit plans from Richard Stutsman.

Councilmember Greene requested more information on incentives and how to employ the program. Greene also asked if the program would be “incentive only” or if the retrofit would be mandatory depending on the degree of remodeling.

Building and Planning Director Lisa Wight responded that this program is voluntary. When a homeowner is adding onto a structure, depending on the work, some retrofit work may be required by the building code.

In response to Greene’s inquiry of whether an entire house would be required to be retrofitted if a homeowner wanted to remodel, Wight responded that there was a good chance that the entire house would have to be seismically retrofitted during a remodel.

Councilmember Thornton asked if seismic retrofitting was a building code or planning issue, and Town Manager Debra Stutsman stated that the purpose was to attract homeowners who are not currently remodeling and encouraging them to voluntarily retrofit their homes. Stutsman stated that the incentive was for that group.

Mayor Freeman stated that a reference was made to older homes, and asked if newer homes have been retrofitted. Stutsman said newer homes are more likely to have bracing but the building codes tend to change after major events and the building code was recently modified. Stutsman stated that the goal was to give homeowners of older homes a quick and fairly inexpensive way to bring their homes up to standard.

Thornton stated that it is a good idea to prepare a resolution to implement in San Anselmo for those homes that are not being remodeled, but want to be seismically retrofitted. Thornton also stated that she would like to see the range of the building permit fees, in order to possibly consider waiving or reducing them.

Councilmember House stated that she concurred with the comments of the rest of the Council.

Greene stated that he could support the program as long as it was a voluntary program. Greene further said that he would like more information if the program would be tied to remodeling projects.

Vice Mayor Breen said that he felt it was a good program.

Stutsman stated that staff would come back before the Council with a staff report which would include a listing of current fees for this type of work and a proposed resolution.

4. INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE APPROVING THE MARIN ENERGY AUTHORITY JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT AND AUTHORIZING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A COMMUNITY CHOICE AGGREGATION PROGRAM, CONDUCT A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE ORDINANCE AND DIRECT THE TOWN MANAGER TO READ THE ORDINANCE BY TITLE ONLY.

Town Manager Debra Stutsman presented the staff report noting that the ordinance authorizes the adopting agency to enter into the Joint Powers Agreement. Stutsman also noted that there were several noteworthy atypical features, including a two tier voting system. Stutsman stated that the ordinance would signal that the Town is participating in the CCA program. Stutsman also informed the Council that there would be no fiscal impact to San Anselmo if it adopted the Ordinance to form the Marin Energy Authority.

Councilmember Thornton asked about the tier voting system and Tim Rosenfeld, County of Marin stated that the first vote is a majority vote.

Vice Mayor Breen stated that he'd heard that San Joaquin had been unsuccessful in finding an energy provider and Rosenfeld stated San Joaquin had chosen Citigroup Energy, but that there were various issues that delayed the process. Rosenfeld stated that PG&E created problems and delays and that there were also unresolved issues at the Public Utilities Commission.

In response to Stutsman's statement that there would be no immediate financial risk to the Town, Greene asked what financial risk the citizens of San Anselmo would be exposed to if the ordinance was approved and there was a commitment to a contract with an energy service provider.

Rosenfeld stated that there would be no risk at any time to any citizens of San Anselmo.

Greene asked if there would be an exit fee if a consumer chose to participate in the program and later decided they didn't like the program.

Rosenfeld stated that he wasn't absolutely sure there would be an exit fee, and if so, only under certain conditions. Greene asked if that policy had been defined and Rosenfeld stated that it would be defined under actual conditions.

In response to Greene's inquiry of whether to Rosenfeld's knowledge there would be any possibility that the JPA would be employed in the future to sponsor and attempt to impose any sort of tax on its ratepayers, Rosenfeld stated that the legal answer would be



Standard Plan Set for Residential Seismic Retrofitting

What Is the Plan Set?

This plan set is a "blueprint" version of a prescriptive ("cookbook") standard for strengthening homes to better withstand earthquake shaking. When approved by the local building official, the plan set may be used to strengthen older homes without the need for costly site-specific plans and design calculations. This plan set provides a low-cost method to help improve an older home's chances of surviving an earthquake.

Why Is the Plan Set Needed?

ABAG concluded that most homeowners are not retrofitting - and those that retrofit are not doing all the work needed to significantly change the likelihood that their homes will be habitable following future earthquakes. One of the problems that homeowners mentioned in an ABAG survey was that they did not know what to do. This plan set is a tool to help homeowners know what needs to be done. They can use the plan set to get bids from contractors, or, if experienced, can do the work themselves.

DOWNLOAD Standard Plan Set A - Large Sheets for Seismic Retrofit of Single-Family Wood-Frame Homes

NOTE - ABAG's Executive Board adopted the 2008 version of this plan set on Sept. 18, 2008. Therefore, the files on this page have been updated.

These sheets are difficult to view on a computer screen, but are suitable for providing to your city or county building department to obtain a building permit.

Standard Plan A - Page 1 - an Adobe Acrobat PDF file - 24" x 36" - but legible on 11" x 18" paper

Standard Plan A - Page 2 - an Adobe Acrobat PDF file - 24" x 36" - but legible on 11" x 18" paper

MORE Frequently Asked Questions

Why 24" x 36" and how do I print these large sheets? And how many of these sheets do I need to submit to my

The plan set is two sheets, each of which is 24" x 36." This size is standard for plans required by city and county building departments for permits. You can view the plan set on your computer. However, most people don't have the capability of printing

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**building
department?**

these large sheets. You can email them to your local copy shop or download them to a CD and take them to your local copy shop to make copies. However, they are legible when printed on 11" x 18" paper.

In addition, we are working with city and county building departments to make the plans available at their counters. **Berkeley, El Cerrito, Hayward, Livermore, Newark, Oakland, and San Leandro** have these plan sets available at the counters of their building departments.

The plan set states that the applicant for a permit should submit two copies of the plan set to the building department. Some cities and counties may have different requirements. **Be sure and check with your local building department to confirm that this is the correct number of plan sets required.**

**Who developed the
plan set?**

The plan set was developed by a committee representing the East Bay, Peninsula, and Monterey Bay chapters of the International Code Council (ICC), along with representatives from the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Earthquake Program, the Structural Engineers Association of Northern California (SEAONC) Existing Buildings, Seismology and Structural Standards Committees, the California Building Officials (CALBO) Seismic Safety and Emergency Preparedness Committees, the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute (EERI) Northern California Chapter, and building contractors specializing in home retrofit.

**Why does the plan
set allow use of
either 1/2 inch or 5/8
inch bolts, while the
2008 code only
discusses the use of
5/8 inch bolts?**

The plans intentionally allow the use of EITHER 1/2" or 5/8" bolts. The calculations in the plan set table were run for both types of bolts. Because the 1/2" bolts are smaller in diameter, more of these bolts are required than if 5/8" bolts are used. Both should be acceptable for use for an engineered design, which this is. While 5/8" bolts are a default value for conventional new construction, the use of 1/2" bolts is actually preferred by many as the demand on an existing foundation and

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mudsill at the specific point where the bolt enters the mudsill and foundation is actually a bit less.

Is it a mistake, or does the plan set require use of 3 x 3 x 0.25 inch washers, while the 2008 code requires use of 3 x 3 x 0.229 inch washers?

Either thickness of washers is acceptable. The key is that they should be 3" by 3" rectangular washers, not the thin round ones usually present in existing older homes.

The plan set allows the use of expansion anchors, but most people don't have copies of the ICC ES report for detailed information on how many might be required. Is this an issue?

Those developing the plan set had access to the ICC ES report on expansion anchors. The calculations for how many anchors are required has, therefore, already been performed.

Has ABAG itself acted in support of the plan set?

Yes, ABAG's Executive Board passed a resolution at its December 2004 meeting in support of the original version of this plan set. A second resolution, adopted at its September 2008 meeting in support of the 2008 version of the revised plan set, was passed in support of the revised version of this plan set.




ABAG, the Association of Bay Area Governments, is the regional planning and services agency for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area.

This page was last updated 11/6/08 by jbp.

**TOWN OF SAN ANSELMO
STAFF REPORT**

November 20, 2008

For the meeting of November 25, 2008

TO: Town Council
FROM: Lisa Wight,  Planning and Building Director
Subject: Appointment of Two Councilmembers to a Housing Element Subcommittee

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council establish a 5-member Housing Element Subcommittee consisting of two Councilmembers, two Planning Commissioners and one local person to meet approximately 4 times beginning in January 2009.
2. Appoint of two Councilmembers to the subcommittee.

BACKGROUND

2004: A 2004 Housing Element Subcommittee was appointed by the Town Council and included two Councilmembers, two Planning Commissioners, and Betty Padgett, a Fairfax resident who worked at the Ecumenical Association of Housing.

DISCUSSION

State law requires that the Housing Element of the General Plan of every local jurisdiction be updated every five years, which is due June 30, 2009 for those jurisdictions in the Bay Area (per the California Department of Housing and Community Development).

The 2004 Subcommittee provided valuable input and good direction in preparing the documents for the community workshops and public hearings, which is what we anticipate for the new subcommittee.

Staff hopes to schedule the appointment of the two Planning Commissioners on their December 1st agenda. Unless there is specific direction from the Council to appoint a particular individual to the subcommittee, staff would like to appoint an individual involved with affordable housing.