

Mandatory Seismic Upgrading Bylaws

Planning and Land Use Committee – July 23, 2015



2015-2018 City Strategic Plan Objective

- Council identified a specific 2015 action under Objective 12: Plan for Emergencies Including Climate Change, Short and Long Term, as follows:

“Explore potential for City to require upgrades to heritage buildings for seismic protection even where use is not changed, combined with subsidy program.”

Examples from the United States

- City of Los Angeles
 - In force since 1981
- City of San Francisco
 - In force since 1992
 - Addition mandatory upgrade bylaw enacted in 2013
- City of Seattle
 - Repealed in 1973

Municipal Authority in British Columbia

- *Community Charter*
 - Grants municipal governments authority to regulate building “local building requirements”
- *Building Act – Bill 3*
 - Will eliminate the “concurrent authority” powers under the *Community Charter*
 - Includes a 2-year transitional period

Impacts of Mandatory Upgrades

- Ensure heritage and unreinforced structures are up to code and perform better in case of earthquake
- Potential to create major disincentive for redevelopment of heritage/unreinforced buildings
- Provincial funding or cost-sharing program necessary to reduce financial burden

Recommendation

Engage with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) to advocate to the Provincial Government for the following:

1. Provincial policy changes that would support mandatory seismic upgrading of existing buildings within earthquake-prone regions.
2. Examination of policy impacts to ensure regulations do not create an excessive financial disincentive for property-owners to upgrade heritage and unreinforced structures.