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**Unreinforced Masonry (URM) Seismic Retrofit Project
Committee Kick-Off Meeting
December 10, 2014, 1-3 PM, Rose Room, City Hall**

Committee members and staff in attendance:

David Bugni (Retrofit Standards Committee (RS))
Kristen Conner (Finance Committee (F))
Jennifer Cooperman (F and OMF staff)
Dan Douthit (PBEM Staff)
Brian Emerick (RS)
Peter Englander (PDC staff)
Shelly Haack (PDC staff)
Michael Hagerty (RS)
Sarah Harpole (PDC staff)
Amit Kumar (BDS staff)
Ian Madin (RS)

Carmen Merlo (PBEM Director)
Steve Novick (City Commissioner)
Jonna Papaefthimiou (PBEM staff)
Andy Peterson (BDS staff)
Steve Rose (F)
Colin Rowan (F)
Ken Rust (OMF staff)
Paul Scarlett (BDS Director)
Alyson Schwieger (PDC staff)
John Tess (RS)
Eric Thomas (BDS staff)
Mark Tobin (RS)

Guests:

Gwenn Baldwin

Meeting Summary

Steve Novick welcomed the group: "This is as important a task force as the city has ever had."

Carmen Merlo echoed the Commissioner's thanks and provided background:

URM buildings are very vulnerable in an earthquake, and also essential to our recovery. When they fail, they tend to do so catastrophically which generates debris, blocks emergency routes, damages neighboring property, and cannot be reoccupied.

There is a long history of quakes here and a strong consensus that they will happen again.

In the 1990s there were code updates but less than 15% of known URMS have been retrofitted since then.

Council directed staff to work on this issue; a Council work session was conducted in June 2014. We are looking to develop codes, incentives, and report back to Council. Final recommendations will go to Council by fall 2016.

Some good news: PBEM secured funding to hire a BDS engineer to update the URM database. We expect that to take 12-18 months.

Amit Kumar: Thank you for doing this work! I will give a brief background on our current practices and best practices from other jurisdictions. [Refer to PowerPoint presentation posted to website.]

Shelly Haack: 83% of fatalities in Christchurch were passersby (on sidewalk or in car). Puts it into perspective; not just people who occupy these buildings are at risk.

Merlo: 42 people died from URMs, mostly not building occupants. Threat is to the public, not just people in the building.

Andy Peterson: Goal is to bring buildings up to a better standard. We haven't seen movement in past 20 years. Some considerations about technical standards:

These buildings play an important role to the historical fabric of neighborhoods. We want to maintain them if we can.

We may have different focus or expectations for different building types. Our purpose is to generate recommendations that are right for Portland, starting with our own experience and learning from best practices. These recommendations will go to Finance and Policy committees.

The short version: the Retrofit Standards Committee has free reign based on what's best for us to make buildings safer and not be constrained financially. We will look at those issues later on. These buildings have to be safe enough to protect residents, passers-by; keep in mind the vulnerable populations that are impacted.

Questions and answers elicited:

The group may recommend different standards for different buildings.

There is a budget of \$200,000 to update the inventory. We are building on the existing inventory, not starting from scratch.

Inventory will be completed by some admin support staff and an engineer, with help from Fire Inspectors who also visit many buildings annually.

It is difficult to determine if a building is a URM from a drive-by. City may assume the worst and invite the owner to provide information to the contrary. In general, building owners will have the opportunity to give input. The City may take buildings off the inventory, but the original inventory may have missed some URM buildings.

The existing inventory is incomplete – the permit sets are up to date but we know inventory is not. It is key to integrate the permit database and the URM building inventory. And there will

be categories; some buildings have no changes but many have some changes, an agreement to change in the future, a limited retrofit, etc.

The Retrofit Standards Committee will advise on inventory practices.

The DOGAMI process of inventorying critical buildings statewide may provide a model. That cost \$600,000--about \$100/building. There is also a national standard we could use.

There should be a written standardized questionnaire that's appropriate to the expertise of the person using it, and also allows them to report everything they see.

Another challenge is to classify by occupancy. We might have different methodology depending on building occupancy.

Haack: After Retrofit Standards Committee meets, the Finance Committee will meet to develop a suite of incentives.

Paul Scarlett: Something needs to be addressed that is between these two committees: violations. How do we deal with un-permitted work we find when we are updating the inventory?

Jonna Papaefthimiou: I will be staffing the committee and providing support for group. [Review of the work plan – posted to website.]

Questions and answers elicited:

The group's recommendations should also go to the following committees:

- Development Review Advisory Committee (DRAC)
- Landmarks Commission
- Design Commission
- Planning and Sustainability Commission

These groups should see the project twice; at the beginning of the Policy Committee's work, and again when it is near completion.

The inventory and incentives data together will lead to cost estimates to do the work. This information is important to the Finance Committee; the work plan should include time for these groups to work together.

Cost estimates could also come from contractors or from costs for recent work to update public buildings (since these costs are public).

Papaefthimiou: Will update the work plan to reflect suggestions. Committee members are welcome to email any additional questions or suggestions.

Meeting ended at 2:30 pm.