

SUMMARY and FISCAL NOTE*

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** Note that the Summary and Fiscal Note describes the version of the bill or resolution as introduced; final legislation including amendments may not be fully described.*

1. BILL SUMMARY

Legislation Title: A RESOLUTION declaring the City Council’s and the Mayor’s intent to recognize the seismic retrofit of unreinforced masonry buildings in compliance with the City’s URM Retrofit Technical Standard.

Summary and Background of the Legislation:

In 2021, the City Council passed [Resolution 32033](#) establishing the framework for a mandatory retrofit ordinance for Seattle’s 1,100 unreinforced masonry (URM) buildings. That legislation directed the creation of a seismic retrofit standard required to bring URM into compliance. The Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) has created a Draft URM Retrofit Technical Standard and adopted components through Director’s Rule 6-2023.

SDCI proposes this resolution to establish a workplan forming a Voluntary URM Seismic Retrofit Ordinance using the Technical Standard to inform compliance. Adopting this Resolution will provide transparency to building owners and developers, demonstrating the City’s intent to pursue URM legislation based on Director’s Rule 6-2023 and the Draft URM Retrofit Technical Standard.

2. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Does this legislation create, fund, or amend a CIP Project? Yes No

3. SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Does this legislation amend the Adopted Budget? Yes No

Does the legislation have other financial impacts to The City of Seattle that are not reflected in the above, including direct or indirect, short-term or long-term costs?

This legislation does not have financial impacts to The City.

Are there financial costs or other impacts of *not* implementing the legislation?

Building owners are hesitant to conduct upgrades to their buildings without assurance their seismic improvements will meet the standards of future legislation. As a result, failure to adopt this legislation may result in delayed building upgrades. Additionally, Seattle has an 86% chance of experiencing a damaging earthquake in the next 50 years. Delayed

implementation of this legislation can result in increased fatalities, injuries, and property damage in the event of an earthquake.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

a. Does this legislation affect any departments besides the originating department?

This legislation does not affect any departments besides the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI).

b. Is a public hearing required for this legislation?

A public hearing is not required for this legislation.

c. Is publication of notice with *The Daily Journal of Commerce* and/or *The Seattle Times* required for this legislation?

A publication of notice is not required for this legislation.

d. Does this legislation affect a piece of property?

This Resolution does not affect a piece of property. Future legislation developed in accordance with this Resolution will provide a voluntary seismic retrofit option that may impact owners of Unreinforced Masonry (URM) buildings choosing to conduct earthquake retrofits.

e. Please describe any perceived implication for the principles of the Race and Social Justice Initiative. Does this legislation impact vulnerable or historically disadvantaged communities? What is the Language Access plan for any communications to the public?

According to the City’s Socioeconomic Disadvantage Index, which combines information on race, ethnicity, and related demographics on socioeconomic and health disadvantages like income, education, and disabilities, more than half of Seattle’s Unreinforced Masonry (URM) buildings are located in the “Disadvantaged” and “Most Disadvantaged” areas suggesting that an earthquake will disproportionately impact lower income neighborhoods and marginalized communities. This Resolution directs SDCI to adopt a future ordinance informed by SDCI’s Draft URM Retrofit Technical Standard. The intent of this Standard is to minimize cost of design while reducing the risk of collapse and loss of life.

Resolution 32033 requested SDCI prepare a communication strategy and conduct community outreach and engagement with a focus on communities of color and low-income communities who may be disproportionately impacted by earthquake damage to URMs and

the retrofit requirement. This work remains in SDCI's workplan where discussions about translation services, community champions, and relationship building are ongoing.

f. Climate Change Implications

1. Emissions: Is this legislation likely to increase or decrease carbon emissions in a material way?

Failure to retrofit URM buildings may result in their collapse or demolition post-earthquake. After the February 2023 earthquake in Turkey, the country is coping with 210 million tons of toxic debris from collapsed buildings. This debris produces the equivalent emissions of 1.05 billion cars. This does not include the carbon emissions associated with the design and build process of new construction needed to replace demolished infrastructure. This Resolution supports the advancement of a URM retrofit program to reduce building collapse post-earthquake thus reducing post-quake emissions for debris removal, storage, and rebuilding.

2. Resiliency: Will the action(s) proposed by this legislation increase or decrease Seattle's resiliency (or ability to adapt) to climate change in a material way? If so, explain. If it is likely to decrease resiliency in a material way, describe what will or could be done to mitigate the effects.

This Resolution supports Seattle's resilience to earthquakes and climate change by reducing property damage and post-quake carbon emissions. Additionally, messaging for the URM program will encourage building owners to combine energy efficiency upgrades with seismic retrofits to achieve holistic resilience.

g. If this legislation includes a new initiative or a major programmatic expansion: What are the specific long-term and measurable goal(s) of the program? How will this legislation help achieve the program's desired goal(s)?

Long-term goals of the URM program are to improve the city's resilience to earthquakes by reducing death and destruction associated with collapse-prone buildings. Success will be measured by the number of buildings conducting improvements that meet compliance with a minimum seismic safety standard. This legislation supports the adoption of a seismic safety standard through a future voluntary URM Retrofit ordinance.