



DRAFT MINUTES

Regular Meeting of the CODE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DATE: April 9, 2025 (Wednesday)

TIME: 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

LOCATION: 49 South Van Ness Ave, 2nd Floor, Room 0271

Note: Public comment is welcome and will be heard during each agenda item. Reference documents relating to agenda are available for review at the 49 South Van Ness Ave, 2nd Floor, TSD Counter. For information, please email ken.hu@sfgov.org.

Present

Ned Fennie, A.I.A, Chair
Stephen Harris, S.E., Vice-Chair
Paul Staley
Ira Dorter
John Tostanoski
Zachary Nathan, AIA, CASp
Arnie Lerner, FAIA, CASp
Gina Centoni
Jim Reed
Don Libbey, P.E.
Jonathan Rodriguez
Deepak Patankar, AIA, LEED AP
Brian Salyers
Marc Cunningham
Henry Karnilowicz

Excused

Tony Sanchez-Corea
Rene’ Vignos, S.E.

Absent

Others Present

Thomas Fessler, DBI
Laurel Matthews, ORCP
Public, Public

Tate Hanna, DBI
Ken Hu, DBI

Melissa Higbee, ORCP
Joe Maffei, ATC

1.0 The meeting was called to order. Roll call found a quorum of committee members were present.

2.0 Approval of the minutes of the Code Advisory Committee regular meeting of March 12, 2025.

- Amendments:
 - On Page 3, the 14th bullet point, the first sentence was modified as follows: "The list of potential subject buildings is still being finalized."
 - On Page 3, the second-to-last bullet point, the paragraph was modified as follows: "Compliance Threshold: The triggered retrofit provisions of the 2007 (or later) SFBC or those of the 2016 SFEBC (or later) serve as the benchmarks for recognizing previous retrofits as compliant."
 - On Page 6, the last sentence of the Administrative & General Design and Disability Access Subcommittee section was modified as follows: "Additionally, there was a discussion regarding the start of tolling for the expiration of permits."
 - On Page 6, in the last sentence of the Structural Subcommittee, the word "propose" should be corrected to "proposed."
- A motion was made to approve the minutes with the above amendments.
- Seconded and approved.

3.0 Discussion and possible action regarding proposed ordinance for amending the Existing Building Code to assess the City's inventory of seismically vulnerable Rigid-Wall-Flexible-Diaphragm and Concrete Buildings, and adopt voluntary seismic retrofit standards for such buildings. (File No. 250211)

The possible action would be to make a recommendation to the Building Inspection Commission for their further action.

Discussion:

- The Structural Subcommittee held a meeting the day before and discussed new edits.
- Melissa Higbee from the Office of Resilience and Capital Planning presented the context of the legislation.
- Joe Maffei from the Applied Technology Council (ATC) introduced the program:
 - The Concrete Building Safety Program began in 2020 and evolved over five years from a proposed mandatory ordinance to a voluntary one after extensive stakeholder and engineering input.
 - The voluntary ordinance provides clarity for building owners on retrofit requirements and offers a 20-year compliance extension if followed.
 - Significant interest and feedback from the structural engineering community influenced the ordinance's development.
 - The current draft reflects revisions by the City Attorney, forming the basis for ongoing updates.
- CAC Vice Chair Stephen Harris provided more details about the ordinance:
 - The ordinance has two main parts: identifying suspected concrete buildings via a required online form and establishing a voluntary retrofit path.
 - Being on the list doesn't impose immediate requirements, but flagged buildings could be subject to future mandatory ordinances.
 - Voluntary retrofit provisions for concrete buildings are proposed in Appendix A6 of the SFEBC; tilt-up buildings are already covered under Appendix A2 of the CEBC.
 - Two retrofit options (A and B) are outlined. Option A is similar to Option B, except that the force levels are lower and it includes additional safety measures addressing

known collapse risks. Option B is a regular retrofit designed to comply with SFEBC Section 304.4.3.

- Laurel Matthews from the Office of Resilience and Capital Planning presented the new edits to the proposed ordinance.
 - A 20-year exemption period was added for buildings that retrofit to the required level.
 - Changes were made to specify that "work" refers to evaluations and design work, not actual construction, and adjustments were made to clarify requirements for subject buildings.
 - The requirement for engineers to provide professional opinions on voluntary measures was removed due to liability concerns.
- The administrative bulletin includes detailed discussions on processes and the "seven deadly sins" with specific code provisions and commentary, derived from long-standing technical content developed in parallel with the ordinance and originally included as commentary rather than ordinance language.
- A list of key community and committee concerns—including financing, tenant relocation, process issues, and microfiche access—was compiled and categorized into recommendations, conditional considerations for a future mandate, and summarized concerns from the working group, intended for inclusion in a draft letter accompanying the committee's recommendation.
- The initial inventory of possible concrete buildings, compiled from various sources and volunteer efforts, listed about 3,400 buildings but included many inaccuracies; a partial review suggested the actual number may be closer to 1,500–2,000.
- The ordinance targets the most seismically dangerous class of buildings—non-ductile concrete structures—which pose significantly higher collapse and fatality risks in earthquakes.
- Insurance concerns are a factor influencing some building owners to consider retrofitting due to increased premiums for identified concrete buildings. There's potential for educational outreach to inform owners about insurance implications.
- Demolition and rebuild may be a more financially viable option for some building owners, especially for commercial properties.
- There is interest in reducing barriers to demolition, particularly in light of proposed zoning changes along transit corridors.
- It was suggested that the group should concentrate on the current inventory assessment of concrete buildings and defer broader retrofit or mandate-related discussions.
- Disagreement was expressed with deferring broader discussion; the suggestion was to begin by outlining the benefits of the ordinance.
- It was emphasized that while the ordinance is currently voluntary, most people believe it to be mandatory, so clarification is needed. Framing the conversation this way maintains credibility and sets a reasonable tone for public understanding.
- Even if only ten buildings participate voluntarily at the start, it's still an improvement, potentially protecting many people from catastrophic collapses.
- Early adopters who have voluntarily retrofitted have done so with some uncertainty, but now, with assurance of protection for 20 years, owners can make more reliable decisions.
- There is a press plan in place for the ordinance's release, including a press release after the major decision is made.
- A website for the program exists, though it won't be fully operational until six months after the ordinance's passage, as screening forms and other materials are finalized.

- DBI is currently training in-house engineers on the ASCE 41 provisions to assist with voluntary retrofitting.

Public Comment:

- No public comment.

Action:

- A motion was made to approve the proposed ordinance as amended.
 - The motion was seconded and approved.
- A motion was made to write the letter to the Building Inspection Commission, incorporating revisions to reword the term "compliance" to "retrofit progress" within the statement.
 - The motion was seconded and approved, with one vote in opposition.

4.0 Review of communication items. The Committee may discuss or acknowledge communication items received for discussion.

4.1 CAC seats expire on August 10, 2025

- Members were reminded to check their emails for a message from BIC Secretary Sonya Harris regarding upcoming scheduling matters.
- The June meeting, tentatively on June 18 (3rd Wednesday), may include the re-swearing-in of members. Members are encouraged to confirm availability.

4.2 Addressing procedure

- Information sheets regarding addressing are under development.

4.3 Site permit processing

- The site permitting process is being reviewed by the Code Streamlining Committee, which is evaluating all local amendments to the SFBC. A formal draft ordinance has not yet been developed.

4.4 Sunshine requirements refresher

- Awaiting the City Attorney's recommendations.

4.5 Low voltage technology presentation

- A planning session will be scheduled upon the designated presenter's return to work.

5.0 Public Comments on items not on this agenda but within the jurisdiction of the Code Advisory Committee. Comment time is limited to 3 minutes or as determined by of the Chairperson.

- No public comment.

6.0 Committee comments on items not on this agenda.

7.0 Subcommittee Reports: (Discussion & possible action)

Housing Code Subcommittee:

Subcommittee Chair: Henry Karnilowicz
Subcommittee Members: Ira Dorter
Jim Reed
Paul Staley

- No meeting. No report.

Mechanical Electrical Plumbing & Fire Subcommittee:

Subcommittee Chair: Brian Salyers, F.P.E.
Subcommittee Members: Henry Karnilowicz
Jim Reed

- No meeting. No report.

Administrative & General Design and Disability Access Subcommittee:

Subcommittee Chair: Jonathan Rodriguez
Subcommittee Members: Arnie Lerner, F.A.I.A., CASp
Tony Sanchez-Corea
Zachary Nathan, A.I.A., CASp
Henry Karnilowicz
Deepak Patankar, AIA, LEED AP

- A meeting was held earlier today to review amendments to the 2025 San Francisco Building Code resulting from the California code adoption cycle. A motion was made and approved to adopt the changes, as they were deemed non-substantive.

Structural Subcommittee:

Subcommittee Chair: Stephen Harris, S.E.
Subcommittee Members: Rene' Vignos, S.E., LEED A.P.
Marc Cunningham
Ned Fennie, A.I.A.
Don Libbey, P.E.

- The Subcommittee held a meeting the day before, during which Item 3.0 on the agenda was discussed, and a motion was made to approve the proposed ordinance. The Subcommittee also reviewed and approved amendments to the 2025 San Francisco Building Code resulting from the California code adoption cycle. Additionally, a draft Administrative Bulletin on the Application of Engineering Criteria in SFEBC Appendix A, Chapter A6 was discussed during the meeting.

Green Building Subcommittee:

Subcommittee Chair: Zachary Nathan, AIA, CASp
Subcommittee Members: Gina Centoni
Henry Karnilowicz
Jonathan Rodriguez

- No meeting. No report.

8.0 Committee Member's and Staff's identification agenda items for the next meeting, as well as current agenda items to be continued to another CAC regular meeting or special meeting, or a subcommittee meeting.

- No new items.

9.0 Adjournment.

- The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 a.m.