

City of San Luis Obispo Seismic Hazard Mitigation

(Commercial Buildings)

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- Population of about 45,000
- Workforce and Cal Poly increase daytime population to about 75,000
- Seismic zone 4 – near San Andreas Fault
- Many buildings built of brick from the 1920s

Overview

- City Seismic Hazard Mitigation Program spanned over 20 years but most activity occurred between 2004 and 2010
- City of SLO used policy and community involvement to produce safety improvements with some unintended results
  - Economic Development vs Building Division
  - Historic Preservation

Warden Building - Before



After



Before and After





More Before and After





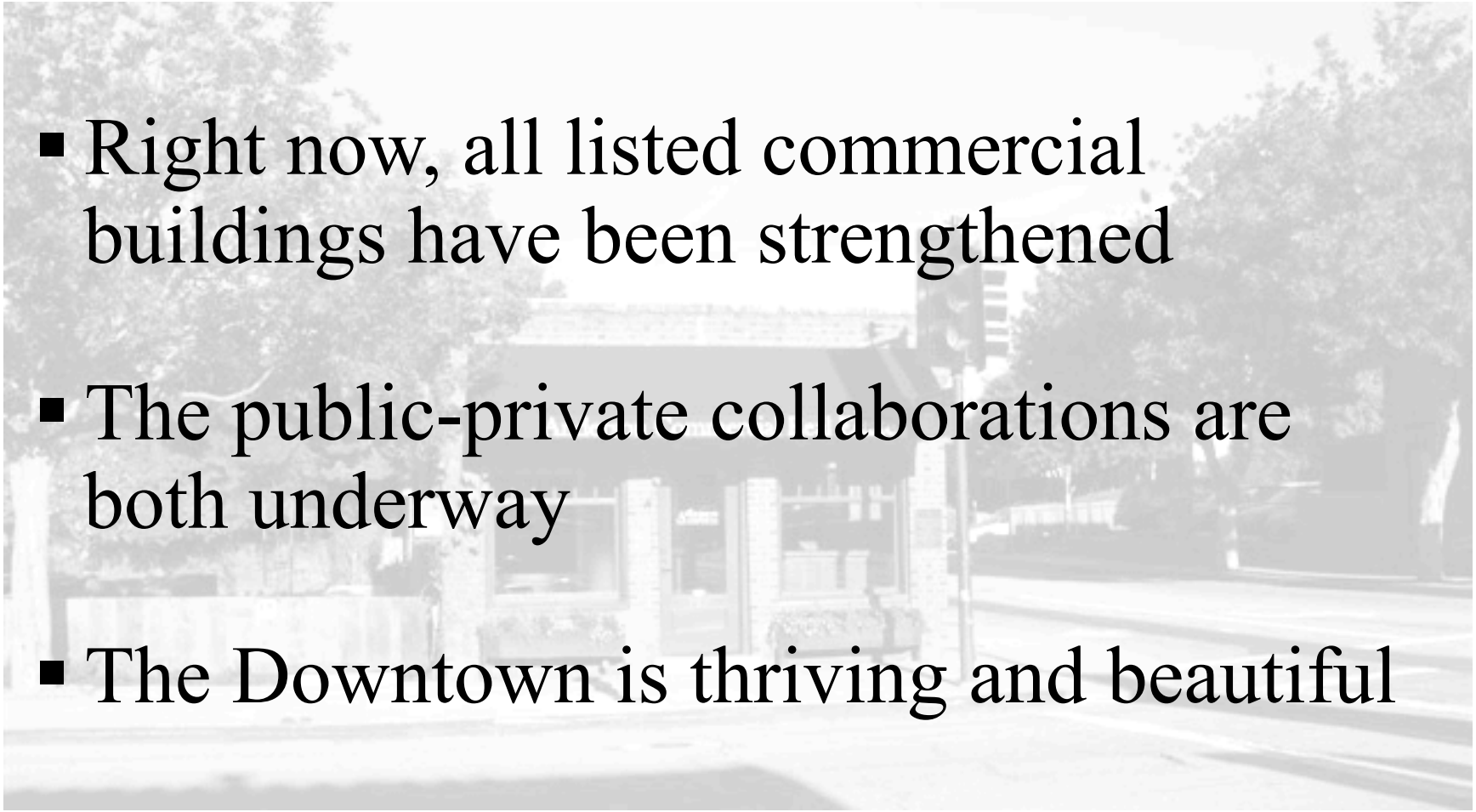




Public-Private Collaborations



The View from 2017



- Right now, all listed commercial buildings have been strengthened
- The public-private collaborations are both underway
- The Downtown is thriving and beautiful

How Did This Happen?



State of California Mandated Action late 1980s

California Legislature adopted the "Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act"

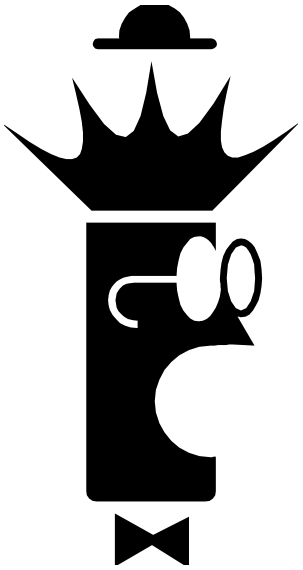
- Identify all potentially hazardous commercial buildings constructed prior to adoption of earthquake resistant design standards for masonry wall construction
- Establish a mitigation program for such hazards

San Luis Obispo Building Official Takes Action - 1994



- Identified 126 hazardous buildings in the City
- Proposed mitigation of all hazards on the inventory by 2000
- Included mandatory fire sprinkler installation in Downtown Fire Zone

Local Reaction



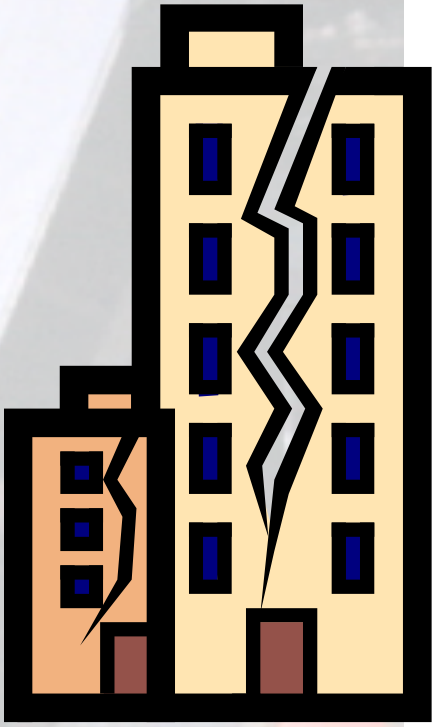
- Chamber of Commerce noticed!
  - Established the Seismic Task Force
  - Collaborative group including building owners, business owners and city staff
  - Worked for three years to craft a program that adequately balanced the need for strengthening with the cost to property owners.

1997 - Initial Program Established

- Required full strengthening by 2017
- Established triggers that would require strengthening
- Provided Incentives

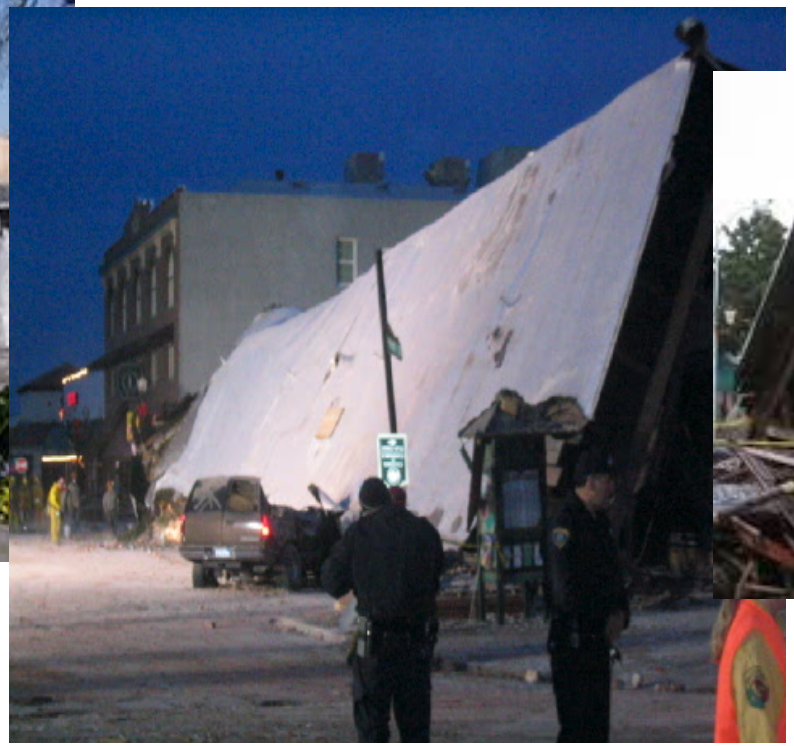
Retrofit Status in late 2003

- 102 buildings remained on the Inventory (Started with 126 buildings)
  - 76 in the five-block-long Downtown Core
- Not much action was being taken by building owners, except to avoid triggering seismic strengthening



San Simeon Earthquake 12/23/2003







City Council resolves to reassess the effectiveness of the URM Ordinance



City Turned Up the Heat

- The Chamber of Commerce reconvened the Seismic Task Force
- New Ordinance was adopted with closer deadlines
- Despite predictions of economic devastation as a result of the Ordinance, the Downtown Association and Chamber of Commerce both supported the new law



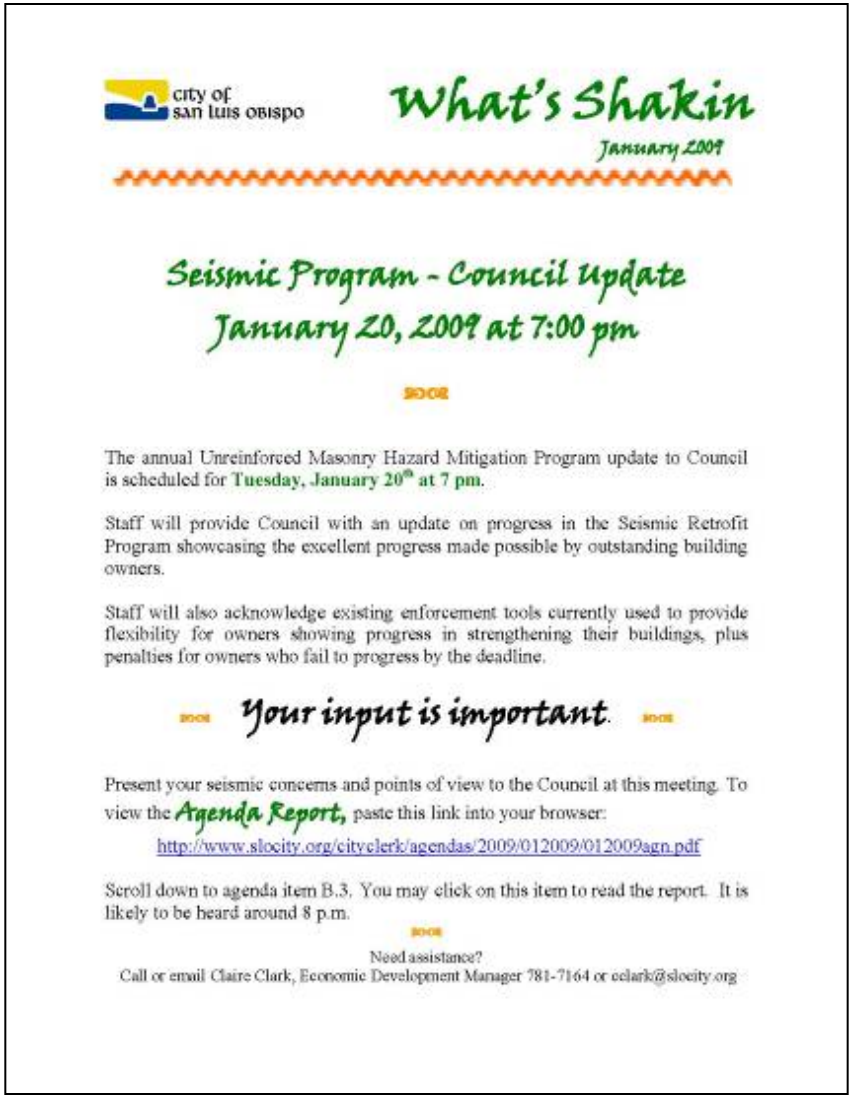
Keys to Success

Minimization of De-motivators

- Council support for a "Get it Done" approach
  - Permitting
    - Streamlining entitlement review for facade changes to historic buildings
  - Hired Dedicated Staff – Seismic Coordinator
  - Changed Incentives
    - Allowed all work done during the seismic upgrade to be included in the seismic construction permit at the low cost of $40, systems and facades included



Maximization of Support



city of san luis obispo

What's Shakin

January 2009

Seismic Program - Council Update
January 20, 2009 at 7:00 pm

The annual Unreinforced Masonry Hazard Mitigation Program update to Council is scheduled for **Tuesday, January 20th at 7 pm.**

Staff will provide Council with an update on progress in the Seismic Retrofit Program showcasing the excellent progress made possible by outstanding building owners.

Staff will also acknowledge existing enforcement tools currently used to provide flexibility for owners showing progress in strengthening their buildings, plus penalties for owners who fail to progress by the deadline.

Your input is important.

Present your seismic concerns and points of view to the Council at this meeting. To view the **Agenda Report,** paste this link into your browser:

http://www.slocity.org/cityclerk/agendas/2009/012009/012009agn.pdf

Scroll down to agenda item B.3. You may click on this item to read the report. It is likely to be heard around 8 p.m.

Need assistance?
Call or email Claire Clark, Economic Development Manager 781-7164 or cclark@slocity.org

- Role of Seismic Coordinator
  - Individual contact with every URM building owner
  - Communication of Rules and Resources
  - Cheerleader in Chief for building owners
  - Periodic "What's Shakin" Publication
    - Keep the issue in the public eye
    - Positive application of pressure to complete work

Catalyst for Success

- JP Andrews building
- The first to complete a retrofit under new rules
- Done in 90 days
- Showed other owners that they could survive a retrofit.



Community Buy-in

- Chamber of Commerce Seismic Task Force remained engaged
- The program was reevaluated periodically by the City following the Seismic Task Force's lead
- Deadlines were adjusted periodically based on practical aspects, such as permitting timeline and the start of the recession

What Was Learned?

- The proximity of deadlines were key as were the policies for success
- An “internal” advocate can make a difference
- A few willing local players can get the ball rolling for everyone
- The economy made a difference
- The program had the unintended result of improving the downtown

Helpful Links

- Staff Reports to City Council
  - 5/20/2003 Staff Report on URM status
  - 8/17/2004 URM Staff Report-Program Changes
  - 1/9/2007 URM Staff Report-Status Update
  - 2/16/2010 URM Staff Report – Status Update
- City of San Luis Obispo website resource:
  - SLOcity.org, City Council Agendas, Archive, search for Seismic Task Force



Questions?