

San Francisco seismic retrofitting mandate still a ways away

Brent Begin, San Francisco Examiner, 5-3-11

San Francisco leaders are well aware that a devastating earthquake could happen at any moment. They're well aware that buildings with "soft-story" construction will be the most vulnerable during a quake. And they're painfully aware that building owners aren't just going to up and retrofit their buildings on their own.

So, in order to encourage those kinds of seismic retrofits, Mayors Ed Lee and Gavin Newsom had been searching for some sort of economic incentive. At a gathering Monday of some of the country's most-respected seismic engineers, however, Lee reiterated that such funding won't be coming soon.

There is no money in the current budget, he said, adding that there will eventually be room in The City's long-term 10-year capital plan for it. Once that funding is in place, expect a law that requires building owners to retrofit.

"Somebody in the future has to make a decision that probably has to mandate this standard to happen," Lee said.