



Press Release

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ATTACHMENT: Photo of City Hall (Aerial View)

Mountlake Terrace City Hall At Risk

The Mountlake Terrace City Hall building is in danger of failing in the next serious earthquake, according to engineering reports dating from the early 1990s. The information was heard by the City Council at a meeting on September 27 as part of the Council's review of the building's condition.

The information is summarized in a new report, "Synthesis of Past Reports and Assessments," also online at <http://www.cityofmlt.com/news.htm>. The report notes that the City Hall was built in 1961 when Mountlake Terrace had about ¼ of its current population. Its concrete shell roof is supported by hollow columns that funnel water from the roof. Leakage has occurred that can rust the reinforcing wire mesh and gradually decrease roof strength. Impacts from the 2001 Nisqually Earthquake have likely sped up the rate of deterioration.

Other findings show that asbestos is contained in many of the interior materials and cannot be disturbed except with hazard mitigation techniques. Cracks at building joints have appeared and indicate structural weakening. The building has no fire sprinkler system. Its heating and ventilation system is inadequate and energy efficiency is low. Interior walls of unreinforced masonry do not meet current codes and could fall in a seismic event. Because of the building's unusual construction, it would be very expensive to enlarge or to remodel with a new roof system or other upgrades, according to Architects West, a firm hired in 1991 to design a new roof.

The City Council adopted a goal in 2002 to replace the aging City Hall. In 2005, a Civic Center Master Plan was prepared to show two concepts for a new City Hall on the existing campus. The Council is considering those ideas, along with new options that have been suggested as part of the current Town Center planning project, such as building on a more central downtown site where a new City Hall could stimulate other development and provide more space for community activities.

The synthesis report notes that some recommendations from previous studies have been followed. For example, a new fire station was constructed last year. Previously, the fire station operated out of basement quarters in the City Hall building.

The Civic Center synthesis report can be reviewed at City Hall and the Mountlake Terrace Library. It is also online at <http://www.cityofmlt.com/news.htm>.

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