



ANNAPOLIS FIRE DEPARTMENT

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Mayor Buckley and Members of the City Council,

I would like to express my support for any legislation in the City of Annapolis, including O1-22, which encourages the retrofit of buildings with fire sprinkler systems on Main Street and other areas in Historic Annapolis. This letter discusses the benefits, costs, and other considerations related to such retrofits.

There are many benefits to retrofitting buildings with fire sprinkler systems, including:

- Significantly increasing the life safety of building occupants and fire fighters.
- Slowing the growth of fire events to allow more productive firefighting measures.
- Drastically reducing property damage to historic buildings and contents resulting from fires. (Most fires are extinguished with the activation of one sprinkler head.)

Many of the costs associated with retrofitting buildings with fire sprinkler systems may be offset by opportunities such as:

- Approval for additional area and height for buildings.
- Potential use of less expensive materials in the construction of buildings with fire sprinkler systems.
- Additional/alternative uses of buildings. Using fire sprinkler systems in conjunction with a performance based design developed by a qualified engineer may allow building code equivalencies to be applied which can assist in making non-compliant structures compliant under certain circumstances. (Some unleased properties could potentially become leasable depending on the design.)

Recent notable fires highlight the importance of having active fire protection systems accompany passive fire protection systems. Passive fire protection strives to slow the progress of fire through compartmentalization of the building, restricting the flow of fire and smoke with items such as fire walls/barriers, fire rated floors/stairs, and self-closing fire doors. Active fire protection most often includes the application of fire sprinklers, which activate to suppress/control a fire as well as notify emergency response.

I appreciate your consideration with regard to this legislation. The City of Annapolis is home to many irreplaceable historical assets. Fire sprinkler systems and sound proactive fire prevention programs could prove invaluable in preventing a small fire event from becoming a larger event that jeopardizes those assets. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have regarding this.

Sincerely,

Douglas M. Remaley,
Fire Chief

DMR/jsc

cc: File Copy