Division of Fire Requested Legislation (897-2020) Review

Challenges faced by the Division of Fire

➢ <u>Challenge 1</u> - It is estimated that only 50% of all fire protection systems (fire alarms, sprinkler systems, chemical suppression systems, smoke control systems etc.) are being maintained as required by law.
  ➢ The Division of Fire does not have a system or the resources to track and ensure that the tens of thousands of fire protection systems within the City are being tested and maintained as required by law.
  ➢ There is no database that lists fire protection systems to even begin tracking them.
  ➢ These fire protection systems are required when building or renovating certain types of buildings and certain uses of buildings to allow for construction methods that would otherwise result in fire and smoke spreading too rapidly for occupants to escape.
  ➢ These systems are heavily reliant on regular maintenance to operate properly. Our fire inspectors regularly find systems that are impaired or inoperable due to neglected maintenance.

Challenges faced by the Division of Fire

➢ Challenge 2 - Our business and building owners are lacking the education and understanding of fire safety concerns, permitting requirements, and proper maintenance of their fire protection systems.
  ➢ The Division of Fire, like every other fire department, does not have the ability to be at every building often enough to ensure compliance with fire code, nor are we able to spend the time with business and building owners to teach them about all of these concerns.
➢ Challenge 3 - The Division of Fire's building information database was create over the last 20 years by firefighters in an inconsistent manner, resulting in unreliable information.
  ➢ Accurate and up-to-date building information is crucial for firefighters to safely and efficiently respond to emergencies. Having information on things like hazardous materials storage, fire department connection locations, and special occupant needs at the fingertips of our responders is critical to providing outstanding service and keeping our members and the public safe.
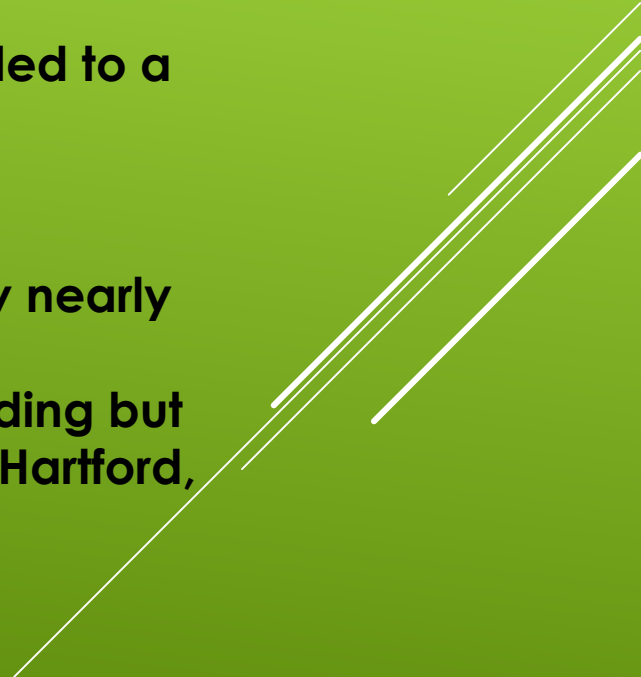
Challenges faced by the Division of Fire

➢ **Maintaining good up-to-date information on the many thousands of commercial buildings within a City's jurisdiction is a significant challenge for Fire Departments around the Country.**

Solutions Using Proposed Legislation

- **Challenge 1 - It is estimated that only 50% of all fire protection systems (fire alarms, sprinkler systems, chemical suppression systems, smoke control systems etc.) are being maintained as required by law.**
    - **Solution for Challenge 1 – Third party fire protection system maintenance compliance service who will build a database of all fire protection systems installed in the City and be responsible to track and ensure that all of these systems are being properly maintained as directed by the Division of Fire.**
    - **Dashboard showing any critical issues such as:**
        - **Fire protection systems that are out of service.**
        - **Fire protection systems that are past due for maintenance using color codes to signify how past due the system is.**
    - **Ability to send mass communications via email to all businesses with fire protection systems.**
    - **Educates business owners on our behalf to teach them what maintenance is required and why that maintenance is so important.**
    - **Communicates with business owners via mail, email, and telephone to give notice of upcoming, due, or past due maintenance requirements.**

Solutions requiring legislation

> ➢ Conducts all reviews of fire protection system maintenance reports with certified fire protection professionals.
> ➢ Conducts follow ups to ensure any reported deficiencies are corrected in a timely manner, resulting in 95% of the issues being resolved without the Division of Fire taking any action.

❖ This service has no cost for the City or for the business owners.
❖ Legislation requires that all fire protection maintenance reports be uploaded to a third party service.
❖ Fire protection contractors servicing the systems pay a $15 fee for each maintenance report they submit.
❖ Fire protection contractors are estimated to increase their service work by nearly double.
❖ Many Cities across the Country have adopted compliance services including but not limited to Chicago, Los Angeles, Seattle, Austin, Kansas City, Raleigh, Hartford, Scottsdale, Long Beach, Las Vegas,

Solutions requiring legislation

➢ <u>Challenge 2</u> **- Our business and building owners are lacking the education and understanding of fire safety concerns, permitting requirements, and proper maintenance of their fire protection systems.**

➢ <u>Challenge 3</u> **- The Division of Fire's building information database was create over the last 20 years by firefighters in an inconsistent manner, resulting in unreliable information.**

    ➢ <u>Solution for Challenges 2 and 3</u> **– Legislation requiring a "Building Registration" or "Building Risk Assessment."**

    ➢ **Using a third party to collect building information directly from business owners on a yearly, biennial, or triennial basis.**

    ➢ **This submittal will collect critical building information in a format that can be uploaded to our new ArcGIS fire pre-plan system as a layer for instant viewing on any web enabled device by our members.**

    ➢ **This submittal will ask questions related to fire code compliance that will ensure the most common code violations are addressed by the submitter.**

Solutions requiring legislation

➢ **Provides a strong education system to help building representatives to understand what the questions are asking and to explain why the information and compliance is so important.**
  ➢ **Includes multiple on-site education events for fire personnel and the building representatives at no cost.**
❖ **No cost to the City.**
❖ **Building owners pay a $15 fee when the annual survey is submitted.**
❖ **This is an effective community risk reduction program, and community education program that does not incur a monetary or personnel burden on the City.**

Summary

The two pieces of requested legislation are not stand alone projects. These are key pieces to much broader programs to improve the accountability, professionalism, and efficiency of the Division of Fire. The Division of Fire programs that are dependent upon these pieces of legislation are listed below;

1. Community Risk Assessment Project
2. Community Risk Reduction Program
3. Fire Pre-Plan Program
4. Fire Code Compliance Program

These programs will change the relationship between the Fire Department and our business/building owners. Instead of showing up at businesses, finding violations, and issuing violation notices, these programs will educate business owners and create a partnership where we work together to provide a better service to them, and improve the safety of our residents, visitors, and firefighters.