



Springfield Sangamon Growth Alliance

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www.ThriveInSPI.org

February 8, 2023

City of Springfield
Mayor James Langfelder
800 E. Monroe St.
Springfield, IL 62701

Dear Mayor Langfelder,

I am writing to express support for Horace Mann's request for funding from the City's Tax Increment Financial (TIF) program. As you know, Horace Mann is a good community neighbor and continues a legacy of their presence in and support of our city. Recently, Horace Mann invested more than a million dollars to renovate the historic Witmer-Schuck building at the corner 7th and Washington Streets in downtown. The renovation created commercial leased space on the first floor, as well as four corporate residences on the other floors. Furthermore, Horace Mann agent Katie Hageman, Hageman Family Insurance, is currently leasing the property.

In addition, Horace Mann is currently redoing its campus pond, installing an eco-friendly pond that will self-sustain and enhance the campus. Their campus is a frequent stop for visitors who enjoy the lush landscaping and beautiful horticulture. To further their investment in downtown, Horace Mann has purchased the building at 622 Washington Street to be used for parking and green space for the tenants of the Witmer-Schuck building. They are also willing to purchase the 618 Washington Street building to remove a failing building and add additional parking and a green space. These two buildings (618 and 622) are in great disrepair with compromised roofs, mold and asbestos. Due to the cost to repair, the buildings are likely to remain vacant for many years.

The cost to abate environmental issues and demolish these two buildings is more than one million dollars. While renovation is always the initial goal, these buildings are in such disrepair that it is not financially viable to bring them up to habitable conditions. In cases such as these, funding from the City's TIF program provides critical financial assistance for organizations, like Horace Mann, that are making significant investments in the community.

Based on the investments made and planned by Horace Mann, and their long-standing commitment to the community, the Springfield Sangamon Growth Alliance supports their request from funding from the City of Springfield TIF program. We appreciate you considering this request, and please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Ryan McCrady, President & CEO
Springfield Sangamon Growth Alliance



Downtown Springfield, Inc.
live • work • play

February 16, 2023

Dear Council Members,

As the downtown business association and nationally accredited Main Street organization, we want to express our support for the proposal put forward by Horace Mann to purchase and demolish two buildings located at 618 and 622 Washington Street. We believe this proposal will have a positive impact on the overall appearance of our neighborhood and will create a space that is more open and inviting for downtown businesses.

Horace Mann has a long history of being a good community neighbor and has invested over a million dollars in renovating the historic Witmer-Schuck building at 7th and Washington. This renovation created commercial leased space on the first floor, as well as four corporate residences on the other floors. Additionally, Horace Mann agent Katie Hageman, Hageman Family Insurance, will be leasing the property.

The two buildings located at 618 and 622 Washington Street are in great disrepair with a huge hole in one roof, mold, and asbestos. They will likely sit unoccupied for years to come, and the cost to abate environmental issues and demolish these buildings is more than one million dollars. While we would usually try to save buildings in our downtown, these two buildings are in such disrepair it doesn't make sense to do so.

Key factors we consider when evaluating whether or not we support the demolition of a building in downtown Springfield are:

- The historical significance of the building
- The current and future impact on the character of the neighborhood
- Impact on property tax and property values
- Current and future impact on neighboring buildings
- Cost of revitalization
- Public health hazards

Horace Mann wants to create an area that is open and inviting for the downtown space, including the businesses on Washington Street. We believe that this proposal will have a positive impact on the character of the neighborhood and will remove an eyesore from the area.

Therefore, we urge you to support Horace Mann's proposal to purchase and demolish the buildings at 618 and 622 Washington Street. We believe that this proposal is in the best interest of our community and will have a positive impact on the overall appearance of our neighborhood.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kayla Graven
Executive Director