


MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable President and Members of the City Council
Attention: Natawna Austin, Executive Secretary

FROM: William H. Cole, President and CEO 

DATE: March 19, 2015

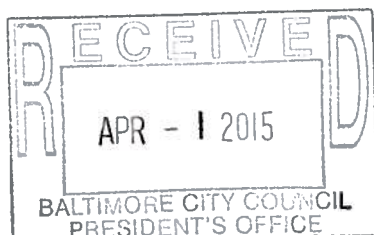
SUBJECT: City Council Bill 15-0204R
Establishing a Baltimore City African American Business, Tourism,
Entertainment & Heritage Preservation Commission

The Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) supports City Council Bill 15-0204R concerning the establishment of a commission on African American culture and business. Efforts to expand the tourism, development and business base, along with the documentation and sharing of the contributions of African Americans to the development, commerce and culture of Baltimore City is both supported and encouraged.

The Bill calls for representatives from Baltimore's tourism, entertainment, business, and heritage preservation communities to meet with the Baltimore City Council in a hearing to determine how best to fashion and establish a Baltimore City African American Business, Tourism, Entertainment & Heritage Preservation Commission, and to seek a source of designated funding for the Commission.

The Arts, Culture and Tourism Industry has been identified as having high growth potential and is a featured industry within the current strategies outlined in the City of Baltimore Comprehensive Development Strategy (CEDS). Under CEDS the City of Baltimore has also committed to fostering economic inclusion by generating business development opportunities in historically under-invested communities.

Increased opportunity to market Baltimore more holistically and to celebrate the contributions of Baltimore's African American population has the potential to increase tourism and business opportunities throughout the City of Baltimore by encouraging extended stays among current visitors and expanding Baltimore's appeal to gain both leisure and business travelers.



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Baltimore currently benefits from a steady rise in cultural tourism, primarily around the historic elements of the 19th and 20th Century. Promoting the rich heritage, culture and commerce of African Americans in Baltimore will enhance that experience and increase civic pride while adding additional cultural tourists and families to the economy. Specific reference and City designation of the African American experience translates into increased demand for commercial, retail and residential opportunities in historic Baltimore neighborhoods.

BDC has reviewed the ordinance and is respectfully requesting that the matters listed herein be given consideration in the adjudication of Bill No. 15-0204R by the City Council.

cc: Colin Talbert
Angela Gibson