

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable President and Members of the City Council
Attention: Karen Randle, Executive Secretary

FROM: Brenda McKenzie, President and CEO *Porc*

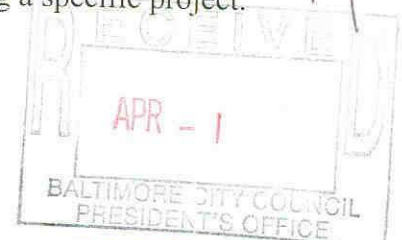
DATE: March 28, 2013

SUBJECT: City Council Bill No. 12-0152
TransForm Baltimore - Zoning

The Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) has reviewed City Council Bill 12-0152, for the purpose of establishing a new Zoning Code (“Code”) for Baltimore City, and respectfully requests that Bill No. 12-0152 is given favorable consideration by the City Council.

The proposed new Code makes important strides toward clarifying the development review process, use regulations, and sign requirements; delineating responsibilities for implementation of the Code; and introducing thoughtful approaches to things such as transit-oriented development, creative signage, and reuse of industrial buildings in areas that are no longer purely industrial. The new campus zones provide flexibility for continued growth of hospitals, educational facilities, and industrial parks. Establishment of the Maritime Industrial (MI) zoning district reaffirms the City’s commitment to the Port of Baltimore, ensuring compatibility between land uses and minimizing conflicts. BDC also appreciates the fact that the Code addresses ostensibly small details. For example, the Code introduces a “food processing, light” use category which will help owners of small batch food production businesses locate more readily in main streets and other commercial districts.

For the first time, the Code incorporates design standards to ensure implementation of the visions set forth in the City’s Comprehensive Master Plan and to enhance the value of structures and communities. There is some concern within the development community that the design standards are overly prescriptive and will hinder creativity and that the Planned Unit Development (PUD) timeline requirements do not provide the flexibility necessary to work within market conditions. The Code does, however, provide for administrative exceptions to the design standards and timeline requirements, and BDC will work with all parties to achieve the intent of the standards and requirements without unreasonably hindering a specific project.



Please see BDC's specific comments below:

Specific Comments from the Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC)

1. BDC generally supports the elimination of parking requirements in C1 districts for uses that do not require much parking to begin with, such as Retail Goods Establishments, Restaurants, Personal Services, and Financial Establishments, because parking requirements conflict with the City's goals of enhancing the walkability and vibrancy of its main street-style commercial districts. However, we do think that some more parking-intensive uses should still be subject to parking requirements in the C1.

cc: Kaliope Parthemos
Angela Gibson