

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable President and Members of the City Council

FROM: Colin Tarbert, President & CEO 

DATE: January 30, 2023

SUBJECT: Modifications to Research & Development Zoning Use

The Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) requests that the Administration introduce the enclosed Resolution for the approval to expand the number of zones in which Research & Development Facilities can operate, and to modify the definition of Research and Development Facilities to include accessory manufacturing, processing, and fabrication.

Life Sciences is one of Baltimore's promising growth industries. Life science companies not only generate exportable products and intellectual property, but also provide tax revenues and needed employment opportunities for City residents that do not require a college degree and pay a family a living wage. However, the industry is constrained by the availability of adequate spaces for these companies to operate. Baltimore's available wet lab space has reached a critical low. With just a 1% vacancy rate for wet lab space, Baltimore faces the threat of losing life science companies that incubate and grow here to surrounding areas. For comparison, the D.C. metro area (including Montgomery County) has 14.3 million square feet of wet lab space, while Baltimore only has 4.3 million.

This bill increases the number of zoning categories where these wet lab spaces can be legally located to include all high intensity Commercial Districts (C-3 and C-4) and all Transit Oriented Development (TOD) districts. Expanding zoning categories for wet lab space will encourage the development of new buildings with wet lab capabilities and will allow companies to fully benefit from many of Baltimore's advantages:

- Northeast corridor location, land, sea, and air transportation hub
- Talent Pool: Baltimore ranks among the Nation's densest population of workers with advanced degrees.
- Lower cost of living compared to established life science focused clusters such as Boston, San Francisco, and San Diego

The Baltimore Together CEDS consist of four Key Strategies:

- Work Together
- Invest in People and Places
- Build From Strength
- Compete to Succeed

The creation of additional wet lab space is a key component of our Compete to Succeed and Build from Strength Strategies. Implementation of our Key Strategies will enable Baltimore to capitalize on its strengths in the high growth Life Science Industry.

Baltimore has a promising pipeline of life science companies coming out of the Johns Hopkins and University for Maryland incubators. Expanding the number of zoning categories will enable Baltimore to become a strong life science hub, which will both help to retain companies and attract growing life science companies to Baltimore.