

# **Mayor Rawlings-Blake Convenes Working Group to Develop New Strategies to Reduce Vacancies in Downtown Baltimore**

Press Release, December 20, 2010

Today, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake announced the establishment of a working group to develop strategies to reduce office vacancies in downtown Baltimore. The group, which is made up of government and business leaders, will analyze and review data and make recommendations to the Mayor about how to maximize the office space currently available in Baltimore.

“Stimulating growth downtown and attracting new companies and jobs in Baltimore’s commercial core is important to the overall health of the city. As the country comes out of the recession, it is important to strengthen downtown Baltimore as a great place to grow a business in the new economy,” said Mayor Rawlings-Blake. “Recent success stories, including Transamerica Life Insurance Company’s decision to relocate and consolidate its offices at 100 Light Street, demonstrate that Downtown Baltimore remains an ideal location for businesses.”

The Mayor created the working group following a meeting early this fall with city and regional stakeholders. Because of local and national economic trends, Baltimore’s downtown has experienced a significant increase in office vacancies. The number of vacancies is also due to corporate downsizing, restructuring, and competition from suburban office parks. Most critical is that office tenants are looking for larger floor plates and modern amenities. Work group members will begin holding meetings in January to share information and develop multi-agency strategies that can be applied to specific properties as part of a plan for downtown’s continued development.

## Members of the Working Group:

- Claire Bonner, U.S. General Services Administration
- Kimberly Clark, Baltimore Development Corporation
- William Cole, Councilman, 11<sup>th</sup> District
- Kirby Fowler, Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, Inc.
- Don Fry, Greater Baltimore Committee
- Michael Gaines, Maryland Department of General Services
- David Gillece, Cassidy Turner
- Alex Hoffman, Department of Planning
- Courtenay Jenkins, Cushman Wakefield
- Bob Manekin, Manekin, LLC
- Chris Moyer, Baltimore Development Corporation
- Kalliope Parthemos, Mayor’s Office
- Nan Rohrer, Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, Inc.
- Tom Sadowski, Economic Alliance for Greater Baltimore
- Latoya Staten, Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, Inc.
- Tom Stosur, Department of Planning

- Colin Tarbert, Mayor's Office
- Bryce Turner, Craig Brown Turner Architects
- Irene Van Sant, Baltimore Development Corporation