



## POSSIBLE PRIORITIES

### Small-Scale Manufacturing

- **Rockville has the opportunity to position itself competitively for small scale manufacturing but is not known currently as the ideal place for small-scale manufacturing.**
  - Raise awareness of the opportunities in Rock East, Twinbrook, and across the city.
  - Build trust with communities that may not trust government.
  - Leverage partnerships like the various chambers, religious organizations.
  - Promote REDI's location services and provide information on available real estate.
  - Explore engagement with businesses (possible association or hub location) to have a continuous feedback process.
  
- **Small-Scale Manufacturing Businesses in Rockville need business development support to open and grow.**
  - Incubator/curriculum to support small-scale manufacturing businesses. Include understanding of marketing audience.
  - Physical office for support and engagement hub.
  - Gather information on business needs.
  - Create a business toolkit to address gaps in knowledge – like pointers on leasing.
  - Attract a food/beverage incubator or commercial kitchen.

#### Actions that would need to be led by city staff with REDI support:

- Streamline the permitting process to reduce unnecessary barriers for businesses.
- Allow retail/production combined use in Zoning Code rewrite.
- Provide bus shelters/ lighting for areas serving shift work for businesses like Mas Panadas.
- Survey properties needing utility upgrades and create affordable solutions.
- Explore connectivity of areas like Rock East to Town Center and other hubs.

## Life/Bio Science and Technology

- **Rockville and Montgomery County are the heart of the Maryland life/bio science industry ranked #3 in the Country, but struggle to present a clear brand identity, especially globally, which inhibits attraction efforts.**
  - Continue joint branding effort and market aggressively. Rockville is the heart of bio/life science on the East Coast, and epicenter of innovation along the I-270 corridor.
  - Encourage businesses to stay and scale. Highlight the entrepreneurial ecosystem important to start-ups.
  - Emphasize access to federal funding (SBIR) and NIH resources as well as venture capital funds/investors.
  - Highlight available skilled workforce and housing.
  - Assess where Rockville (and Gaithersburg) would fall in the ranking system Massachusetts uses to see how bio ready their cities are and try to increase our competitiveness – and promote why we are competitive.
  - Focus on businesses developing small molecule products, in addition to biologics – do not avoid pharma as a potential attraction pool.
- **Rockville does not have enough of a “place” where Life/Bio Science business owners and employees can convene.**
  - Businesses need business development information, mentoring and incubation. Provide resources and amplify available opportunities.
  - Grow the Bio Boost program with luminary speakers – to break down silos and convene. Consider REDI’s position in the ecosystem with BHI, Maryland Tech Council, TEDCO, etc.
  - Create opportunities for businesses to talk about their work with others so they can cross-pollinate ideas.
  - Develop relationships with venture capitalists who would like to invest and connect them with businesses.
  - Support workforce development pathways and promote them – including BioHub.
  - Encourage the County to create a larger conference center to attract larger conferences. The International Bio show draws tens of thousands of attendees.

### Actions that would need to be led by city staff with REDI support:

- Support and participate in the City’s Zoning Code rewrite to streamline opening and operating bio/life science businesses and reducing barriers to coming to Rockville. Looking at other jurisdictions to benchmark best practices and ideas is encouraged. There needs to be more “by right” opportunities for businesses – and clear provisions about what is allowed.

## Clean Tech

- **While there are an increasing number of Clean Tech businesses in the city, we are not sure yet if there is a competitive edge in this industry sector for Rockville.**
  - Research and determine whether Rockville can have a competitive edge with regard to clean/aqua tech.
  - Research the clean tech sector to understand what talent is here, how many jobs there are (and salaries), what the growth for the sector looks like, and if there are innovative technologies or proof of concept type of work being done here.
  - Explore resources, partnerships and opportunities with nearby federal agencies like the Department of Energy and the Nuclear Regulatory agency to see if they can contribute to business attraction in the same way NIH and FDA attract bio/life science.
  - Align with the efforts of the state in growing the clean tech sector to position Maryland competitively.
  - Explore alternative solutions for utilities/energy for area businesses to help them defray their operating costs.
  - Support Connected DMV in their efforts to promote the development of hydrogen as an energy source.
  - Partner and promote clean tech with entities like Bethesda Green, and the Green Bank. Promote state incentives for clean/blue tech and aquaculture.
  - Review and determine how efforts can align with the sustainability plans of the city and the county. Understand and support the goals of Mayor and Council.
  - Understand what real estate or incubator needs this sector has.
  - Create a narrative around the existing businesses to highlight the sector and attract other businesses to the cluster.

## Small Business

- **The city and REDI need to support businesses across the city (not just Town Center) and make sure messaging about resources is accessible to all.**
  - Promote and support commercial hubs across the city to continue the work done by expanding incentive programs citywide.
  - Continue to build out Explore Rockville and commercial hub identities.
  - Continue to provide MWBC technical assistance services - consulting, workshops, incubators and networking engagement.
  - Support of small-scale manufacturing will be across the city.
  - Continue to provide location services and work with area brokers to fill vacant commercial spaces.
  - Put materials and communications in multiple languages.
  - Build trust through trusted organizations to reach new audiences.

- Possible Actions that would need to be led by city staff with REDI support:
  - Support and continue to participate in the process of the City's new Town Center plan draft.
  - Create the opportunity for development of more housing units – and affordable housing units. REDI can help promote resources and opportunities.

Note: MWBC's Advisory Board will be updating their strategic goals to present to the Board, which will be tailored to the MWBC program (a signature program of REDI) that provides in partnership with the US Small Business Administration business counseling, topical workshops, targeted incubators, micro grant programs, and networking events within the greater Maryland Capital Region (Frederick County, Montgomery County, Prince George's County and Howard County).

### Administrative

- **REDI staff is at capacity and needs more employees to expand services.**
  - Business development does not have the capacity to have sufficient engagement with retail and small-scale manufacturing businesses at the level desired.
  - MWBC counseling requests have a long waiting time before a counselor can schedule a meeting.
  - Shop Local is expanding, and staff is needed to support the additional locations. Requests have been made of Howard County and the City of Bowie.
  - The junior counselor position at BSU has been frozen due to diminished funding.