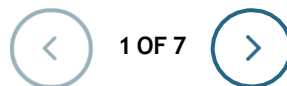
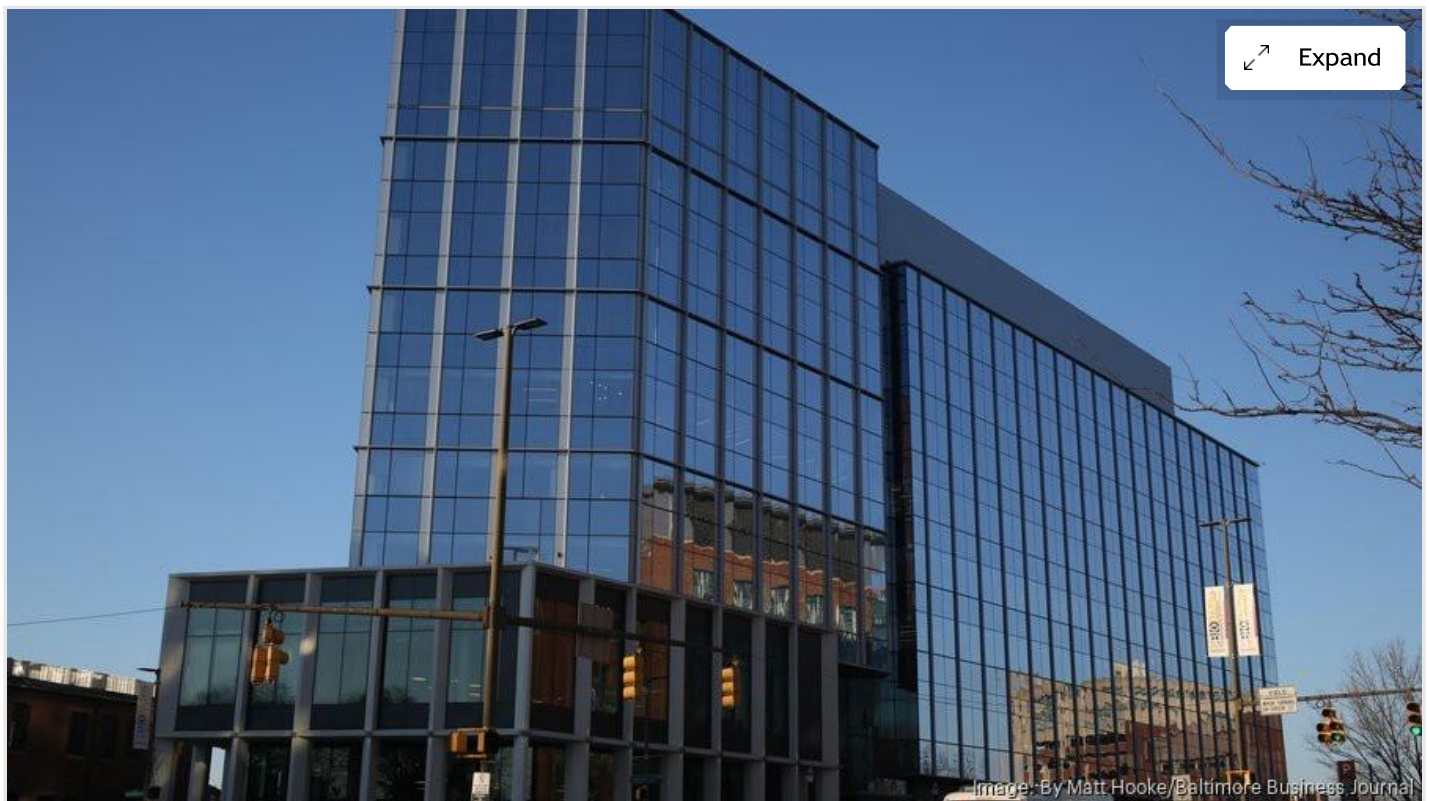


Commercial Real Estate

First half of \$320M West Baltimore science hub opens



The 4MLK building is the newest addition to the Baltimore skyline. [Expand to read more](#)

BY MATT HOOKE/BALTIMORE BUSINESS JOURNAL



By [Matt Hooke](#) – Reporter, Baltimore Business Journal
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STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Wexford Science & Technology and UMB unveiled the 4MLK science hub.
- The 250,000-square-foot building includes wet labs, offices and event spaces.
- 4MLK will house Wexford's headquarters, startups and venture capital offices.

An eight-story science and tech hub that's been years in the making celebrated its grand opening this week, introducing new space to West Baltimore that a city developer believes can become an innovation center for the region.

Developer Wexford Science & Technology and the [University of Maryland](#), Baltimore unveiled the [250,000-square-foot 4MLK building](#) at 4 N. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. on Wednesday. The building is the latest addition to the University of Maryland BioPark and will serve as a center for scientific research in the region with around 160,000 square feet of wet lab space blended with offices, support facilities and community gathering areas. The hub will also house Wexford's new headquarters, a startup program and several venture capital offices from the developer and UMB. The building is the [first half of a \\$320 million plan for the West Baltimore site](#) that will eventually include a second building of the same size.

“4MLK really gives us an opportunity to reintroduce Wexford to our community by bringing the experience that we have gained developing innovative ecosystems across the country in areas like [Philadelphia](#), North

Carolina, St. Louis, [Phoenix](#) and California back to our hometown," [Wexford President and CEO Ted Russell](#) said.

The tower, constructed by Towson's Whiting-Turner Contracting Co., is part of the nine-building BioPark development and will house Wexford's new headquarters once the company moves from around the corner at 801 W. Baltimore St. It is Wexford's first development at the BioPark in 15 years, adding to its portfolio of similar "knowledge communities" in 17 other cities.

Along with labs rented by specific tenants, there will be shared lab space where startups can use expensive equipment without having to spend hundreds of thousands of hard-earned venture capital dollars. 4MLK also features spaces for collaboration and several areas made for events, such as a large conference room and a first-floor common space that will soon be home to a coffee bar. The building will host everything from community group meetings to office hours for startups who need advice from law firms or banks.

In an era where the [commercial real estate market is struggling](#) as more people work from home, 4MLK's ability to host events can separate it from other developments, Wexford Executive Vice President Tom Osha told the Baltimore Business Journal during a private tour on Tuesday.

"The ability to make these connections, whether they're large-scale connections like weekly meetings, or gatherings, or intimate meetings, are things that make you want to come into the office more often," Osha said.

Those amenities led 4MLK to attract several notable companies in time for the grand opening. UMB and the University of Maryland, College Park will use the space to blend medical and engineering research. 4MLK will also house a [location of Wexford's Connect Labs](#) startup program, which will take up 35,000 square feet to offer lab space to companies that are too large for accelerators but too small to buy their own spaces. Several startups, such as the gene therapy firm Irazú Bio, are already tenants within Connect Labs.

The building's large glass walls with plentiful natural light are an improvement on the rundown basements many scientific researchers are accustomed to, and they help alleviate a shortage of lab space in the region, Connect Labs Baltimore Site Director Mark VanderZyl said.

"Bringing more lab space online in the city was something that a lot of people have wanted for a long time," VanderZyl said.

There will also be tenants working on the business side of innovation. [Baltimore City's Emerging Technology Centers](#) is establishing its startup venture studio in the building. The venture capital arms of the University System of Maryland, UMB and Wexford will operate investment offices in the space, giving startups the chance to quickly interact with the people signing the checks that lead to innovation.

With the [years-long project](#) now halfway complete, UMB President Bruce Jarrell struck a note of excitement at the grand opening.

"Who would have ever dreamt that this would happen 25 years ago, when all this started with empty lots?" he said.