



**Designing development parks of the future today - by Stacey Duncan**

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Stacey Duncan

For far too long “industrial” parks have unfairly held a bad reputation. When people traditionally think about business parks, more often than not, they are viewed less as assets of a community and rather more as eyesores with a sea of looming buildings that bring large amounts of noisy and disruptive truck traffic. The reality is, however, that industrial development parks are major economic drivers, especially in rural and suburban areas, that can serve as a beneficial extension of the community for both business and residential users alike. When planned with the surrounding community in mind, a natural synergy emerges, allowing residents to be proud of these crucial economic assets.

The Broome Corporate Park at I-81 in Conklin, services several major companies across a variety of industries with both national and international presences. From transportation and logistics giants such as Amazon, FedEx, and Dick’s Sporting Goods, to innovative technology development and advanced manufacturing leaders like Universal Instruments, Samscreen, and Trivium Packaging, the Broome Corporate Park at I-81 generates nearly \$1 billion in economic activity each year. At the same time, residents who live around the park have embraced its presence. A buffer of beautiful evergreen trees between the park and surrounding residential neighborhoods was incorporated into the original design back in 1984 to preserve the natural beauty and tranquility of Broome County living, and many residents can be found walking the park’s expansive campus for fresh air and exercise.

While the planning process for the Broome Corporate Park did take into account the impacts on surrounding residents into the design, it is no secret that the park was still built nearly 40 years ago and design has evolved. Since then, the evolution of corporate park designs have only looked to find new ways to invite the community to visit and take pride and a sense ownership over the park. The Broome County Industrial Development Agency (The Agency) hopes to accomplish exactly this with the potential development of a new 600-acre technology park in the town of Maine.

We look to our neighbors in Rome, where they have constructed the incredibly successful Griffiss Business & Technology Park, as we begin our design process. Spanning over 3,500 acres with currently over 20 commercial users, the Griffiss Technology Park also boasts a stunning sculpture garden, nature trails and a full 18-hole disc golf course, all open to the public. Public engagement is key to the modern development of corporate parks, and The Agency is excited to welcome ideas from Broome County residents on how this park can be designed to support the surrounding community.

The property for the proposed Broome Technology Park at Airport Rd. was carefully selected by The Agency following a comprehensive survey and analysis of available land throughout the county. Our community is blessed with incredible peaks and valleys; however, this geography also makes it incredibly challenging for economic development. Unlike areas where there are vast amounts of flat land, we currently don’t have significant tracks of “shovel ready” sites in Broome. Over 200 properties were reviewed and graded based on their developability before ultimately it was decided that the properties along Airport Rd. in the town of Maine were the most viable option by far.

It is impossible to guarantee a vibrant economic future for Broome County without constructing new development sites. It is not only an imperative for the IDA to build new sites, but it is our responsibility. Our mission is to serve as a partner, catalyst and investor in new investment and development sites to create jobs and to enhance the tax base for the residents of Broome County. The creation of this new and vibrant development park will support the economic growth of Greater Binghamton and Broome County over the next two decades. The Agency hopes to attract companies in technology and R&D to support the region's emerging industries such as battery technology, as well as continue our long-term successes in the advanced manufacturing space. The proposed Broome Technology Park could result in another nearly \$1 billion in annual economic activity through sales, compensation, tax revenue and indirect business growth.

We cannot and should not accomplish this major investment on our own, however. To construct a truly successful development park we need the support of our local leaders, business partners, and community members. Together we can design the Broome Technology Park at Airport Rd. to be an asset that all are proud of. We invite you to stay tuned through the planning process and to join us in developing this major tool for economic success for future generations.

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