



***Start where you are, Use what you have, Do what you can.***

***Arthur Ashe***

## **Achieving the Vision**

A year of work by County staff, the community, consultants and elected officials culminates with a vision for Broome County. We inventoried our assets, catalogued our deficiencies, did an extensive survey, held workshops, met with stakeholders and most of all we listened. We asked the community to imagine that they are a resident of the county 10 years from now, the comprehensive plan is done and implemented to great success, and they are writing a letter to a friend or family member who does not live here. In this letter we asked residents to tell us how do you want to be able to describe Broome County? This is what the community said:

**The Vision:** Our residents make Broome County an inviting place to live, work and play. Our students and young professionals are fully engaged in the community. We take pride in our safe, vibrant, attractive urban and village centers and the scenic beauty that surrounds our rural towns and villages. Because we proactively invested in our legacy sites, new ventures now flourish on former brownfields. Our healthy communities are sustained because municipalities have made a commitment to high standards in community services and building design and renovation.

Broome County communities remain strong and resilient in the wake of natural disasters and other challenges through our capacity for cooperation and by incorporating sound planning in all facets of public decision making.

With our partners in education, Broome County invests in our workforce, entrepreneurship, and innovation to continue our legacy as a leader in high technology development. As the birthplace of IBM and the simulation industry, we know the importance of fostering diverse, newly emerging industries such as renewable and clean energy, green technology, and advanced healthcare.

This vision statement encapsulates the aspirations of the community, and we now lay out vision items and an action plan.



**Vision Item 8:**

**Becoming More Resilient**

As a community, we have become experts in responding to the aftermath of major floods, but now our focus must turn to actions that protect our residents, businesses and institutions from future events. Our towns, villages and public institutions have done much to mitigate against future disasters through selective buyouts of residential properties, improving our infrastructure, and constructing floodwalls to protect critical facilities such as Lourdes Hospital and the Union-Endicott High School. Projected increases in the amount of precipitation and the frequency of significant storms requires us to **adapt to changing conditions**. We can become a more resilient community by further incorporating hazard mitigation planning concepts into decision making, instituting policies that protect property and public safety, and encouraging natural, non-structural solutions to reducing flood damages.



**BROOME COUNTY  
FLOOD TASK FORCE**

As we make land use and capital investment decisions, we should review projects with hazard mitigation in mind. This can include making it Planning Department policy to provide comments as part of the 239 review process that require proposed developments become more disaster resistant. In addition, we should integrate flood mitigation and stormwater management projects and policies into the County's annual Capital Improvement Plan.

All communities in Broome County participate in the National Flood Insurance Program, but only Johnson City and the Town of Union are part of FEMA's Community Rating System. Through the Community Rating System program, residents and business owners receive reduced flood insurance rates because their communities take a comprehensive approach to floodplain management and work to reduce flood damage to insurable properties. Related to this, all communities in Broome County have floodplain development ordinances, but none have adopted the more stringent No Adverse Impact standards that would be more protective of property. These programs are complex and difficult to initiate, and require a great deal of technical assistance, education, and advocacy. The Broome County Flood Task Force is one venue for initiating these programmatic and policy changes. But we should continue to reach out to the business community through the Chamber of Commerce, the local chapter of the Bar Association, the Board of Realtors and other appropriate venues to educate businesses, attorneys, realtors, and others about



## Broome County Comprehensive Plan *Building Our Future*

concepts such as flood insurance, individual property hazard mitigation, and contingency planning during a flood to keep businesses running.

### **Vision Item 9: Investing In Our Workforce, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation**

It is hard to imagine today's society without the technological advances that came out of Broome County businesses. These include a century of innovation at IBM, the virtual reality and simulation industries which were borne out of Link Aviation and its daughter companies, and significant contributions to the space program and defense industries by local technology firms that maintain a strong presence here. What are we doing to cultivate the next crop of entrepreneurs?

Like any greenhouse, we must tend to the infrastructure of innovation in order to create an entrepreneurial ecosystem. Community groups, private industry, and the public sector have done quite a bit to sow the seeds for the next generation of innovators. For nearly 30 years, the Southern Tier Imaginink Celebration of Invention and Art has hosted art shows and invention conventions at many local venues. Over 20,000 students have invented solutions to their problems since the program

#### **Boston Innovation District: Core Principles & Strategies**

##### **Work: Create Clusters of Innovative People**

People in clusters innovate at a quicker rate, sharing technologies and knowledge easier. **Ideas need a tight ecosystem** to foster creative growth – distance equals death. These Innovation District clusters become the new economic engines for the region, retaining homegrown talent from the surrounding city and intellectual institutions.

##### **Live: Build Flexible Housing Options to Work for Flexible Lifestyles**

The entrepreneur who is never at home because she's at the lab all night or developing a new program with her co-founders, needs an apartment that meets her lifestyle demands and budget and is near her office. The City of Boston works closely with design professionals and developers to produce a palette of new housing options to fit the range of lifestyles and needs of the innovation workforce.

##### **Play: Provide Public Space and Programming To Foster An Innovation Ecosystem**

An **abundance of collaborative venues and open space** is critical to fostering the creative process. The Innovation District will offer unparalleled opportunities to organically grow projects and networks among entrepreneurs.