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Subject:
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To: Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council

Redeveloping Emerson, the largest brownfield site in Tompkins County, into an Eco-Industrial Park (EIP) would first and foremost stimulate the clean-up effort at Emerson, create and retain many new good paying jobs, put the site back on the tax rolls, and finally, move our community towards "sustainable community development."

What is an Eco-Industrial Park? First and more most, Eco-Industrial Parks were co-invented here at Cornell by E. Cohen-Rosenthal and defined in the Journal of Cleaner Production as follows:

"An Eco-Industrial Park is a community of manufacturing and service businesses seeking enhanced environmental and economic performance through collaboration in managing environmental and resource issues, including energy, water, and materials, By working together, the community of businesses seeks a collective benefit that is greater than the sum of the individual benefits each company would realize if it optimized its individual performance only. The goal of an EIP is to improve the economic performance of the participating companies while minimizing their environmental impact"

The Odyssey Group, a small ad-hoc group of Ithacans, has been developing the concept of an EIP for the Emerson site since Emerson announced it would be moving out of Ithaca over three years ago. Already, it has elicited enough interest in the concept that Francis Vanek, PhD at the Cornell School of Civil & Environmental Engineering will be conducting a graduate level course called,**"Technical and Economic Feasibility Study of Green Energy Center at Former Emerson Plant in Ithaca, NY."**

The Odyssey Group believes the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council should take a close look at Eco-Industrial Parks as an economic development stimulator for the region because EIP's would take full advantage of our region's most valuable asset, higher education.

As you know, the Souther Tier Regional Economic Development Council has working groups focused on a whole host of categories. All or any group of these focus areas could be addressed and woven into eco-park communities across the Southern Tier. In Ithaca, for example, the Emerson site is an ideal location to focus on brownfield remediation, renewable energy generation, technology transfer and development, sustainable transportation solutions, downtown redevelopment and even food security. Eco-Industrial Park's could be whatever each municipality in the Southern Tier deems to be in their best interest to develop with the added benefit of moving that municipality towards genuine economic sustainability.

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