



DESIGN/BUILD COMPANIES TAKE ON LAND PLANNING

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One of the biggest trends in commercial construction today is land planning and management.

Developers are taking holistic view of what tomorrow's business and industrial parks are going to look like. From intermodal centers to one-stop-shop manufacturing, developers are placing a greater value on the design/build contractor's role in envisioning whole land developments.

Industrial and business parks used to be built one building at a time, with roads and infrastructure created on an as-needed basis. Today, developers acquiring large, strategically located land sites look to their design/build construction partners to manage, plan, and construct roads and infrastructure to accommodate various phases before the first building comes out of the ground. As business park development moves further out into pure greenfield markets beyond traditional suburban destinations, it becomes more important that the infrastructure is designed to accommodate logistic movements within a park, as well as in and out of a park. Intermodal centers and the resurgence of rail transportation are part of this larger trend as contractors must work closely with municipalities to plan for the movement of products through new communities – whether that be via truck, train or in some cases, air transport.

While many construction companies are well-versed in the construction of individual industrial facilities, developers are increasingly dependent on their design/build construction partners to participate in the business park planning process. This process involves much more expertise than getting a single facility out of the ground. The design/build firm becomes

a trusted advisor to the developer by trouble-shooting potential infrastructure problems up front, sometimes years before the project begins. It is important that the design/build firm have the experience and expertise necessary to look at a new piece of land and be able to identify the planning design and construction challenges that may arise as development proceeds on the site.

Upfront due diligence is essential. Design/build contractors must understand soil conditions, environmental and wetland concerns, and the sit work engineering to balance the excavation work. There is an enormous upfront analysis of the land to ensure the client's full knowledge of its investment.

From there, it is important to consider the number of buildings envisioned for the site and how they might be arranged to allow for the maximum usable square footage. Beyond traffic flow, the logistics of building a transportation system – whether it be via road, rail or air – must be carefully planned with surrounding municipalities. Planning for current and future utility infrastructure, including natural gas, electric, water, storm sewer and sanitary sewer, plus telecommunications systems, retention and detention areas, also takes careful consideration.

As the industrial market in the Chicago area continues to grow, land planning and management will take an even more important role in the development process

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