

Belmont Development Testimony
January 8, 2019

Statement from the Floral Park-Bellerose School Board

Good afternoon. My name is Laura Ferone, President of the Floral Park Bellerose School District Board of Education and a 30 year resident of Floral Park.

I am here again to speak on behalf of the children and families of the Floral Park Bellerose Community.

I spoke yesterday and reiterate today our concerns regarding development on the North Lot and request that the Empire State Development Group walk the property line with myself and our administrators and develop a plan to provide a set back and barrier to protect our children and community.

Today, I am here with regard to traffic and safety. There are 4 schools within the Boundaries of Floral Park Village. 2 are located on Plainfield Ave and 1 of those is directly across the street from the Plainfield Ave Gate.

To date the Plainfield Ave gate is not slotted to become an active gate. We need assurance, in writing, that this gate will remain closed for daily public use, tour buses, and shuttles.

The vast majority of our students walk to and from school. Despite your traffic study which states there will be no anticipated rise in accidents due to increased traffic, common sense dictates that more cars on the road without question will lead to more car and pedestrian accidents. Sadly, our community has already suffered several serious and fatal accidents along some of our main streets, Jericho Turnpike, Hillside Ave, Elmont Rd, Dutch Broadway, and Plainfield Ave.

Since the beginning of the school year, there have been 4 accidents in close proximity to our local high schools, all occurring during drop off, pick up, or on the way to a school event.

Plainfield is already congested between the hours of 3p and 6p. This is when the greatest number of children are walking, bicycling or skateboarding through our streets. I might remind you all that in an age of technology where we encourage our children to be active, to play outdoors, and to become independent...sending them home from school and out to play during a daily traffic jam is obviously unwise.

There is already significant congestion around all 4 schools during drop off and pick up. I happily invite any members of the Empire State Development Group to come to our town during school dismissal. I will gladly drive you around our community and show you first-hand what the current traffic situation already is. In fact, we will even take you by school bus in order to demonstrate how our drivers already have to navigate what is already in existence. Now add people rushing to or from shopping or racing to get to the stadium to pregame before a sporting event or concert....it just doesn't work.

I understand this is insignificant to you all, but this is a suburban area. People were raised here and chose to stay and raise their families and people like myself moved from the city so that our children could live in a safe suburban community. Your plan does not work with this.

With regard to the shopping mall....the only time I have seen this type of mall, has been when it is sitting next to a casino. Don't for a moment think that we are not aware that that is the end game and plan for this project.

Lastly, with regard to infrastructure...you are building a house without a foundation. There is no infrastructure to support this project. Viable public transportation and proper roads, water, power, sanitation, and drainage all must be in place prior to beginning any project or it is doomed to fail. Thank you.

Laura Ferone