



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Productive Meeting with Empire Study Group

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Yesterday I had the opportunity to meet with neighborhood leaders from the Empire Study Group about community concerns as well as their findings and vision for the future of Empire Boulevard between Flatbush Avenue and Rogers Avenue. Constructive dialogue in our community is critical to moving forward together, as I highlighted in a piece on what I termed "participatory planning" in the Brooklyn Spectator earlier this year entitled *Planning for a Stronger Community*:

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Community boards and neighborhood residents need support engaging in the planning process, even before the formal, legally-defined planning process begins. Both state and city level outreach can help promote this engagement. These efforts should proceed with several key goals in mind. First, new construction needs to benefit the existing, long-time residents of the community – whatever their income level. Second, construction cannot be about pushing existing residents to the margins of our community or out of our neighborhoods entirely. Third, development cannot outpace the necessary infrastructure to care for neighborhood needs, needs like seats in schools, appropriate cables or cell sites for internet access, and pipes for water and sewage. Broad, community-based dialogue early on can help hold would-be developers accountable even prior to the beginning of the formal Uniform Land Use Review Procedure.