

## LOCAL

# Public shares thoughts on proposed LaGrange Town Center development



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## Key Points

On Wednesday, Dec. 10, the Town of LaGrange Planning Board held a special meeting and public hearing to learn residents thoughts on the proposed LaGrange Town Center development.

Here, see what the development is seeking site approval for and what's planned, hear residents voice their concerns, and learn how locals can share public comment on this following the meeting.

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A development project situated in the Town of LaGrange, now over two decades in the works, sought public comment on Dec. 10.

On the snowy and rainy evening, droves of town residents filled the benches in the LaGrange Middle School auditorium to share their thoughts about the LaGrange Town Center, a project by BRH Land, an affiliate of Rieger Homes — what many folks at the meeting dubbed [Eastdale](#), but bigger.

Steven Rieger, vice president of Rieger Homes, said at the meeting, the development was designed to fit the town's vision and comprehensive planning for a new town center.

"As far back as 1987, the town stated in its comprehensive plan that a key goal for the town was the development of a commercial hub in this location," Rieger said.

The Dec. 10 meeting sought comment on only the site plan approval for the northern portion of the development, within the Town Business Center (TCB) zoning district, including 63 acres from Route 55 toward Lauer and Todd Hill Roads.

This area also encompasses the buildings at 1100 Route 55, with one housing the LaGrange Library and Salsa Fresca, and the other home to M&T Bank.

The LaGrange Town Center in its entirety is proposed to be 194 acres.

During the meeting, information on when the project would begin, how long it would take and end was not shared.

## **What is known about the proposed plan**

However, for the northern portion in question — a walkable, mixed-used community — it would include 35 buildings.

The proposed plan includes 249 multifamily residential housing units of varying types, a 3,400 square foot clubhouse, a pool and playground for the residents, 118,000 square feet of commercial space, including restaurants, retail, office space, a bank and a pharmacy, as well as an approximately half acre town green — the center of the project.

Ten percent of the 249 units are intended to be affordable housing units for people making no more than 80 percent of Dutchess County's area

median income.

**More:** [Dutchess County Housing Trust Fund awards \\$2 million for 100 new northern Dutchess units](#)

At the meeting, Emma Arnoff, Dutchess County District 2 Legislator elect, pointed to the cost of these affordable units, along with the cost of all the units, with hopes this "very large project," she said, would think about the people of LaGrange and the high cost of living.

"If we're going to be creating housing, it should be to alleviate the problem people in our community who cannot afford to live here," Arnoff said.

Some individuals agreed with the plan, including Sarah Lee, Dutchess County resident and executive vice president of Strategic Initiatives at [Hudson Valley Economic Development Corporation](#).

"The project represents an important step towards creating a vibrant and balanced town center, that aligns with the community's comprehensive plan," Lee said. "The project will create a true town center, a place where people can live, work, shop and enjoy local amenities, all in one area."

However, many residents voiced their concerns. Read on for some of LaGrange residents most pressing concerns, and how you can get involved if you could not make the meeting.

## **Traffic is the largest concern**

Overwhelmingly, increased traffic on Route 55, due to the development, was the greatest concern for LaGrange residents at the hearing.

The roundabouts added to LaGrange, a collaboration between the town and New York State Department of Transportation, 12 years ago, took into consideration the anticipated traffic generated by this project into the design and construction, according to Rieger.

The two entrances to the development would be at the two western roundabouts, further from the Taconic State Parkway.

"We continue to coordinate with the DOT," Rieger said. "We've continued to submit traffic counts and other information."

Susan Kavy asked whether any further changes would be made to Route 55.

Kavy highlighted how large trucks tend to go over the roundabouts, instead of through them, but recognized there's not much that can be done to widen them.

**More LaGrange Town Center:** [Environmental remedies, development's history and why there is a need](#)

Additionally, Ken Zebrowski, senior advisor at Brown & Weinraub, a public affairs firm representing the LaGrange Fire District, presented the concerns of the district and amendments to the proposal, prior to approval, including the traffic study conducted for this project, which the fire district does not believe is adequate or up to date.

With the latest version of the study completed in 2019, before COVID-19, the district doesn't think it represents the "current conditions," Zebrowski said, and asked the planning board to require a new study to be done.

LaGrange Fire District Chief, Anthony Champion, said, "the fire district continually responds to this area for emergency issues, and are met with a slower response than normal, as there is little to no room for normal traffic to safely and effectively pull over."

The fire district wants to ensure proper fire truck response and access mitigation measures are made by BRH Land, ensuring emergency response times are adequate.

Traffic concerns not only about Route 55 were brought up, but also for how this development would effect congestion on the commonly used backroads and secondary roads, such as Lauer Road, Todd Hill, Stringham Road, Noxon Road and Bushwick Road.

Resident Gary Polhemus highlighted roads like these have outdated designs and was concerned how the increase in cars would effect safety.

"LaGrange now in 2025 is a very different town than it was when these roads were put in," Polhemus said.

## **Lack of infrastructure**

Many residents were concerned the current infrastructure of LaGrange would not be able to support the proposed development.

LaGrange resident Peter Turnoff asked the planning board to "consider just the north section," and not do the south section, another 131 acres, at all. He does not think the town can "absorb it."

Kavy doesn't believe the town is equipped to take on a development like this.

"The town doesn't have the infrastructure for all of these new housing units," Kavy said.

Town resident Dave Siegel, of the [LaGrange Democratic Committee](#), said "responsible planning" would be the "smart thing to do." With this project being in the works now for over 20 years, outdated metrics should be reevaluated in the planning process.

"I've been here for 31 years, and I can tell you that Lagrange in 2005 is not the same as 2025," Siegel said. "This is a different town with more people, more traffic and more of everything."

## **Concerns for increased taxes**

Robert Herberger, one of many at the meeting, asked the planning board what impact the development would have on Town of LaGrange resident's taxes.

"Everyone knows our taxes are high enough as they are," Herberger said.

Additionally, Zebrowski highlighted the fire district would require fire equipment, personnel and upgrades, which would not be covered by BRH Land.

Thus, they asked for a community benefit fund to assist the department in purchasing a ladder truck, to not rely on mutual aid, constructing a substation and covering the cost of hiring new firefighters, which may cost upwards of \$4 million.

Some residents voiced their worries about the resulting taxpayer burden to ensure the fire department is properly equipped for a development like

this.

## **Lack of accessibility to information about the development**

Siegel ran in the previous election for Dutchess County Legislature District 3, representing LaGrange. He did not win, but said in his campaign knocked on a lot of doors, learning many people "had no idea about this project."

"I think going forward, as a town, we just need to do better," Siegel said. "We need to keep people up to date better and more well informed on project."

Laura Wilson furthered this, seeking "transparency and openness of communication," she said about the project. She asked for all the site information to put online in an easy to find place, noting it would be of "great value to the community."

"It was really hard to find information about this site and the planning," Wilson said.

## **How the public can share their comments**

If you could not make the Dec. 10 special meeting and public hearing, the Town of LaGrange Planning Board, according to the town [website](#), will be keeping the hearing open until Jan. 2, 2026 at 4 p.m.

Written comments on the LaGrange Town Center development can be submitted via email to [shughes@lagrangenyny.gov](mailto:shughes@lagrangenyny.gov), hand delivered to the Town Hall, at 120 Stringham Road, Lagrangeville, or mailed.

Note, mailed comments must be received by the deadline on Jan. 2 at 4 p.m. to be considered.

For future updates, LaGrange residents should look to the planning board's agenda for the next project review and update.

Contact reporter Nickie Hayes: [NHayes@poughkee.gannett.com](mailto:NHayes@poughkee.gannett.com), 845-863-3518 and [@nickiehayess](https://www.instagram.com/nickiehayess) on Instagram.