

**Mayor Anita Dugatto**  
City of Derby, Connecticut

PRESS RELEASE

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**Derby to Lobby DOT for Changes to Route 34 Design  
in Interest of Downtown Development**

DERBY – The City of Derby recently punctuated the public engagement component of its comprehensive planning initiative *Downtown Now! Derby's Blueprint for Progress* with a five-day intense and interactive design charrette.

*Downtown Now!* is a bottom-up approach to development, unprecedented in Derby, that is geared to successfully position the south side of downtown Main Street for investment. It is being lead by DPZ Partners, one of the country's preeminent urban design and planning firms. The project is funded by a grant from Connecticut's Department of Economic and Community Development.

For *Downtown Now!* DPZ Partners joined forces with a team of consultants to conduct a series of assessments for the downtown area including infrastructure and environmental analyses, an economic and market study, and an evaluation of the tax revenue implications of proposed development scenarios. The goal is to define a development path for the site that is in sync with the community's vision, is grounded in real world data, and boosts the expansion of Derby's tax base. The objective also includes streamlining the development process for investors.

During the charrette, the ideas and priorities collected from the community during stakeholder interviews and two public workshops were measured against the data assembled by the team's consultants. From there, DPZ designers created a series of credible development plans for the south side of Main Street which reflect the vision Derby residents have for a vibrant, walkable downtown.

The proposed development plans account for a variety of challenges that exist at the redevelopment site including topography, multiple property owners, a rail spur, and Derby's sewage treatment facility.

DPZ's analysis also incorporated a review of the local transportation network as well as the proposed improvements to Route 34 through downtown Derby.

One of the big takeaways from the assessment was a recommendation by the consultant team to consider changes to the Route 34 design. Route 34 is a state road.

"The Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG) has been a great steward of the Route 34 project for our City," said Derby Mayor Anita Dugatto.

Under the leadership of Executive Director Rick Dunne, NVCOG has worked with Connecticut's Department of Transportation (DOT) to design a road to facilitate the movement of vehicular traffic in accordance with DOT's objectives.

However, Dunne's team recognized that Route 34, while being a state road, was historically Derby's Main Street. So, Dunne and his team incorporated many design features to make it more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly including narrower lane configurations, bump-outs, a center median, and dedicated bike and pedestrian paths.

Marina Khoury, one DPZ's leaders, suggested that even greater modifications to the Route 34 design should be proposed to DOT.

"We were commissioned to present Derby with a credible development plan that would provide the best opportunities for economic vibrancy. Therefore, we have an obligation to suggest any and all considerations that would encourage this - including some tweaks to the current design plans for Route 34," Khoury said.

Khoury believes Derby can realize a greater economic return on downtown investment by incorporating additional modifications that favor pedestrians and cyclists over vehicles.

"Our data suggests that there may be opportunities for changes to the Route 34 design that will further increase safety and support a more robust economy on both the north and south sides of Main Street," Khoury said.

Dugatto expressed her support of Khoury's recommendations. "I can assure you that NVCOG and the City of Derby will work collaboratively to lobby DOT for additional modifications that best serve the interest of Derby's residents and the future prosperity of our downtown," Dugatto said.

To learn more about *Downtown Now!* or to preview the proposed development plans, please visit Derby's website [derbygt.gov](http://derbygt.gov).

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