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# THE VILLAGE OF UNIONVILLE

MAIN STREET UNIONVILLE  
COMMUNITY VISION PLAN

VERSION 3.1

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Prepared for

The City of Markham

Lead Consultant

Masterplanner & Architects

Torti Gallas and Partners  
Michael Morrissey

Consultant Team

Ferris + Associates Landscape Architecture  
Gibbs Planning Group Retail Consultant  
Arup (Parking)  
Nelson Nygaard Traffic Engineer  
Daywriter Communications & Editor  
Seamless Collaborative Retail Consulting  
David Johnston Village Architect  
Adam Cook Editor

Charrette Team June 4-9, 2013.

Crosby Community Arena

Charrette Team :

Robert Goodill	David Johnston
Michael Morrissey	Roy Chan
Daniel Ashtary	Ken Tai
Eric Aulestia	
Laurence Brady	
Chiawat Polanin	Organization Team :
Atul Sharma	Judi McIntyre
Paul Ferris	UBIA members
Kay Laidlaw	Bob Evans
Ted Merrick	Mary Creighton
Hilary Holden	Francine Perinet
Annika Hui	Rob Kadlovski
Christie Day	Sandra Tam
Robert Hyland	Mary Pan

Mayor

Frank Scarpitti

Main Street Unionville Committee

Chair

Regional Councillor Jim Jones  
Councillor Don Hamilton (Vice-Chair)

Committee Members

Rob Kadlovski (UBIA)  
Brian Brewer (URA)  
Ann Laxton (UHS)  
Charlie Deacon (UVA)  
David Nesbitt (Heritage Markham)  
Paul Vasilkovsky (UBIA)  
Robert Fleischaker (UVA & UVC)  
Jeff Morris (URA)  
Larry Mariani (UBIA)  
George Illopoulos (UBIA)  
Mark Smith (Alternate-UBIA)

Town Development  
Services Commission Staff

Commissioner of Development Services

Jim Baird

Commissioner of Community Services

Brenda Librecz and Staff

Director of Planning and Urban Design

Rino Mostacci and Staff

Senior Development Manager

Biju Karumanchery

Manager of Heritage Planning & Staff

Regan Hutcheson, Study Project Manager  
George Duncan, Senior Heritage Planner  
Peter Wokval, Heritage Planner





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PREFACE TO THE VISION</b>	<b>4</b>
A Brief History	6
A Year in the Village	8
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>I. THE GROUND WORK</b>	<b>22</b>
Vision Plan Overview	24
Public Process	30
Urban Retail	32
Challenges and Opportunities	36
Precedent Villages	46
<b>II. THE PLAN</b>	<b>58</b>
Vision Plan Focus Areas	64
Highway 7 Gateway	66
Stiver Mill Area	76
Main Street Village Core	86
West Side South	90
West Side North	96
East Side	108
Village Square	118
Crosby Community Centre and Park	122
Toogood Pond Park and Amphitheatre	132
Additional Concepts	140
Streetscape Strategy	142
Main Street Program & Parking	144
Environmental Sustainability	148
Rouge River Walk	152
<b>III. THE WAY FORWARD</b>	<b>154</b>
Transformation - Conclusion	156
Recommendations	160
Community	164









## PREFACE TO THE VISION

Welcome to the heritage village of Unionville, Ontario – and to a vision of how this extraordinary community can prosper well into the future.

Historically rich and visually stunning, Unionville faces considerable challenges if it is to remain vibrant over the long term. This document evaluates those challenges in detail, identifies opportunities for improvement, and recommends a set of interconnected solutions that can unfold over time.

Following an Executive Summary and Plan Overview and Goals, this Vision Book presents concepts for enhancing the community, unfolding in a series of focus areas and themes.

The reader is invited to imagine we are taking an unhurried walk up through the heart of the village. We'll stroll north along Main Street from Highway 7 all the way to Toogood Pond,

crossing the street now and then and taking short side trips to explore key details.

Our purpose is to learn what has been put in place over time, observe what is true today, and envision what could be for tomorrow.



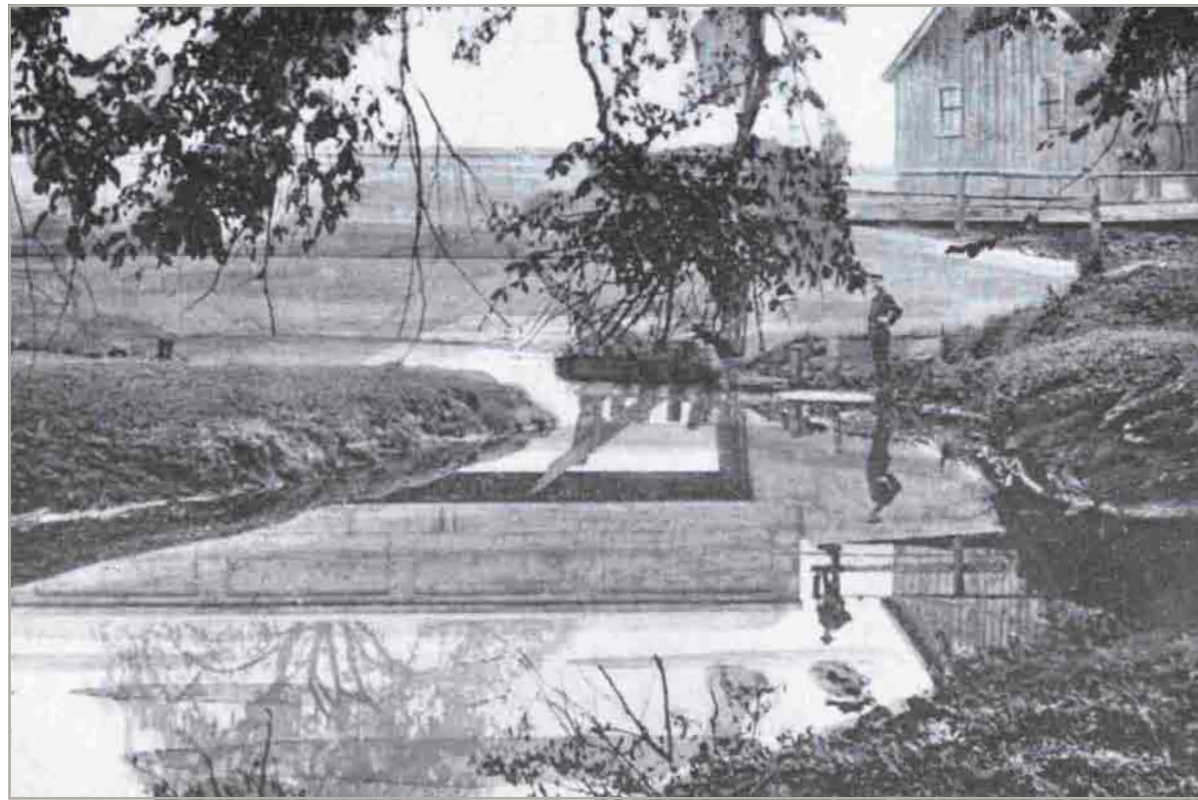
It should be noted that this is a vision plan and that improvements and amenities, such as streetscapes, public washrooms, facilities (such as the amphitheatre), tree planting, renovation of the recycling depot, etc. are conceptual in nature. Implementation will depend upon feasibility of infrastructure installation, as well as available funding and resources identified in the course of plan review and implementation of the Masterplan over time.

Additional future studies will be required to support the Community Vision Plan :

- *Transportation and Parking Study*
- *Environmental Site Assessment*
- *Master Environmental Servicing Study*
- *Functional Servicing Report*
- *Development and Phasing Plan*
- *Secondary Plan and Design Guidelines*











## A BRIEF HISTORY

Like all good stories, this one starts a few centuries ago – in 1794, to be precise.

Hardy families emigrating from Germany and Pennsylvania, led by William Berczy, took advantage of free land grants. They began working the fertile, untouched farmland several miles north of “Muddy York,” the prim ancestor of modern Toronto. The area’s rich soil was well fed by a network of creeks and streams, part of today’s extensive Rouge River system.

The first hint of a village sprouted north of present-day Unionville, up Kennedy Road above 16th Avenue. Settler Philip Eckardt allowed his log cabin to double as a church. Soon a real church was built nearby. You can still find headstones from the late 1790s and early 1800s in the Bethesda Lutheran cemetery at the top of the hill.

In time, the settlers had wheat to grind and livestock to feed. By the 1840s, the community centre moved southward with the building of the Union Mills, including two grist mills situated along a more protected part of the Rouge, and Unionville began to take shape.

The rest of the story unfolds on our walk through the focus areas.





# A YEAR IN THE VILLAGE





# A YEAR IN THE VILLAGE





# A YEAR IN THE VILLAGE





A YEAR IN THE VILLAGE





# A YEAR IN THE VILLAGE





# A YEAR IN THE VILLAGE





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



## Unionville : The Village Evolved

This book is the story of a village. It is a story told from a different perspective than a history book, though many historical facts are brought in to the narrative. Instead, this Community Vision Plan for Main Street Unionville aims to tell the story of this Ontario village's past through its present—because any village as beloved by its residents as Unionville is a true place—somewhere that has evolved over time, so that its past is inherent in its present. By examining present conditions on Main Street Unionville in a thorough way, the story will continue as a description of Main Street Unionville's evolution over the next thirty years.

What is a village? People seem to know one when they see one, and residents and visitors alike flock to Main Street Unionville for its heritage village character. The City of Markham, in which Unionville sits, proclaimed Main Street Unionville one of four Heritage Districts, with rigorous standards in place to protect the character that makes this place special<sup>1</sup>. They, alongside the residents, business owners and admirers of Unionville realize that there is no other place quite like it in the GTA.

Main Street Unionville is distinctly different—the buildings, the street; the way we interact with them and with each other when visiting—from the predominately post-World War II development that surrounds it. As Markham and the GTA continue to see incredible growth and new, modern development, these distinctions have become ever more heightened. Again we must ask: What is a village? Is it merely a place that is a 'step back in time', a short departure on a Saturday from the modern world to take in a concert and shop for gifts, or is it something more? The term 'village' implies function as well as form, and as we have already established, it is a place that has evolved over time and will evolve into the future.

Perhaps we can find answers by looking to the English planner Thomas Sharp, who 70

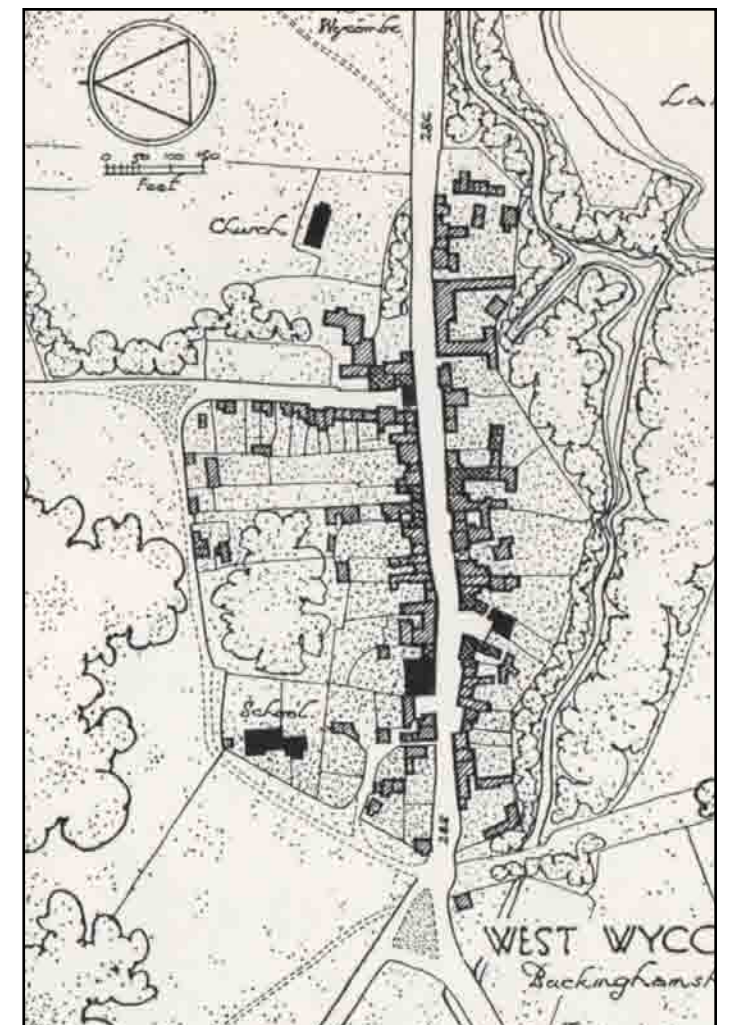
years ago studied the villages of his home country at the beginning of the post-World War II development boom<sup>2</sup>. Of course, Main Street Unionville is a distinctly North American—a distinctly Canadian—type of village, but Sharp's assertions ring true nevertheless. According to him, there are three principal conditions that must be met in a village, and we will address them one-by-one.

Firstly is layout: Of the several types of villages Sharp classifies, Unionville is most definitely a roadside village, as it exists along one road: Main Street Unionville. Founded in 1794 to the north of its present location, by 1840 the founding of Union Mills prompted development of the modern settlement we know today. The road servicing this settlement, notably, deviated slightly west from the original north-south Concession Road connecting the wilderness to Lake Ontario: this was to take advantage of a slight rise over the Bruce Creek floodplain, protecting the nascent buildings<sup>3</sup>. Here is how Main Street Unionville got its slight bend—and fulfills aptly Sharp's description:

*[M]ost... roadside villages seem somehow to contain their road rather than to be merely a string of buildings pushed aside by it. The road may curve gently away from the straight or it may take a sharp*

*and sudden turn; in either case the village is thereby transformed into a place; a place with a way in and a way out and not merely an incident on the roadside.<sup>4</sup>*  
(Emphases in original)

Second we must look at the buildings. Of the buildings themselves, Sharp notes: "A manor house, a group of almshouses, a tithe barn, a mill, an inn, a couple of shops, may by accident or design be so situated



**West Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, UK**  
A Roadside Village typically has a slight bend about the middle of the street containing views inward.



as to give emphasis, a ‘punctuation,’ to one or more points in the plan.<sup>5</sup>” Do the Old Firehall, standing guard atop Main Street Unionville’s bend; the Stiver House, stoically overseeing the street’s northern climax; or the Congregational Church building, whose spire can be seen peeking over the treetops from that point, not all immediately come to mind—alongside many other examples?

These buildings were designed with specific functions—residential, retail, spiritual, and in the case of the since-recreated Planing Mill, industrial—which implies the third aspect of the village: the community itself<sup>6</sup>. “The village is the home of a community... A simple social structure produced a simple material form.”<sup>7</sup> During the Mill Era of the 1840s and the Railroad Era that succeeded it, Unionville had the self-contained economic and social functions to act as a true village<sup>8</sup>. People lived, shopped and worked there; they socialized there; they worshipped there—and people from the surrounding farmlands came there whenever feasible to do these things as well<sup>9</sup>.

Thus Main Street Unionville is still perceived as a village, and it is the historic core from which the surrounding community grew throughout the 20th Century. In those intervening years, the functions that Unionville might have evolved to take on were satisfied elsewhere: the development

of multi-family housing throughout greater Markham; the supermarkets on Highway 7; the modern industrial parks ringing the GTA. It is not that Unionville could have—or should have—tried to replicate these fixtures of the modern suburban scene. Rather, in the absence of other economic functions, Unionville evolved from a self-contained community into a district predominantly used for retail and community purposes. While still seen as a village, still looking lovingly like a village... Unionville is not acting like a village.

## The Village in the 21st Century

This Vision Plan tells a story of Main Street Unionville’s future evolution based on its existing assets, and how it can evolve into a place—a beautiful, walkable, sustainable place preserving of its history—that once again acts as a village. This requires that there be residents living in the core Main Street Unionville area; expanded opportunities for retail relevant to those residents, both within the immediate core area and those who currently live within

walking distance; community space and facilities that make the existing social and festival culture ever richer; and as the broadband-connected laptop has supplanted the old mill, a modern version of business and industry.

There are precedents. Notably, as we shall discuss in some depth, the English village of Poundbury (an appendage to the city of Dorchester, Dorset) is none other than Prince Charles’ gauntlet, thrown down nearly a quarter-century ago to prove that a traditional village could be built—and function—in the modern world<sup>10</sup>. These traditional principles of building, planning and design have been studied and refined in North America through the New Urbanism movement, though the movement’s litany of successes exist in a variety of built forms and contexts.

Main Street Unionville can evolve to be both in form and function a contemporary traditional village, but it will take great care; that is the central thesis of this Vision Plan, as reflected in all of its facets. Say one of the movements on a beautiful heirloom watch has stopped working—a jeweler will deftly insert new parts alongside old ones in the cramped space of the watchcase to produce a fully functioning timepiece.



View north on Main Street : The Queen's Hotel, the center of Village life is prominently featured at the bend in the road providing terminating views north and south.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

That is the level of thinking addressed herein—where new buildings appear, their very specific placement, their shape, their size, their height, their architecture—are fundamentally important to preserving and enhancing the existing character of the village.

That character is at the heart of Main Street Unionville, and to use a modern term, is the district's 'brand asset'. The wealth of marvelous new development in Markham and throughout the GTA cannot and will not replicate it. The Unionville community learned with the saga of a modern condominium project on Fred Varley Drive that a vision—reinforced by proper planning codes and guidelines—is essential to ensure that a single project never again threaten this character. But new projects—and new land uses—are in fact essential to prevent a place from becoming the equivalent of an object in a museum, preserved yet unchanging; so it must be ensured that they physically interact with and be responsive to the surrounding area.

### About the Main Street Unionville Community Vision Plan Project

In 2013, the City of Markham, Ontario commissioned a team of urban planning and design experts, co-lead by Torti Gallas LLP and Michael Morrissey to develop a long-range master plan vision for the Main Street Unionville heritage district: this book is the result of a year long effort in the life of the Village. This Vision Plan is not, however,

a step-by-step guide—or an instruction manual—for building a conception pre-fixed in the minds of one or several of the authors. A Vision Plan such as this takes a high-level, long-range view of how to approach many interconnected issues in a cohesive way, and expresses a set of possible solutions specific to Main Street Unionville's unique context. The authors and design team have worked with the City, business owners, residents, and other interested stakeholders throughout the process to identify these

issues and explore solutions in light of their specific needs and desires. The City will develop a Secondary Plan based on this vision to implement the solutions discussed herein.

As the village itself is an organism, growing and changing as it does through a complex set of interconnections, the solutions proposed in this Vision Plan must also be interconnected: when implemented in isolation, though improvements will be seen, the problem will not be fully solved. The Vision Plan addresses the need to gently grow Unionville into a functioning, contemporary village by addressing the following problems:

- Providing space for enhanced retail opportunities, relevant to local residents' day-to-day lives as well as to visitors;
- Providing space within the core Main Street Unionville area for full-time residents;
- Developing enhanced public spaces, such as squares and plazas to augment the existing successful social and festival culture;
- Reimagining existing community and sports facilities while preserving their functions;
- Addressing the ongoing parking issues in the district in a workable, sustainable manner;



**Unionville Station :** The introduction of the railway in 1871 signals the greatest period of growth and prosperity in the Village. Half of the heritage buildings on Main Street were constructed at this time between 1871-1900.



- Revitalizing the streetscaping elements on Main Street Unionville itself;
- Augmenting the system of pedestrian movement through the district to extend the traditional walk along Main Street Unionville further north and south while providing new, interesting, and exciting walking routes;
- Establishing stronger connections to the Rouge River, Toogood Pond Park, and Crosby Park;
- Establishing a Gateway district along Highway 7 to the south.

In the short span of time during which the study was conducted, two transformative projects were successfully completed in Markham: the transformation of Unionville's Stiver Mill into a beautifully restored Cultural Centre, and the streetscaping of Main Street Markham, the city's other traditional Main Street retail district. Both projects should not only be considered successes, but serve as a constant reminder that Unionville—and the Markham community as a whole—is singularly capable of effecting meaningful and positive change.

The level of engagement displayed by the City of Markham throughout the study period—aside from having had the foresight and dedication to commission such a study—bodes well for the implementation potential of many solutions. The sophistication and dedication of City staff and leaders have been nothing less than incredible: their stewardship going forward is essential. There are other champions, too, taken from a wide variety of groups—business and landowners, area residents, local club membership. These are a unique and dedicated group of individuals.

Famed Philadelphia city planner Edmund Bacon understood great places as products of work and design over many generations, the so-called 'principle of the second person'<sup>11</sup>. Main Street Unionville is no different—its past generations' contributions are contained in what we see at present. The current generation of leaders and stakeholders has shown the willingness to create a vision for the future, and must dedicate themselves to act. If they do, their mutual presence at this moment in Main Street Unionville's history will be seen by those who stand to inherit it as more than accidental—and they will then take up the challenge.



By 1870's, the population in Unionville was 250 persons and a prosperous main street had a complete rural Village program including : 7 shoemakers, 3 carriage works and blacksmiths, 3 hotels, 6 general stores, 1 butcher, 1 tailor, 2 cabinet makers, 3 coopers, 1 harness maker, 1 cheese factory, 1 tinsmith, 1 flour mill, 2 doctors and 2 ministers.

## Footnotes and Endnotes

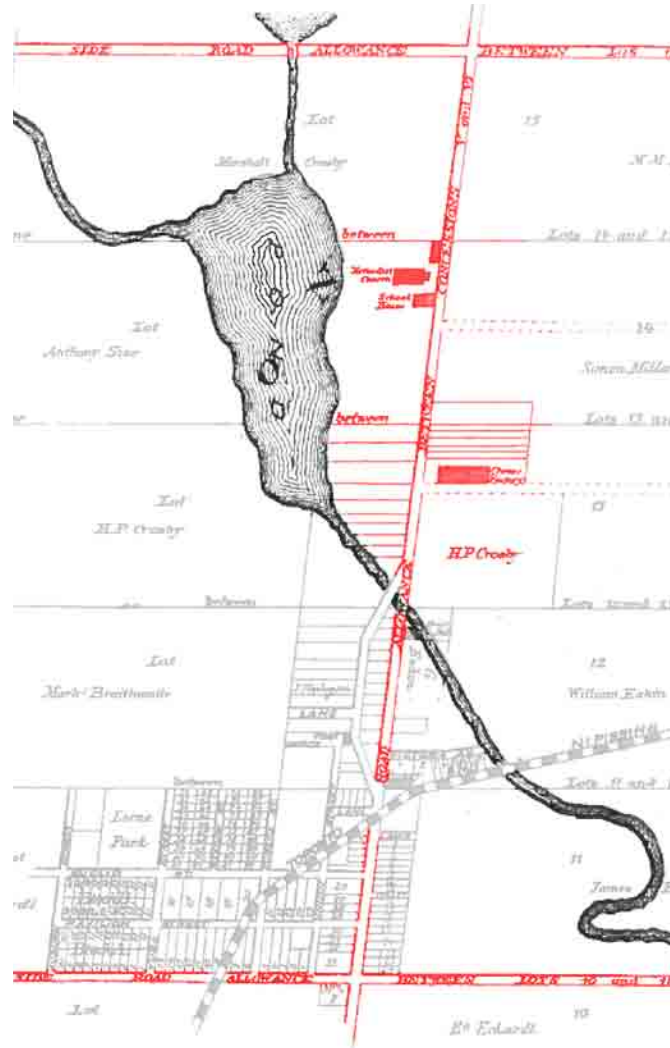
- 1 See, Town of Markham, ON, Development Services, Heritage Section. Unionville Heritage Conservation District Study. September, 1987.
- 2 Sharp, Thomas. *The Anatomy of the Village*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1946.
- 3 Unionville's history is detailed in: Champion, Isabel, and Mary B. Champion. *Markham Remembered: A Photographic History of Old Markham Township*. Markham, ON.: Markham District Historical Society, 1988.
- 4 Sharp, p. 9
- 5 Sharp, p. 10
- 6 Champion points out, "As a rule the hamlets and villages which appeared at so many crossroads of Markham owed their beginnings to an early mill or tavern and such subsidiary activities as a cooperage or distillery. Lack of transportation and the primitive roads persuaded shopkeepers to set up shop where this mill or tavern encouraged traffic." (p. 225)
- 7 Sharp, p. 12, 31
- 8 If light rail service comes to the Union-Stouffville Go Line in the future, Unionville Station would once again become a viable portal to the Main Street District.
- 9 Ross, Pat. *Remembering Main Street: An American Album*. New York: Viking Studio Books, 1994. p. xv would once again become a reality.
- 10 Rybczynski, Witold. "Behind the Façade." *Architect Magazine*, December 3, 2013. <http://www.architectmagazine.com/international-projects/behind-the-facade-of-prince-charles-poundbury.aspx>.
- 11 Bacon, Edmund N. *Design of Cities*. New York: Penguin Books, 1976.



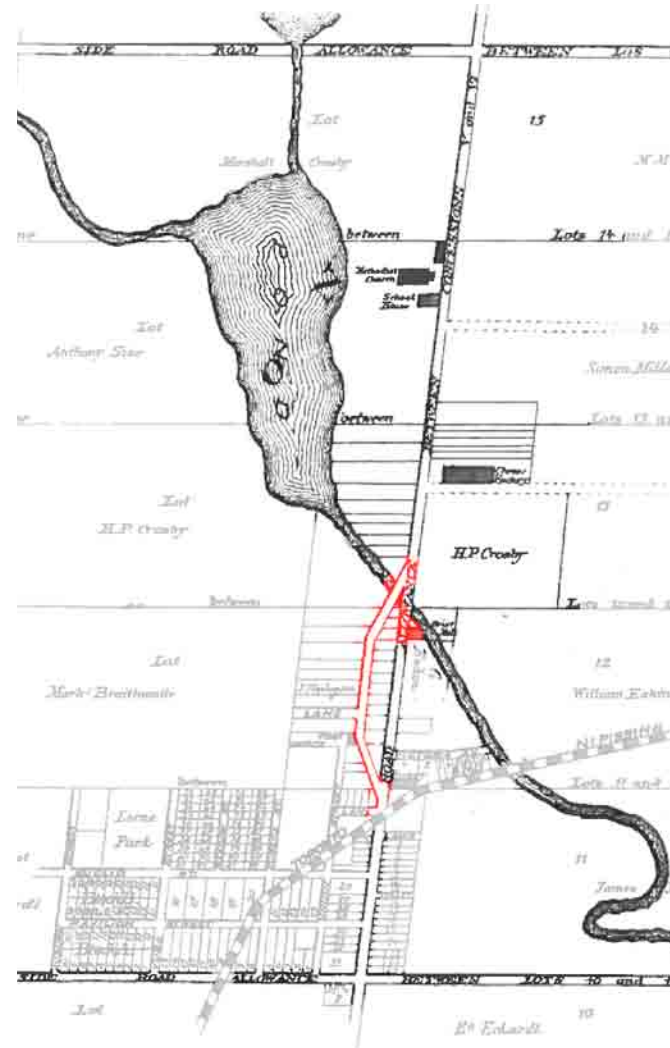
## THE EVOLUTION OF THE VILLAGE

RURAL

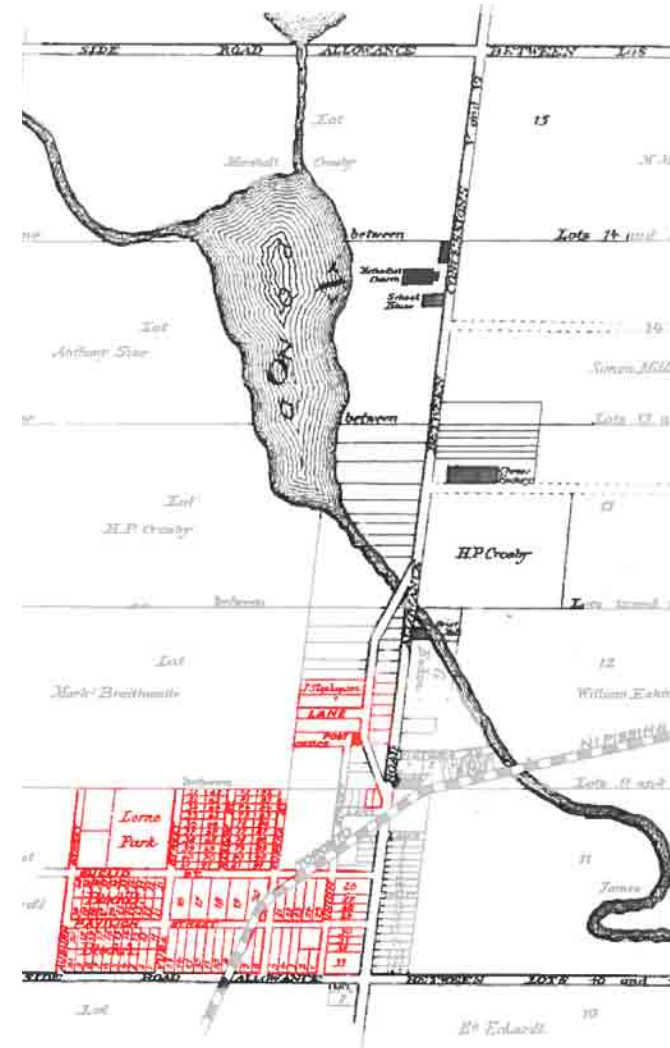
## HAMLET

**Early Settlement: 1794**

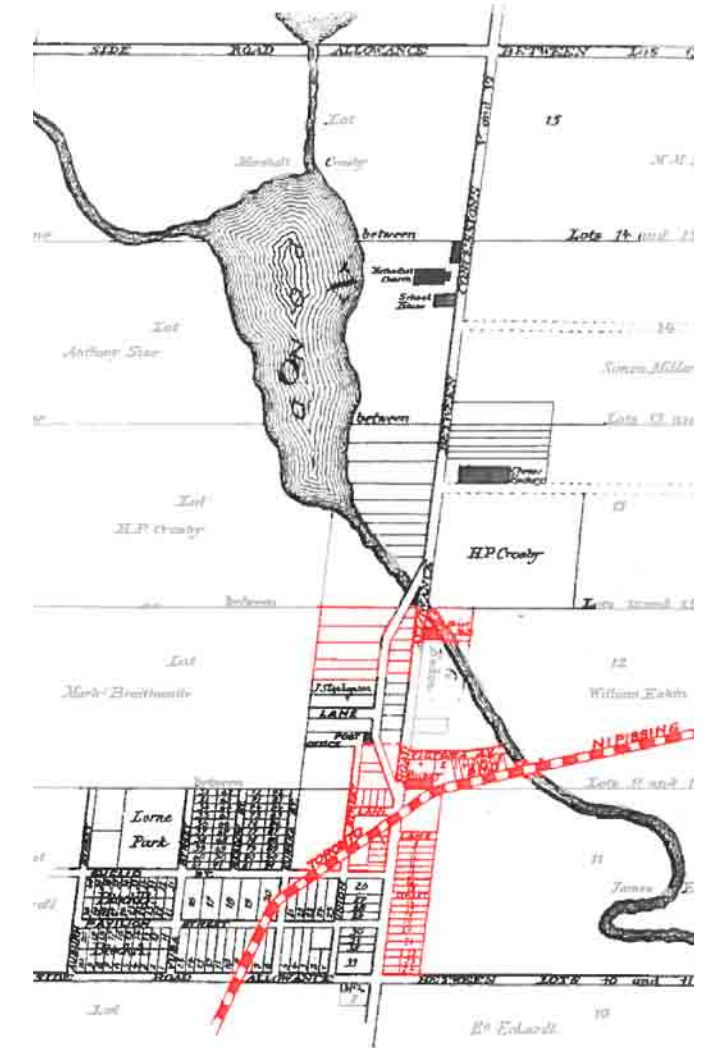
The origins of Unionville can be traced to a Canadian Land Grant settled by a group of German-speaking settlers, led by William Berczy. The first settlements along the Sixth Line concession road were north of the crossing of the Bruce Creek, with farmland stretching down to what is now Highway 7.

**Mill Era: 1830-1850**

As the settlement grew, it developed to the south. A flour mill, called "Union Mills" was built on the southwest bank of the Bruce Creek, a tributary of the Rouge River. The lane leading to the mill became the new main street. The original concession road was relocated out of the floodplain to its current alignment.

**A Village Grows: 1850-1870**

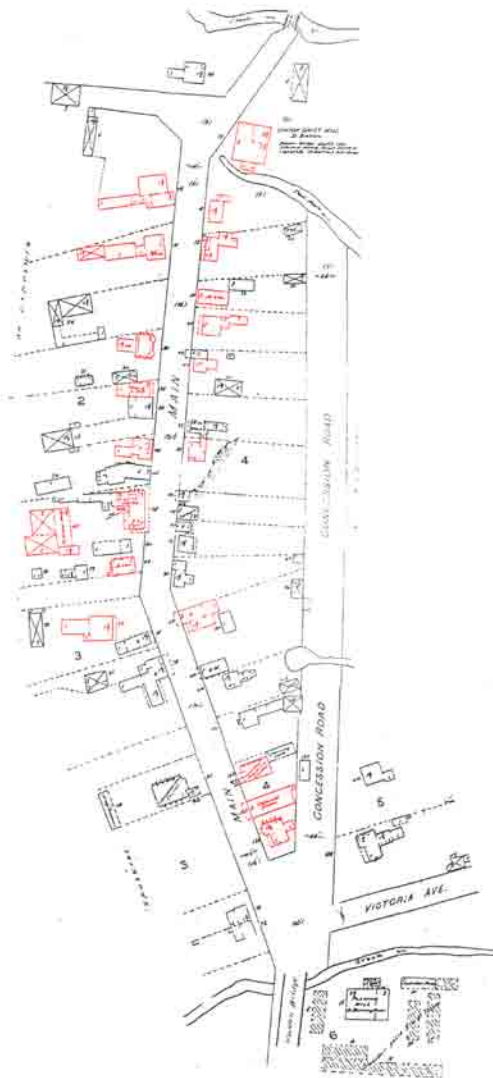
In 1851, the Village acquired a post office and was officially named "Unionville". The first residential subdivision was made in 1856, when William Eckardt divided his land to the west of Main Street, along Pavilion, Union, Eureka, and Euclid Streets. By 1870, the population had grown to 250 people.

**Railway: 1871**

The arrival of the Toronto and Nippissing Railway started the greatest period of growth for the Village of Unionville. Along with the increased industry and commercial development, new residential subdivisions occurred, as well. A majority of existing heritage buildings were built during this expansion period.



THE EVOLUTION OF THE VILLAGE



**Main Street: 1891**  
Detailed drawing of Main Street Unionville during the post-Railway period showing the outline of buildings existing at that time.



**Heritage Conservation District: 1997**  
In opposition to the potential for destructive changes to the Village of Unionville during the 1950s and 60s, local residents formed the Unionville Conservation and Development Society. A Heritage Conservation District Study Area was established in 1976 and the Heritage Conservation District Plan was adopted in 1997.



**Vision Plan: 2014**  
The Vision Plan builds on the historic development of Unionville and creates a unified vision for a holistic village from Toogood Pond in the north to Highway 7 at the south.

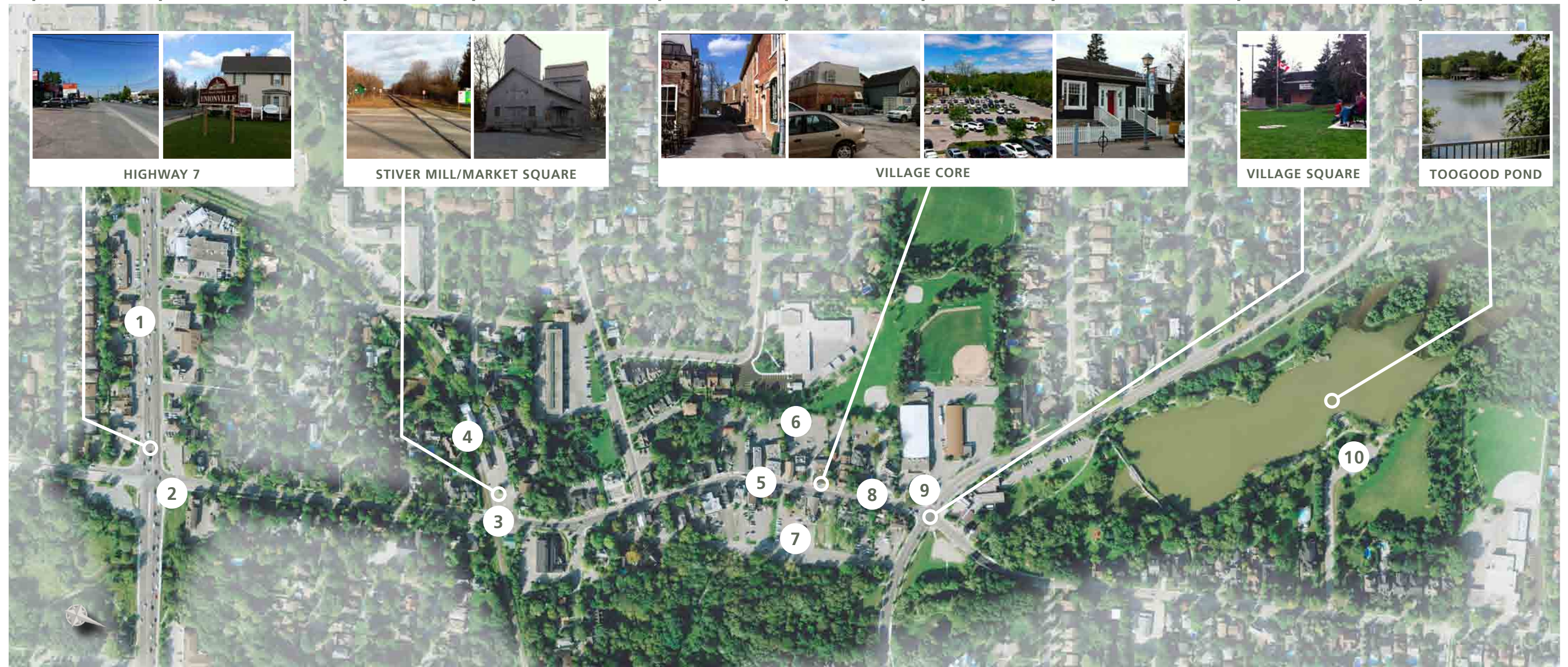


**Village of Unionville: 2050**  
The vision plan for the village centre provides an enhanced mix of uses, appropriately scaled, sustainable redevelopment, and provides an adequate "park once" facility for the uses of Main Street.



# UNIONVILLE VISION PLAN - EXISTING CONDITIONS

1. Hwy 7 is a wide regional road engineered as a traffic thoroughfare. This area is not pedestrian friendly, nor is it evident that this is a part of the Unionville Heritage Conservation District.
2. Only a glimpse of Historic Main Street Unionville is visible from the intersection of Hwy 7 and Main Street. A sign board on posts is the only indication demarcating the entrance into the Village.
3. Crossing the rail corridor into the Main Street Core Area, this threshold area is a broad expanse of asphalt that is currently uneventful.
4. The Stiver Mill c.1900 is an Industrial Heritage landmark with a distinctive massing punctuated by iconic grain elevator structures. The Mill complex has been repurposed many times and is currently under restoration as a cultural facility.
5. Numerous vehicular alleys (Old Firehall Confectionery, c.1891 and the Queens Hotel c.1870) interrupt the retail Main Street and disrupt pedestrian movement and compromise safety.
6. Behind the west side of Main Street is a disorganized asphalt parking area, subdivided by ownership, with poor vehicular connectivity into and across the site.
7. The east side is an expansive asphalt parking area with a jumble of cars, dumpsters, a mish-mash of rear building elevations, poor accessibility and lighting.
8. The Stiver House, c.1829 is good example of a Regency cottage style building with a well detailed Neoclassical entry. The building has fallen into disrepair and is unoccupied. Despite their intrinsic historic character, vacant buildings detract energy and life from the retail street.
9. The grass area in front of the Crosby Arena has the Memorial Cenotaph, a Canadian flag, a single bench and a collection of pine trees. This space lacks an official name and is under purposed at the top of Main Street and Carlton Rd.
10. This view across Toogood Pond shows a rather drab and underutilized concession stand in the centre of Toogood Pond Park.





# UNIONVILLE VISION PLAN

1. At the corner of Main Street and Hwy 7 a corner clock tower, and a pair of Village scaled lychgate portals frame the entrance to the Village of Unionville.
2. Hwy 7 is redeveloped as a 3.5 - 5 story gateway project between the GO rail tracks and the Rouge Valley. The scale and character of the street will conform with the historic Village with smaller building increments, pedestrian scaled streetscape elements, retail at grade with residential above, parking concealed behind the block and structured parking below grade. This area will feel like a natural southern extension of the village and thereby extend the walkability of Unionville.
3. The Market Square fronts onto Main Street. The Market Pavilion is an open air covered structure used for a variety of community related activities like the Farmers Market, a gateway to the rail walk and formally marks the southern end of the Main Street Commercial Area.
4. The newly restored Stiver Mill is now a major landmark on the south end of the Village. The original historic agrarian spine along the rail spur is reinforced by related buildings like a Green House, Market Pavilion and Artist Studios. The Stiver Mill area will entice pedestrians to walk further south on Main Street to explore this unique destination.
5. The Unionville Lanes concept on the west side of the core transforms vehicular alleys into pedestrian scaled passages and mews that lead to unique urban spaces deep into the block.
6. On the West Side a new residential quarter fronts onto Parkside Park with a pedestrian walk up to Crosby Community Centre.
7. The East Side piazza is at the mid-point or apex of the Main Street and is the logical place to locate public washrooms and an accessibility lift. A parking platform at the Main Street grade adds parking supply on the valley side along with a junior anchor for urban retail like a Village Grocer.
8. The west side of the core includes the conversion of the Stiver House into the formal lobby of a village scaled inn composed of a number of buildings framing a forecourt and enclave.
9. The Village Square establishes a larger urban space on the Main Street for larger events like Remembrance Day, The Unionville Festival and functions as the central gathering place in the Village. The Cenotaph will remain in its ceremonially important place on the Square.
10. The Toogood Amphitheatre reactivates the Park as a new destination in the trail system at the north end of the Village and creates a dramatic performance pavilion on the Pond.





# THE GROUND WORK I









# VISION PLAN OVERVIEW

## Community Vision Plan Overview

This Community Vision Plan for Main Street Unionville envisions the sustainable growth, prosperity, and enrichment of the village over the next 30 years. It establishes a shared concept to give direction to future investments, development, and community building initiatives in the village and the area that surrounds it.

Development of this Vision Plan was prompted by two key events: In 2013, a mixed-use development proposal was approved by the Ontario Municipal Board for a site on Fred Varley Drive, immediately to the west of Main Street Unionville. Had an articulate community vision plan been in place, particular design elements in the proposal itself would have been obviated, preventing the contentious approval process that subsequently occurred. Second, a restaurant regulatory policy enacted in 2003, popularly known as the 50/50 Policy, required public reassessment. While initially a part of the study resulting in this Vision Plan, the retail and restaurant policy component was ultimately reconsidered independently.

Top Issues

- Guiding Growth
- Heritage Village
- Parking / Traffic
- Zoning Issues
- 365 Day Active Village
- Main Street Physical Design
- Regional Greenway Connections
- Conservancy & Sustainability
- Public Transit
- Focus Areas



A proud Village



The Millennium Pavilion - Performance Event



Old Congregation Church



Main Street Festival Parade





## GOALS OF THE VISION PLAN

1. Open public process
2. Economic sustainability
3. Protect and expand heritage character
4. Expand walkability
5. Reinforce anchors
6. Add destinations
7. Extend the depth of main street
8. Optimize parking
9. Connect to open space systems
10. Preserve existing heritage assets

This Vision Plan generally represents a consensus vision of community stakeholders, providing a programmatic and architectural blueprint for future investment and sustainable growth. It is now crucial that a regulatory framework be studied by the City of Markham so as to implement and enforce the Vision Plan put forward here. Based on this work, a regulatory scope of work will need to be conducted by the City to implement, regulate, and enforce the Vision Plan put forward here. The unique layout and design of buildings and streetscapes will require review and approval of proposed plans by Community and Fire Services Commission Staff in the early stages of planning/design to ensure public services (such as waste collection, sewerage, snow ploughing and removal etc.) can be delivered, operated, maintained and accessed in an efficient and cost effective manner.

### Vision Statement

*Main Street Unionville shall become a vibrant, thriving and successful heritage village that is a regional destination, but serves local needs.*

This Vision was **achieved** through in an open and interactive Charrette process, by enhancing heritage character in design, and enriching existing facilities while adding new facilities appropriately and where necessary, and integrating place-based elements to ensure 'the whole is greater than the sum of the parts'.

The Vision is **captured** in this Community Vision Plan to guide physical development, changes to by-laws, and associated improvements.



# VISION PLAN OVERVIEW

## Goals and Objectives

The ten Goals of this Vision Plan are illustrated on Page 25. As the public process unfolded over 18 months, these Goals – and their associated Objectives – were constantly refined with each addition of public and stakeholder input.

There are, however, three Principal Goals of the Vision Plan, formed by the aspiration to sustain Main Street socially, economically, and environmentally:

## Social Sustainability

- Improve walkability;
- Create a more vibrant gathering place on Main Street Unionville by enhancing the retail program, adding new residents, providing washrooms, convenient parking locations, and street beautification;
- Create a richer and more varied Main Street experience by providing additional pedestrian routes and destinations within the core area, and better connections to the Rouge Valley parkland.

## Economic Sustainability

- Create value by making a more desirable and inviting place to live, work, and recreate;
- Create value by providing opportunities for a more successful and sustainable retail program;
- Create a more successful retail experience by providing a more convenient, legible, and accessible parking facility.

## Environmental Sustainability

- Manage stormwater by improving treatment and storage of runoff, principally by utilizing previously developed parking areas;



Increase Main Street Vitality



Expand Reach of Walking-Loop



Grow Retail Opportunity - Anchor



Preserve Residential Character South of Train Station





Preserve Heritage Character and Resources



Restoring the tree canopy



Enhance Retail Display Opportunities

- Remove trips from area roadways for convenience and dining by improving pedestrian connectivity and character, and by augmenting a sustainable retail program;
- Improve air quality and mitigate the ‘heat island’ effect by augmenting the tree canopy;
- Generate ‘green’ electricity by covering the parking garage with photovoltaic solar cells.

Parking

A municipal parking solution that is consolidated in a central location is necessary for sustainable growth in the Main Street Unionville Core Area. Existing parking policy requires lots with retail uses to provide parking spaces on the lot itself; the aggregation of many small lots with tenuous connectivity to the existing street network precludes optimized parking today, and will therefore preclude retail growth in the future.

As a traditional village serving local everyday needs that is simultaneously a place of significance in the region, Main Street Unionville must become a mixed-use, ‘park once’ district: Those who choose to arrive by automobile will park, for the duration of their visit, in the most appropriate place depending on the occasion and length of their visit.



# VISION PLAN OVERVIEW

## Parking Issues

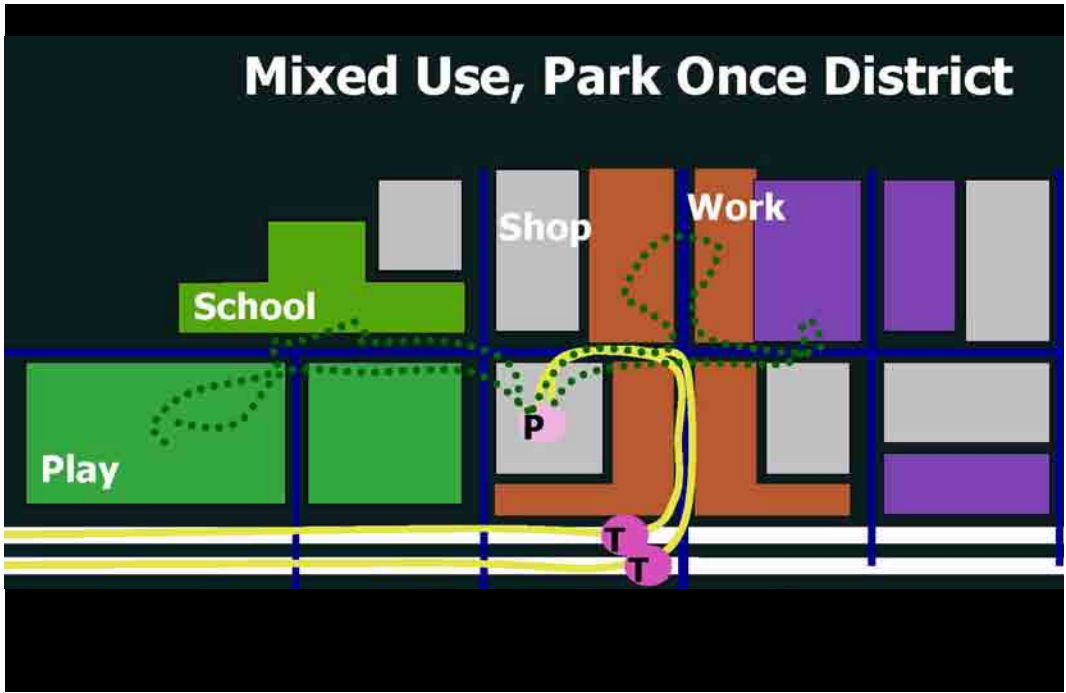
- Differentiate daily needs from event-day needs
  - Accommodate Festival needs with shuttles, trollies, heritage trains, etc.
- New development will displace surface parking
- New residential can park underground, commercial likely cannot park underground
- Maximize Current Facilities
  - East side
  - Carlton Road
  - Stiver Mill
  - Toogood Pond Park
- Locate Future Additional Facilities
  - Carlton Road West of Main - approx. 60 spaces
  - School Lot - 90 Spaces
  - Soccer Field Lot - 90 spaces
  - North anchor parking - 80 Spaces
  - Smiley Lot - 50 Spaces



Strolling



Dining



Park Once Concept

## Results of a Mixed Use, Park Once District

- < 1/2 the parking
- < 1/2 the land area
- 1/4 the arterial trips
- 1/6 the arterial turning movement
- < 1/4 the vehicle miles traveled

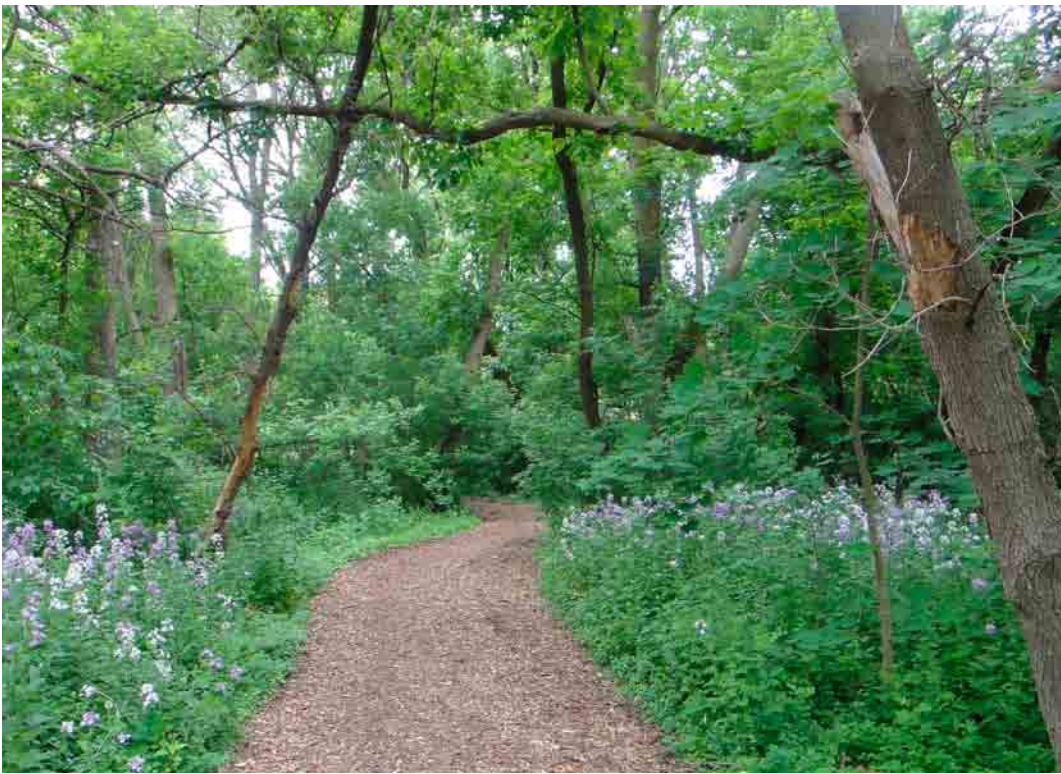


Shopping





Special Events Increase Demand for and Limit Access to Parking



Rouge Valley Trail



Pedestrian Safety is a Priority



Non-Accessible Pedestrian Way from East Side Parking Lot

Transportation Issues

- Visitors at weekends, local on weekdays and commuter through traffic at peak times
- Differentiate daily transportation needs from Festival days
- Bike/walking:
  - Poor links to trail systems
  - Strategic and local routes
- Bus/transit issues:
  - No clear access from regional transit network
  - No clear routes to/from transit stops
  - Heritage rail station is under-used
- Traffic issues include:
  - Delivery vehicles parking on Main Street
  - Queuing on westbound approach to Carlton/Main Street intersection
  - Speed and visibility an issue on bends
- Parking issues:
  - Very few cycle parking spaces
  - Very few motorcycle parking spaces
  - Difficult access to vehicle spaces



# PUBLIC PROCESS

## Open and Transparent Public Process

With such a cherished and valuable community come many opinions about how to plan for its future.

Throughout the development of this vision plan, it has been critical to seek the full range of stakeholder input and feedback, employing an open and transparent process. The process began with a public Charrette held in Crosby Memorial Arena June 5–9, 2013. In those five days, the project held: an initial public meeting and intake session open to all; a number of breakout sessions targeting specific topics; work sessions by the design team to incorporate real-time input and feedback, a midweek public presentation and intake session; and an end-of-the-week public presentation of draft plans, with feedback.

A series of public meetings followed: November 2013 in Markham Council Chambers to present an update on the focus areas outside the core; January 2014 in the Markham Civic Centre’s Canada Room to present the focus areas inside the core; and June 2014 again in Council Chambers to present the overall vision findings. As well, members of the team met with several community groups to answer questions and discuss options that would address concerns in specific areas of the plan.

During this process, the City of Markham has published interim development reports on its website. Citizens have had the opportunity to provide their feedback online; the design team has taken their many comments into consideration, including developing more than one concept in some cases to provide alternate choices as the plan is realized.



Tour of Village with Charrette Team conducted by George Duncan



Visual Inspection of Existing Conditions

Also the team was guided by the Main Street Unionville Committee, created by Council to provide community input and review study documents.

### Charrette Public Input Process

- 8 Focused Intake Sessions
  - Transportation, Traffic, & Roads
  - Protecting a Heritage Community
  - Programming a Village
  - Land Use/Heritage Planning
  - Urban Retail Strategies
  - Accessibility
  - School Board Initiatives
  - Environmental & Open Space
- 4 Public presentations with Q & A
  - Evenings - June 5,6,7
  - Sunday afternoon final presentation - June 9



Final Public Presentation in the Crosby Arena



Reviewing Charrette Drawings hung on the glass perimeter of the rink







Charrette Presentation to Stakeholder Group



Charrette Design Process - Study Design Team working in the Crosby Memorial Arena



Reviewing Charrette Drawings



Public Presentations - Michael Morrissey



Break Out Sessions - Robert Goodill



## URBAN RETAIL

### Sustainable Retail

As a commercial centre, sustainable retail is crucial to the success of Main Street Unionville—it is perhaps the greatest single challenge the district faces, and none of the solutions presented in this Vision Plan will fully solve the problems they are intended to address if retail issues are pushed to the background.

During the study period, members of the design team toured numerous Main Street retail districts throughout Ontario, and studied in-depth those including Niagara-on-the-Lake, Kleinberg, as well as nearby Main Street Markham. Also of note were two modern retail districts located in Toronto: Shops at Don Mills and the Distillery District.

While many may argue that Main Street Unionville faces stiff competition from the vast array of retail choices currently available in the GTA—not to mention those soon to come online—it cannot be overstated that Main Street Unionville is in fact ‘its own brand’ due to its unique heritage attributes and walkable, compact built form<sup>1</sup>. New developments cannot fundamentally replicate this; though it is enlightening to note that in two of the modern developments mentioned above, the

key urban design principles on which Main Street Unionville has evolved, and which are the foundation of the design solutions proposed in this book, have been used to great effect.

### Shoppes at Don Mills

Shoppes at Don Mills (SADM), a ground-up redevelopment of a traditional post-World War II enclosed regional shopping centre, SADM re-opened in 2009 as the GTA’s

first ‘lifestyle centre’. Developer Cadillac Fairview has even gone so far as to market the 500,000+ square foot complex of 72 shops, restaurants and condominiums as ‘Toronto’s first Urban Village’<sup>2</sup>. Combining very upscale retail—including both a traditional supermarket and a gourmet food market owned by Chef Mark McEwan—with residential uses, SADM combines time-tested elements of urban design with admittedly very modern architecture: streets

are open to automobiles but focused on walkability and pedestrian primacy; ample free decked parking does not interfere with the pedestrian experience; a grand village square serves as community space; tactful use of bends and curves in the connected street network create a sense of excitement and entice shoppers to walk them in their entirety. In contrast to the traditional mall or strip centre, there is a very carefully developed mix of retail, dining, professional and personal services here: those living within walking distance of SADM have the great majority of their daily needs met.

### Distillery District

The largest collection of Early Industrial-era buildings in Canada, this former distillery re-opened in 2003 as an upscale shopping district retrofitted into a heritage area. Over 200,000 square feet of retail, restaurant, gallery, and studio space exist between several buildings with an interconnected pedestrian street network between. The retail in Distillery District is both upscale and strays away from known national brand names, but repeat business appears to be driven by creative individual proprietors (shown in the breadth and display of their offerings: artisan Sake; organic baby clothes; vintage found items), mixed with those who specialize in the provision of everyday-type needs (gourmet olive oil; patisserie; the requisite coffee bar).



**Shoppes at Don Mills** - The design team toured this state-of-the-art retail district that is designed to support an outdoor shopping and dining experience. Developer, Cadillac Fairview, has created a very walkable retail area with a strategic mix of retail masterplanned as a mixed-use residential development



Thus a retail program for Main Street Unionville must involve enhancement of the district's core design elements—adding additional retail spaces that are both keeping with the character of the existing buildings and flexible to meet modern retailing demands; ensuring the process of parking is always predictable and that the supply thereof is easily accessed; and providing an intimately-connected choice of pedestrian routes in the core area of the



Distillery District, Toronto - The design team was given a tour of this historic precinct by the Founder/Developer early in the study.

district to prevent ennui on the part of shoppers<sup>3</sup>. However it must also address the sophistication in tandem with the variety of retail, for a 21st Century village must have the selection of both daily and specialty goods to capture the needs of the local residents as well as those from around the region. This model has proven effective in area developments that have tried to emulate Main Street Unionville in various ways; though, as existing business owners, shoppers, and residents know, there is only one Main Street Unionville.

## Background

Main Street Unionville retail faces significant challenges, though the business community and residents alike should be heartened by the fact that the ten-year-old '50/50 Policy' was lifted in 2014. This policy, the subject of much debate and controversy, precluded new 'restaurant uses' from occurring on Main Street Unionville until retail floor space exceeded 50 percent of the total floor space in the Heritage Main Street commercial zone, and placed multiple restrictions on potential restaurant operators when retail floor space rose above 50 percent—something which never came to pass over the decade<sup>4</sup>.

Furthermore, five definitions of 'restaurant' types existed in the zoning by-law, which were quite inflexible; none would have allowed, for example, retail uses that involved the mere sale of food, either

incidentally or as a specialty, such as a small grocery store with a café, a bakery, or any type of business where on-site consumption of food might occur. Given the nature of modern urban retail—as well as the inherent function of a 'traditional shopping precinct'<sup>5</sup>—this limitation on the breadth of businesses allowed to locate on Main Street Unionville, and on the flexibility concerning what existing businesses might offer for sale, proved to be a major barrier to retail development in the core area. To the immense credit of the City, business owners, and area stakeholders, this policy was lifted and replaced with new, more flexible zoning provisions less restrictive of retail uses.

Although policy restrictions were lifted, physical constraints on the development of successful and sustainable retail on Main Street Unionville remain. As is evidenced in greater detail throughout this Vision Plan, the core area suffers from small building and lot sizes, limits on available parking, and a lack of full-time residents in the immediate core area. While thoughtful solutions to these issues are presented in detail in the following sections of this book, a summary of concepts is presented in light of Main Street Unionville's current retail challenges.

## The Traditional Shopping Experience

To truly fulfill the stated vision of Main Street Unionville becoming, 'a vibrant, thriving and successful heritage village that

is a regional destination, but serves local needs', it is essential to restore to the core area the ability for residents and visitors to pursue a 'traditional' shopping experience—one where a combination of daily needs and specialty items can be purchased, with the added ability to dine in the district. For too long the desire to preserve the character of Main Street Unionville's built form has been conflated with the need to restrict various retail uses in the district. However, from a retailing perspective, Main Street Unionville's heritage character is in fact its brand image, and the nearby modern developments currently offering or planning to offer world-class retail will never directly compete. To offer success retail opportunities relevant to visitors and residents will nevertheless require additions to the built form—though, as this Vision Plan shows, those additions will only enhance the existing character of the village.

## Retail Anchor

Enhancing Main Street Unionville retail to put it on a sustainable footing will require a multi-faceted approach. Most notably, the absence of a retail anchor poses a challenge to expanding the customer base for existing retail shops. It has been proven that small



## URBAN RETAIL

and medium size retail establishments have a better chance of being sustained when a larger retail anchor is located nearby—this is indeed the principle that drives the many successful retail developments throughout the greater Markham area<sup>6</sup>. The ‘junior anchor’, about 10-13,000 square feet in size, would draw in customers from a larger area and improve Unionville’s competitive edge within the region. The challenge of location as well as the appropriate built form of such an anchor is addressed in this report; the authors believe a Vision Plan that does not include a proposed retail anchor solution runs the risk of moving Main Street Unionville forward to a future where existing business will continue to struggle, and the needs of the community for more retail options will continue to be unmet.

### Retail thrives in a mixed-use environment

Adding layers and depth to village fabric in the areas behind Main Street Unionville is the best opportunity to realize investment and economic sustainability within the core area. Retail—particularly on the scale found within the district—thrives best in a mixed-use environment. However, residential uses are better for infill opportunities behind the

existing buildings, as retail in locations without principal street frontage is difficult to sustain. Residents within the village core would provide a base clientele within easy walking distance of nearby shops, and create 24-hour vitality and activity within the core. Not only would these new residents be additional customers for goods and services on Main Street Unionville, they would restore an authentic balance between commercial and residential uses characteristic of historic Ontario villages—

and particularly the historic legacy of Unionville itself. The addition of mixed-use and residential buildings would also help to balance the variety of retail types that can be sustained, especially businesses offering goods and services associated with every day needs.

### Parking Access

Naturally, simplified access to parking—as well as parking supply—are relevant questions that this Vision Plan

comprehensively addresses. The main proposal involves making use of the steep grade change to provide a second level of consolidated parking atop the lots which currently exist along the Concession Road to the east of Main Street Unionville. The design works with the topography of the area to create a solution that creates no visual impact from the perspective of one walking along Main Street Unionville. Parking dedicated for infill residential uses is located primarily underneath those buildings. For those arriving by car to shop in Unionville, a ‘park-once’ strategy is employed to ensure consistent patterns of parking turnover.

### Demographics Support Expansion

During the initial phase of retail study, custom demographic profiles of the Main Street Unionville area were created to examine the composition of the existing local marketplace. These were based on the defining of a trade area of residents located within a 5-minute walk (roughly 500 metres linear distance) from the Main Street Unionville core area. This trade area took into account the local street pattern, correcting for paths that would be disruptive or unpleasant to traverse on foot. The resulting area encompasses roughly 2 square kilometres, and fits within the trapezoid formed by Main Street Unionville, Highway 7, Village Parkway and 16th Avenue. Key demographics are presented in the table.

#### Enhance Unionville as a Shopping District



Update Heritage Standards



Business Recruitment



Secure Anchor



Assist Retailer Practices



Seek Leading Retailers



Improve Parking Convenience

Robert Gibbs retail study included a host of recommendations to revitalize main street retail



Nearly 8,000 people reside within an unencumbered 5-minute walk of Main Street Unionville. As an area of protected heritage development, and built-out suburban development, there is little room for growth in residential units in the area, aside from what is being proposed in this Vision Plan. Due to the rapid growth regionally, the area’s population is projected to remain stable over the next 4-5 years. The area is well-off financially, with average household income projected to increase by 15% by 2017. As with regional trends, the area will continue to see a change in ethnic composition, with a major proportion of new residents of predominantly Chinese origin. It is useful to note, however, that the growth in non-native English or French speakers is roughly indexed to

the population of direct immigrants; this suggests that as these people have families, their children are learning English as a native language.

This close-in catchment area has over 2,000 families within a 5-minute walk to MSU. Established research by the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) has shown that certain types of convenience-oriented retail require at least this many families to be viable<sup>7</sup>. This does not take into account the additional 5,000 families residing in the total area bounded by Kennedy Road, Highway 7, Warden and 16th Avenues. Retail needs currently unmet on MSU due to the conditions that have previously existed, which fall into the category of ‘convenience retail’ include: bakeries, delicatessens and food markets;

dry cleaners, cobblers, tailors; and an LCBO store.

**Programming, Management and Finance**

This Vision Plan, key as it is to bringing sustainable retail back to Main Street Unionville, cannot aim to solve every problem with a physical design solution. Main Street Unionville business and property owners, working closely with City staff, must agree on policy-oriented solutions as well in the areas of programming, management and finance including, but not limited to, the following:

The Main Street Unionville Business Improvement Association (BIA) should investigate hiring an individual with the marketing and business retention expertise to attract a mix of sophisticated retailers to Main Street Unionville, calibrated to be appropriate for a mixed-use, active heritage village district.

Adoption of a Form-Based Code (FBC) should be considered in place of the existing zoning by-law; if drafted, the FBC should contain rigorous standards for retail establishments, including signage design guidelines, window transparency guidelines, and general design guidelines that are sensitive of the differences between boutique retail, convenience retail, and professional services.

The City and BIA should work jointly to investigate potential financing structures

to aid in the development of new retail space without disincentivizing existing business owners, without the support of whom no improvements can occur.

Footnotes and Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> A significant amount of urban-scaled retail uses are planned to be added to the Markham Centre area in the next five years.
- <sup>2</sup> The centre’s website contains a good overview of its development and a timeline: <http://www.shopsatdonmills.ca/en/centreinfo/Pages/Default.aspx>
- <sup>3</sup> That is, many business owners and shoppers alike recognize that, in its current configuration, one generally walks both sides of Main Street Unionville once before boredom sets in.
- <sup>4</sup> A full description and history of the by-law may be found in the Staff Report of March, 2013 prepared by Markham’s Heritage Planning section: Hutcheson, Regan. Staff Report to Development Services Committee on Request to Remove Restrictions on the Approval of Additional Restaurant Floor Space within the Commercial Core Area of Historic Unionville. Corporation of the City of Markham, ON, Heritage Planning Section, March 5, 2013.
- <sup>5</sup> See, The Corporation of the City of Markham, Ontario. Planning Markham’s Future: City of Markham Official Plan Part I DRAFT. September, 2012. Sec. 8.3.7
- <sup>6</sup> This is not to say that Main Street Unionville should by any means try to replicate the function or style of a regional shopping centre. See, Gibbs, Robert A. “Principles of Urban Retail”. John Wiley & Sons, 2012. for a thorough treatise on developing successful and supportable retail in a traditional built environment.
- <sup>7</sup> See Gibbs, Robert A. “Principles of Urban Retail”. John Wiley & Sons, 2012. pp. 1-10 for a thorough outline of supportable retail types.

	2007	2012	2017
TOTAL POPULATION	7,838	7,962	7,942
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	2,486	2,574	2,594
AVG. HH SIZE	3.09	3.03	3.00
TOTAL FAMILIES	2,166	2,215	2,203
AVG. FAMILY SIZE	3.28	3.27	3.33
AVG. HH INCOME	\$145,575	\$153,623	\$179,978
MEDIAN AGE	42.6	43.1	42.7
HH W/ INCOME >\$100,000	1,253	1,465	1,795
NATIVE LANG. ENGLISH	5,233	5,104	4,858
NATIVE LANGUAGE NON-ENGLISH/FRENCH	2,263	2,513	2,716
IMMIGRANT POPULATION	2,555	2,587	2,636
VISIBLE MINORITY CHINESE	1,587	1,720	1,884

Custom demographic profile of the local marketplace/trade area within a 5-minute walking radius (500 metres from Main Street)







### A CLOSER LOOK

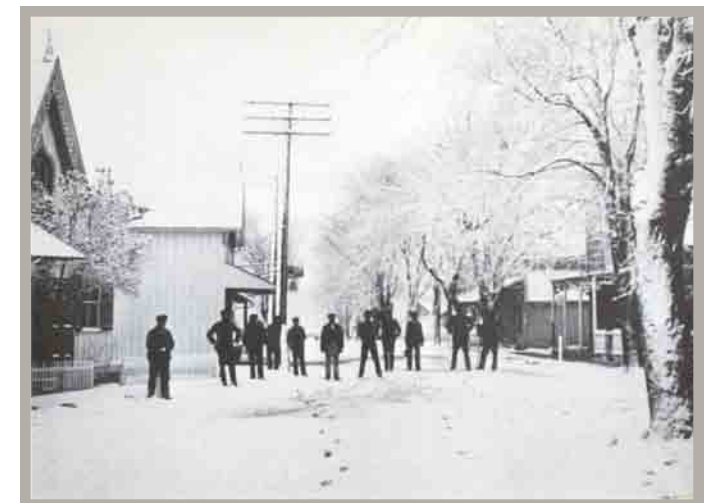
In such a visually striking community as Unionville, its challenges may not be readily apparent, yet they put the village at risk in a number of interconnected and very real ways.

Most pressing are the threats to the commercial district's economy. Changing consumer tastes and habits have altered the retail landscape; where the village used to be a haven for antiques shoppers, for example, now it is not seen as a destination for any particular specialty. Seasonal fluxes in visitor traffic put a strain on retailers to remain solvent from fall until activity picks up again in the late spring, yet rents and BIA levies remain high all year, and competition from surrounding retail centres has grown steadily. More "For Lease" signs have appeared in the past five years than at any time in Unionville's recent past.

Functionally, the village needs to manage its vehicular traffic flow and parking more efficiently if it is to create a healthier retail setting. It requires clearer focal points that draw visitors and create appealing social hubs. There are

opportunities for added cultural programming, for enhancing the walkability of the entire area, and for showing leadership and innovation in sustaining itself environmentally.

Finally, for this vision to be realized, Unionville needs community champions who have the determination to work with residents, business owners and the City to help turn recommendations into actions.





# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

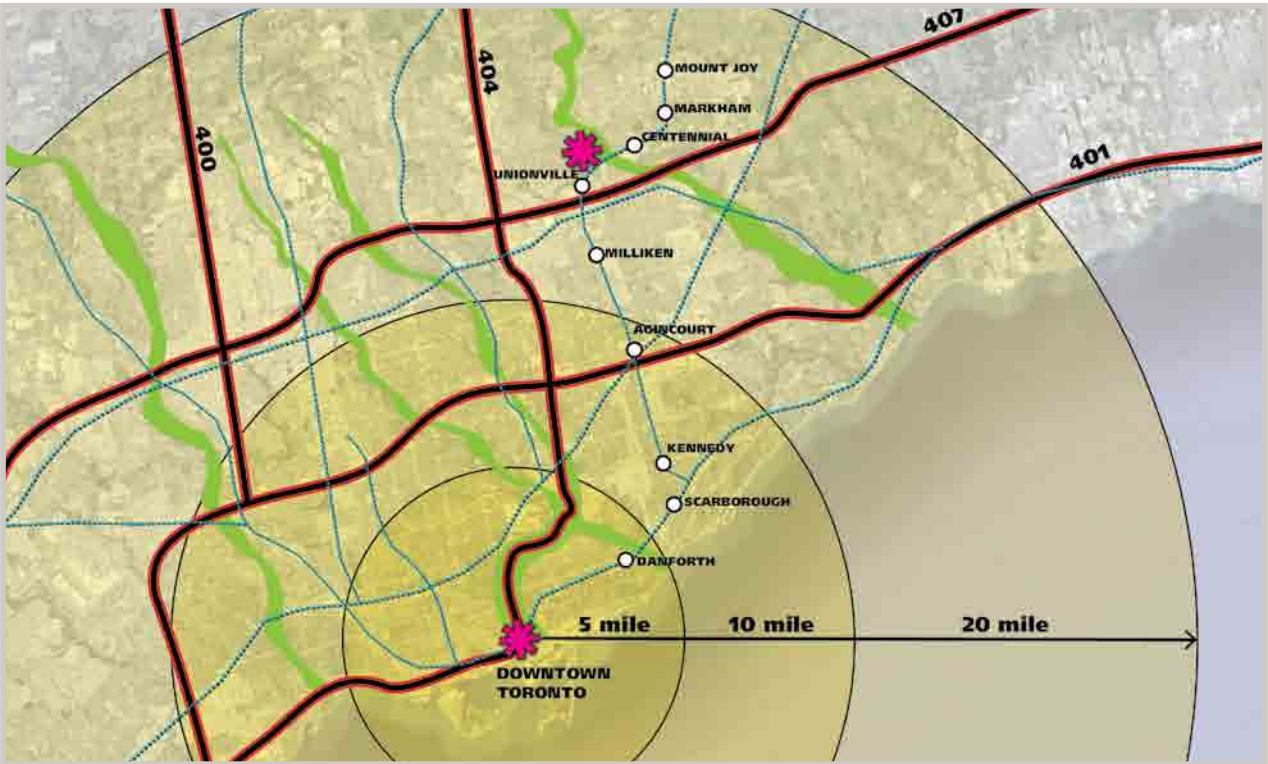
## Challenges

As discussed previously, the greatest challenge to Main Street Unionville is the current unsustainable trajectory of retail viability. There are, nevertheless, many other challenges to be addressed as well. These include the following:

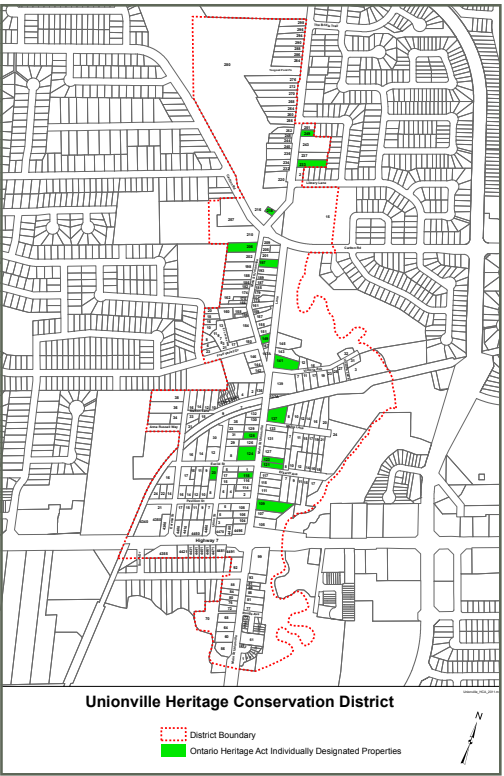
- Small parcels and multiple landowners
- Presence of Rouge River flood plain limits buildable land area
- Presence of physical barriers to expanding existing shops, growing new businesses, and adding new housing
- Limited access behind the Main Street for service vehicles and loading
- Parking is limited to individual, inefficient lots
- Preservation of the heritage character of Main Street Unionville

Each of these challenges identifies a constraint for planning the future sustainability of the Village. Also implied in each is an opportunity to take corrective action: for example, fragmentation in parcel size and ownership suggests an opportunity for joint agreements between landowners to achieve common goals and derive mutual benefit. This approach can, in turn, address the problems of limited parking and growth potential through recommendations for shared parking facilities on consolidated parcels, and joint-development infill projects by landowners of adjacent parcels.

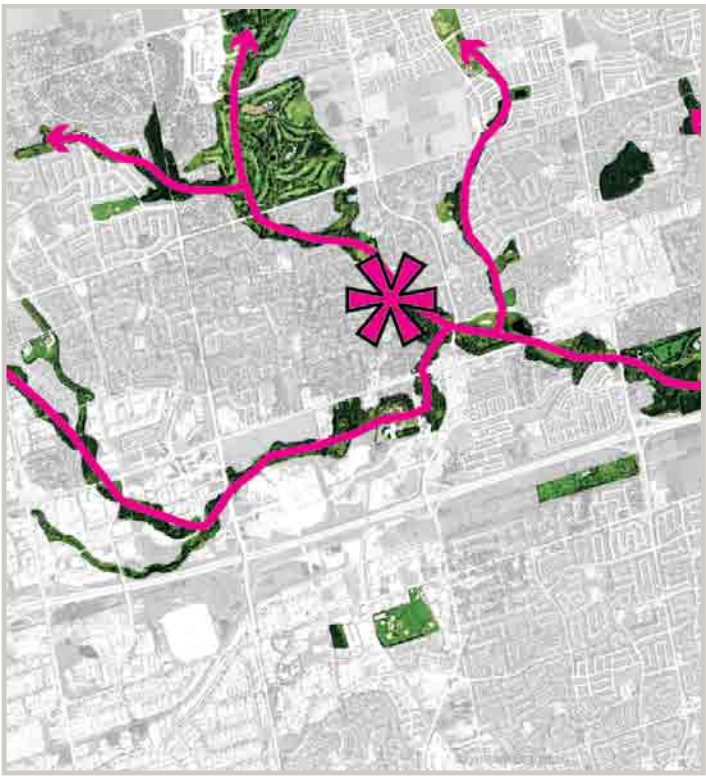
In another example, individual landowners and businesses must provide parking on an individual basis, typically on their own sites. This limits the overall capacity and efficiency of parking within



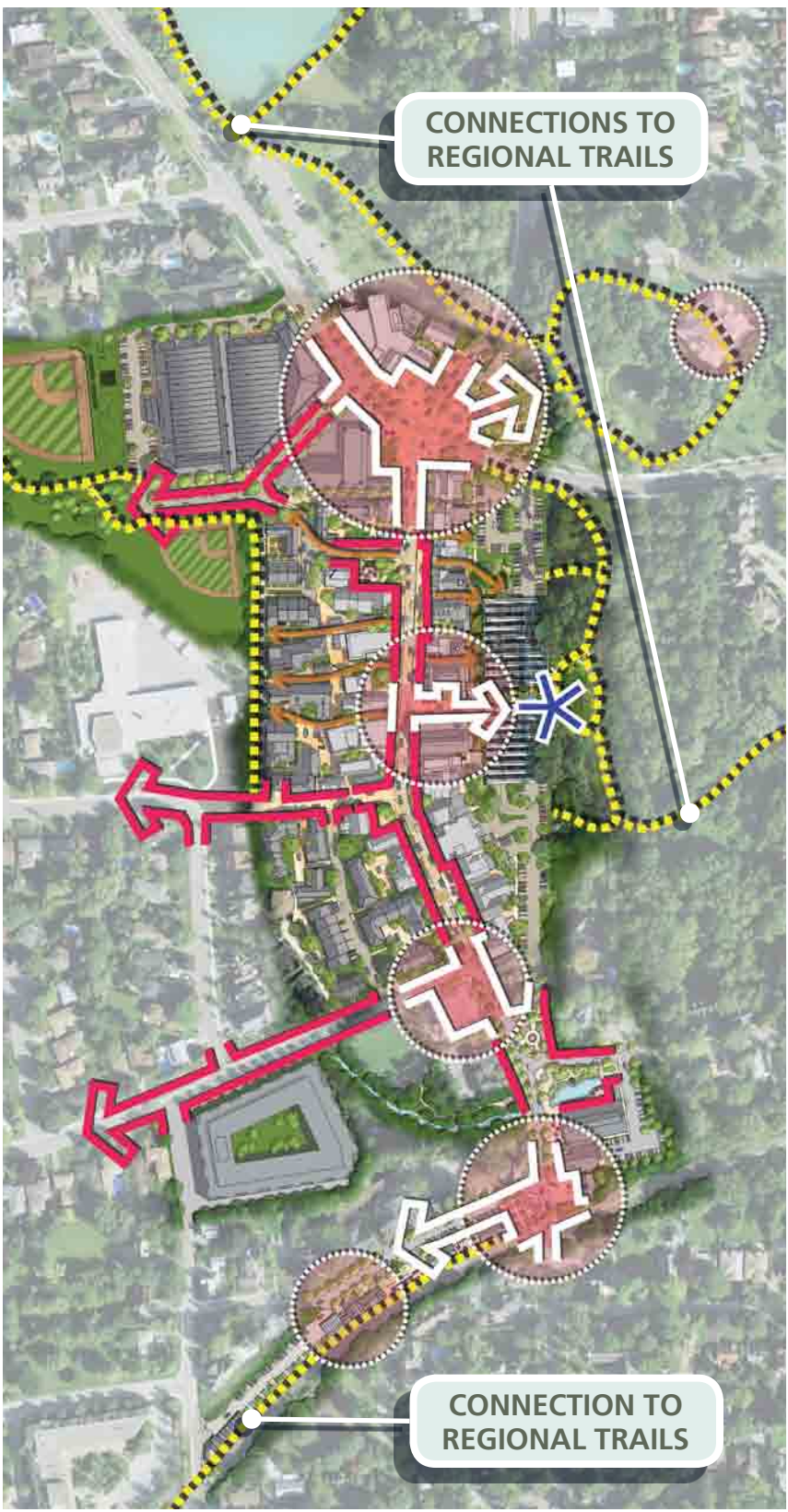
Regional Map



Small Lots in the Core



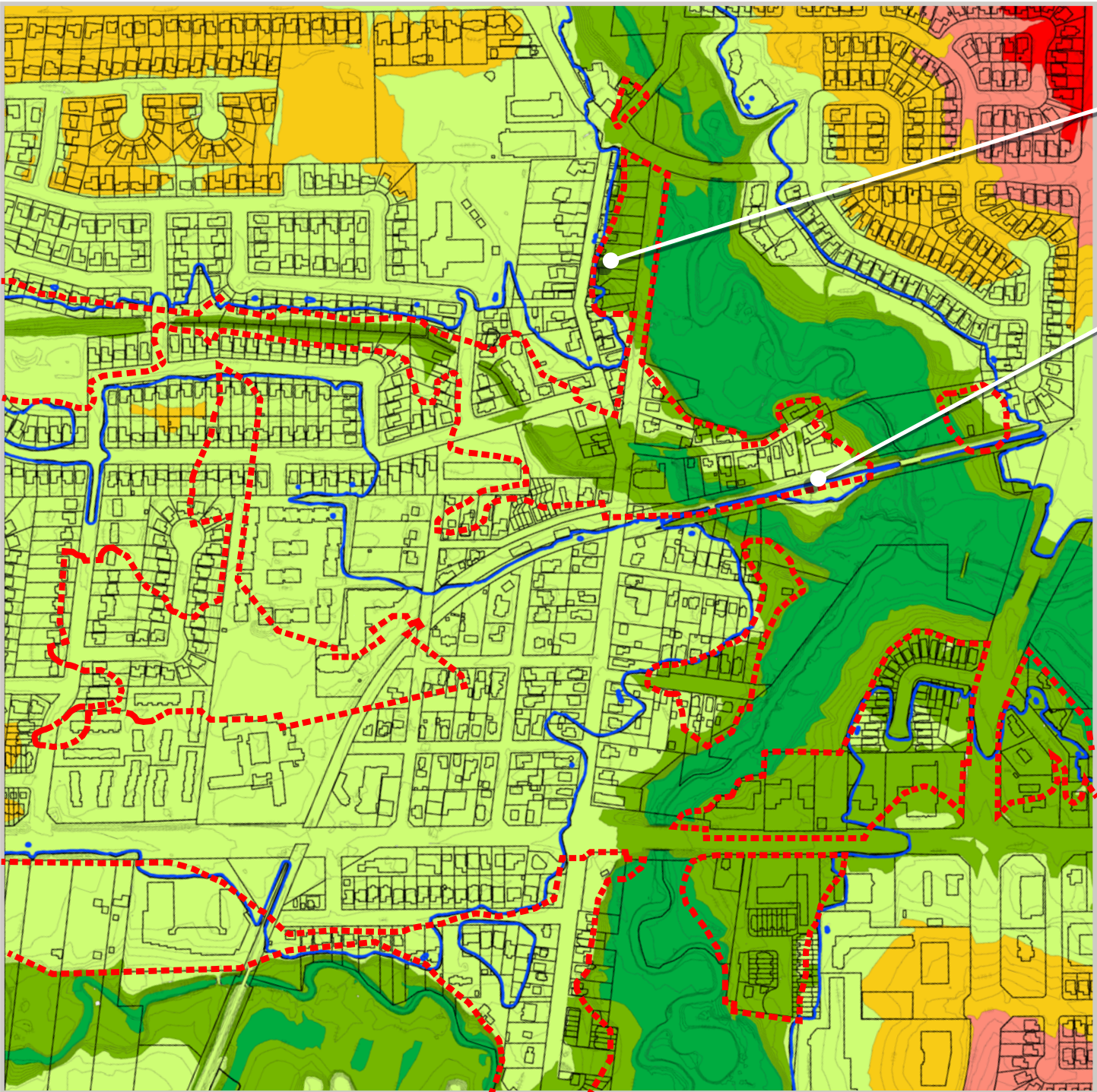
Regional Trail Map



Connections to Regional Trail Map







Existing Topography, TRCA Flood Plain and Related Constraints

**5M DROP IN TOPOGRAPHY BETWEEN THE FRONT AND BACK OF BUILDINGS ALONG THE EASTERN EDGE OF MAIN STREET**

**RAILROAD EMBANKMENTS LIMIT WATER CONVEYANCE DOWNSTREAM & ARTIFICIALLY RAISE THE FLOODPLAIN IN UNIONVILLE**

**PARKING IN A FLOODPLAIN: Addressing TRCA Concerns**

Portions of the study area are within the floodplain and under the jurisdiction of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) as a Special Policy Area. This places limits on development potential. Development proposals in the Vision Plan are conceptual opportunities which would require further examination, study and consultation with the TRCA, the City of Markham and provincial authorities. This is particularly the case with the concept to provide a much needed increase in parking supply within the Village core by introducing a single level parking platform over the floodplain east of Main Street. The TRCA has completed several innovative projects in similarly flood-prone locations including the Evergreen Brickworks, Toronto and Bill Crothers Secondary School, Markham. The parking platform concept will require a fulsome examination and liaison with the TRCA.

the Village, given the access and size constraints of the individual parcels. By consolidating parking across individual parcels and investing in a centralized parking structure, parking capacity can expand efficiently to meet both current and future needs. This additional parking capacity will, in turn, allow for strategic retail expansion, particularly the community retail anchor described in the previous section.

Locating a parking facility on the East Side backlots was originally proposed in the Community Charrette. This site provides sufficient land area to accommodate a facility, and has good accessibility for servicing the village core. As described below, this solution comes with its own set of challenges and constraints.



# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

## Individual Focus Areas have their own challenges:

**Highway 7** – This regional arterial is a busy thoroughfare that carries a high volume of traffic. The intersection of Highway 7 and Main Street Unionville is the ‘front door’ of the Village, but in its current state does little to project the character of Unionville or serve as an attractive gateway. The current retail configuration at this intersection, although unattractive, remains viable and thus is not necessarily incentivized for immediate redevelopment. When eventually redeveloped, a preferred design solution would provide a continuous street wall while locating the parking behind and below the buildings, a challenge given the shallowness of the land parcels. In addition, these parcels vary in size, and ownership is spread among several landowners. There has been uncertainty regarding roadway improvements, proposed configurations, and York Region’s desire for a grade separation between the adjacent railroad track and roadway. The Rouge River floodplain exists immediately to the east of the Main Street Unionville intersection, which constrains development on the adjacent parcels or requires coordination with the TRCA.

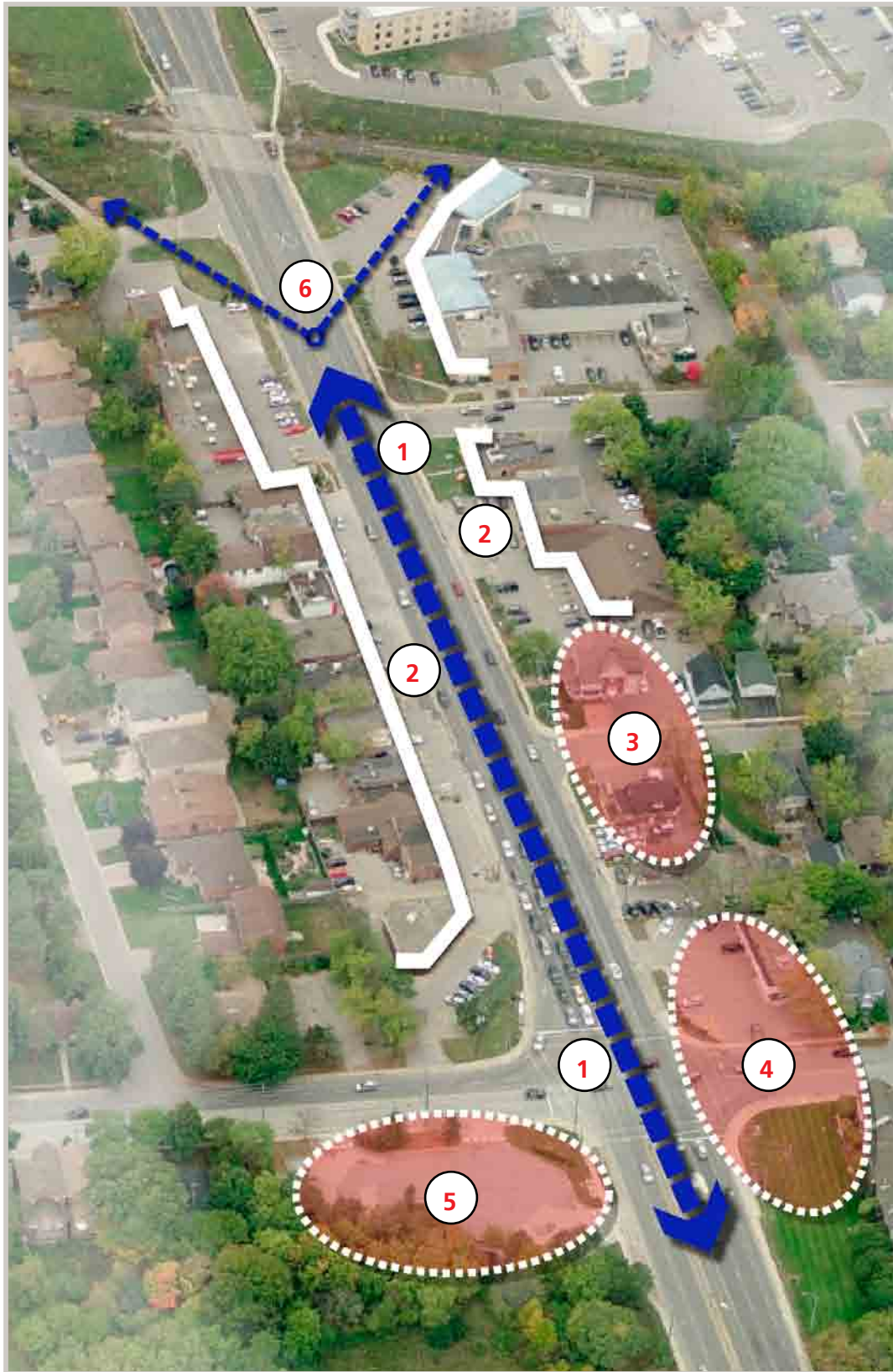
**Stiver Mill** – While rich in amenities, the Stiver Mill area has its own challenges, including a lack of suitable locations for parking and the traffic generated by the unsightly recycle depot. Additionally, the Planing Mill is not within the perceived walkshed of Main Street Unionville. Those walking Main Street Unionville venture as far south as the bandstand at Fred Varley Drive, at which point the continuity of the street wall and retail experience fragments. This stretch of Main Street Unionville needs to be enhanced to entice



Existing Condition at Highway 7 and Main Street



Typical Condition along Highway 7



Existing Highway 7 Looking West



# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

## Highway 7

- 1. Roadway unaccommodating of pedestrians and bicyclists, devoid of trees and their beneficial shade, unsustainable socially, economically, and environmentally.
- 2. Unattractive streetscape of surface parking lots and strip retail is not befitting the heritage precinct and harms property values in the area.
- 3. Heritage buildings are orphaned in the mix of buildings.
- 4. Unattractive Gateway/Node to Heritage Precinct.
- 5. Former Gas Station site remains undeveloped with impermeable asphalt surface.
- 6. Sight Triangle restricts buildable frontage adjacent to tracks.

## Stiver Mill Area

- 7. Overgrown and underutilized open area currently location of farmers market.
- 8. Important Node and gateway to commercial Main Street unrecognized.
- 9. Retail "walking loop" of Main Street does not extend to include station and Stiver Mill Area, leaving important village assets underutilized.
- 10. Recycle Depot adds activity to Main Street in this Area, but has parking and circulation issues.

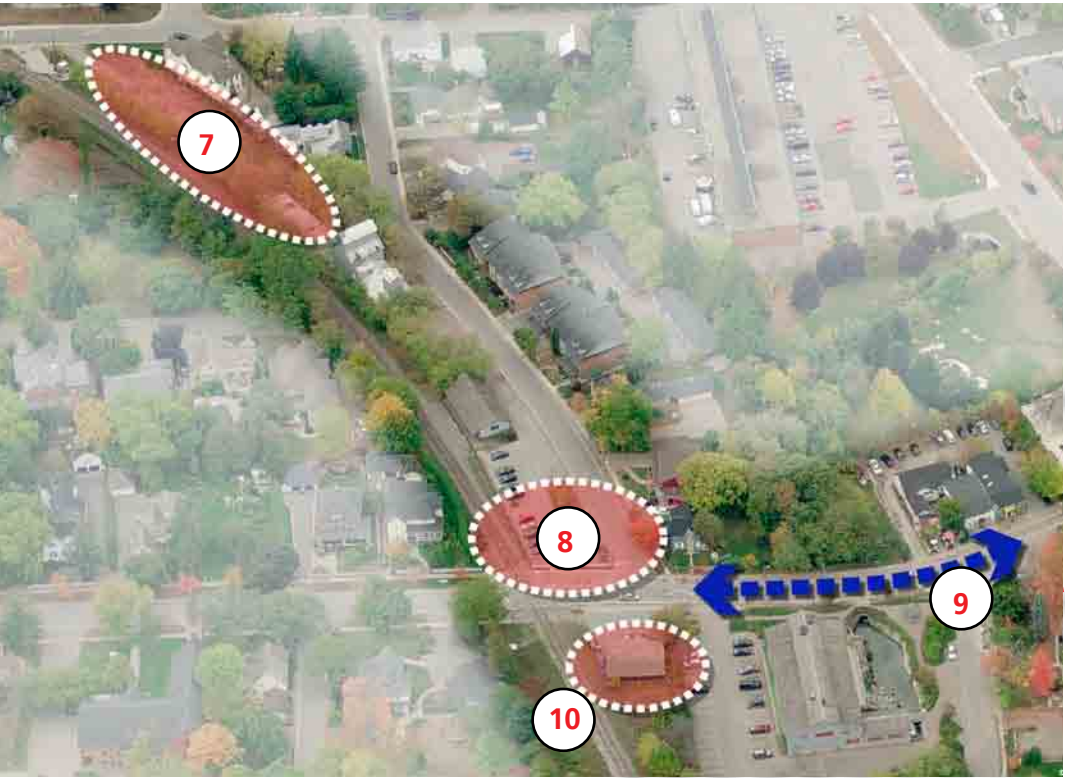


Recycling Depot

people to walk further south to the Planing Mill, farmers market and Stiver Mill.

**West Side North, West Side South** – There are three general constraints on the West Side of Main Street Unionville: relatively small parcels of land, individual parcels each having separate ownership, and conditions that make access difficult for parking and service. While previous attempts have been made amongst the property owners to work together to resolve these issues, no progress was achieved. In addition, the adjacent Parkview Elementary School is a sensitive issue: "former" road connections to the West Side of Main Street Unionville were severed to provide additional parking for the school. Furthermore, portions of the West Side South are within the 100-year floodplain, which is artificially high in this area due to the railroad tracks acting as a dam that constricts the floodways of Bruce Creek and the Planing Mill stream into the Rouge River to the south. Floodplain remediation should be considered if improvements are to be made in the future to the railroad tracks.

**East Side** – While relatively small parcels with individual ownership are also a constraint on the East Side of Main Street Unionville, access for parking and service is made easier by way of the Concession Road to the east. The topography on the East Side is, however, particularly challenging: Main Street Unionville sits along a ridge, out of a historical necessity to build the village on higher ground. Buildings along the East Side therefore open onto Main Street Unionville in the front, though the rapidly sloping topography from front to back creates 'walk-out' basements in the rear. Most East Side buildings straddle the floodplain line, and their rear parking lots fall entirely within



Existing Stiver Mill Looking West



Renovated Stiver Mill



# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

the floodplain. Pedestrian access between Main Street Unionville is accomplished via a public stair located mid-block, as well as through occasional private stairs, all without handicap accessibility.

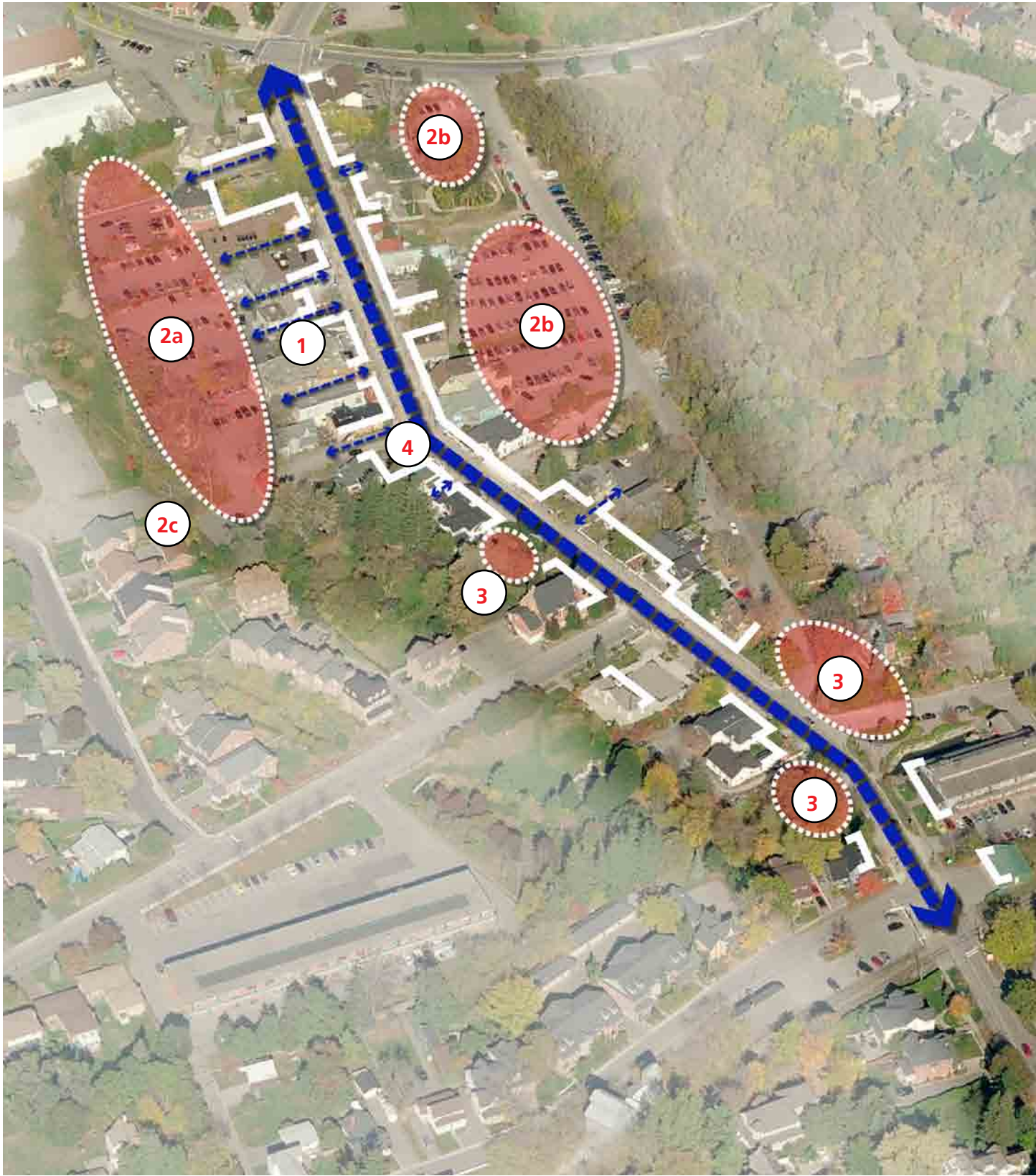
**Crosby Community Centre Area** – The relationship of the Crosby Community Centre building to Main Street Unionville represents a missed opportunity to provide the street with a community anchor and a focus of pedestrian activity. While the building’s program of activities provides a valuable service to the community, it does little in the way of activating the important corner of Carlton Road and Main Street Unionville at which it sits. The building itself detracts from the heritage character of the Village, and fails to engage the public realm of the street or the cenotaph space immediately in front, and is dominated by a driveway friendlier to cars than pedestrians. What results is an anticlimactic end to a walk along Main Street Unionville. Further problems include the obstructed visibility of and access to Crosby Park and the playfields situated behind Crosby Community Centre, and the lack of adequate parking. Potentially a new building could replace the Crosby Community Centre which could involve two skating rinks, necessitating relocation of the Curling Club. It should be noted however that this is not contemplated in Recreation policy documents at this time and would require a funding model/ source and review of the City-wide ice pad needs. Finding an appropriate location and implementation funding for the Curling Club would present an additional challenge. Meanwhile, an unsightly parking lot occupies the northeast corner of Main Street Unionville and Carlton Road, providing a poor gateway to the Unionville



East Side Parking Lot



Existing Cenotaph Park



Main Street Looking North



# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

## Main Street Looking North

- 1. Lots accessed from Main street means gaps between buildings are automobile access drives - Not retail pedestrian passages
- 2. Unattractive surface parking lots
  - a. West Side accessed only from Main Street
  - b. East Side accessed from Concession Road
  - c. Parking lot areas isolate Main Street from neighborhood behind.
- 3. Retail street wall gaps interrupt the continuity of the Walking Loop
- 4. Main Street streetscape does not accommodate street trees or cafe seating well and needs to be refreshed to be made more vital and attractive.

## Main Street Looking West

- 5. Fonthill Blvd and neighborhood disconnected from Main Street. Pedestrian access uncomfortable
- 6. Unattractive edge to Parkview School yard.
- 7. Individual lot parking access driveways. Compromises streetscape continuity.
- 8. No accessible route to Main Street from lower level parking area.
- 9. Unattractive asphalt parking lots create a great deal of storm water run off and are inefficient in terms of parking spaces and circulation.



Typical Alley off of Main Street

Branch Library, Toogood Pond Park, and the Rouge River Trail system.

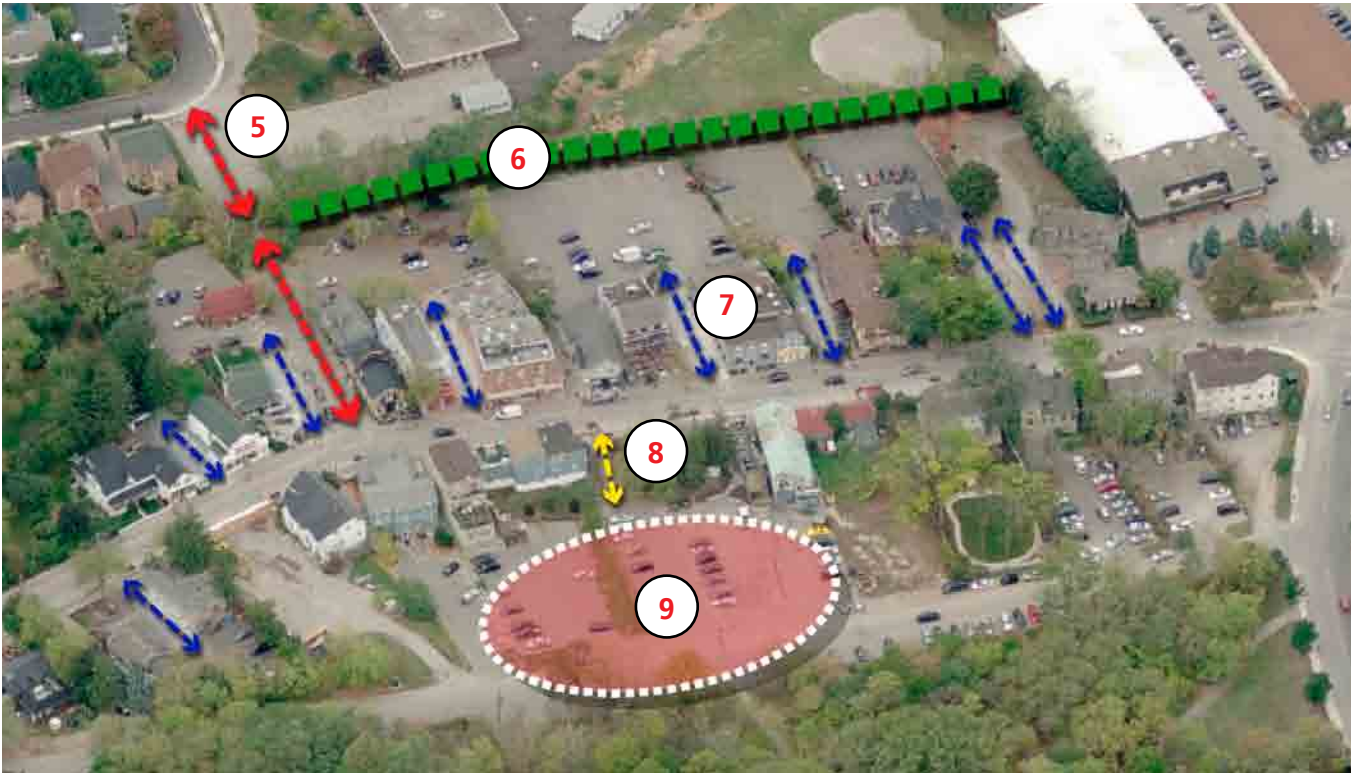
**Toogood Pond Park** – Toogood Pond Park is a wonderful asset to the community, and must be successfully linked to the Main Street Unionville Core Area. Creating a seamless physical and psychological connection between these two assets is the primary challenge.

**Opportunities**

The opportunities for implementation of this Community Vision Plan are many, particularly with respect to the timing of this report. The public process used in developing this Vision has built momentum for action; the renovation of Stiver Mill has been completed, giving community members a clear precedent of positive change; the City has lifted the 50/50 Policy relating to retail vs restaurants after ten years of debate and controversy; and a willing group of property owners appear committed to accomplishing necessary improvements, having seen previous efforts bear no fruit. Massive development is being undertaken in Markham and in the region at large, currently one of the fastest growing areas in all of North America. This growth and associated world-class development has sharpened the focus of City leaders and Unionville stakeholders on the future of the Main Street village that serves as their historic core. Thus, an engaged citizenry, committed stakeholders, willing ownership, as well as City Planning staff and Council are motivated to support a future vision. That this unique and dedicated group of individuals has come together at such a crucial time to propel Main Street Unionville forward, it is hoped, is viewed by future generations as more than mere coincidence.



Parking along Main Street



Main Street Looking West

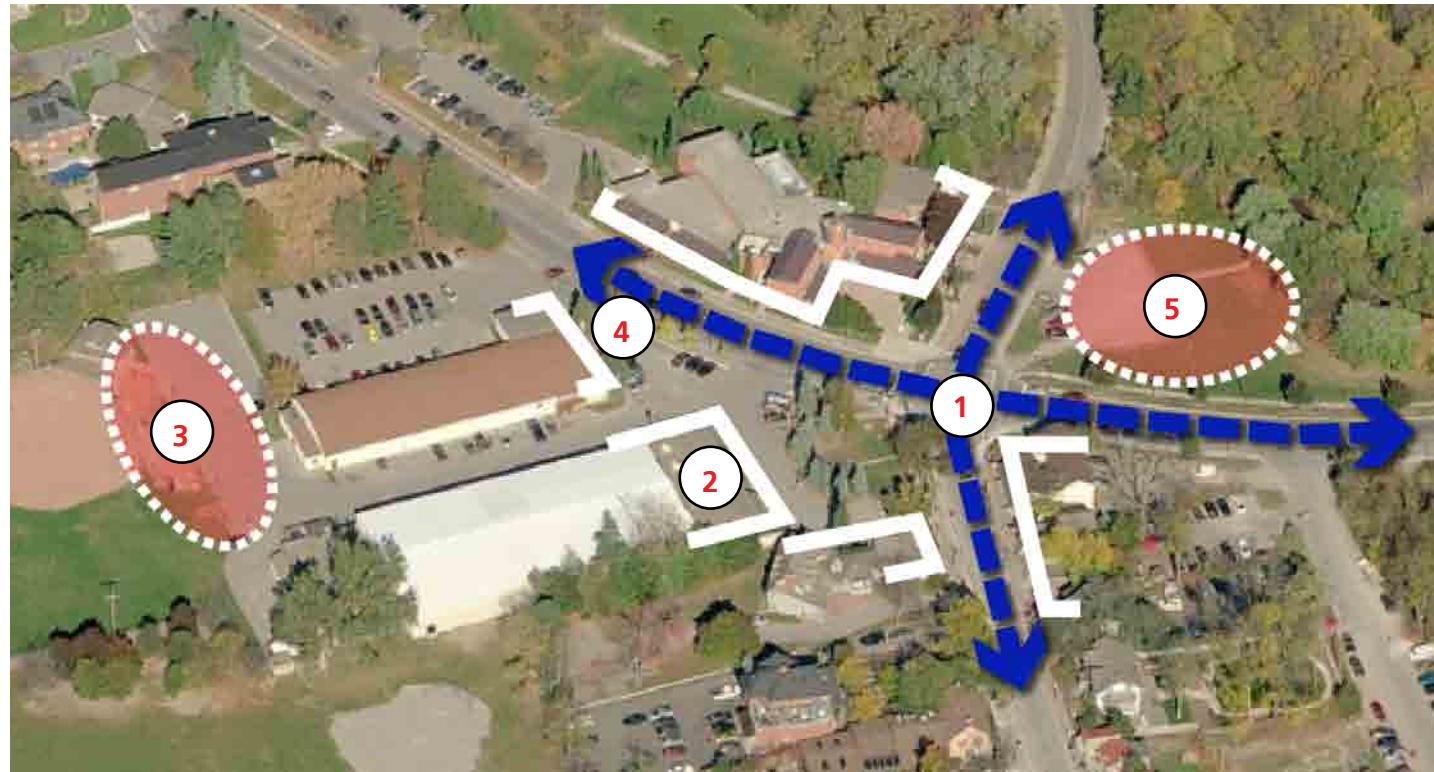


## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

If parking is the greatest physical constraint to sustainable growth in the Village, then the ability to find practical solutions for this issue affords the greatest opportunity for success. Chief among these is the possibility of consolidating parking on the East Side and locating a two-level central parking facility on land currently occupied by a patchwork of individual surface lots, backyards, and the Concession Road. This location would have a number of benefits: The upper level would provide direct pedestrian access to Main Street Unionville; parking spaces could be laid out in an efficient configuration; the upper deck would double parking capacity on available land; and parking would be more convenient and accessible for the disabled. When added to the available on-street parking and other regional parking locations, parking capacity could grow with the Village, and even flex to meet the needs of festivals and events.

Infill opportunities are found throughout the Village. Much of what is proposed is situated on undeveloped land, principally surface parking lots, at the rear of buildings on Main Street as well as numerous gaps in the streetwall. By relocating much of the surface parking below grade and in the East Side parking facility, the depth and character of the Village's heritage can be preserved and enhanced. New opportunities to add and expand retail shops can be provided, and residential units can be added directly into the Village core.

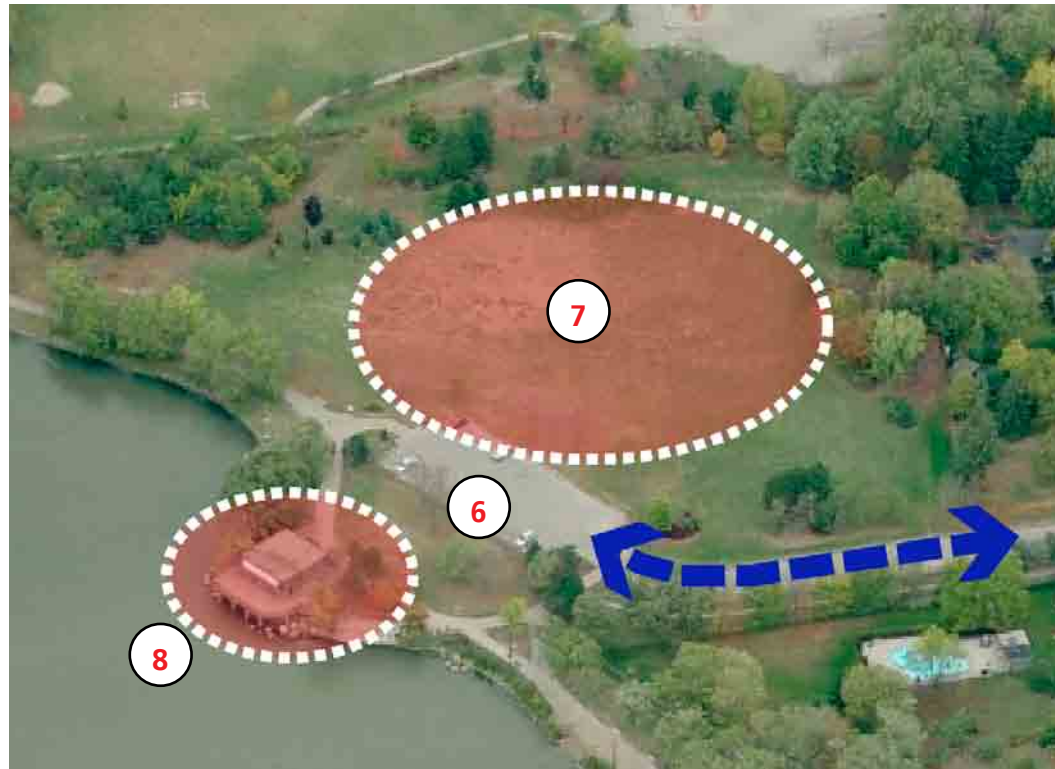
Adding layers and depth to the Village fabric atop the asphalt parking lots currently located behind Main Street Unionville is the best opportunity to realize investment and economic sustainability within Unionville's core. Retail, particularly on



Northern Village Gateway



Playing Fields behind Crosby Arena



Existing Condition at Toogood Pond Park

### Village Square Area

1. The four corners of the Main and Carlton intersection have little relationship with each other, leaving the space ill defined.
2. An unattractive building facade, the drop-off drive, and a poorly designed Cenotaph Park combine as spatial elements that are isolated and disengaged from one another, as well as the street.
3. Crosby playfields are not easily accessed and remain a hidden asset in the Village.
4. Unattractive surface parking lots and streetscape along Carlton Rd.
5. Unattractive surface parking lot that compromises connection to river valley trails and public library.

### Toogood Pond Park

6. Generally, Toogood Pond Park is underutilized, poorly programed, and is not well integrated into the Village.
7. Under-utilized park open space area.
8. Concession stand is not successful being too far removed from street access; this is not a sustainable retail location



# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



West of Main Street



West Side of Main Street



Aerial of Village Core

the scale found within Unionville, thrives best in a mixed-use environment. Residential use is better for infill behind the existing Main Street buildings, as retail in locations without Main Street frontage is difficult to sustain. Residents within the Village core would provide a base clientele within easy walking distance of Main Street shops, and create 24-hour vitality and activity within the core. Not only would these new residents be additional customers for Main Street goods and services, they would restore an authentic balance between commercial and residential uses characteristic of other a typical main street district, as well as historic Ontario villages, and particularly the historic legacy of Unionville itself. The addition of mixed-use and residential buildings would also help to balance the variety of retail types that can be sustained, especially businesses offering goods and services associated with every day needs.

Another great feature of Unionville's location is its adjacency to the Rouge River Valley Trail System and the Toronto Area Park System. This affords an opportunity to link Main Street Unionville directly to the park trails, which can be easily and directly accessed both east and north of the Village Core.







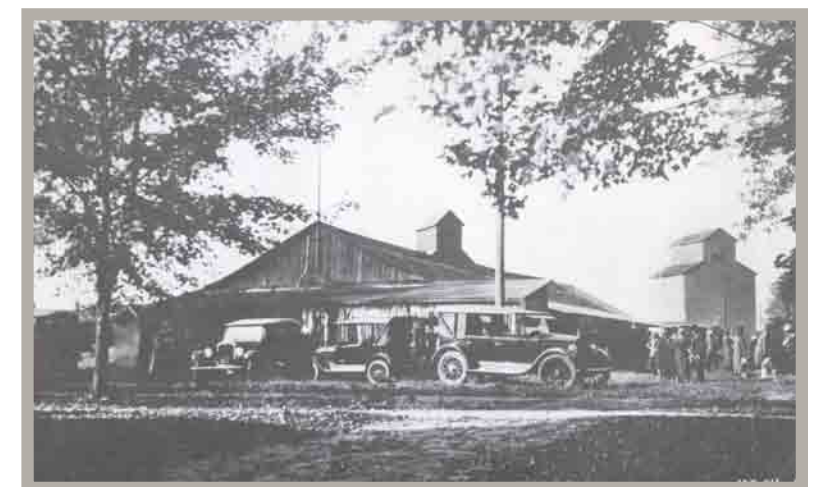


### LEARNING FROM OTHERS

First principles of far-thinking urban planning call for all those involved to seek out the successes of other communities and study them in detail for possible application to the current project.

The team reviewed several related communities, not only locally through site visits but also nationally and internationally. The precedent villages highlighted in this section resemble Unionville in certain specific ways, if not in exact size or scope. The goal was to identify successful expressions of new urbanism, the sympathetic restoration of heritage districts, and concepts for creating healthy commercial main streets of a similar scale.

As well, visits by various stakeholders to projects such as Toronto's Evergreen Brickworks and Wychwood Barns offered insights into how to deal innovatively with floodplain conditions and integrate environmentally sustainable options.





# PRECEDENT VILLAGES - POUNDBURY - OVERVIEW



## Poundbury as Precedent

When looking at what the Community Vision Plan for Main Street Unionville aspires to accomplish, the team naturally sought out precedents to which they could turn. Precedent is defined as, “any act, decision, or case that serves as a guide or justification for subsequent situations”. More than any other example, the team found that Poundbury, a new extension to the city of Dorchester, Dorset, fit this description.

Poundbury is a traditional village built from scratch. The idea was conceived in the late 1980s, an era when the tenets of neotraditional town planning were still in their nascency. Such an idea would have been thrown out as

too radical for the times if not for the fact that the growing city of Dorchester would need to expand on neighbouring lands owned by the Duchy of Cornwall—in other words, land under the direct control of the Duke of Cornwall, HRH Prince Charles.

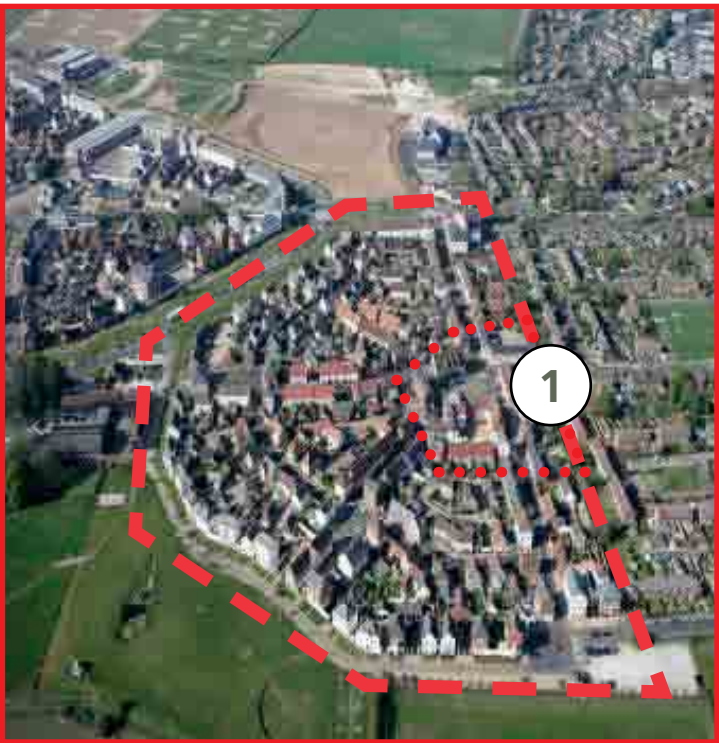
It is a fact of history that radical planning decisions—some good, some bad—have sometimes needed to be made by royalty: in the case of Poundbury, Charles had in fact been spending much time developing a personal view of architecture and

urbanism<sup>1</sup>. He indeed saw the drawbacks of the Modernist planning and architecture overwhelming Britain, and felt that a return to traditional urban form could work in a modern context. With the authority of a Prince, and backed by a genuine passion and interest in creating a neotraditional model for urban development, famed architect Léon Krier developed a preliminary site plan for the 400 acres immediately to the west of Dorchester in 1988, and public planning workshops were held in 1989.

As can be seen in the Masterplan (left), Krier conceived a village that could be developed in four separate quarters. The first of these (lower right), construction of which began in 1993, was mainly complete by the



Masterplan of Poundbury (area outlined in red is phase I completed in 2000)



Aerial View



end of the twentieth century; Phase Two (lower centre) was completed by 2010, and construction of Phase Three (upper centre) is well underway. All buildings shown in red are the future Phase Four, to be completed by 2025.

When looking at the site plan, one can immediately see a village that may as well have existed for centuries—one that, perhaps, grew organically. That was indeed Charles' vision. But how does it relate to Main Street Unionville?

## Poundbury is a very relevant precedent to Main Street Unionville

The Main Street Unionville Community Vision Plan certainly is not one of building from scratch; rather, it preserves a village that is already several hundred years' old while allowing it to grow organically and once again function as a true village. In fact, the preservation of Main Street Unionville's heritage assets is the one key priority in this Vision Plan, as nothing meaningful can be accomplished if this is not held in the highest esteem. We must turn back to our initial definition of precedent: Main Street Unionville is not Poundbury—but Poundbury is a guide for how to achieve a successful future vision on Main Street Unionville. While far from identical twins, Poundbury is nevertheless is a close cousin

to Main Street Unionville in that it shares philosophical and tangible precepts.

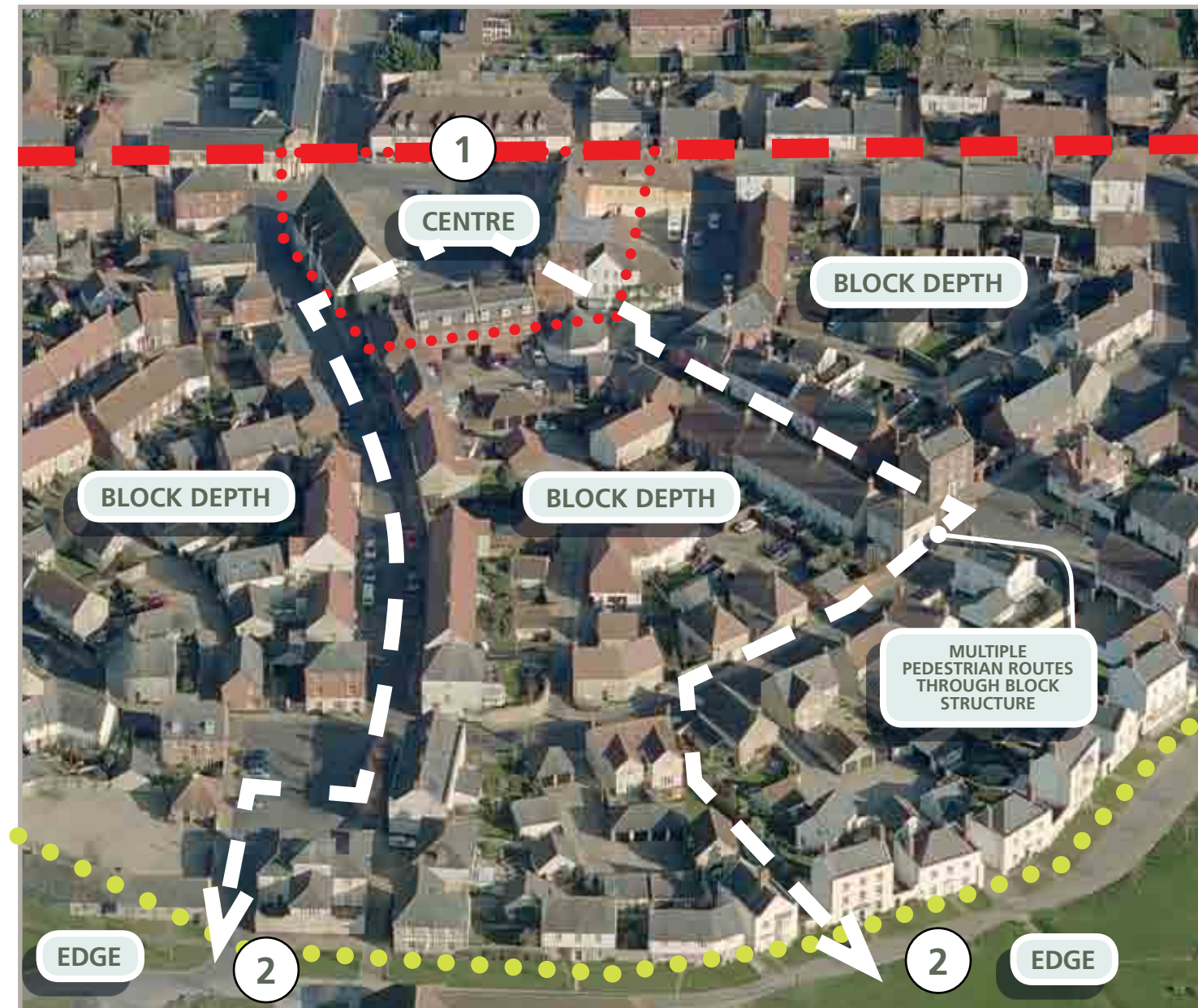
Thus, Poundbury is relevant because it has thoughtfully combined urbanism and architecture to craft a one-of-a-kind

place while embracing historical continuity. In the small spaces between and behind existing buildings on Main Street Unionville, urbanism and architecture need to be designed simultaneously to use every inch of

the limited space to maximum effect, both sensory and economic. Like the watchmaker deftly inserting new parts among the old to ensure an antique timepiece continues to function, we can look to Poundbury for the technical basis upon which to base our vision for the future.

However, this relationship transcends the technical and philosophical similarities between Poundbury and the Community Vision Plan (though these will be discussed below); indeed Charles himself has previously recognized Markham as being a notable steward of its built environment. Markham has the honour of being the initial recipient of the Prince of Wales Prize for Stewardship of the Built Heritage in 2000. Selected over eight other Canadian municipalities by a jury of experts from Heritage Canada, Charles addressed via video those gathered at the Markham Theatre for presentation of the award:

*You have gathered this evening to honour and celebrate achievements in the preservation of historic places. As many of you will know, this is a cause very dear to my heart. Historic buildings help to give us a sense of our roots, and of belonging, which are vital to our existence as human beings...*



Aerial Photo of Poundbury Phase I c. 1993-2000.

The Poundbury Main Street is focused by an urban square (red dots) and the village is organized from centre to edge, from commercial main street to residential edge and perimeter park system.



## PRECEDENT VILLAGES - POUNDBURY - OVERVIEW



Typical block with interstitial pedestrian spaces, and residential intensification within the block



Poundbury mid-block pedestrian passage  
Human-scaled, thoughtful and modest urbansism

*In particular, the Awards Jury cited the determination of Markham in using a variety of legal means and incentives to protect heritage buildings and entire districts. In concert with these measures, a host of voluntary organisations dedicated to heritage preservation has worked to achieve, with considerable success, public awareness for heritage in Markham...*

*In the towns and cities of Britain, I have felt deeply about the wanton destruction of old buildings and entire districts in the name of progress and their replacement with a featureless and soulless urban jungle. Before it is too late, I pray that people will realize the potential of sensitive conversion to new uses for our built heritage. And so, Ladies and Gentlemen, I do hope that Markham's success, which I applaud, will be an inspiration for other towns and cities across Canada.*

### Style vs. Form

When we examine the aerial view of Poundbury Phase I (previous page) and of a typical block (left), we immediately notice that the buildings are of a style foreign to Ontario. Poundbury's buildings are of a rural English Country Vernacular style, the local traditional architectural style of Dorchester. It is a style fitting of Dorchester's history and heritage. Similarly in Main Street Unionville,

buildings shown in this Community Vision Plan will need to be interpreted in a style that is derived from the existing heritage context, described in the District Plan<sup>2</sup> as "Unionville Vernacular" (1790-1920) that includes a collection of styles like Ontario Gothic Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anne and Edwardian Classicism to name a few. What is important is that the style of the buildings in each case is sympathetic to the local heritage—the Community Vision Plan does not intend to recreate Poundbury's buildings on Main Street Unionville!

Looking again to the aerial photo(p.51), and ignoring the styling of individual buildings, we notice something else: the way those buildings relate to one another, and to the spaces between them. In contrast to style, this is the village's overall form. When looking at Poundbury's built form, we see more direct similarities to both what exists today on Main Street Unionville, and to what the Vision Plan foresees. Running along the top of the picture(red dash) is main street, an axis of movement around which some of Poundbury's important buildings are organized (as in Main Street Unionville, Poundbury's firehall is situated along this street). Below this main street appear to be a confusing tangle of buildings, mainly residential. But while it is helpful to study the built environment from the air,

villages (and indeed cities) are meant to be experienced from the ground level. Looking at the view from ground-level, we see how what appears chaotic from the air translates into a human-scaled, thoughtfully designed neighbourhood (see pair of images, left).

Further notice in the aerial photo(p.51) that there is a defined centre to the village, as well as a defined edge. It is clear where the village exists and, where it does exist, it is clear where the most intense activity takes place. This progression of intensity already exists along Main Street Unionville as one walks from the Stiver Mill district on the south to the Old Firehall and the Queens Hotel. Future development envisioned along Main Street Unionville must respect this progression from centre to edge and back, as well as respecting the defined edges of the village on the east (the Rouge) and west side (Parkside fields and Crosby Park).

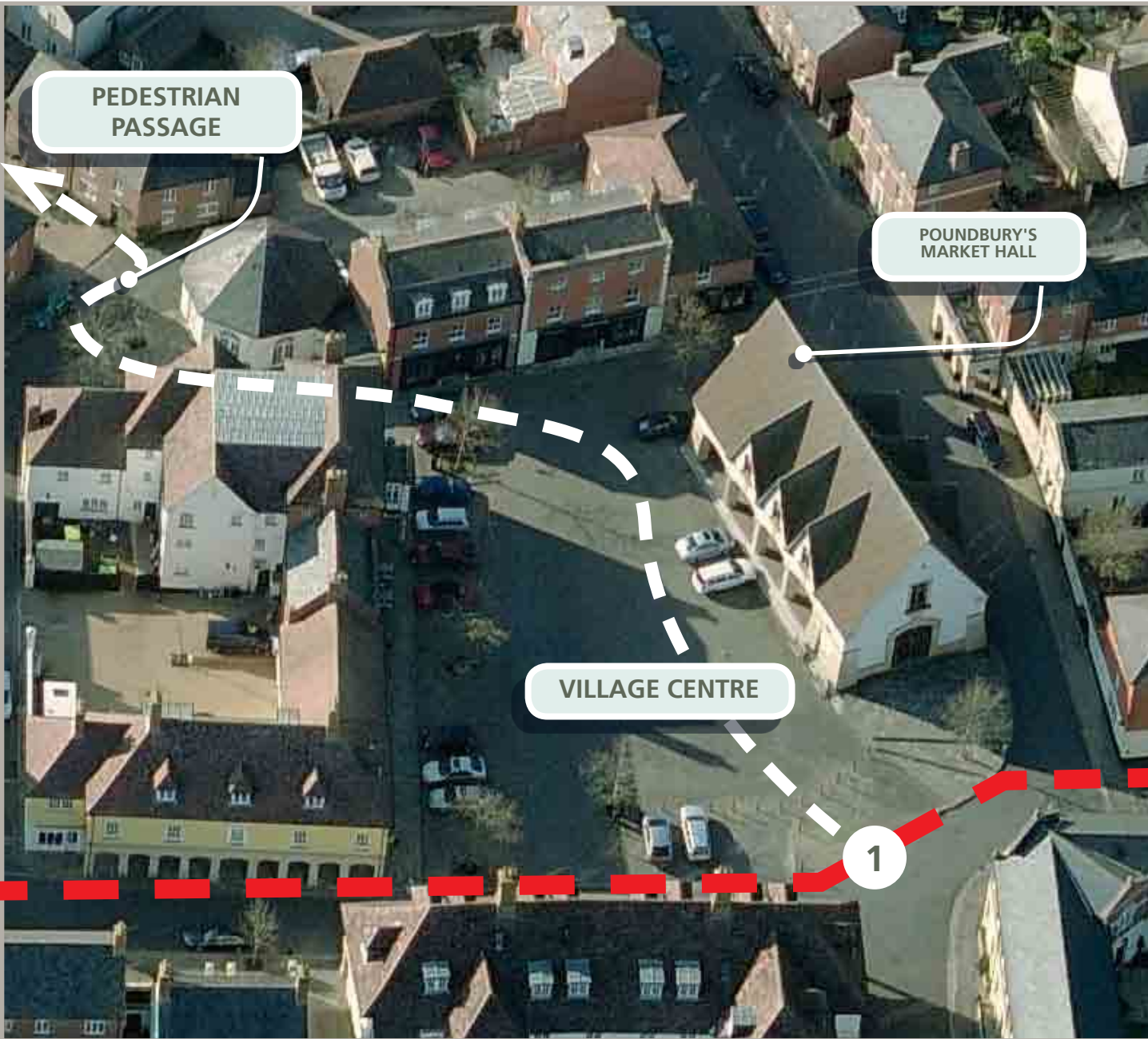
Style and form are not married to one another: We can respect the historic architectural styles that make Main Street Unionville unique while replicating a traditional, walkable village form with the careful planning and insertion of new buildings. It is the tactful placement of these buildings that make the small spaces in between meaningful for those on foot that has been accomplished at Poundbury.



Scale

While the study area in this Vision Plan is nowhere near as large as that of Poundbury, the scale of the development that is proposed in this Vision Plan is in fact similar to that of Poundbury. Buildings are between two and four stories; design

is at a very fine scale; adjacencies matter. The sides and backs of the buildings are just as relevant as their fronts. For example, in the elevated view of Pummery Square, Poundbury (left), we can see the area leading to the Market Hall (Brownsword Hall). Note that buildings are not at right



Village Centre - Elevated View of Pummery Square, Poundbury

angles but are carefully placed, or stage-setted, to create a pleasing street picture and passage at pedestrian level. The faceted side of the Octagon Café helps to create a sense of enclosure for those sitting in the courtyard while funneling people toward the important civic space beyond.

As we approach the Market Hall, we see the subtle change between pedestrian-only space and space that is open to automobiles, marked by a single bollard. While not immediately apparent, the Market Hall itself is built at a slight slant to all of this: it allows one approaching to see slightly more of the building's façade, and therefore builds a greater sense of anticipation for arrival.

Outdoor tables are set against the sides of the taller buildings, which have been designed to be interesting—windows are not uniformly sized or positioned; the side door of the white building has a thoughtful overhang; the brick building has a single lamp and hanging basket affixed in seemingly random places. In fact, it appears as if there is a window missing from the second storey of the brick building—why isn't it there? Was it once there and has since been bricked over? Of course, being in Poundbury it was designed in a "picturesque" way consistent with the informality of a rural village—but it begs one to question. In Main Street Unionville we are blessed with existing heritage buildings that have developed



Street Picture - Eye Level View of Poundbury pedestrian passage looking toward the Village Centre. Uniquely designed small scale spaces behind the block create intimate places within the village.



PRECEDENT VILLAGES - POUNDBURY - REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

these quirks as they have grown and changed and aged. While these will be preserved, we must pay attention to this level of detail when designing new buildings to allow the village to gently grow sensitive to these idiosyncracies. This is not planning by zoning. To achieve this effect in Poundbury, a strict regulatory framework was devised and carried out. To ensure that future development in the Main Street Unionville study area stays true to the Community Vision Plan, similar tools will have to be enacted.

Regulatory Framework

Poundbury has codified exceptional urban design into a regulatory framework that allows for predictable development that is at the same time part of a unified vision for an urban village. This predictability of form, scale, and architecture is at the core of what the city, stakeholders, and potential developers will need to create a place that is consistent with the Community Vision Plan. It cannot be stressed enough that the Fred Varley Drive development saga is a textbook case of what can happen when the regulatory framework to ensure predictable development in tune with the community’s wishes is not in place. We will now present

a brief overview of these tools and their applicability to Main Street Unionville.

**Form-Based Codes<sup>3</sup>**

Many communities in North America are adopting an alternative to the conventional, use-based zoning by-law that has been the standard for nearly 100 years. The Form-Based Code still governs use, but does so as a secondary element. Instead, built form

(discussed above) is the primary organizing element of the by-law. Such elements as building massing, height, placement and the design of intermediate spaces are codified to create a firm, predictable template on which the community can expect developers to design buildings. The Massing and Scale illustration below is an example of a page from Poundbury’s Form-Based Code.

Form-Based Codes are also much more graphically-oriented than the traditional

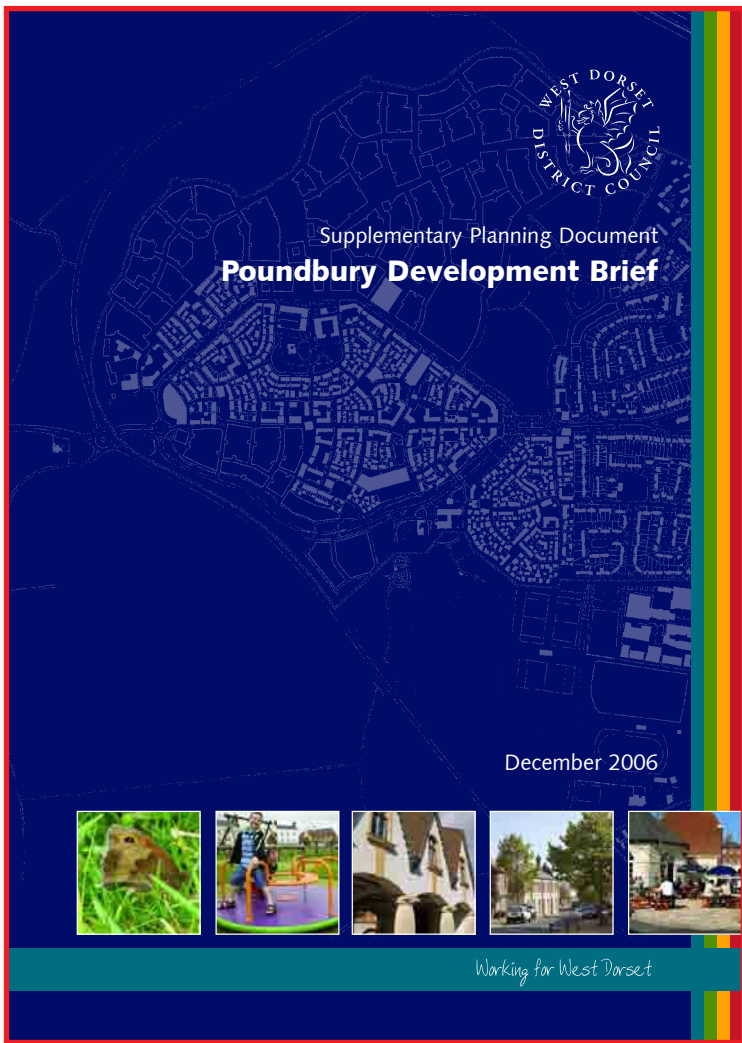
text-based zoning by-law, making them much easier to comprehend by residents, elected officials and developers alike. With a clear understanding of what is and is not legal, the community can quickly work out questions and disagreements on proposed projects.

Pattern Book<sup>4</sup>

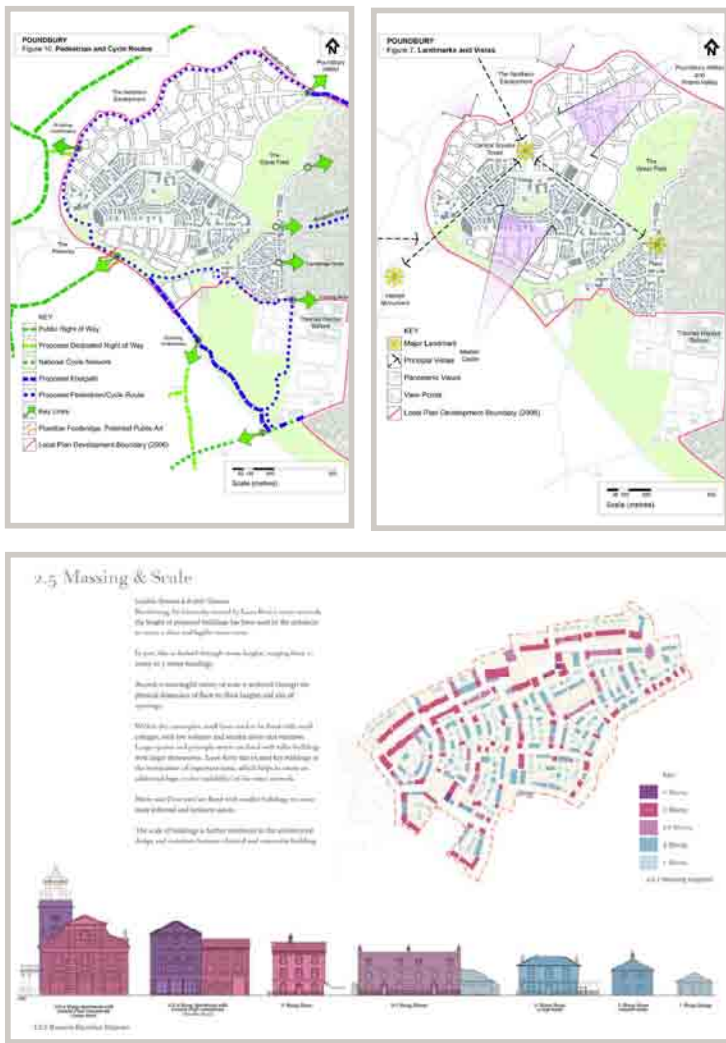
In use since Roman times, a Pattern Book is a document that codifies examples of specific architectural designs and features desired in a community. Pattern Books were once commonly used in North America prior to the twentieth century. More intricately detailed than the Form-Based Code, the Pattern Book focuses on style. Depending on a community’s wishes, this document can be quite rigorous or can provide some flexibility to a developer or designer. For example, a pattern book for Main Street Unionville might require specific types of columns, roof shingles, doors or railings on any new buildings that would be compatible with the existing local heritage character<sup>5</sup>.

Secondary Plan

A Secondary Plan is a more focused version of a Master Plan, applicable to a specific area. In fact, Section 9.19.6.2 of Markham’s Official Plan states that, “A new secondary plan shall be approved for the



Secondary Plan - Development Brief



Form Based Codes



PRECEDENT VILLAGES - POUNDBURY

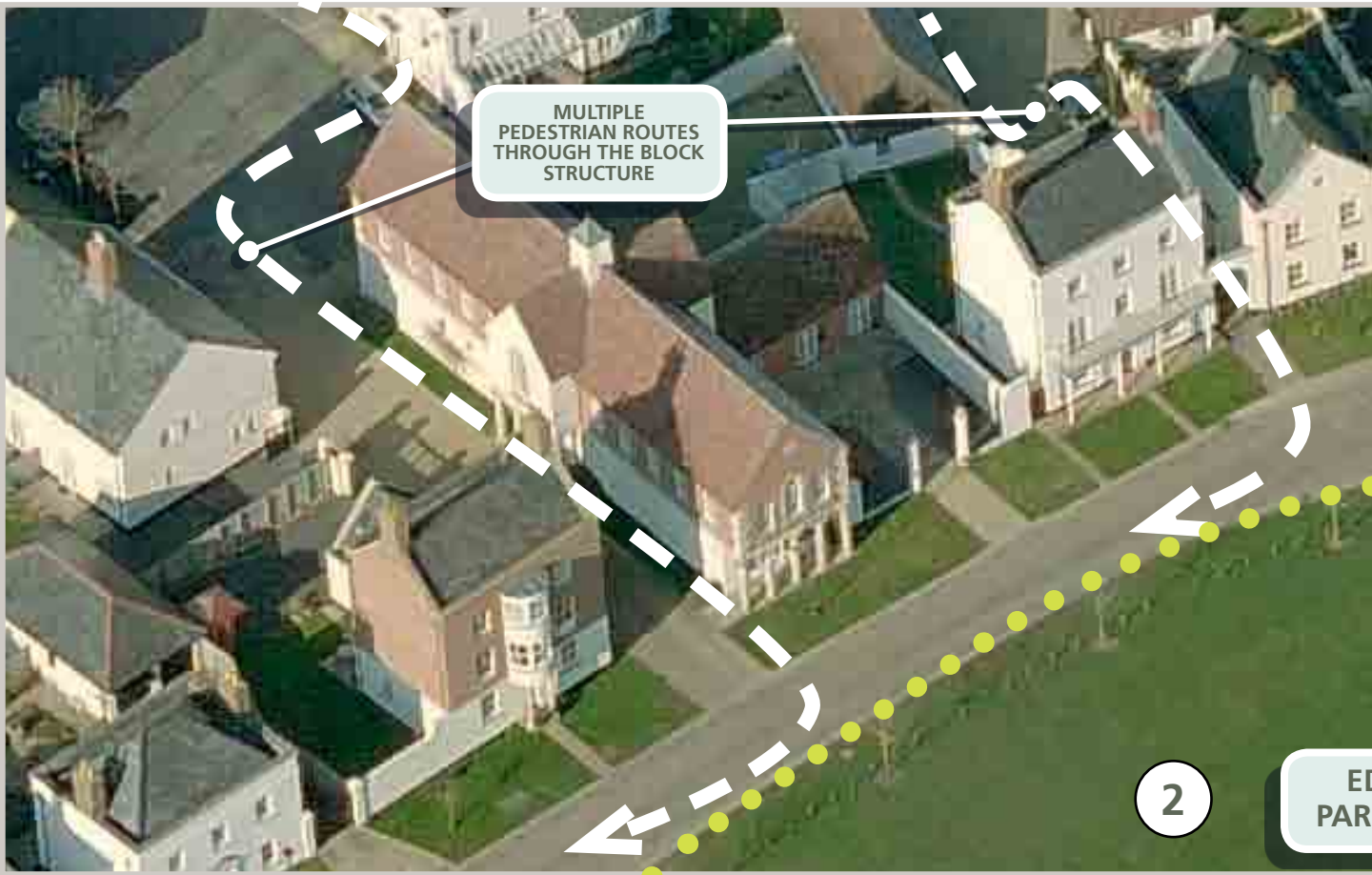
Unionville Heritage Centre”. To ensure that any secondary plan has maximum effect, it should be drafted simultaneously with a Form-Based Code, to ensure consistency between the two documents. Poundbury was able to achieve this effect by consistently employing the same teams of experts over a period of years as plan and code were drafted. Ideally, the explicit policy aims developed in the secondary plan should be embodied in the form-based code, as the latter document serves as the “technical manual” of sorts for what can and cannot be built.

Poundbury’s version of a secondary plan is termed a “Development Brief”<sup>6</sup>, as all development is new-build (p.52). The development brief is easy to read, and clearly lays out point-by-point Poundbury’s purpose, the tenets of its built form, its scale and intensity, its architectural styles, its mix of uses, as well as social policies, civic uses, and sustainability. While the ideas and policies for a secondary plan for Main Street Unionville that would implement this Vision Plan would necessarily be different from those of Poundbury, this document in its depth and breadth should serve as a model

for what Markham should aspire to in terms of secondary plan development.

Ultimately, Main Street Unionville must have residential intensification to support development of successful retail, as well as a year-round relevancy and sense of village culture. Those who fear that growth will destroy Main Street Unionville’s special qualities can look to the fundamental principles of urban design successfully deployed at Poundbury to create the appropriate scale and style for a modern urban village. Furthermore, they may

have confidence that regulatory tools—which as noted by HRH Prince Charles, Markham has successfully deployed in the past to preserve its heritage while growing—can be put in place to ensure that this vision and quality of design is affirmatively implemented.



Edge of the Village - Poundbury residential fabric comes to the perimeter of the Village fronting onto sport fields and an open space park system.

Details matter



# PRECEDENT VILLAGES - POUNDBURY - THE DEFLECTED VIEW

## Urban Navigation<sup>7</sup>

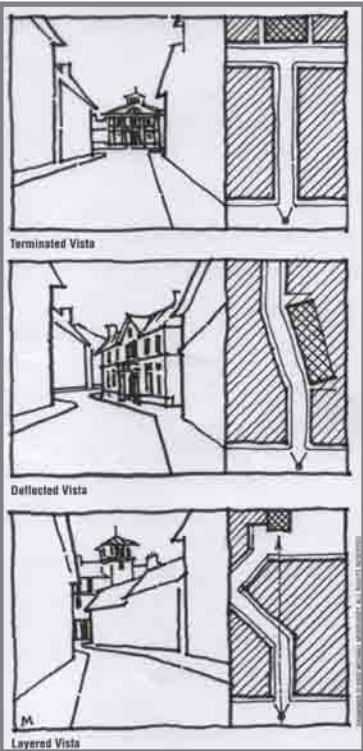
Poundbury looks complex from the air—but makes sense to those walking its streets and passageways. This is no coincidence: Poundbury was planned to incorporate an instinctive ease of movement by means of time-honoured design techniques that promote urban navigation. One design technique used extensively at Poundbury, the deflected vista, is also a prominent feature of Main Street Unionville, though the latter was handed it by history.

Deflected vistas happen when a building is angled relative to the overall direction of movement along a street. In the picture at upper centre (street picture A), note how the Octagon Café juts out into the passageway: we can fully see two sides of this building. Instead of being a mere curiosity to look at as we pass immediately by, the building’s siting allows us to view it from a distance, allowing for punctuation of movement along the passageway—it is a little destination in and of itself, even if we do not intend to stop there.

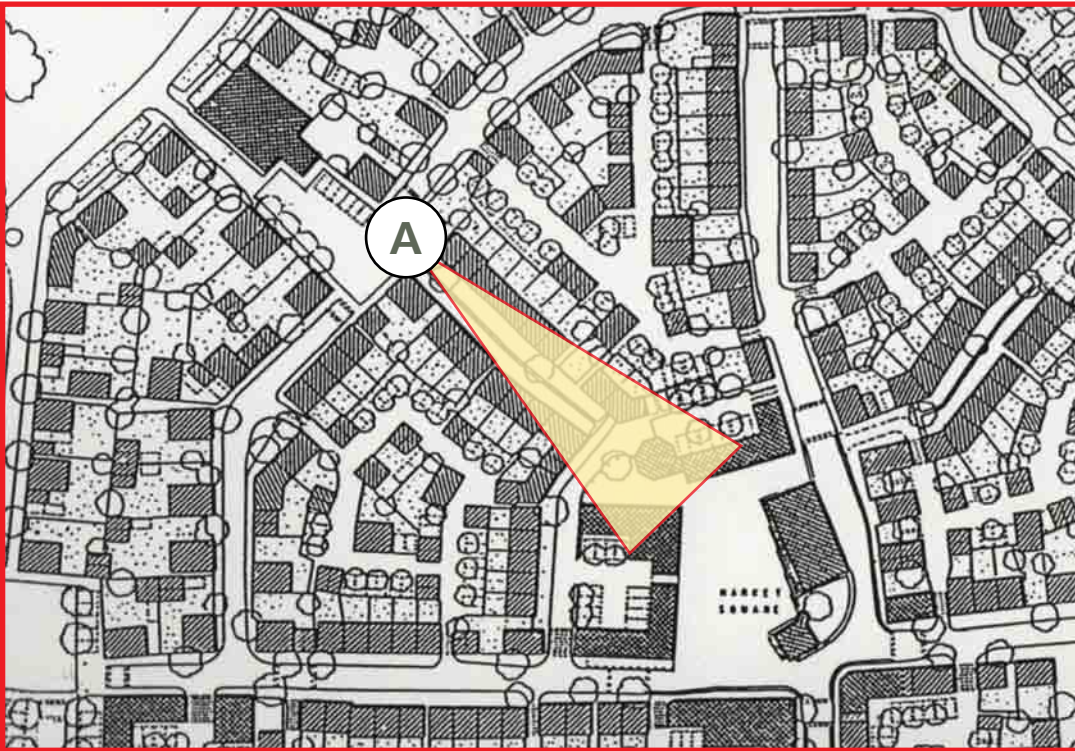
The deflected vista not only punctuates movement, it guides us along to an ultimate conclusion. In our Poundbury example, one must pass the Octagon Café en route to the Market Hall (see the photo on the lower right of Page 51). This building of civic importance is the main destination for most



Street Picture A - Around the Bend - View along pedestrian passage deflected by the iconic Octagonal Cafe.



Urban Vista Terminations



Poundbury Plan - Deflected pedestrian axis pivoting on the Octagon Cafe

of those who use this passageway—in effect, the Octagon Café is similar to the bellhop gesturing us along, both greeting us and showing us where to go next.

There is yet another benefit to the deflected vista: it creates what the English architect and planner Raymond Unwin called a “street picture”. Referring back to Thomas Sharp, the great student of villages (see Page 14), the images created by the interplay of buildings and bends in the road turn the village into, “a place; a place with a way in and a way out and not merely an incident on the roadside.” That sense of place is represented in our minds by such a street picture, and becomes the material for the postcard photographer helping us to transmit encapsulated memories to those elsewhere.

There are other ways to incorporate vistas into the urban landscape. The diagram on the lower left shows the terminated vista as well as the layered vista. The former happens when a street terminates at a prominent building, or perhaps a monument. The latter happens when a deflected view combines with a partial view of something bigger beyond, such as a tower or a spire “peeking out” in the distance. In our Poundbury example a clocktower is planned beyond the Market Hall, the tower, when completed, will peek out in the space between the Octagon Café and the red brick building to its right creating a layered vista and increasing the sense of anticipation for arrival at our destination.



## Main Street Unionville - A Deflected View

As discussed in the introduction to this book, Main Street Unionville was built with a bend in the middle: not because those who built it planned to create a village with amazing street pictures, but because there was a need to route the otherwise straight north-south Concession Road up a slight grade to avoid the Rouge River floodplain. As the village grew, two prominent buildings—the Old Firehall and the Queen's Hotel—were sited at the bend. Thus history has handed Main Street Unionville this deflected view: its signature street picture, its iconic postcard.

The viewer standing at Point B, as labeled in the photos (right) sees what is represented by the yellow-shaded triangle. The Old Firehall and Queen's Hotel are seen in partial profile view, lending import and highlighting their unique architecture to passers-by. While one cannot see beyond them when standing at Point B, it is nevertheless clear that Main Street Unionville continues on to provide other great treasures. The sense of enclosure is comforting, but the knowledge of a passage beyond is liberating.

The bend punctuates Main Street Unionville, buildings come closest together here to create the virtual centre of the Village, and creates one of many experiences that contribute to the unfolding sequence of emotions that occurs as one walks the street.



**Street Picture B - View along the bend on the Main Street terminated by the Old Fire Hall and the Queen's Hotel. The deflected view creates a sense of enclosure and yet entices further movement and exploration beyond this natural centre point in the Village.**



**The "Bend" or deflection in Main Street is the unusual geometry that distinguishes it from a conventional straight street yielding a special sense of place that is uniquely Unionville.**

### Footnotes and Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Charles' vision is expressed in his 1989 book, "A Vision of Britain". Charles. A Vision of Britain: A Personal View of Architecture. London: Doubleday, 1989.
- <sup>2</sup> See, Town of Markham, ON, Development Services, Heritage Section. Unionville Heritage Conservation District Study. September, 1987.
- <sup>3</sup> Much more information on Form-Based Codes, and many examples of successful codes, may be found on the Form-Based Codes Institute website: [www.fbc.org](http://www.fbc.org)
- <sup>4</sup> See Downey, Kirstin. "Recognizing a Revival in Pattern Books." The Washington Post, February 25, 2006. Available at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/24/AR2006022400823.html>
- <sup>5</sup> A larger discussion on pattern in architecture may be found in Alexander, Christopher, Sara Ishikawa, and Murray Silverstein. A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction. New York: Oxford Univ. Pr., 2010.
- <sup>6</sup> It is highly recommended that the interested reader download this document at <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/poundbury>.
- <sup>7</sup> For more information on urban navigation, see the Technical Page feature by Andr s Duany, Michael Morrissey and Patrick Pinnell in the journal New Urban News, which ran regularly between March 2001 and April/May 2007. The articles from October/November 2002 through March 2003 codify urban design techniques based on framing vistas or "street pictures".

### Further references on Poundbury:

- Neal, Peter. Urban Villages and the Making of Communities. London: Spon Press, 2003.
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# PRECEDENT VILLAGES - NOTL, KLEINBURG, VIEUW QUEBEC

## Related Historic Villages

The design team visited and studied numerous smaller-scaled villages within Ontario and Quebec. The following is a brief summary of some of the special qualities or assets that make each unique and can be instructive for the implementation of the MSU Community Vision Plan.

### Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario

- Outstanding village and streetscape beautifully maintained and appointed.
- Unique destination programming like theatres and specialty retail contribute to multiple day stays supporting hotels and B&B's
- Infusion of private capital investment in last decade has renewed the village, especially the remarkable historic hotel architecture.

### Kleinberg, Ontario

- Walkable main street that retains much of the historic fabric albeit for only a few short blocks.
- Recent install of Starbucks is a good example of a retail chain adapting to heritage architecture.
- The Wedding Chapel and recently expanded Banquet facilities is a special destination program that sustains the village year round.
- Proposed development on several blocks not sympathetic with the heritage district threatens to spoil the scale and character of the existing village permanently.
- The streetscape is cluttered with external electrical boxes everywhere.

### Vieux Québec, Quebec City

- Very unique, fully pedestrian square and network of passages.
- Narrow passges are fitted-out for seasonal celebrations, making this historic center a natural draw during festivals and special events.



Lively urban spaces with double level restuarants and retail at grade spills out onto outdoor seating areas animated with umbrellas and fountains



Gateway architecture is carefully detailed and boldly placed for iconic effect



Pedestrian mid-block passages are very inviting and landscaped



Unique destination retail stores, like this wine store with interior tasting bar, expands the defini-tion and experience of retail creating a one-of-a-kind experience.



Landscaped parking areas at the back soften asphalt areas with pavers and planting

## Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario (c.1781)





## PRECEDENT VILLAGES



The greatest programmatic asset within the village is the Wedding Chapel and newly expanded Banquet facilities. Ample and convenient parking is provided deeply behind main street and well concealed from view.



Expanded public school on the main street undermines the heritage scale and character of the village



Throughout the village, externalized utility boxes are located in the sidewalk area interrupting the pedestrian streetscape



Attached small buildings form and frame intimate pedestrian streets, squares and passages



Seasonally themed narrow streets and passages

Kleinberg, Ontario (c.1825)

Vieux Québec, Quebec City (c.1608)