

THE WAY FORWARD

III





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40TH UNIONVILLE



VILLAGE FESTIVAL

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CONCLUSIONS

A city is not an accident but the result of coherent visions and aims. It is an invention of the human spirit...

A beautiful building by itself is unable to improve a sordid settlement, but a single ugly building can kill the soul of a proud city... A well-designed building may be an appreciable asset, but a beautiful village or city represents a foundational act, an act of civilization. By creating cities we create ourselves. When we spoil our cities we despoil ourselves. Our most cherished memories will henceforth generate the poison of regret, of irretrievable loss, even of hatred of what we prized the most. We then flee from the world and from ourselves. A beautiful village, a beautiful house, a beautiful city can become a home for all, a universal home. But if we lose this aim we build our own exile here on earth. –Léon Krier¹

This book has told the story of Main Street Unionville through its present circumstances, and presents a future chapter in that story through a future vision. The recommendations that follow are the necessary short-, medium-, and long-term steps required to realize that future vision.

To the residents, business owners, and stakeholders of Main Street Unionville as well as City leadership and staff, we present these recommendations with one caveat: This book cannot be consigned to the metaphorical bookshelf, its ideas left to atrophy. It must be used as a tool for education; as a blueprint for the next scene in Krier's 'foundational act'; as a call to action.

The public process that has been so successful in engaging so many is not over. The spirit of village life is a public one, and Main Street Unionville's champions—including those representing the Villagers Association, Ratepayers Association, Business Improvement Association, and other individuals and groups—must embrace specific issues as they see fit and engage their neighbours, partners, and city government to catalyze and then realize the vision. To the latter, we urge with equal strength the necessity to form key partnerships with public, private and not-for-profit sector entities throughout the region and province to realize specific aspects of this vision.

Main Street Unionville is more than a collection of beautiful buildings; it is indeed the home of a great human spirit. To that end, the authors wish to extend a heartfelt thanks to the interesting, dedicated, and

strong-minded individuals who have made Main Street Unionville their home, their place of work, or their place away from home. We also wish to personally thank Regional Councillor Jim Jones for his unwavering dedication to the visioning process from its inception, in the aim of a better future for Unionville and the city of Markham. Main Street Unionville entered its 220th year in 2014; from all who have come before, it is this current generation, put here at a specific moment in time, who will shepherd the village forward to become a universal home for posterity.

Footnotes and Endnotes

- ¹ Krier, Léon. *The Architecture of Community*. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2009, p. 63, 439. Leon Krier is the original theoretical mind behind the New Urbanism movement. He is also the Masterplanner/Architect of Poundbury working in partnership with Prince Charles for two decades.



Mayor Frank Scarpitti, along with Bob Stiver, Jeanne Ker-Hornell and MP Paul Calandra, kicks-off the restoration effort in 2013.





STIVER COMMUNITY CULTURAL CENTRE



The past year was an eventful one for the Village. The photo above was taken in the spring of 2013 at the outset of the Main Street Unionville Study prior to the June 2013 charrette. Plans for the transformation of the Stiver Mill were approved and constructed culminating, a year later, in a spectacular community cultural centre with a bright, heritage red exterior. This iconic mill structure renovation symbolizes what can be done within a historic, heritage context and should have a catalyzing effect for the study area and the district.



MAIN STREET MARKHAM STREETScape IMPROVEMENT



Public Washrooms



In 2014, Main Street Markham underwent a major streetscape improvement project and transformation. The outcome has exceeded expectations reinventing this once tired historic main street district. This successful project is a great precedent for Main Street Unionville validating the positive uplift and renewing effect that a streetscape masterplan has on a retail main street.

In addition, public washrooms, completed several years ago and located centrally in the district off of the main street, are a model for the washroom facility and central location suggested in this study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Final Recommendations

1. **Vision Plan** - That City Council accepts this document as the general consensus 30 year vision for Main Street, Unionville.
2. **Regulatory Documents** - That the City work to put in place the regulatory frameworks that will deliver the vision; provide a new Secondary Plan and Precinct Plan that is based on this vision, and commission a Pattern Book to guide the architecture.
3. **Trustee** - That the City work with the ownership group(s) to put in place a Development Manager or Trustee to facilitate the ability of the group to work together to achieve the ends outlined in the vision.
4. **Residential Intensification** - That the City support residential intensification opportunities in the commercial core area and along Highway 7 at an appropriate scale, massing and design to sustain the commercial businesses in the village.
5. **Urban Retail** - That the City and BIA monitor the impact and ramifications associated with the recent changes to permitted land uses in the commercial core area.
6. **Parking Optimization** - Because providing parking on site is one of the biggest challenges to redevelopment, the City is encouraged to consider the following parking recommendations:
 - Differentiate between the challenges associated with festival and event parking verses every day and weekend parking. Address the challenge of event parking with remote parking facilities and shuttle services.



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. VISION PLAN

2. REGULATORY DOCUMENTS

3. TRUSTEE

4. RESID. INTENSIFICATION

5. URBAN RETAIL

6. PARKING OPTIMIZATION

7. PARKING PLATFORM

8. ANCHOR

9. PUBLIC WASHROOMS

10. GREENING MAIN STREET

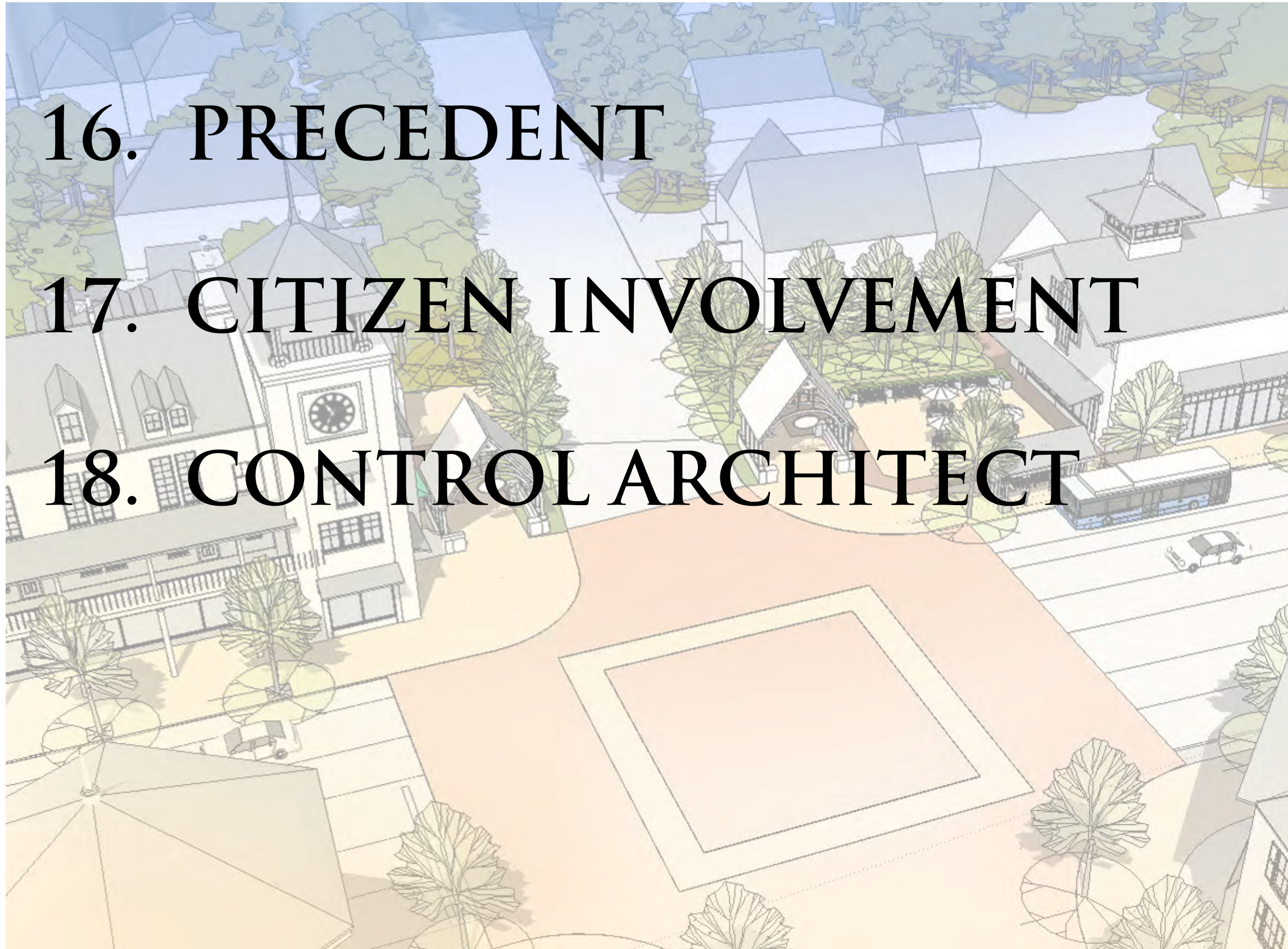
– Introduce parking management practices, provide parking requirements based on performance standards, reinstate a cash-in-lieu of parking program that could generate funds for parking related improvements, improve way finding to parking, provide bike racks, acknowledge and manage on-street parking in the broader community toward meeting parking needs.

7. **Parking Linchpin** - That the City commit to work with TRCA to explore the possibility of a parking facility on the East Side of Main Street as shown in the concept plan. This is the lynch-pin of the long term vision, and without it, redevelopment becomes very limited and difficult. Political will, staff involvement, and a great deal of co-operation and coordination with the TRCA will be required.
8. **Anchor** - That the Unionville BIA and future ownership group Development Manager work to achieve a key commercial anchor in the historic core area.
9. **Public Washrooms** - That the city commit to an immediate priority to locate public washrooms in the small central square, located on City owned land on the east side of Main Street and that it be carefully coordinated with other important components of the masterplan including the accessibly lift and parking platform.
10. **Greening Mainstreet** - That the City take guidance from the streetscape concepts explored as part of the vision and undertake a Streetscape Beautification initiative. A streetscape that is more comfortable, more accommodating, and the reestablishment of a green canopy will contribute to the regeneration of Main Street.

RECOMMENDATIONS

11. **Rouge River Trail Portal** - That the City as a strategic partner with Rouge National Urban Park , use the Vision Plan to apply for funding for a new portal and orientation pavilion into the Rouge River Trail System at the corner of Main Street and Carlton Rd. Located on a tributary of the Rouge Park, MSU Main Street Unionville is an important historic and beautiful village that would add a significant destination in the park system, the largest urban park in North America.
12. **Highway 7 Underpass** - That the City work with York Region and railway authorities to eliminate the need for a underpass to accommodate the railway crossing on Highway 7. This feature if implemented would be exceptionally disruptive to the community and detrimental to Highway 7 revitalization.
13. **Narrative Branding** - That the Unionville BIA, in co-operation with the City undertake a new branding and marketing initiative to reposition Main Street taking into account the opportunities created by the new vision plan. The marketing effort needs to be lead by a highly skilled individual with strong connections to the retail and developer community who can work effectively with property owners and the City.
14. **Village Champions** - That the City should harness the skills and energy of the many talented, intelligent and passionate individuals, and groups, for example the URA and UVA, who live in and love the village and want to actively contribute to the long view and sustainability of the Village. They should be tapped to champion specific aspects, focus areas and other related initiatives to catalyze and realize the vision.





16. PRECEDENT

17. CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

18. CONTROL ARCHITECT

15. **Strategic Partnerships** - That the City should use the Vision Plan to form alliances and partnerships with key organizations that have been instrumental in realizing similar historically significant revitalization projects in the GTA like Artscape, Evergreen and others, as well as utilizing the City of Markham's Economic Development Office to involve the strong Markham Corporate community in strategic partnerships, perhaps with branding opportunities, to further realize specific projects within the plan like the Toogood Pond Amphitheatre.
16. **Precedent** - That the City further investigate Poundbury, UK to understand how this new village is conceived to be an appropriate addition to an existing historic small scale village.
17. **Citizen Involvement** - That the City consider maintaining the Main Street Unionville Committee with a new mandate of overseeing the progress of the vision, reviewing the impact of recent official plan and zoning changes to ensure they are functioning effectively, and advancing public improvements to the area.
18. **Control Architect** - That in addition to the regulatory documents, the City put in place a Control Architect who will work with property owners, if requested and review proposals architecturally for compliance with the vision. The City would review compliance with the Precinct Plan and Heritage Guidelines, and the Control Architect would specifically review proposals for the quality of the architectural design and conformance with the Pattern Book.

A COMMUNITY VISION PLAN - A PHOTO GALLERY OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE VISION



The Design Team would like to thank all those pictured here and the many others who contributed their time and energy to help create a masterplan for the next thirty years.

