

PRECEDENT VILLAGES - POUNDBURY - THE DEFLECTED VIEW

Urban Navigation⁷

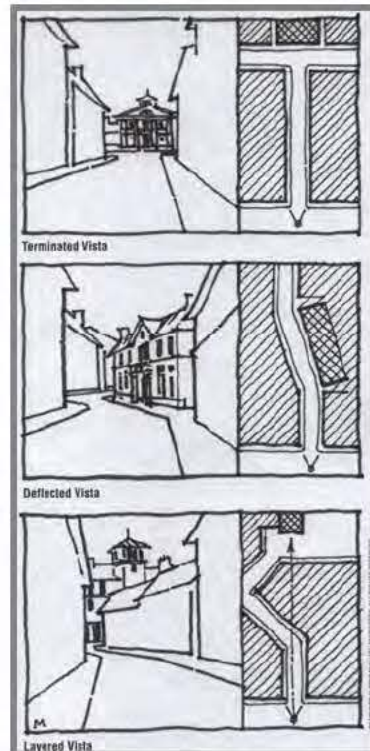
Poundbury looks complex from the air—but makes sense to those walking its streets and passageways. This is no coincidence: Poundbury was planned to incorporate an instinctive ease of movement by means of time-honoured design techniques that promote urban navigation. One design technique used extensively 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.

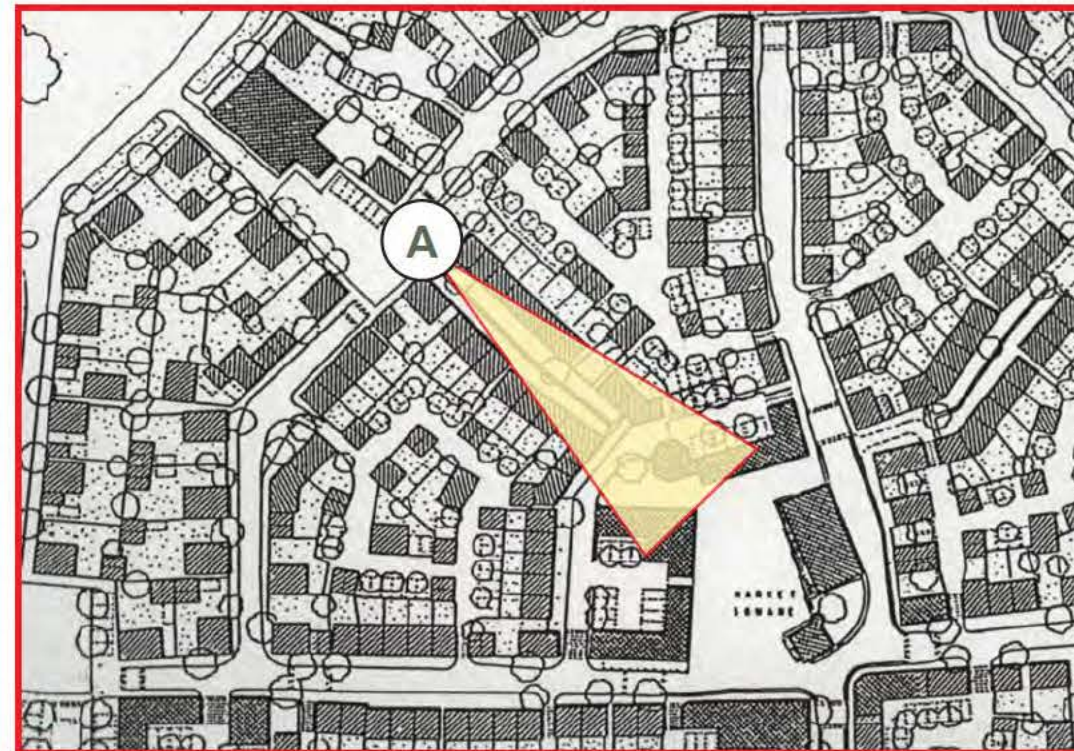
The deflected vista not only punctuates movement, it guides us along to an ultimate conclusion. In our Poundbury example, one must pass the Octagon Café en route to the Market Hall (see the photo on the lower right of Page 51). This building of civic importance is the main destination for most



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

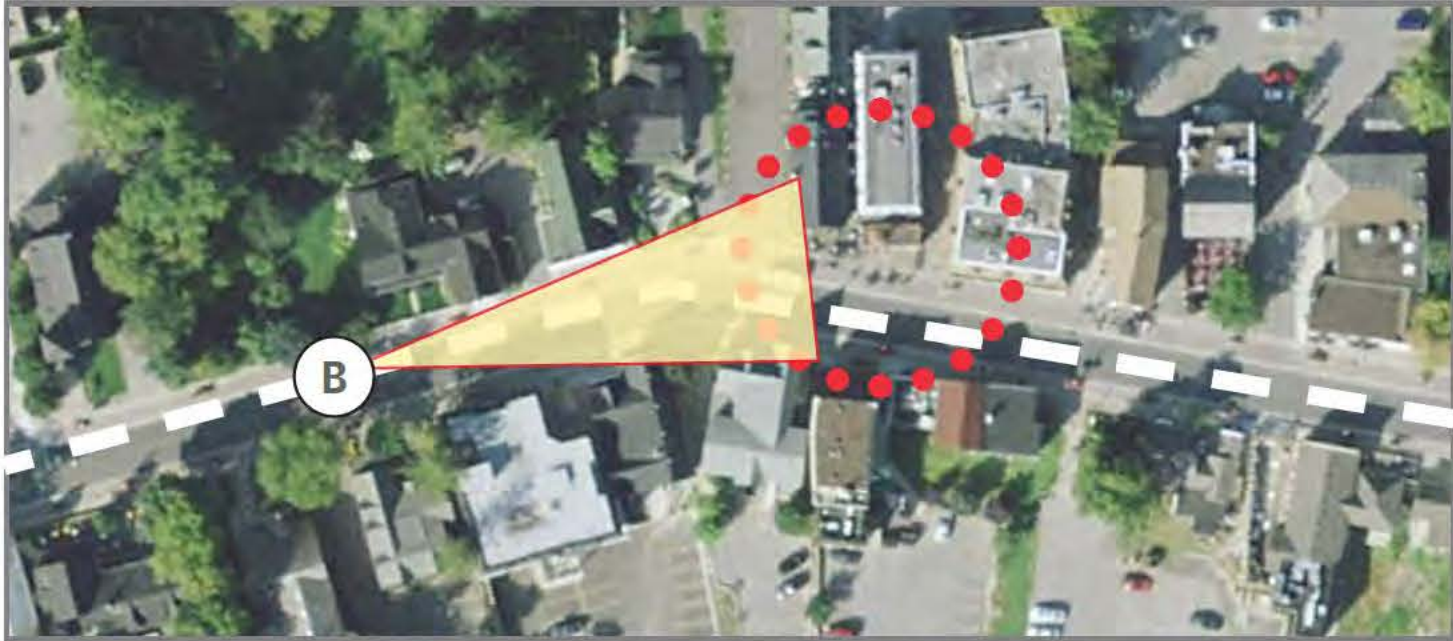
As discussed in the introduction to this book, Main Street Unionville was built with a bend in the middle: not because those who built it planned to create a village with amazing street pictures, but because there was a need to route the otherwise straight north-south Concession Road up a slight grade 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

- ¹ 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.
- ² See, Town of Markham, ON, Development Services, Heritage Section. Unionville Heritage Conservation District Study. September, 1997.
- ³ 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
- ⁴ 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>
- ⁵ 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.
- ⁶ It is highly recommended that the interested reader download this document at <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/poundbury>.
- ⁷ For more information on urban navigation, see the Technical Page feature by Andrès 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.
- Langdon, Philip J. "Prince Charles Reasserts Need for Traditional Town Design Principles." New Urban News 9, no. 7 (October/November 2004): 1-4.
- United Kingdom. West Dorset District Council. Supplementary Planning Document: Poundbury Development Brief. December 2006. <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/poundbury>.

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.

Kleinburg, 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 centre 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 definition 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)





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

Kleinburg, Ontario (c.1825)



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



Seasonally themed narrow streets and passages

Vieux Québec, Quebec City (c.1608)



THE VISION PLAN

II





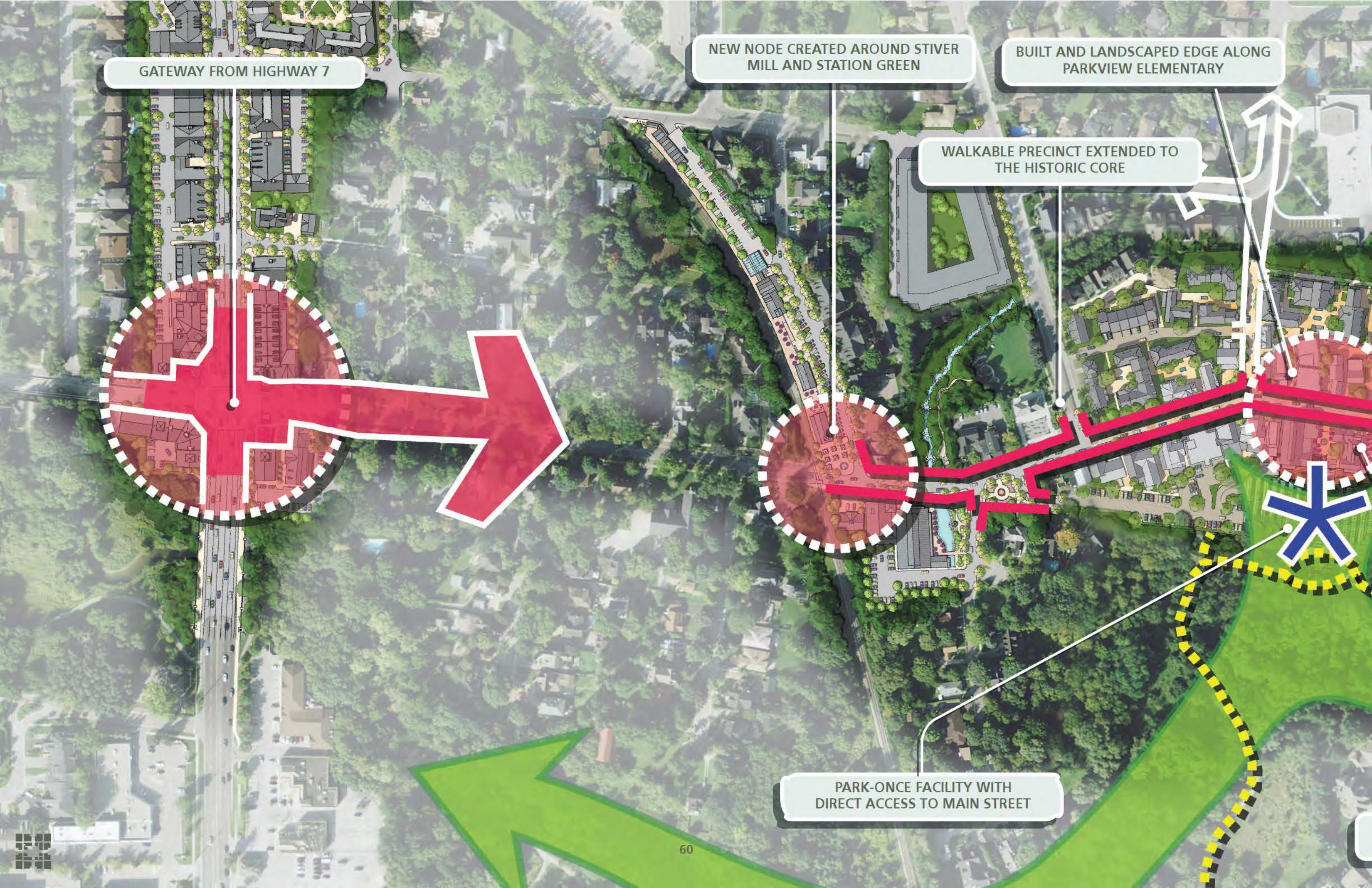
GATEWAY FROM HIGHWAY 7

NEW NODE CREATED AROUND STIVER MILL AND STATION GREEN

BUILT AND LANDSCAPED EDGE ALONG PARKVIEW ELEMENTARY

WALKABLE PRECINCT EXTENDED TO THE HISTORIC CORE

PARK-ONCE FACILITY WITH DIRECT ACCESS TO MAIN STREET





CONNECTION TO CROSBY PLAYFIELDS

GATEWAY NODE WITH ORIENTATION CENTRE, CROSBY FACILITY AND PORTAL TO THE ROUGE RIVER TRAIL

ENHANCED CONNECTION TO THE LIBRARY

TOOGOOD AMPHITHEATRE AND CURLING CLUB

PORTAL TO ROUGE RIVER TRAIL FROM MAIN STREET

INFILL ALONG MAIN STREET TO CREATE A CONTINUOUS VILLAGE FABRIC

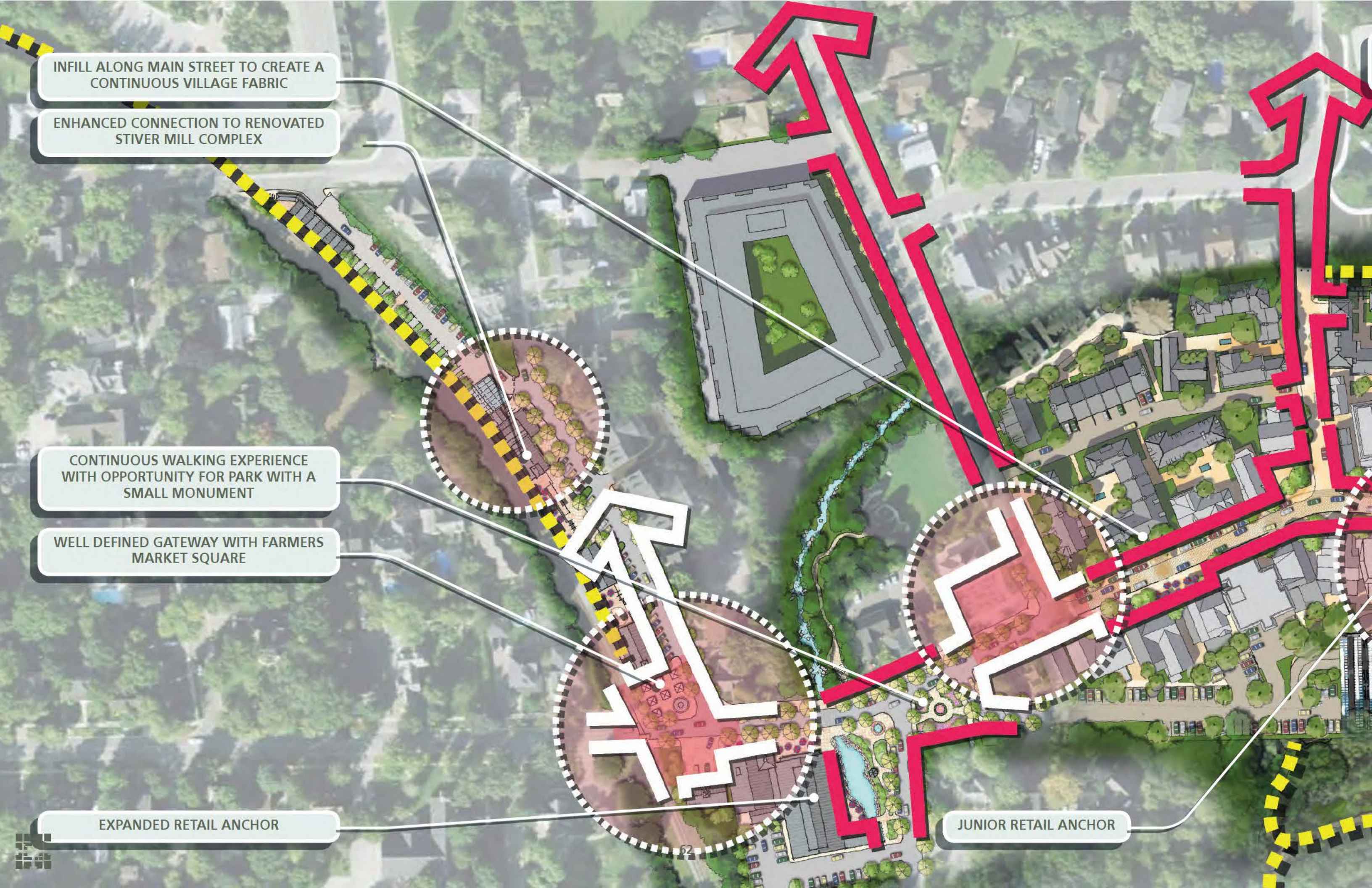
ENHANCED CONNECTION TO RENOVATED STIVER MILL COMPLEX

CONTINUOUS WALKING EXPERIENCE WITH OPPORTUNITY FOR PARK WITH A SMALL MONUMENT

WELL DEFINED GATEWAY WITH FARMERS MARKET SQUARE

EXPANDED RETAIL ANCHOR

JUNIOR RETAIL ANCHOR



A WELL DEFINED EDGE ALONG THE SCHOOL SITE AND EXPANDED DEPTH OF MAIN STREET WITH BETTER INTERCONNECTIVITY

MIXED USE ANCHOR

GATEWAY NODE WITH ORIENTATION CENTRE AND CROSBY FACILITY

PORTAL TO THE ROUGE RIVER TRAIL AND CONNECTION TO THE LIBRARY

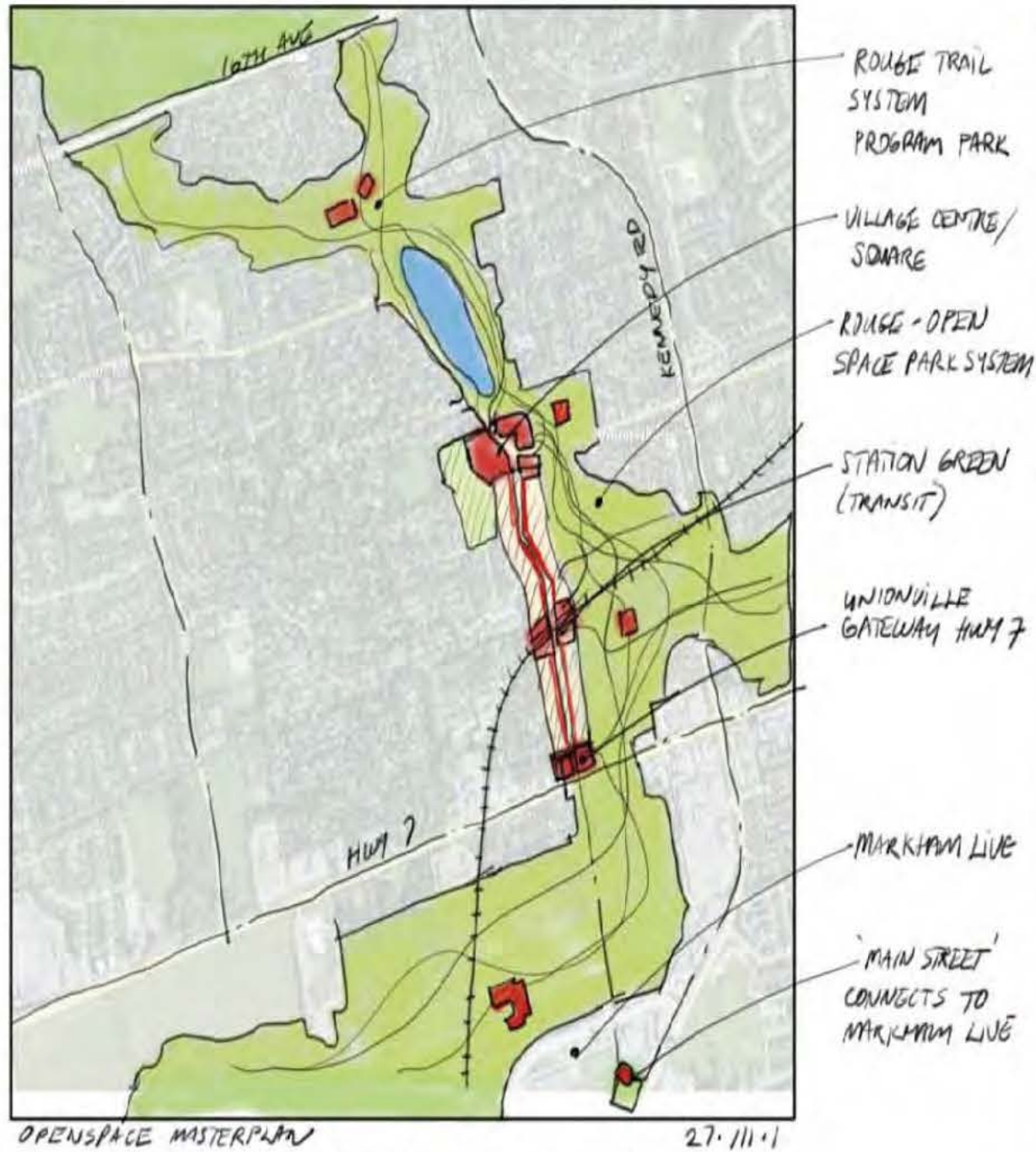
PARK-ONCE FACILITY WITH DIRECT ACCESS TO MAIN STREET

PORTAL TO THE ROUGE RIVER TRAIL

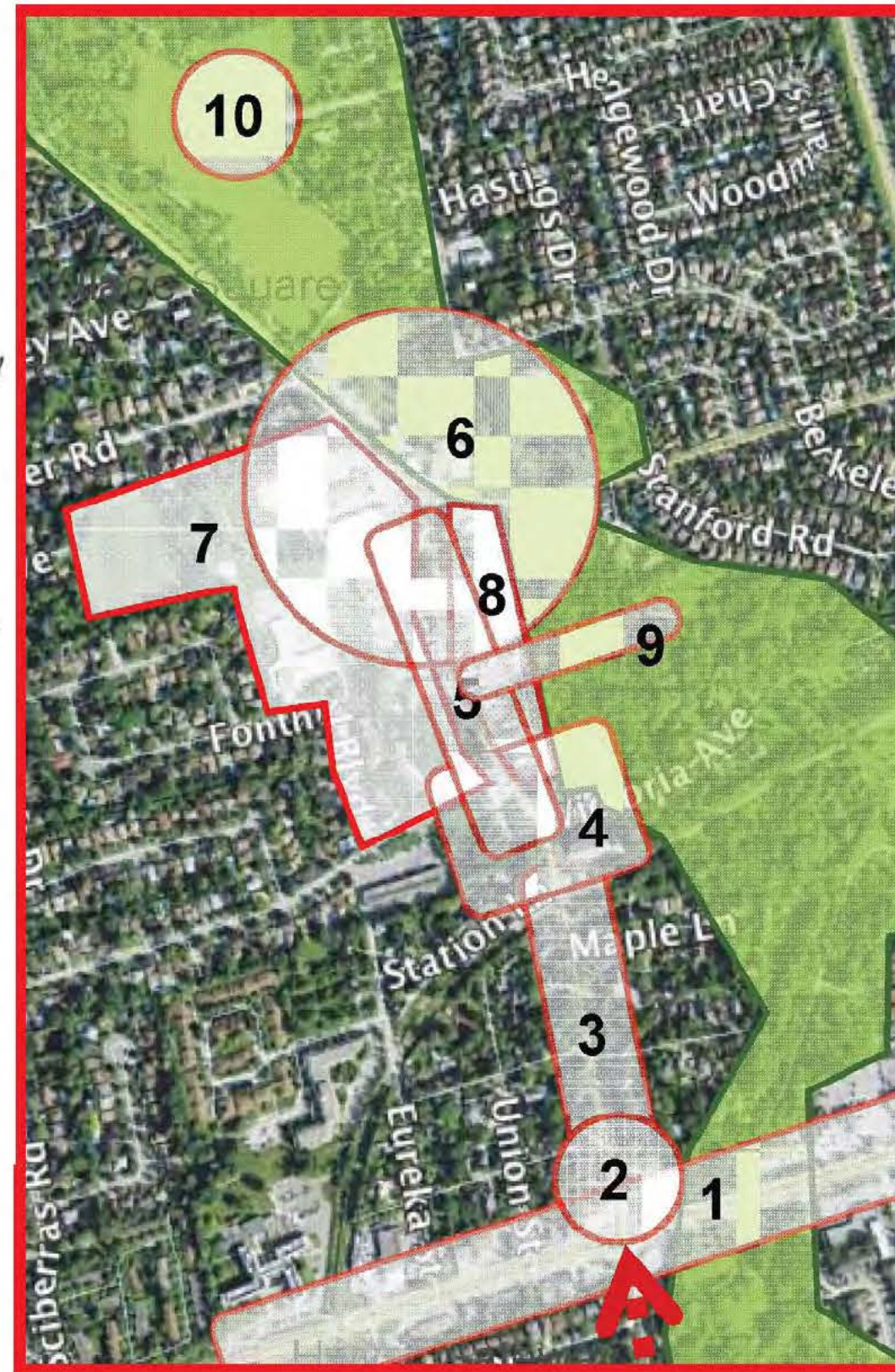
VISION PLAN ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN



VISION PLAN FOCUS AREAS



The Rouge River Valley and the Main Street Precinct have a strong and historic relationship. The Main Street is at the vertex of several tributaries and it is important to strengthen and connect to this important open space system.



Charrette diagram of Focus Areas from south to north - potential to expand the walkability of the Precinct 1 mile from Hwy 7 to Toogood Pond.

This Vision Plan is a holistic planning framework to address the opportunities, constraints, and threats to the sustainability of Main Street Unionville. Within the larger vision, there are individual 'Focus Areas' that have been identified and targeted for study. Each focus area has its own issues and stakeholders, sub-areas of special focus, and its own 'Champions' who can help to realize the plan. These individual focus areas are of two sorts: those which are discrete and not dependent on other focus areas for their realization, and those which are dependent on at least one other focus area. The core, for example, needs to be studied as a whole.

Focus Areas From South to North:

- Highway 7
- Stiver Mill/ Station Green
- Village Core
 - West Side, North and South
 - East Side
 - Main Street Streetscape
- Village Square
 - Crosby Community Centre (Twin Arenas)
 - Varley Gallery
 - Rouge Orientation Portal
- Toogood Pond
 - Toogood Pond Amphitheatre
 - Unionville Curling Club

VISION PLAN FOCUS AREAS



AN UNREMARKABLE INTERSECTION

Regional Highway 7 cuts across southern Ontario all the way from west of London to Ottawa. In the Greater Toronto Area, it serves as a main east-west artery.

Some of the traffic volume it used to carry has been diverted to the 407 Express Toll Route. Still, it's a central thoroughfare in Markham, and is key to the placement of the extensive Markham Centre development emerging to the west, toward Warden Avenue.

Closer to Main Street, the CN/GO rail tracks cut across Hwy 7 just 300 metres from the intersection. To the immediate east, a low bridge and a discreet path are all the evidence that an

intricate system of walking trails winds through the Rouge River valley just steps away.

Look around. You'll see a mix of nondescript, low-rise structures peppered with unattractive signs, patchy storefronts and strip parking. There's a decent amount of greenery at the edges. Yet, save for a modest signboard on the grassy northeast corner, virtually nothing hints that a rare historical gem lies just to the north.



HWY 7 GATEWAY

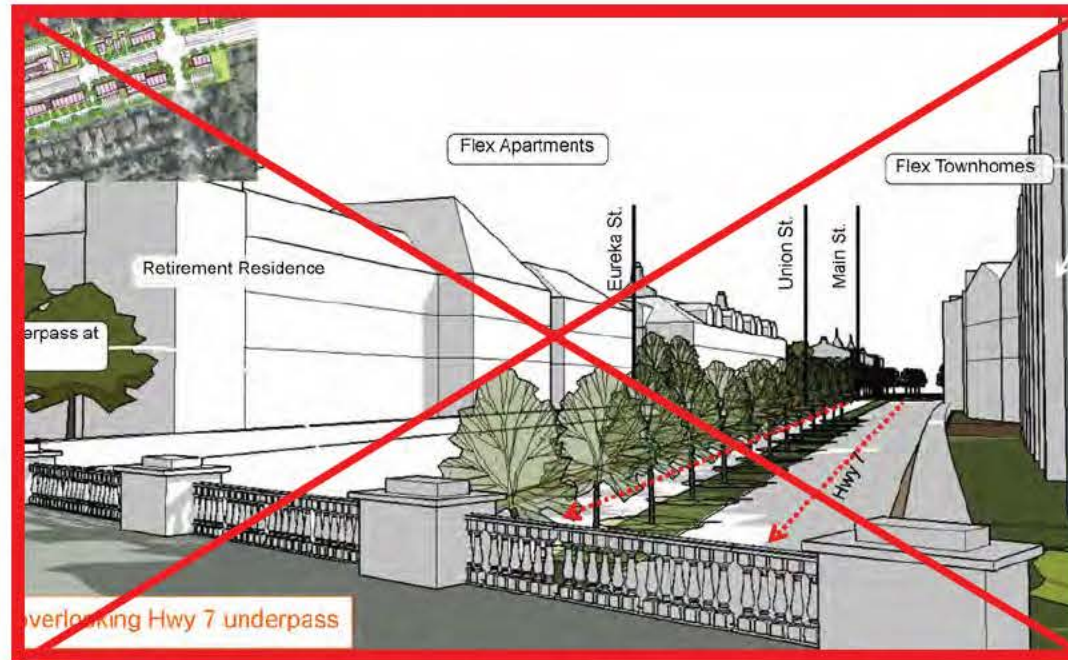
Highway 7 - Gateway Concept

Highway 7 is an important and heavily travelled regional arterial road, providing an important entry point to Unionville. This segment of roadway between the GO railroad tracks to the west and the Rouge River to the east is the front door to the Main Street Unionville core. In this spirit, the concept for Highway 7 is to create a street fronted by buildings with heritage scale and style on both sides, and lined with pleasant tree-covered sidewalks. These buildings would house retail on the ground floor with residential and/or office uses programmed above, to create a natural extension of the Village. A sense of place would then be created along this segment of Highway 7, with the built environment echoing Unionville in character and scale. The intersection of Highway 7 and Main Street Unionville would be given special emphasis through inclusion of distinguishing architectural features and landscape elements. This location would serve a dual role as a centre and a gateway, forming both an entry to the historic commercial core of Unionville to the north, and promoting the continuity of the Main Street historic district further south to where it meets Markham Centre.

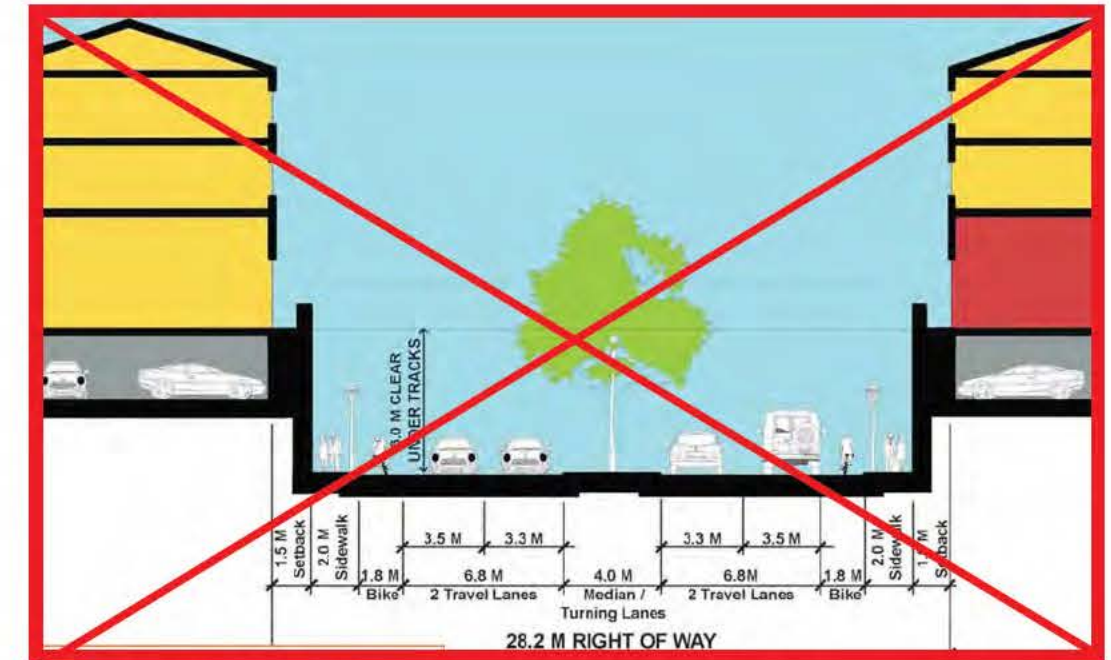
Overwhelmingly, residents have requested a provision, with the concurrence of the municipality, that the possibility of a grade-separated Highway underpass at the train tracks be prohibited in this Heritage area.

The Plan for Highway 7 includes the following aspects:

1. The Site extends from the GO railroad crossing on the west to the Rouge River on the east.
2. The plan maintains existing heritage-contributing structures.



Highway 7 Underpass - not compatible with Historic Village Precinct



Highway 7 Street Section - Impact of Proposed Underpass



Existing Conditions Highway 7

HWY 7 GATEWAY



View from the bridge over the Rouge River looking east along Highway 7. The Main Street Unionville Intersection is marked by a clock tower on the n-w corner

3. A small-scale, picturesque, and traditional style of building is appropriate for this setting as the 'Gateway to the Historic District'
4. The Highway 7 roadway is designed to accommodate a planted median and left turn lane, four travel lanes, two bike lanes and sidewalks with planter boxes for street trees.
5. The plan maintains the mandatory diagonal view corridors from the roadway to the train tracks.
6. The buildings contain a mixed-use program with retail on the ground floor and residential or office above. Parking for residential and/or office uses is located below the buildings, and on the surface behind the buildings for the retail uses. Residential building types consist of townhouse-style, two-storey apartments and traditional 'double-loaded' apartments, where units are built on either side of a central corridor.
7. A clock tower at the corner of Highway 7 and Main Street Unionville signifies the importance of this intersection.
8. Two pedestrian-scaled roofed gates, 'lychgates' or other entry feature, frame Main Street Unionville on the north side of Highway 7, further impressing the presence of a gateway to Unionville.
9. A larger ensemble of buildings is proposed on the northwest parcel just east of the tracks that could accommodate a senior-living or active adult residence.
10. Parking behind the buildings provides a separation between the new buildings and the existing homes immediately to the north and south.
11. The homes on East Drive are buffered from new development by a fence and by supplementing an existing east-west tree stand. The existing, adjoining neighbourhoods on the north and south sides have a significant tree canopy that naturally softens and screens the intensified buildings on Hwy 7.
12. Preferred heights 2.5-3.5 storeys in the east with a possible 4-5 storeys near the tracks.

HWY 7 GATEWAY - MASTERPLAN



Highway 7 Illustrative Site Plan



View east along Highway 7 from intersection at Main Street. The tracks are at the end of the vista and must remain as a "level crossing" to ensure the viability of this gateway concept neighbourhood.

HWY 7 GATEWAY - LAND USE

Hwy 7 - Gateway Concept Program

Residential

- Apartments 240 D.U.
- Age Appropriate 110 D.U.
- Retail 3,500 S.M.



LAND USE DIAGRAM	
	Residential
	Retail
	Mixed Use Res over Retail

Land Use Diagram

HWY 7 GATEWAY - PROGRAM AND PARKING DISTRIBUTION



Parking Load

PARKING REQUIRED	PARKING PROVIDED	PARKING BALANCE
673	669	+4

PROGRAM CHART			
LAND USE / VENUE	AREA (M ²) / UNITS	PARKING RATIO	PARKING REQUIRED
Retail**	3,500	1 / 13.85 m ²	253
Apartments***	240	1.2 / unit	288
Active Adult	110	1.2 / unit	132
TOTAL PARKING REQUIRED			673

**Retail Parking Ratio weighted to factor in a 50/50 mix of Retail and Restaurant

***Rental apartments to park at 1.2/unit rather than owner occupied 1.5/unit



Parking Plan