



Unboxing Uptown

The transformation of a main street from the inside out

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Land Acknowledgement

The Canadian Urban Institute (CUI) is committed to advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. We acknowledge and respect that our programs are delivered on the territory of many Indigenous Peoples.

We acknowledge that the City of Brampton is located on the traditional territory of the Mississauga's of the Credit First Nation, and before them, the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Huron and Wendat. We acknowledge the many First Nations, Métis, Inuit and other global Indigenous people that now call Brampton home.

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Executive summary

Unboxing Uptown is the result of a nine-month research and engagement project completed by the Canadian Urban Institute (CUI) with the City of Brampton. The objectives of this work are two-fold. First, the report provides recommendations to support the retention of existing businesses in Uptown. These are businesses that represent the diversity of Uptown and Brampton as a whole. The many small businesses in Uptown are the area's strength and their contributions to the community should be preserved and enhanced. Second, the redevelopment of the Shoppers World site provides a generational opportunity to rethink Uptown and apply the features of vibrant main streets — both new and historic. Research for this project revealed that approaches to creating main streets in the context of new development are nascent and evolving. The City of Brampton has a unique opportunity to learn from and improve on this work.

To support the redevelopment of Shoppers World into a diverse, mixed-use community, CUI has drawn on its legacy as city-builders combined with research, observations, and partnerships to support the renewal and resilience of main streets in the context of post-COVID recovery. While COVID has created an unprecedented shock to communities and main streets across Canada and globally, the lessons learned have helped to propel main streets to the forefront of conversations about how we restore social and economic resilience. Combined with growing attention on the importance of reconciliation and equity, CUI's findings contribute to a national dialogue on city building that will outlast the pandemic.

Research for this project began with stakeholder engagement with business owners, business support networks, property owners, and economic development experts. Through surveys and interviews, several trends emerged. First, existing businesses define the character of Uptown. South and Southeast Asian, Filipino, Chinese and Black business owners form a network of small independent businesses and small chains that call Uptown home. To remain in Uptown they require modest, affordable storefront spaces and a continued street presence to attract local foot traffic as well as clientele from a broader catchment area who come to Uptown for its diverse food scene and other small business offerings. These businesses also offer essential services and retail needs for residents. Retaining these businesses and providing opportunities for growth will ensure that Uptown maintains its cachet. There is also a chance to support the emergence of new businesses that would complement existing businesses.

Interviews also revealed the importance of serving the area's youth given the area's proximity to Sheridan College. Recommendations highlight the need for programs, spaces, and opportunities to retain and attract youth as well as employment, recreational, social and mental health supports. Similarly, programs, services, amenities, and housing that cater to the broader community's needs will help retain residents and preserve Uptown's diversity.

Stakeholders also identified challenges including better transit access, safe pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, and better linkages within the community including safe pedestrian and cycling routes between commercial areas and Sheridan College. The need for business promotion and assistance for new businesses were also highlighted.

Within the development scheme for Shoppers World, a central High Street has been designed as a main street. Running parallel to Main Street South and Steeles Avenue, High Street will act as the spine of the development providing a range of businesses in proximity to residences, offices and the proposed Community Hub. CUI has evaluated the redevelopment scheme based on the characteristics of a successful main street. For this analysis, CUI has identified five key ingredients for main street success: People, Businesses, Places, Anchors, and Leadership. Focusing on these five elements, the report provides recommendations to help the new High Street excel. Key strategies include investing in the people and businesses of Uptown. This includes ensuring an equity lens is used during all stages of the development process to create an environment that is welcoming and accessible to people of varying backgrounds, ages, abilities, and socio-economic status. Redevelopment can help enhance Uptown's accessibility and appeal with site design standards and programming.

Drawing on the themes of Places and Anchors, stakeholders acknowledged a need for beautification and public realm investments. CUI recommends the thoughtful planning of public spaces and anchors to provide opportunities for learning, socializing, and integrating. This includes engaging and diverse events to attract residents, businesses and visitors as well as providing unique spaces, such as co-working or innovation spaces, for new businesses to emerge and youth to remain in the community.

Leadership will be important including in the potential creation of a Business Improvement Area to support businesses, placemaking, and community cohesion. Both the City and the developer also have a role to play in facilitating a neighbourhood transition and ensuring that policies, planning and decisions are aimed at creating a resilient and inclusive community.

From a broader perspective, the work in Uptown is connected to an important and necessary conversation about how we restore and invigorate our downtowns and main streets as a post-COVID-19 recovery strategy, as well as future-proofing our commercial cores to be more resilient and diverse for the long-term. This includes building social, economic and environmental sustainability into our main streets and using these principles in new redevelopment schemes. *Unboxing Uptown* provides an opportunity for CUI to apply research and ideas gathered with its *Bring Back Main Street* initiative, launched in 2020, which engaged communities across Canada. As we complete this report, CUI is launching *My Main Street*, a federally funded program to implement placemaking initiatives. As recovery strategies move forward, the redevelopment of Shoppers World and the broader goal of creating 20-minute, transit-oriented communities will help shape the national conversation around 'building back better' and positions Brampton as a leader in this discussion.

1.0 Main street matters

1.1 Introduction

Main streets are the heart of our communities. With small businesses, historic buildings, public spaces, essential community services, and civic institutions, Canada's main streets form the identity of many communities. Main street is where we go to shop, work, do business, and socialize. Main streets may also include gathering spots that provide community amenities including libraries, theatres, faith buildings, community centres, educational institutions, parks, and public squares. Healthy main streets are foundational to the health of our cities and towns.

Small businesses are one crucial ingredient of main streets. Main streets are home to concentrations of commercial activity, including an array of independent businesses. The impact of local small businesses goes beyond just providing goods and services. Local small businesses support local economies by keeping dollars in the community, provide employment opportunities, and are places where neighbours cross paths.

The pandemic has exacerbated challenges facing main streets. Prior to the onset of the pandemic, small businesses on main streets already faced challenges such as increasing competition from e-commerce and rising property taxes. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges and has also led to the emergence of new challenges. Most main street businesses were forced to close their doors in response to emergency lockdown measures, resulting in lost revenues. Civic facilities including libraries and schools, which are often

located on or close to main streets, shut down. With the stay-at-home orders, there was a significant decline in pedestrian and vehicle traffic on main streets.

The Canadian Urban Institute (CUI) launched a national research and action campaign as it quickly became apparent that a main street crisis was emerging due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. The Canada-wide *Bring Back Main Street* (BBMS) initiative launched by CUI in 2020 focuses on understanding the crisis, connecting stakeholders, and developing solutions to ensure that our main streets can recover and emerge from the crisis more resilient than ever.

Main streets have displayed remarkable resilience and ingenuity during this difficult time. Many businesses have shifted their business models by going digital with new e-commerce websites, rapid delivery services, curb-side pickup, and new products and services. However, there is still a great deal of uncertainty surrounding Canada's main streets.

This report explores how to “bring back main street” in Uptown Brampton — in both the short-term, and over a longer time horizon.

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic.¹ Since that time, repeated closure requirements and re-openings have made it very challenging for small businesses to plan and operate. Brampton has been one of the cities hit hardest by the pandemic, and small businesses in Uptown have faced steep challenges. In the short- and medium-terms, small businesses need support to ensure main street prosperity.

In the longer-term, Uptown is an area that will undergo transformation, spurred by the arrival of a new light rail line and large-scale redevelopment plans for the area. The urban fabric in Uptown is poised to shift from auto-oriented shopping plazas and enclosed malls to become a walkable, transit-oriented, 20-minute neighbourhood.

Uptown has the potential to be a model for bringing back main street.

In the short term, support for a main street in Uptown can help drive recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. And in the long-term, healthy main streets can be the centrepiece of vibrancy, equity, and liveability in Uptown. Uptown Brampton can be a model for cities and their partners in retrofitting suburban car-oriented development toward healthy communities.

1.2 Objectives and approach

The objectives of this report are:

- to better understand the current state of main street in Uptown;
- to shed light on community and business needs, priorities, challenges, and opportunities as they relate to vibrant street culture and the small business community; and
- to provide advice and recommendations to the City on how to promote a vibrant small business environment and strong main streets in Uptown.

The insights and recommendations presented in this report are drawn from a variety of sources:

- Recent data provided by the City of Brampton on the demographics of Uptown and data from the Brampton Business Directory;
- Interviews conducted by CUI with key informants from organizations whose missions relate to business or entrepreneurship in Brampton;
- An online survey aimed at business owners which was posted on the City's Uptown website;
- CUI Solutions Briefs on planning, urban design, and retail recovery which were produced as part of the Bring Back Main Street initiative; and
- The actions identified via the *Bring Back Main Street* initiative, which were the result of collaboration among main street stakeholders across Canada.

Overview

→ Section 2.0 discusses CUI's typology of main streets, the five elements of successful main streets, and the current momentum around the redevelopment of enclosed malls and auto-oriented shopping plazas.

→ Section 3.0 presents some key characteristics of the residential population, businesses, and main streets in the Uptown area.

→ Section 4.0 outlines the context for opportunities facing Uptown in the medium- and longer term, in the form of a new LRT, community vision, and plans for redevelopment of a major site.

→ Section 5.0 offers recommendations for the transformation of Uptown organized by the key elements of successful main streets: places, anchors, business, leadership, and people.

→ Section 6.0 concludes the report.

2.0 The building blocks of main streets

2.1 A typology of main streets

Main streets don't look the same everywhere. Every main street has a unique function, length, history, and combination of retail, services, entertainment, and other features. As part of the *Bring Back Main Street* initiative, CUI previously proposed a typology of main streets consisting of three types:

- 1) **Business district main street:** These main streets are typically located in a high-density walkable downtown core or secondary business district.
- 2) **Neighbourhood main street:** These main streets are typically located outside a downtown core, adjacent to a low- or medium-density residential community.
- 3) **Small town main street:** typically located in a historic centre, surrounded by a low-density residential community.

Within these three categories, there is still further variation. For instance, the built form of a neighbourhood main street can be highly influenced by the era of development of the surrounding residential communities. Some neighbourhood main streets are frequented by nearby residents who largely arrive on foot or by bicycle, facilitated by the connectivity of the street grid and the scale of blocks. Other neighbourhood main streets can take the form of plazas with surface parking lots that cater to customers arriving via private automobiles. Section 3.0 looks at the form main street takes in Uptown.

2.2 Five key ingredients of main street success

As a result of the Canadian Urban Institute's research and action campaign *Bring Back Main Street*, a framework was developed which identifies five key elements of a successful main street: people, business, places, anchors, and leadership.



People: It's the people that create the vibrancy of main streets. With their presence and diversity, people will ensure the long-term viability of main street businesses and anchors.



Business: A successful main street supports the recovery and sustainability of main street businesses. They are key to the health of our main streets.



Places: A healthy and prosperous main street is home to safe, vibrant, and inclusive public spaces.



Anchors: Anchors include a wide range of community spaces like schools, parks, markets, faith buildings, cultural institutions like theatres and museums, and civic institutions like libraries, government buildings, and post-secondary campuses. These anchors contribute immensely to the health of main streets by providing important social and cultural services to local neighbourhoods. They also attract diverse visitors from the community and beyond.



Leadership: Leadership is vital when supporting a sustainable main street recovery. There is a need to strengthen governance structures, data collection, and collaboration between the various main street stakeholders.

These elements of main street success will be used as a framework in Section 5.0 to identify observations and recommendations for the transformation of Uptown.

2.3 An emerging type of main street

A new type of neighbourhood main street is emerging. As enclosed malls and plazas built during previous decades age, and there is greater recognition of the benefits of walkable, transit-supportive mixed-use communities, many commercial sites are getting a second look. There are redevelopment projects across Canada seeking to “bring back main street” by transforming car-oriented malls and plazas into more pedestrian-focused destinations, often in close proximity to public transit.

These redevelopments could be referred to as an “unboxed” main street. This refers to turning an enclosed mall or plaza inside out, reconfiguring the existing elements, and adding new features to create a more vibrant main street experience and repurpose large amounts of space formerly devoted to vehicle parking.

A review of several mall redevelopment strategies revealed some consistent best practices. A list of best practices is summarized in Appendix A. In summary, redevelopment focused around two themes: creating vibrant mixed-use

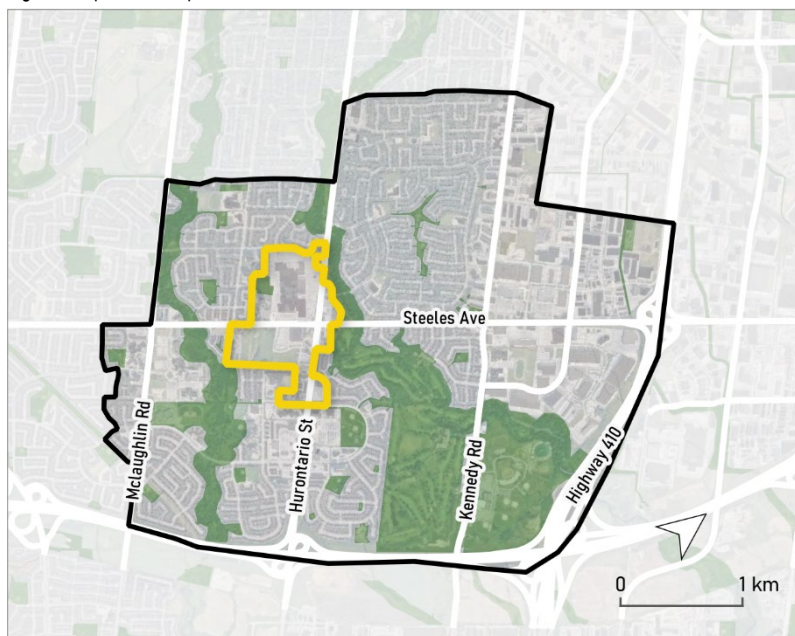
communities for daytime and nighttime activities; and creating a mixed-use environment that prioritizes human-scaled, pedestrian-oriented spaces. Characteristics of redevelopment schemes include small, permeable storefronts, traffic calming measures, a fine-scaled, mixed-use environment with a diversity of residential, commercial, and retail uses, and vibrant, inclusive public spaces for all seasons. These best practices have been considered in parallel with CUI’s observations from historic main streets and commercial districts to inform the recommendations in this report.

3.0. Current context: Thinking inside the box

3.1 Uptown Brampton location

The area referred to as “Uptown” is centred around the intersection of the major arteries of Hurontario Street and Steeles Avenue. The area is bounded by Highway 407 to the south, Highway 410 on the east, McLaughlin Road on the west, and Elgin Drive, Eldomar Avenue and Glidden Road in the north.

Figure 1. Uptown Brampton



Source: City of Brampton

 Uptown Core  Brampton Uptown

3.2 Main Streets in Uptown

Neighbourhood main streets in Uptown currently take the form of auto-oriented commercial plazas and an enclosed mall.

In downtown Brampton, Main Street and Queen Street have been an urban focal point since the 1820s.ⁱⁱ Commercial properties and cultural venues are built close to the street, with frontage directly onto sidewalks, and some limited on-street parking available. The distance between the building faces on either side of the street is approximately 20 meters.

In contrast, the major residential subdivisions in the Uptown area, such as Peel Village and Armbro Heights, were built in the 1960s.ⁱⁱⁱ Similar to elsewhere in North America, the pattern of development at the time was based on the primacy of the automobile as the main means of transportation, and residential and commercial functions were often separated by busy arteries. The legacy is that the commercial, social, and cultural assets in Uptown are largely concentrated in plazas and enclosed malls set back from the street, surrounded by a large amount of surface parking. The distance from the sidewalk to a shop entrance in one of these plazas or malls can be 55 meters or more.

Plazas where retail and services are concentrated include Brampton Mall (160 Main Street), McLaughlin Village (499 Ray Lawson Blvd), Kingston Plaza (910 Hurontario Street), County Court Centre (202 County Court Boulevard), 410 @ Steeles (Resolution Drive), and Bartley's Square (1 Bartley Bull Parkway). These plazas are typically set back from the street and are separated from adjacent sidewalks by parking lots.

Figure 2. Bartley Square, 1 Bartley Bull Parkway (across from Shoppers World and Bus Terminal)



Figure 3. Ten Steeles Plaza, 1 Steeles Avenue East



Figure 4. Interior of Shoppers World Mall



Figure 5. Exterior signage at Shoppers World Mall



In addition to these dispersed commercial plazas, Shoppers World is a large, enclosed mall which first opened in 1969. The mall is sited on the northwest corner of the Hurontario and Steeles intersection. Current anchor tenants include Canadian Tire, JYSK, and Giant Tiger. Shoppers World is also home to several small businesses. The mall acts as main street, fulfilling many simultaneous functions. It is a place to shop, but also a place where residents could gather and socialize, pre-pandemic.

Shoppers World and other retailers along Steeles Avenue and Main Street South are adjacent to the residential development that comprises Peel Village. East of Peel Village along Kennedy Road, a combination of big box retailers (Home Depot, Lowe's, Walmart) is distributed along with light industrial uses including wholesale, warehousing, automotive, supply & distribution businesses. Despite the industrial nature of this area, Kennedy Road is also known for small food businesses that are unique to the Uptown community and represent the diversity of the Uptown population. Many Bramptonians rely on ethnic-specific grocery stores and restaurants along Kennedy Road to get a taste of home. Some of the ethnically diverse businesses include Hakka Village Chinese Restaurant, Danforth Food Market, and Amritsari Dhaba. Kennedy Road also features the Peel Village Golf Course and the CAA Sports and Entertainment Complex.

Although they look very different from the main streets found downtown and in other neighbourhoods, these plazas and the Shoppers World Mall collectively function as important neighbourhood main streets in Uptown. These are the places where residents can access a wide variety of goods and services to meet their daily needs for things such as banking, grocery shopping, health services, personal services, education, dining out, and socializing.

3.3 Demographic snapshot

To better understand the main street ecosystem in Uptown, it is valuable to first understand the characteristics of the residential population. In 2020, an estimated 44,000 residents (approximately 7% of Brampton's total population) lived in Uptown.^{iv} About half of the 14,500 households were comprised

of one or two persons, with 36% of households having three or four persons, and little more than 15% having five or more persons in the household.

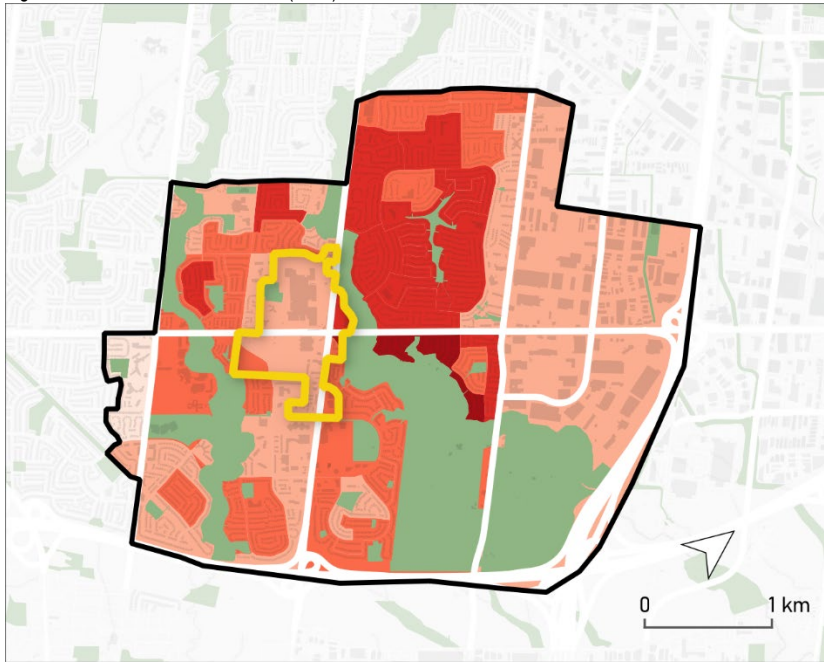
Intergenerational families are prevalent in Uptown. In 2020, among dependents living at home, 22% were age 25 and older. This could be an indication of housing unaffordability and/or cultural preferences. Based on 2016 data, Uptown residents are also slightly older than Bramptonians on average, with an average age of 41 years versus 37 years respectively.^v With the prevalence of students, this means that the population is weighted towards young adults and middle-aged and seniors.

Approximately 60% of the households in Uptown are owner-households, while 40% are renters. The percentage of rental households is double that for all of Brampton where only 20% of households are renters. The prevalence of renters is likely due to the multi-family housing (low-rise and high-rise apartments) in the area as well as the student population.

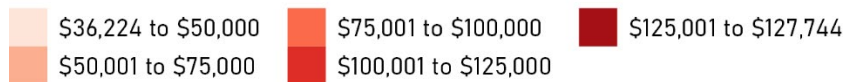
Uptown has a diversity of housing with a majority built in the last 50 years. Nearly half (49%) of the dwellings are ground-oriented units, including single-detached, semi-detached or row houses, while the other half (51%) are high-rise (5+ storeys) or low-rise (<5 storeys) apartments and duplexes. Nearly 65% of dwellings were constructed between 1961–1990.

The average household income in Uptown in 2020 was \$92,433, compared to \$110,100 for Brampton^{vi}, and approximately to \$63,000 for the Canada-wide average.^{vii} The area with the highest income is Peel Village, bounded by Main Street, Clarence Street, Kennedy Road, and Steeles Avenue.

Figure 6. Median household income (2015)

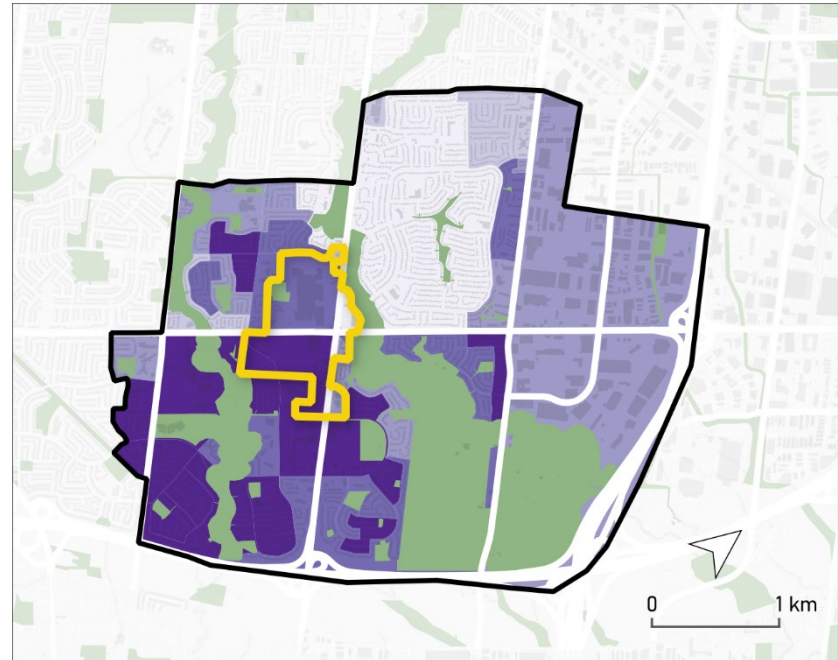


Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Canada; City of Brampton

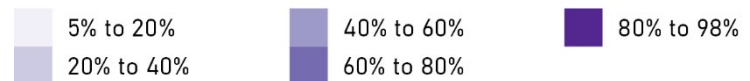


While the educational attainment of the Uptown population varies, more than 54% hold some level of post-secondary education or equivalent. Nearly 29% of the residents hold a high school certificate or equivalent, while the remaining have less than high school. Most households in Uptown rely on their automobile for transportation for the journey to work. Over 77% of residents drive their own car or commute in a car as a passenger; 18% use public transit and 2.6% walk.

Figure 7. Percentage visible minority^{viii}



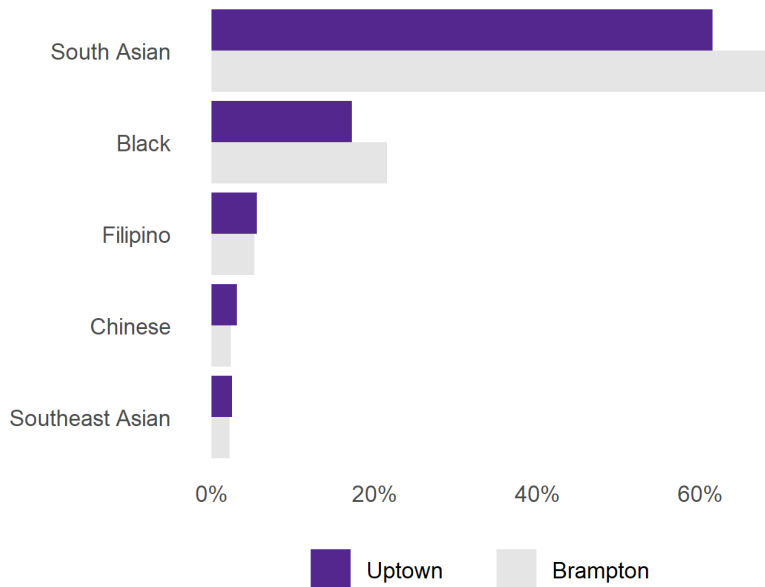
Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Canada; City of Brampton



Uptown is home to a large immigrant population, with immigrants comprising over 52% of the population. In 2020, the total immigrant population numbered over 22,000. Nearly 70% of the total population in Uptown identify as visible minorities. The South Asian community is the largest visible minority group in the area, comprising 44% of the total Uptown population. Black residents comprise the second largest visible minority group in Uptown, at 12% of the total population.

The diversity in Uptown generally reflects the overall diversity of Brampton as a whole — however, less than 20% of the population of the Peel Village neighbourhood identifies as a visible minority.

Figure 8. Top 5 Visible minority groups as percentage of total population



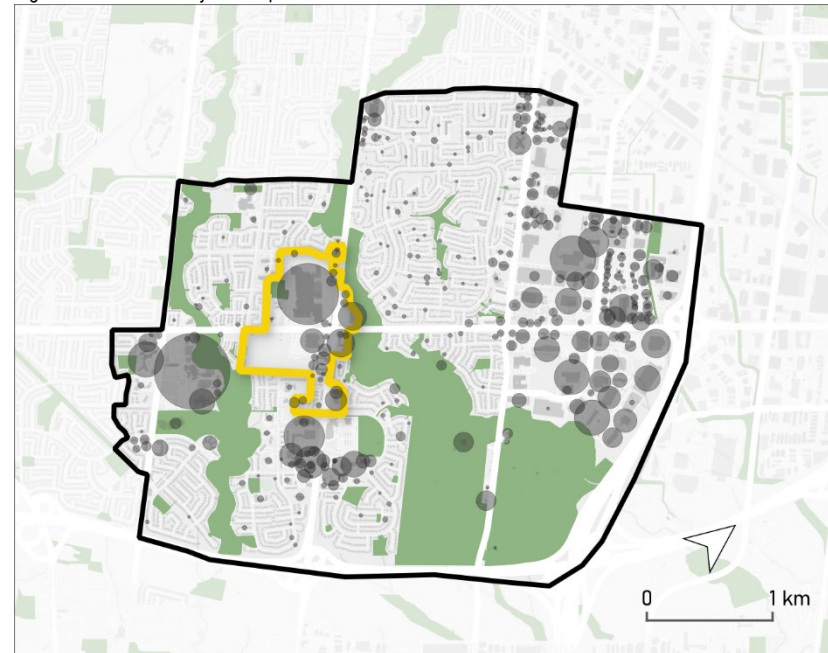
Nearly 46% of the residents in Uptown area speak a non-official language as their home language, with Punjabi being the most commonly spoken non-official language.

3.4 Business snapshot

According to the 2016 Census, Uptown is home to more than 18,000 individuals in the labour force, the vast majority of whom work full-time. Pre-pandemic estimates from

Environics put total jobs in the area at over 20,000. Based on data from the Brampton Business Directory, jobs in Uptown are clustered around Sheridan College (Davis Campus), Shoppers World Mall, the plazas south of Shoppers World Mall, and in the area between Kennedy Road and Highway 410.

Figure 9. Distribution of jobs in Uptown



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Canada; City of Brampton



The Uptown area has approximately 1,200 businesses. Sheridan College is the largest employer in the area. But there is also a significant number of retail and service businesses that are typically associated with main streets. Storefront

businesses account for 55% of businesses in Uptown, and 41% of employment. These businesses include food retail, food service, general retail, and general service. These are the types of businesses that residents rely upon to meet their daily needs. The business environment in Uptown also includes a number of wholesale, manufacturing, and construction businesses, professional services, and other establishment types such as non-profit organizations. Residents may use these businesses less frequently, but they are a crucial aspect of the Uptown ecosystem.

Figure 10. Uptown businesses by type

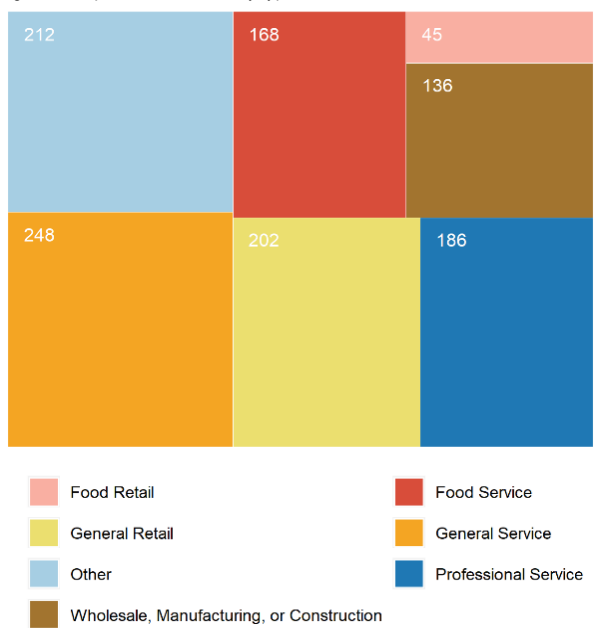


Table 1. Uptown Brampton businesses by type

	Business Type	Number (and %) of businesses	Number (and %) of employees
"Storefront businesses"	Food Retail	45 (4%)	999 (6%)
	Food Service	168 (14%)	1777 (10%)
	General Retail	202 (17%)	2377 (13%)
	General Service	248 (21%)	1570 (9%)
Other businesses	Other	212 (18%)	6072 (34%)
	Professional Service	186 (16%)	1063 (6%)
	Wholesale, Manufacturing, or Construction	136 (11%)	4149 (23%)
	TOTAL	1,197 (100%)	18,007

Retail and service businesses are found within Shoppers World Mall, and in plazas lining McLaughlin Road, Hurontario, Kennedy Road, and Steeles Avenue. Wholesale, manufacturing, and construction businesses are more prevalent east of Kennedy Road.

As shown in the maps below and in Table 2, over 750 businesses were small independent businesses with under 30 employees and operating from a single location. The remaining 400 were either larger independent businesses, chains with multiple locations, or major corporations. As could be anticipated, space needs are different for independent businesses versus for chain or corporate businesses. The average median size for all non-industrial businesses (excluding wholesale, manufacturing, and construction) is just under 1,500 sq. ft. for small independent businesses compared to over 6,000 sq. ft for large and corporate businesses. Not surprisingly, space needs for food and general retail and service businesses were significantly less than the needs of whole, manufacturing, and construction.

Figure 11. Location of Uptown Brampton businesses by size (small independent)

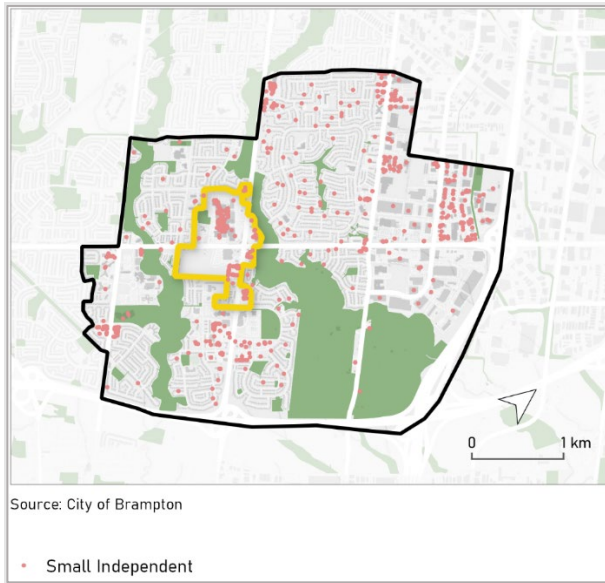


Figure 12. Location of Uptown Brampton businesses by size (large independent, chain, and corporate)

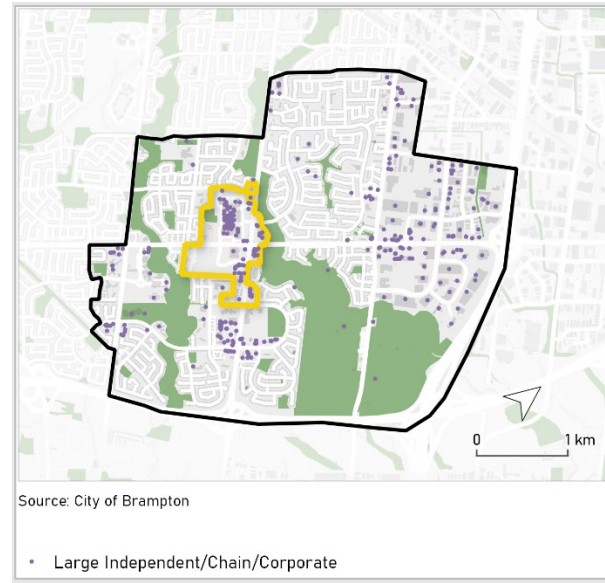


Table 2. Uptown businesses by size

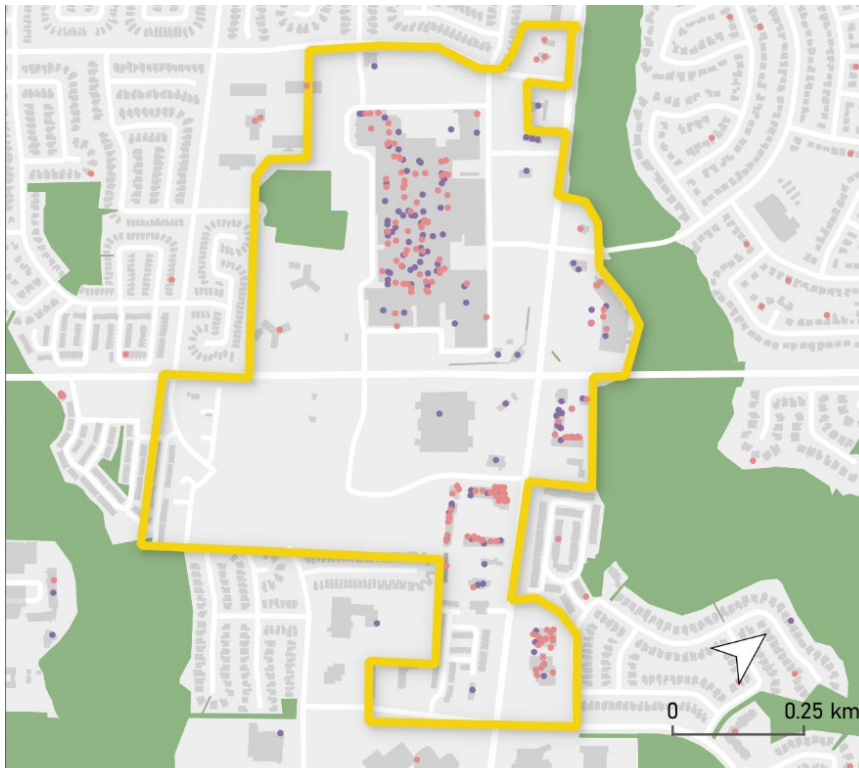
Category	Small Independent		
	# of businesses	Median Area (sq. ft.)	Average Employees
Food Retail	21	1,475	3.9
Food Service	74	1,700	5.1
General Retail	103	1,200	2.7
General Service	162	1,500	3.2
Other	143	1,500	4.6
Professional Service	156	1,200	3.8
Wholesale, Manufacturing, or Construction (industrial)	93	4,950	6.1
Totals	752	--	--
Average (non-industrial)		1,429	4.2

Table 3. Uptown businesses by size

Category	Large Independent/Chain/Corporate		
	# of businesses	Median Area (sq. ft.)	Average Employees
Food Retail	23	5,300	39.8
Food Service	88	1,200	16
General Retail	97	3,084	21.4
General Service	85	2,350	12.3
Other	60	25,000	57
Professional Service	25	1,500	17.3
Wholesale, Manufacturing, or Construction (industrial)	41	36,918	85.5
Totals	419	--	--
Average (non-industrial)		6,406	35.6

The map in Figure 13, detailing large and small chain businesses and independent business identifies the diversity of businesses in and around Shoppers World. (Note that dots are not a direct representation of the footprint of the business given the need to illustrate multiple data points in a small area).

Figure 13. Uptown Brampton businesses by size in Uptown Core



Source: City of Brampton

- Small Independent
- Large Independent/Chain/Corporate

4.0 The future of main street in Uptown: Thinking outside the box

4.1 Context for long-term transformation

Despite the immediate challenges brought by the pandemic, there are longer-term opportunities which could transform Uptown Brampton in the coming decades.

Brampton 2040 Vision. The Brampton 2040 Vision *Living the Mosaic* was endorsed by City Council in May 2018. Seven aspirational vision statements are linked to key catalytic actions to kickstart change. These actions include founding a diverse new urban core (“Uptown Brampton”) and energizing and diversifying the historic core (“Downtown Brampton”). Within the 2018-2022 Term of Council Priorities work plan, Council priorities include unlocking Downtown and Uptown as a crucial step towards the vision that “Brampton is a city of opportunities”.

Arrival of the LRT. The 18-kilometre Hurontario Light Rail Transit (LRT) is slated to arrive at the intersection of Hurontario-Steeles in 2024, providing Brampton residents and visitors with a new transit choice. The line is planned to include 19 stops across two large urban centres (Brampton and Mississauga), and will connect to major existing transit systems including GO Transit, the Mississauga Transitway, Brampton Transit, ZUM, and MiWay.

At least three LRT stops will be located within Brampton, including Ray Lawson, County Court, and Brampton Gateway Terminal. An extension from Brampton Gateway to Downtown

Brampton (Queen Street) is currently undergoing the environmental assessment process.

The new transit system will influence how people move around the city and will facilitate both local and regional connections. This presents an opportunity to decrease reliance on the automobile and bring more potential customers to the area who could patronize local businesses. The extension of the northern terminus of the LRT line would enable a direct and fast connection between the Uptown and Downtown areas of Brampton.

4.2 Redevelopment of Shoppers World Mall: Unboxing Uptown

In addition to the new LRT station to be added at the Hurontario and Steeles intersection, the area is poised for large-scale redevelopment in the coming years. The owner and operator of the Shoppers World Mall site, RioCan, has submitted applications to transform the 21-hectare site into a sustainable and walkable transit-oriented neighbourhood.

The proposed development plan calls for a mixed-use neighbourhood of medium- and high-density buildings, with community amenities and a network of open spaces. Features of the plan include:

- The addition of over 3 million square feet of residential space, translating into approximately 4,600 units. These will be located within buildings ranging from 3-storey low-rise to 29-storey high-rise;
- The addition of over 377,000 square feet of office space, in 19- and 21-storey buildings to be located on the

northwest corner of the Hurontario and Steeles intersection, flanking the gateway to the site;

- A Community Hub on the western portion of the site. As identified in the Brampton 2040 Vision, the site will be an anchor for the new urban core of Uptown Brampton. This Community Hub will enable the colocation of educational, social, arts and culture, technology and entrepreneurship, health and recreation, renewable energy, and urban agriculture services;
- Distribution of over 433,000 square feet of commercial space at street level and in second storeys. The commercial space is proposed to front Main Street South, Steeles Avenue West, and along a proposed new “High Street” that will curve through the site, parallel to Hurontario and Steeles;
- A network of publicly accessible open spaces and plazas.

The transformation is proposed to take place in phases:

- Phase 1 would see the south-western portion of the mall demolished and replaced with new development fronting Steeles Avenue.
- Phase 2 proposes to demolish the remaining western half of the existing mall, to be replaced by open space, the Community Hub, and additional new residential development adjacent to Charolais Boulevard.
- Phases 3–4 proposes demolition of the remaining eastern portions of the mall, to be replaced with a gateway of interconnected public spaces, a high street, and new mixed-use development extending along Main Street South.

The redevelopment plan involves “unboxing” main street. It is taking an enclosed mall and reconfiguring its commercial and social elements so that these assets can be accessed from and integrated into the public realm.

Fig. 14. Site concept for Shoppers World Mall redevelopment, by Quadrangle Architects Ltd. On behalf of RioCan Management Inc.

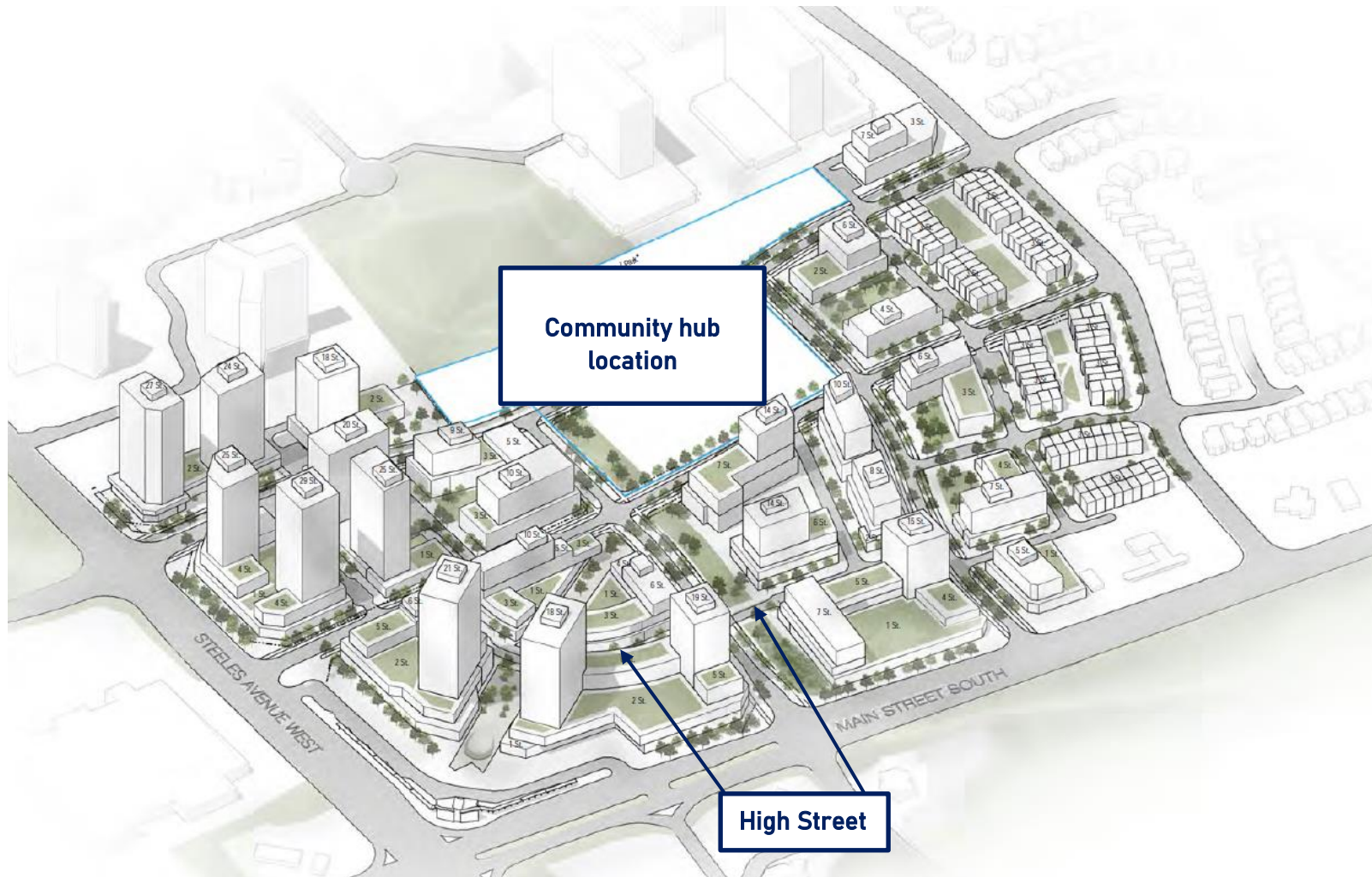
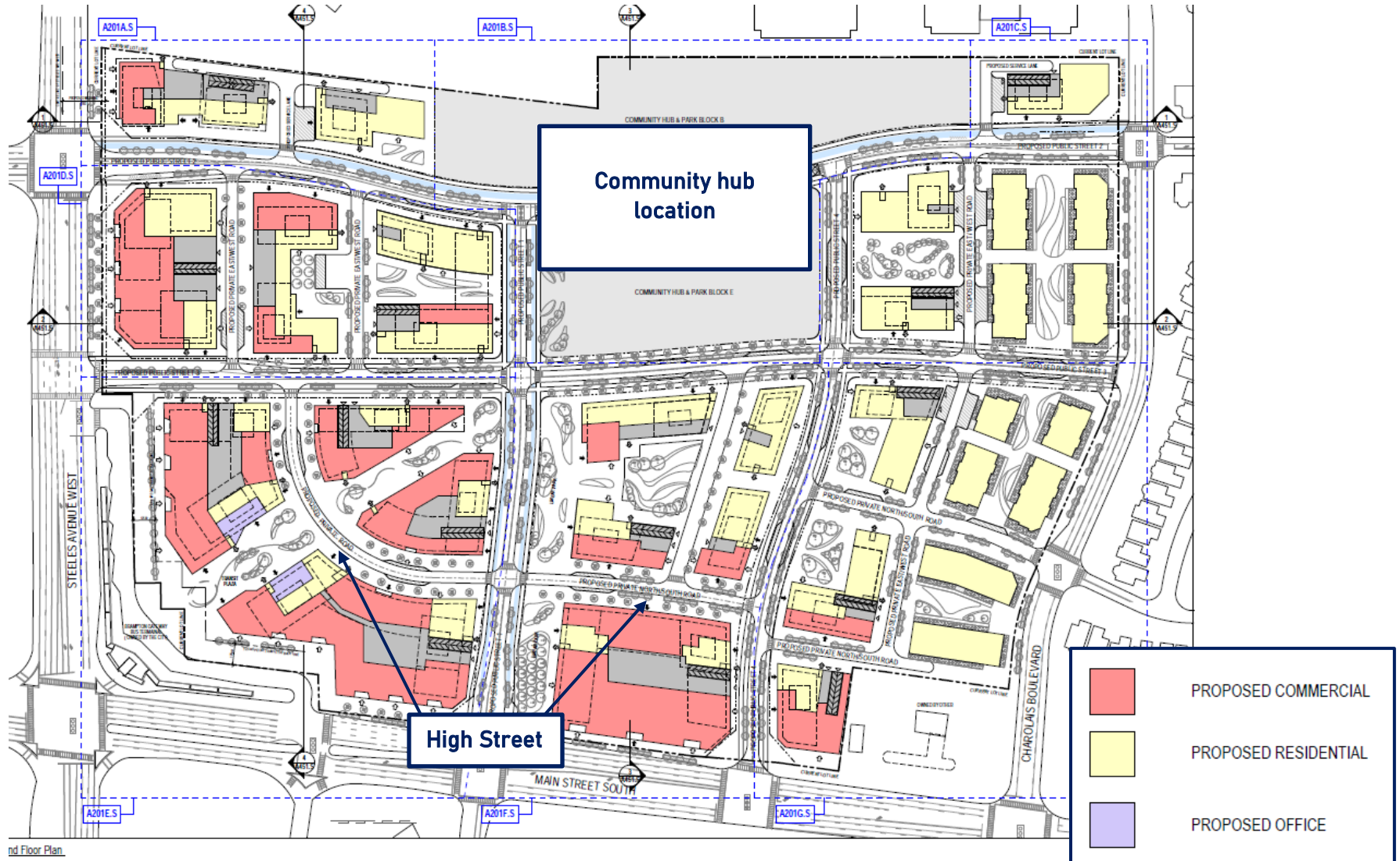


Fig. 15. Ground Floor Plan, proposed Shoppers World Mall redevelopment



5.0 Observations and recommendations for Unboxing Uptown

5.1 An integrated perspective on main street

Unboxing Uptown has the potential to bring several benefits:

- making more intensive and efficient use of land;
- increasing the supply of housing;
- decreasing greenhouse gas emissions linked to private vehicle use;
- creating an integrated mixed-use neighbourhood where residents can live, work, and play; and
- facilitating access to community services and facilities as part of a 20-minute neighbourhood.

The process of large-scale change will be disruptive to residents and businesses who are already established in an area. Uptown Brampton contains a diverse population and many businesses that serve the daily needs of surrounding residents. These are tremendous assets. People and businesses are two critical elements of every successful main street. As Uptown confronts both immediate challenges and longer-term change, it is important to ensure that small businesses have the support they need so they can continue to act as a key element of successful main streets in Uptown.

When it comes to main streets, the whole is truly more than the sum of its parts. It is important to recognize the simultaneous economic, social, and cultural functions that main streets play. As Uptown unboxes, an integrated perspective on main streets can be valuable for recognizing interactions and spillovers, both positive and negative.

It is therefore valuable to explore how the transformation can be undertaken in a way that addresses existing challenges facing the community and local businesses, while also seizing new opportunities.

The following are some observations and recommendations for transforming main street in Uptown, organized by five elements that CUI has observed are typical of successful main streets: **places, anchors, businesses, leadership, people**. These elements are interrelated and mutually reinforcing.

The information, insights, and recommendations presented in this section are drawn from a variety of sources:

- Recent data provided by the City of Brampton on the demographics of Uptown and data from the Brampton Business Directory;
- Interviews conducted by CUI with representatives from organizations whose missions relate to business or entrepreneurship in Brampton;
- An online survey aimed at business owners which was accessible on the City's Uptown Brampton website;
- Solutions briefs on planning, urban design, and retail recovery which were developed by CUI and its partners as part of the Bring Back Main Street (BBMS) initiative; and;
- The Action Report of the BBMS initiative, which was the result of collaboration among main street stakeholders across Canada.^{ix}

- Best practice research on mall redevelopment, business relocation strategies, and municipal policy documents.

Recommendations have been summarized in **Appendix B** for easy reference along with proposed timeframes and intended outcomes.

5.2 Places

A healthy main street requires safe, vibrant, and inclusive places and public spaces. Creating a place that people want to be will be paramount to the success of any main street.

→ Create a flexible, mixed-use zone.

Far too often, a truly mixed-use neighbourhood is conceived of, only to be curtailed by overly restrictive zoning requirements dominated by parking requirements or restrictive floor area ratios.

The City of Brampton is encouraged to seek out best practices in mixed-use zoning, parking requirements, and public space design to ensure that flexibility can be achieved to create a mixed-use area that supports a diversity of uses. Evaluating incompatible uses will still be crucial to the success of mixing uses but allowing for new combinations of uses to facilitate new business models should be explored. Can retail uses be combined with light industrial uses to encourage new businesses and collaborations? For example, one person interviewed for this project noted that indoor recreation spaces are highly desirable for youth but are difficult to develop due to restrictive zoning requirements.

Can business clusters be enhanced with flexible spaces throughout buildings? Can shared parking arrangements be facilitated to prevent the over-dedication of parking spaces that are used for only a portion of the day?

→ Provide spaces for active and passive uses.

Ensure that Main Street has gathering or “pause” spaces and that the streetscape is designed to be safe and comfortable for pedestrians including benches, street trees, and bike parking. RioCan’s initial renderings include a 3m distance between building facades and sidewalks to provide spaces to stop and linger, or for businesses to set up outdoor seating or patios.

Adjacent to the sidewalk, the development scheme includes dedicated bike lanes, which are buffered from traffic by a “green” zone for trees and other greenery. This zone also offers shade to provide a cooling effect during hot months. Eliminating furniture in the green zone adjacent to traffic and bike lanes may be necessary to eliminate conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists. Street furniture along building facades and sidewalks provide a more comfortable environment for sitting.

The curved orientation of High Street prevents it from becoming a fast-trafficked street, and narrow, two-directional traffic lanes will help with traffic-calming. Implementation of other traffic-calming elements are encouraged. The City can refer to its *Complete Streets Guidelines (2020)* to ensure proper lane widths for the co-existence of cars, bicycles, pedestrians, and greenery.

→ Include accessible and welcoming public spaces. Design of public spaces should consider equity. This includes design that considers all ages and mobilities: frequent places to rest in the shade or find shelter from bad weather, pedestrian zones that are free of trip hazards and materials prone to becoming slippery in snow or rain, as well as spaces that are geared to children and seniors.

Spaces should also be designed to feel comfortable and safe including proper lighting and views to other public spaces to provide 'eyes on the street' and visible sight lines to other public spaces.

During interviews, spaces for young children and "youth" (teenagers and young adults) were highlighted as a need. It was pointed out that there are not a lot of programmed outdoor spaces such as playing fields or playgrounds, and those families living in apartment style buildings lack good outdoor space for their children.

The need for public restrooms was also highlighted as an important public amenity and a need for vulnerable, street-involved people.

→ Address barriers to youth spaces. When developing spaces for youth (whether it is through the creation of the community hub or public spaces), it is important to foster capacity building and give youth the experiences, tools, and opportunities they need to grow and thrive in Brampton. Based on our engagement with the youth development sector, there is currently a dearth of accessible and affordable spaces for youth to congregate and access free services. The long winters have been identified as a particularly challenging time for Brampton youth. During the winter months, youth spaces should be bolstered with

additional options with indoor recreation and structured programs.

The costs associated with public transportation, programs and services may also prevent individuals from accessing the social and academic supports they need to succeed. Sports and recreation opportunities for youth programs, such as indoor basketball, are often fee-based thus creating an economic hurdle for some.

The design of public space within Uptown should be done with a view to youth needs. For example, service providers shared challenges that youth experience within public spaces across Brampton, and how the design of spaces has systematically excluded youth interests. For example, Chinguacousy Park is lacking a basketball court, which according to Brampton youth workers is a high demand sport amongst youth. Having amenities that reflect the interests of youth will enable youth to have a deeper connection to the City of Brampton.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the challenges that many youth face with regards to internet access and mental health. For this reason, it is important to create youth spaces that have strong Wi-Fi connections both inside and in the vicinity of the community hub. Mental health supports should be accessible and inclusive for youth. Youth service providers reported that youth do not access mental health supports if they feel they are not welcomed or have previously been judged or denied access.

→ Enhance the character of the proposed High Street with façade variation.

The proposed High Street is meant to function as a small-scale main street at the interior of the development site. High Street is intersected by a "Gateway", conceived as a wide

pedestrian-only area connecting the LRT at Main and Steeles with High Street and the Community Hub (see Figures 14 and 15). As proposed, High Street has several characteristics of a great main street: deep setbacks between building facades and roadways to allow space for pedestrians as well as space for patios, seating, or window shopping. There is also ample open space within the development scheme.

To enhance the pedestrian experience, facades should be permeable and divided into small, notable spaces. Studies of newly-developed commercial areas have observed that long, blank facades, even when permeable, create uncomfortable environments for pedestrians when compared to the fine-grained arrangement of storefronts along historic main streets^x. Entire blocks composed of a single uniform façade with few entrances or little variation in massing, colour, or materials encourage people to walk more quickly and to linger less. Through the building design, efforts should be made to create streetscapes with multiple shops, identified by individual doorways, variation in facades, and window displays. Large format retail can be interspersed along High Street to create retail anchors but should be given an urban format to create a main street feel. Building design and leasing decisions should be made to prevent large format retailers from dominating High Street.

→ Recreate the main street feel of Shoppers World or other small-scale main streets in a new development context. The interior mall offers some physical attributes that could be considered in the new High Street. For example, comfort and accessibility comes from the proximity of businesses to one another and the depth of the interior corridor that makes it easy to navigate and move from one storefront to another.

In an outdoor context, it should be safe and easy to cross the street to visit businesses on both sides of the street with safe pedestrian crossings, long signal crossings, wayfinding, and a business directory. Signage and storefronts should be designed to be legible from across the street and the nature of the business to be obvious. Similarly, small businesses depend on foot traffic and a clustering of similar or complementary uses will attract customers both day and evening such as bars, restaurants, entertainment, and services. Finally, short block lengths (100m or 150m) create a walkable environment with multiple paths to a destination and in and out of an area. Mid-block street crossings allow pedestrians to cross easily and explore both sides of the street, while also calming traffic.

→ Enhance places to create a destination.

'Place-making' involves creating spaces where people want to be. The nature of new development is that without activities and spaces to attract people to come and stay, new environments can feel sterile or even hostile especially with phased development. Programming spaces will encourage people to come and stay. Adding an element of spontaneity will increase people's desire to return or stay. Enlivened spaces will create an experience: a new work of public art, a kiosk to learn about new local events, ample areas for sitting and visiting in proximity to other activities, or the presence of a street performer.

The City, developer and/or BIA should work collaboratively to activate the space between the buildings. This includes providing funds for events, creating a streamlined or simple process for events or festival permits, and creating a one-stop-shop for all questions regarding the activation of public

space. One interviewee noted that the Advance Brampton fund provided resources for events-based programming yet only non-profit organizations were eligible. An Uptown-specific program and events fund could be extended to local businesses to involve them in creating a destination.

Place-making should also evolve as the spaces are built out and should be adaptable to different locations and seasons. Local artists, businesses, cultural groups, and equity-seeking individuals should be engaged in place-making strategies to highlight the cultural backgrounds and unique expressions of the community.

→ Create an identity for Uptown with the existing community. Most successful main streets have a character that tells the history of the place. Drawing on the existing population will create an identity for Uptown that is unique. As it becomes clear what businesses will be relocating to the newly-development site, efforts to develop a unique character for portions of High Street, based on business clusters, can create character areas that make the development scheme more interesting and unusual. The City may also want to explore urban design guidelines that are specific to Uptown to codify some important elements that will contribute to the look and feel of the neighbourhood.

Food service (restaurants) make up 25% of all storefront retail uses. Redevelopment could build on Uptown's reputation as a food destination by working to relocate existing restaurants along the High Street and building upon the area's reputation as a culinary destination through events, markets, and complementary businesses. Food tours can be a great way to

tell a story and bring people together who share a love for food.

→ Use meanwhile leases as a way for artists to showcase their products and provide rehearsal space to performing artists, while at the same time activating space between longer-term tenants.

Applying a "meanwhile" approach to allow for temporary or interim uses of spaces will also help enliven outdoor and interior vacant spaces during development or between tenancies. A meanwhile approach means that performing arts groups are provided inexpensive use of ground floor retail spaces for rehearsal and performance uses. This provides a physical home for creative uses while also activating otherwise vacant spaces. In the long-term, this approach can be used to fill spaces during periods of vacancy to create on-going relationships with performing arts groups.

→ Consider large-format retail on Steeles Avenue and Main Street South vs. on the new High Street.

Large format retail spaces lend themselves to large floor plates and parking, and a business model built more on convenience than experience. These retail uses are better situated on Steeles and Main Street South to provide easy access to essential goods and be accessible to both local residents and a broader catchment area while not competing with smaller-scale businesses that are better suited to the more narrow High Street. Large format retailers included on High Street can be incorporated into small storefront facades to provide anchor tenants while respecting the Main Street scale of the area.

5.3 Anchors

Anchors are critical community facilities or institutions that provide services as well as social opportunities to build a connective tissue for the community. This can include schools, universities, cultural institutions, marketplaces, faith buildings, libraries, and government offices.

→ Enhance connectivity and integration between Sheridan College (Davis Campus) and the surrounding community. Sheridan College is an existing anchor in Uptown. It is a “mini community” with 13,000 students and about 1,000 employees. Students and employees make use of amenities on campus, but also within the broader community of Uptown, including places to eat, shop, and socialize. However, a current challenge is the quality of pedestrian connections between the campus and the surrounding community. Most nearby plazas are automobile oriented and are not conducive to travelling on foot.

The Sheridan Campus Master Plan calls for a seamless interface with the surrounding community. Enhancing pedestrian connections between Sheridan College and the surrounding commercial activity could help increase customers to local businesses and provide a greater diversity of experiences for students and employees. Increasing the walkability of the area also has health and environmental outcomes. Improving Uptown’s walkability will foster community engagement and build social capital.

→ Leverage the Community Hub as a community anchor. The proposed Community Hub on the east side of the Shoppers World site has the potential to be a new anchor for Uptown. As

designed, the hub will offer a single destination for a range of programming and resources for the community including health, social services, education, arts and culture, and technology uses. Specific proposed spaces include but are not limited to: a daycare, elementary school, outdoor recreation amenities, a food hub with commercial kitchen, exhibition and performance space, a technology and innovation coworking space, an event venue, and designated areas for urban agriculture. These uses should complement uses offered within the private development scheme.

Spaces in the Community Hub should offer a combination of drop-in and unprogrammed space where youth can feel safe and be themselves, while also having an array of structured programming that would encompass their interests, for example, media arts, life skills, female-specific programming, recreation, and one-on-one coaching or counselling. Youth service providers shared that the hours of operation for youth spaces should be open during peak times when youth are typically available 12PM–12AM.

→ Create a space for a Food Hall and marketplace. An opportunity mentioned in the interviews is to create a Food Hall with a collection of small local food providers inside one large building. This type of space would be an entry point into diverse cultural experiences through food, bringing people together and enforcing Uptown’s identity as a culinary destination while providing additional opportunities for small or emerging businesses that may not want or need a permanent, physical retail location. A Food Hall could be incorporated in the Community Hub, as proposed, or into the ground floor of one of the mixed-use buildings along High Street. The Food Hall should be supported by a commercial

kitchen to allow individuals to make food that can be sold at the Food Hall or at other markets or stores.

A Food Hall can help Brampton tell a story about its vibrant and diverse food culture. Food grown in the nearby community garden could provide educational opportunities to learn about urban agriculture and foods that are unique to Brampton's population. An area for food demonstrations was also noted as an important feature to highlight the area's culinary specialties.

Opportunities for a Food Hall to expand into an outdoor space in the summer months would provide additional opportunities for food producers and would create an active marketplace at the centre of Uptown.

5.4 Businesses

Supporting businesses and growing the business community on Main Street is the key to a healthy and sustainable main street.

→ Implement approaches to support business retention and prevent displacement of existing small businesses. Uptown has generated a reputation for the diversity of its businesses. To retain this business community and its clients, efforts should be made for business retention and relocation as the site is redeveloped. Unpredictable costs are much more difficult for a small business to absorb — a situation that has been exacerbated by COVID restrictions and the impact to small businesses. Providing support and predictability can be achieved with relocation grants, leases offered at reduced costs for early adaptors, the existence of small, flexible storefronts, and the potential for long-term, fixed-rate leases to provide a degree of certainty for both businesses and landlords.

The City could encourage the developer to create a relocation plan for willing businesses and to offer spaces at a reduced rent. By working directly with business owners, the developer can ensure that new spaces are built to the specifications and needs of existing business owners and create a win-win situation in which both businesses and developer are confident in the future retail success of the new site. Research on other mall redevelopment schemes revealed that a 'zero displacement' policy can alleviate business attrition and retain consumer confidence. This can be achieved by building replacement spaces early in the phasing for those businesses wishing to stay in the community.

Any disruption of the scale of the Shoppers World redevelopment will take thoughtful planning and communicating with businesses as well as assistance with marketing and promotion to help businesses survive and thrive. Promotional events, philanthropic campaigns, and business promotions such as those launched at Shoppers World (“Shoppers World Cares”) could migrate to new spaces to provide some continuity for businesses and their clientele.

→ Include youth in workforce development programs. The economic advancement and professional development of youth is an important economic consideration for Uptown’s success. Brampton should strive to retain its young people in both its spaces and the labour force. Brampton youth service providers have reported that their youth experience challenges accessing employment in Brampton, especially during the pandemic. Youth service providers that have engaged with the Canada Summer Jobs program have also expressed challenges in retaining the youth they have employed, who often leave Brampton for higher paying jobs that offer health benefits. To address these challenges, a youth employment centre or program that is focused on internship opportunities, mentorship, career development, entrepreneurship, and workshops on job searches, job retention, and professional networking should be developed.

→ Provide commercial spaces that are affordable for small local businesses and entrepreneurs including a micro-retail space. Interviews and survey results revealed that affordability of commercial rent is a major challenge facing small businesses in Uptown. As Uptown redevelops, it should include inclusive spaces that can accommodate a range of businesses, not just large brands capable of paying high commercial rents. Small

businesses surveyed for this project occupied spaces ranging from 800–5,600 sq. ft. with the majority within the range of 1,000–2,500 sq. ft. One interviewee noted that spaces of 1,000 sq. ft. are difficult to find and highly sought after.

For new and emerging businesses, the creation of a “micro-retail” space should be considered to allow for a variety of businesses to share a common retail space without the burden of a long-term lease or excess retail space. Micro-retailing as a retail model brings together a group of entrepreneurs who wish to scale-up and grow their business within the community. It is also a great community-building activity for emerging entrepreneurs. An incubation model can offer micro-retailers additional support in the form of directed programs, business coaching, and mentorship to better sell and scale-up their business.

→ Provide shared space including co-working spaces to encourage cross-sectoral collaboration and business incubation.

Shared space is vital for innovation. However, we heard via interviews that there is a lack of shared space for cross-sector collaborations to happen in Uptown. There is also a scarcity of space where Sheridan College students can work, study, and socialize off-campus. Adding shared spaces within the Uptown redevelopment could enable entrepreneurs, business owners, and students to learn from each other through work-integrated learning and networking opportunities. If the right kind of shared spaces existed, business students from Sheridan College could help entrepreneurs in the Uptown community with their emerging

business ideas. This is also a chance for co-op students to interact and participate within the wider community.

Additionally, shared spaces may provide opportunities for individuals to grow businesses as incubators and move from home-based (informal) endeavors to formal businesses. For example, anecdotally, there is a demand for tailoring of traditional clothing in the South Asian community. Further, incubator spaces provide networking and learning opportunities to help fledging businesses to expand and evolve. These spaces could be tied to active non-profits in the neighbourhood that offer assistance to newcomer populations and new business owners.

The lack of small private office spaces for entrepreneurs was also noted as a challenge. Redevelopment can be an opportunity to incorporate new workspaces in a variety of sizes so that home-grown entrepreneurs can have access to professional space within their community.

As COVID restrictions ease, a work-for-home culture may prevail requiring individuals without home offices, or who wish to be more engaged in their community, to rent small office or flexible workspaces with amenities and networking opportunities. Uptown has the opportunity to incorporate these new work habits in its new development plans.

→ Leverage a community kitchen to connect with food providers in the informal economy. Anecdotally, there are several small businesses and individual workers in Uptown that are not part of the formal economy.

The city is a great place for culinary tourism with its diverse cultural food scene. The Uptown redevelopment project can contribute to Brampton's food scene by including a kitchen incubator. More than one interviewee expressed the need for a kitchen incubator or professional kitchen in Uptown. A kitchen incubator would also be an opportunity to provide small business owners and their employees with mentorship and training to scale up. As plans for the Community Hub evolve, determining whether a commercial kitchen is best located in the hub or within the redevelopment scheme where it is in closer proximity to retail storefronts and customers should be considered.

→ Offer affordable space for artists.

Affordable space for artists was highlighted during interviews. Space for artists could be an accessory use to another retail use (e.g., at the back of a storefront) or as a dedicated space located alongside office uses. For example, a commercial landlord agrees to commit a 'percentage for art' in their leasable space exclusively for artists' uses. This approach should be tested with local artists to understand space needs and any potential incompatibilities: noise, odours, etc. During the interviews, a number of ideas for supporting existing artists and drawing new artists to the area including an Artscape location in Brampton to provide affordable studio space. Local on-site artists could contribute to shaping the identity of Uptown with public sculpture, murals, or artwork for interior lobbies and public spaces.

→ Incorporate live/work spaces into a mixed-used zone. Historically, main street businesses included people working from their homes: a shop or workshop attached to a home, or a storefront with a residential unit above. The more recent phenomenon of separating work and home has been

challenged by COVID resulting in a renewed work from home model. While it is unclear whether this trend will continue in the long-term, the work-from-home potential has been shown to provide a lot of flexibility especially for families and entrepreneurs.

Most cities allow a home-based business as a permitted use in medium density residential and mixed-use zones. This designation is often limited to ground-oriented housing, such as single-detached or row homes. Such zoning requirements can also be quite restrictive, catering to a single proprietor that works from a home office, which restricts or minimizes home-based businesses that involve individuals from outside of the household or business types that may rely on bringing customers on-site.

A truly mixed-use zone that allows both horizontal and vertical mixing of uses can support a variety of home-based businesses not included in current zoning provisions. Since purpose-built live/workspaces can be difficult to specify, because different work options will require different accommodations, one option is to consider the design of residential units that include a lock-off suite or space that can function as a business location or a residential unit depending on the need. In the context of the Uptown redevelopment, these units can be in proximity to clientele, supply chains, or business networks. They may also serve as a small residential unit for an extended family member or a student boarder when a business use is not relevant. Zoning for the Uptown redevelopment site should explore this flexibility in building design.

5.5 Leadership

Good leadership can be the backbone of a successful and sustainable main street including strong governance, robust data collection, and collaborative leadership networks.

→ Create a Business Improvement Association for Uptown. Currently there is no organization that facilitates communication among and advocates for businesses in Uptown. Many small businesses went through an accelerated digital transformation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it was noted that only Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) received Digital Transformation Grants. Small businesses that were not part of a BIA were excluded. In Brampton, there is a Downtown BIA however there is no similar organization that represents businesses in Uptown. As a result, small businesses in the Uptown Brampton area were excluded from accessing these types of supports.

Establishing a Business Improvement Association for Uptown immediately could be a way to facilitate the communication between the City, developers, and local businesses during the redevelopment process and as the business community evolves. The BIA can also serve to measure the pulse of the community and bring together partnerships to enhance and grow the business community. The BIA can establish a landscape manual or a street guide that offers a streetscape template for businesses in the Uptown core. This may include street furniture, lights, and flower beds that can enliven streets. The BIA can help businesses take ownership and pride in their physical location by offering businesses value in the form of benefits. As part of the launch of a BIA, micro-grants,

incentives, or other provisions could be provided to “made-in-Brampton” businesses to support business retention and growth. Safety should also be a priority during the transition period. In the context of the Uptown development, creating spaces people want to be in with great lighting and deliberate safety measures during the redevelopment phase will encourage foot traffic in the area and help small businesses during the interim period.

The creation of a BIA prior to redevelopment comes with its own challenges including interest from both businesses and property owners in a tenanted situation such as Shoppers World as well as Council approval.^{xi} Alternately, a business network or association could be established to assist businesses in the early redevelopment stages, providing that lease agreements with the building owner does not preclude membership in a business association.

→ Invest in public or a shared Wi-Fi network to facilitate digital accessibility and business acceleration.

Technology can connect people in Uptown Brampton in new and innovative ways. Electronic signage and communications tools can promote events happening in the city, enhance community engagement, and mitigate the lack of communication between people and ‘what’s going on in the city’.

A public or collective Wi-Fi network can help to bridge the digital divide by making internet access free and accessible for businesses and users. The City of Brampton has demonstrated its interest in digital accessibility through its investment in a 5G network.

Training for small businesses for online marketing and virtual sales can help to grow brick and mortar businesses. Further, partnerships with commercial entities could connect businesses with donated, used computer equipment, which may be cost prohibitive to a small business or start-up.

Based on economic trends from March 2020 to now, many Brampton businesses have undergone a digital transformation to improve their online presence, which allowed many to remain open while their brick-and-mortar store was closed due to health and safety protocols. There has been a shift towards e-commerce in the small business community in Brampton. In the post-pandemic world, small businesses can look to take advantage of the digital shift and find ways to capitalize on technological benefits in the return to normalcy. Investments and supports should be reflective and responsive to these emerging needs and take into account the necessary digital infrastructure needed to guarantee sustained growth. The city should continue to support Canadian small businesses to go digital in the post-COVID world while also offering tools and other resources to already-transformed businesses so they can maintain their online presence.

→ Evaluate the use of Smart City technology for Uptown. The City of Brampton wants to be a municipal leader in the development and adoption of 5G technology. The 5G revolution entails hyper-connectivity and it is not possible without proper investments in technology. With the 5G transformation, there needs to be strategic and targeted actions to minimize the existing digital divide and facilitate digital accessibility to enable diverse participants so no one is left behind. The hyperconnectivity and the adoption of new technologies will

enhance the delivery of city services and help Brampton emerge as a smart city. For instance, smart city technology can help mitigate traffic congestion in and around the city. But alongside the benefits, there can also be consequences. Are we creating a smart city or a surveillance city? The deployment of 5G technology may hinder Bramptonians from fully participating in public space, especially in the presence of cameras and other digital technologies. The pros and cons should be closely evaluated for Uptown. Data collection and use, privacy, and surveillance will continue to be prominent concerns moving forward.

→ Provide assistance for businesses for COVID recovery. Many small, independent businesses lack the skills or knowledge to navigate government programs and protocols. Having survived a year and a half of COVID restrictions, businesses will need assistance to rebound once restrictions have eased. The City and/or BIA can play a role in helping to disseminate information to small businesses about City and Provincial programs that may help with the recovery.

→ Create a Buy-Local Uptown campaign and annual events. The City has already undertaken a Support Local Brampton campaign. Buy local campaigns have taken on added importance and relevance and the platforms to support online business promotion and sales are plentiful. Promoting a buy-local Uptown campaign will help build an identity for Uptown as new development takes shape. In addition to a blanket buy-local campaign, business promotion could include events to highlight Uptown's strengths, for example an "Uptown Restaurant Week" or a South Asian street festival.

→ Establish an Uptown Business Alliance.

A collective governance model combining the resources and wherewithal of public, private, and community representatives can be used to build a platform for business advocacy and support. The alliance could use social media platforms to build the business community while Uptown is undergoing physical (re)construction. It could include representatives from the community hub, local businesses, municipal government, and the social service sector.

A Community Alliance can be a place of advocacy and outreach to give a voice to the members of the Uptown community, so their needs are equitably met by the City. It can be a place of networking for key stakeholders looking to develop and implement various initiatives to support the wellbeing of the community. The alliance is more likely to be used and seen as legitimate if the virtual platform is hosted on the City's website or another formal website affiliated with the City of Brampton or Uptown.

Beyond the virtual realm, an in-person meeting schedule can be established (when it is safe) for networking and information sharing during the redevelopment phase. Community public meetings bring important stakeholders to the same table to facilitate discussions about Uptown needs. These public meetings can take place in the future Community Hub.

→ Amplify the voices of young people through youth-led community spaces.

Youth service providers revealed that there is an ease of accessing spaces when they are youth-led. Spaces that are under the operational control of City staff have been viewed as

difficult to access, particularly with room bookings and service provision. The youth development sector advocated for a community-led space where youth organizations with a history of offering youth development programs would lead youth programming in these spaces as they have the resources, institutional memory, and knowledge to best serve the needs of youth.

It is also important to create the mechanisms and opportunities necessary for youth to have their voices present at the decision-making table, particularly when it impacts youth services and access to space. When engaging with youth it is crucial to have engagement that is consistent, ongoing, and accessible. This engagement can take the form of a Youth Space Advisory Committee or Youth Council, and through ongoing engagement provide feedback on current trends, conditions, and issues concerning youth.

Youth workers and the youth development sector support youth from a broad range of services that address the micro, interpersonal, and systemic barriers that youth face, and have the breadth of programmatic experience needed to create services that will help increase opportunities to thrive and succeed in Brampton.

→ Create a support network for those in the informal economy.

The informal economy in Uptown Brampton takes many forms, that are not registered as formal businesses, but who are creating goods and offering services. There can be a lack of information about the rights and responsibilities of informal sector workers, and so local service providers have developed

programming aimed at education around employment rights. Not all informal economy businesses pay taxes. It was highlighted in the interviews that this became problematic during the COVID-19 pandemic, as eligibility for many of the government supports was based on information from tax filings from the previous year. Providing a support network for those in the informal economy to understand the regulations as well as the opportunities to formalize their business may help to incubate new businesses, create partnerships, and grow the entrepreneurial spirit of Uptown.

→ Provide financial support in the form of rental assistance and tax abatements.

Social enterprises and small businesses are seeking rental assistance and other avenues for funding from the government in the long-term. Many individuals noted that access to capital is a challenge. Another opportunity is for the City of Brampton to offer nonprofits, social enterprises, and some privately-held for-profit small businesses support with property taxes. Social enterprises not only contribute to the business community, they tend to hire individuals with barriers to employment. One issue noted during interviews was the challenging and tenuous employment opportunities of newcomers in Uptown.

→ Create an Uptown marketplace and delivery service.

Creating an identity for Uptown will build community pride in being from and supporting Uptown businesses. Online marketplace and delivery services can further facilitate an Uptown customer base to provide easy access to the products and services of Uptown. With regards to the digital realm, businesses can draw from the best practices set forth by the

Digital Main Street, an initiative supporting the rapid shift to digital for small businesses across Ontario.

Marketplace and delivery services should include wrap-around supports for business incubation, marketing, communications, branding, and social media collateral. These services should also take into account the growing digital divide that has impacted economically marginalized businesses and communities who may not typically have access to high-speed internet and readily available technology. This marketplace should also capture the rich cultural fabric of Brampton's informal and maker-space economy. These services should include intentional and strategic outreach to businesses and communities that are often difficult to locate and may not be associated with a BIA communication network.

5.6 People

The presence and diversity of people brings vibrancy to main streets that ensures the long-term viability of businesses and anchors, and communities as a whole. Main street success depends on drawing people and providing something that encourages them to return— for visitors, consumers, workers, business owners, students, and residents alike.

→ Integrate the existing community into the new development. Uptown is already a community with social networks and community identity. To the greatest extent possible, the existing character and cultures of Uptown should be incorporated into the community hub and the redevelopment site. This includes engaging residents as development moves forward and talking to business owners to understand their needs. Incorporating the current strengths of Uptown will build both resident buy-in as well as business and consumer confidence. The City and developer should provide ways for residents and businesses to inform Uptown's redevelopment through relocation, community facilities, appropriate events, and the design of public spaces.

→ Provide recreation, socialization, and employment opportunities for youth.

There is a perception that there is “nothing to do” for youth in Brampton, and as a result young people are going elsewhere. Beyond job opportunities, young people are also seeking places to socialize and interact. There is a perception that these spaces do not exist in Brampton, and so young people are going elsewhere looking for them. This represents lost potential in the form of the next generation of Brampton employees, business owners, and entrepreneurs.

As part of the redevelopment, creating opportunities for young people to socialize and gather will be a way to retain and attract youth, especially given the proximity to Sheridan College. This may include appropriate outdoor spaces, programs hosted at the Community Hub, and indoor social or recreational spaces developed within residential or mixed-use buildings.

Providing employment opportunities that are accessible by various modes of transportation, not just cars, will be important to retaining and bringing youth to the community. Employing local youth will also encourage them to contribute to and be a part of the new Uptown community. Encouraging youth and students at Sheridan College to engage with the BIA, community hub programming, and a community forum will help them feel valued and to want to be engaged.

→ Support businesses owned by South Asian, Black, and other racialized groups and newcomers.

The South Asian community is the largest visible minority group in Uptown Brampton. However, due to a combination of discrimination, language skills, and unrecognized foreign credentials, newcomers within the South Asian and other racialized communities may experience a narrowed set of employment opportunities. Many find jobs in real estate, restaurants, and furniture businesses, however an interview respondent noted that there is lots of competition due to the high number of these types of businesses. Diversification of businesses could better serve the community and new business owners.

Following the South Asian community, the Black community is the second largest visible minority group in Uptown Brampton with just over 5,000 people or about 12% of the total population in the area. Discrimination and access to capital can be a challenge for Black business owners. It can be more difficult to obtain loans, and more collateral is often required.

There are opportunities to support new businesses through enhanced supports regarding customer service and business culture, as well as language training, especially for newcomers. A paid internship program involving local employers, non-profit organizations, and government funding could be a win-win arrangement for newcomers to learn English a few days a week while also gaining on-the-job experience. Access to daycare should also be considered to provide opportunities for caregivers to enter the workforce or explore business opportunities. Finally, opportunities to expand access to credit for business owners from racialized groups could also be sought.

→ Leverage the energy and contributions of international students.

Another challenge is that international students may have ideas for and an interest in entrepreneurship and remaining in the community after their studies are completed yet lack the knowledge, networks, and resources to make this possible. It is sometimes challenging for them to navigate the rules around international student status and maximum allowable hours of work. Support for these students by the College, BIA, or City would help keep these individuals in the community and support the growth of diversity and creativity from within.

→ Create opportunities or strategies for talent retention.

The Uptown redevelopment scheme can play a significant role in business attraction and talent retention. There is an opportunity to develop a marketing campaign to raise awareness about the strengths of Uptown including a re-imagined and vibrant main street with increased foot traffic, a mixed-used development, and a community hub.

Talent retention is influenced by the built environment. The quality of life the city offers matters. A sustainable and just city prioritizes the needs of Bramptonians by building infrastructure that supports public safety, education, community health and wellbeing. An increased focus on walkability with sidewalks, greenspace, transit, and small retail stores makes for a rich urban experience.

→ Encourage an affordable housing mix

The redevelopment will only be as successful as its ability to house a diversity of households including families, young workers, students, and seniors. This requires a diversity of housing options. Interviews with business owners noted affordable housing as important elements of retaining the households in Uptown. This includes providing affordable options as well as a variety of housing for different household types: 3+ bedroom units for families; flexible units for extended families or families with student boarders; and small units for single, couples, and seniors. A mix of rental and ownership housing is also important to supporting economic and cultural diversity. Developing a monoculture of one- and two-bedroom condominium towers will dilute what makes Uptown unique.

→ Apply an equity lens to development, engagement, and services.

The redevelopment of Uptown Brampton is happening at a critical time when crucial conversations on equity, inclusion, and representation are being placed at the forefront across all sectors in society. As a city with a growing population of residents from around the world, an equity lens must continue to be applied to this project as development moves forward. Correspondingly, the City should work to identify groups and individuals to be engaged from Brampton's diverse communities. Within the vicinity of the study area, nearly 70% of the population identify as a visible minority, with the South Asian community being the largest group comprising of 44% of the total population, and 12% from Black communities. Youth, seniors, racialized, and immigrant communities often experience higher levels of disengagement and economic marginalization, and their space-use needs must be addressed within both the broader Uptown Brampton project and through the service provision that will be offered in the newly created Community Hub. Each step of the engagement process should be centered on representation from these residents to ensure an equitable and inclusive approach is implemented. Intentional outreach within these communities is vital to success, as well as sustaining these community relationships through the conceptualization, development, and completion phases of Uptown Brampton.

6.0 Conclusion

The redevelopment of the Shoppers World site provides a unique, once-in-a-generation opportunity for the City of Brampton and the neighbourhood of Uptown. This report aims to capture the business needs of the area while identifying how the best of Uptown can be retained and enhanced with the redevelopment of the site and the addition of a Community Hub. The following *Uptown Brampton Actions* provide some next steps for the City and the developer to consider.

Uptown Brampton Actions

1.0: Phasing of development.

1.1 Phasing of the development should be done to ensure that the area remains active and accessible. This can be achieved by communicating early and often with existing businesses, and by front-ending the development of replacement commercial spaces alongside residential units, public spaces, or other amenities to draw people to the neighbourhood.

1.2 Further engagement with the existing business community will be important to understand how business needs have evolved through COVID, prior to the redevelopment of the Shoppers World site.

2.0: Building on success.

2.1 The character of Uptown is very much defined by the community. Data from Environics reveals that the community has roughly the same population during the day and night

suggesting that the area is neither a bedtime community nor a 9-5 employment-only zone. Attention to amenities and attractions that cater to the daytime population, residents, and visitors will be beneficial to the redevelopment. This will also help to grow the “completeness” of the community and create spaces where residents and the labor force in the area can live, work, and play.

3.0. Offering flexibility to businesses during transitional periods of development.

The existing community is a strength that should be drawn upon as redevelopment begins. The following recommendations should be considered as possibilities to mitigate the challenges of transitional development periods:

3.1 RioCan should provide some level of longevity or certainty to businesses through long-term leases for new retail spaces as the site is redeveloped.

3.2 Ensure that spaces are created in the phasing with the intention to allow for a smooth transition for businesses from the old to the new retail space.

3.3 Ensure that businesses are willing and able to be early adaptors by taking storefronts at a reduced rent while the site is still under redevelopment,

4.0. Creating strategic linkages across uptown Brampton stakeholders.

4.1 If or when a BIA is formed, a broader business retention strategy could be developed to help existing businesses stay or grow in the neighbourhood.

4.2 Support collaborative efforts to convene key Stakeholders for public meetings, advocacy and outreach efforts, and other forms of consultations.

4.3 Create learning opportunities for BIAs and stakeholders to learn about best practices, emerging trends, and opportunities for future collaborations.

5.0. Supporting Uptown's evolution.

5.1 The City, in collaboration with the BIA or other business partnerships, should work collaboratively on business-friendly policies and promotions to keep the area vibrant and evolving.

5.2 Ongoing programming will help to enliven the community and should evolve as the residential, commercial, and amenities in the area are built out.

5.3 As development progresses, the City or BIA should consider a retail gap analysis to understand retail needs that may be unmet and to help recruit new businesses and grow the diversity of businesses and opportunities.

5.4 Spin-off opportunities should also be considered such as opportunities for enhanced supply chains or business clusters. As the inventory of businesses grows and evolves, efforts to grow certain emerging business clusters will help solidify Uptown's reputation and its overall success.

6.0: Investing in comprehensive wrap-around supports in the Community Hub.

6.1 Ensure that a broad cross-section of social development supports is created to support Uptown Brampton's diverse population.

6.2 These services must be reflective and responsive to the social development needs of Uptown Brampton and include childcare, mental health, LGBTQ2S, newcomer settlement, employment and housing supports, youth capacity building, and seniors support services.

6.3 Offer public spaces that are flexible and accessible to the local community.

6.4 Programming for youth and youth spaces should operate beyond the 9-5 timeframe and include cultural media arts, academic support, recreation, and life-skills programming.

7.0: Ensuring an equity lens is embedded within the project.

7.1 An equity lens should be used to examine every aspect of this project, including development, community engagement, and program offerings in the Community Hub.

7.2 All members from Uptown Brampton's diverse community should have the ability to influence policy development and future planning of Uptown Brampton. This may require new means of engagement such as going to where people are rather than expecting individuals to seek out an opportunity for their voices to be heard.

7.3 Intentional and strategic outreach must be conducted with the local community, and these relationships must be sustained by City staff to ensure continuous and meaningful engagement.

8.0: Further engaging seniors, equity-seeking communities and cultural groups to capture their needs.

8.1 Seniors in Uptown Brampton account for a sizeable percentage of the population and their needs should be further identified. This may include solving accessibility issues for older adults and seniors in public spaces and providing them a wide range of socially engaging activities.

8.2 Further engagement must also be undertaken with Brampton's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, and 2 Spirit + (LGBTQ2S+) communities to better understand their space use needs and community amenities.

8.3 A deep-dive engagement with cultural groups is also necessary to further capture the space and programming needs of Brampton's diverse communities. This includes the Black, South Asian, Chinese, and Filipino groups.

8.4 Across all aspects of these engagement efforts, consultations should be held with human services organizations that serve these demographics and well as local community-led and grassroots groups in Brampton and the broader Peel Region.

Conclusion

Fueled by our commitment to healthy urban development and our 30+ year history as Canada's Urban Institute, CUI's team pursued this project with great enthusiasm and excitement to engage the City of Brampton, local businesses, and the youth development sector as we worked together to learn about local needs, current conditions and opportunities for growth. We believe that meaningful connections are vital to the success of large-scale city planning initiatives, and we look forward to continuing our work with the City of Brampton to create a vibrant and inspired city that is reflective and responsive to community needs.

Appendix A – Good Principles in Mall Redevelopment

CUI reviewed a number of mall redevelopment schemes in Canada. The following table provides a summary of best practices for consideration. Learnings from these case examples have also been factored into CUI’s report recommendations for Uptown. Additional information may be found in the references noted at the end of the table.

BEST PRACTICES	CASE STUDY
Mall Redevelopment Planning & Design Principles	
Focus on high density, mixed use, and transit-oriented development	Reimagine Galleria, Lansdowne District, City of Loughheed, Bonnie Doon
Redesign the street and block pattern to create greater porosity throughout the site and connections to the surrounding neighbourhoods	Reimagine Galleria, Lansdowne District, City of Loughheed, Bonnie Doon
Place a transit plaza to serve as a programmable pedestrian-focused gateway into the community	Lansdowne District, City of Loughheed, Bonnie Doon
Provide centralized active transportation pathways enabling safe passage for non-vehicular traffic throughout the site and connections between anchors (pedestrian mews, greenways, traffic calming)	Lansdowne District, City of Loughheed, Bonnie Doon
Provide urbanized and natural settings for gathering and pause (public plazas, small and large parks, tree-lined pedestrian streets, water features)	Reimagine Galleria, Lansdowne District, City of Loughheed, Bonnie Doon
Diversify the feel of the site through precinct design and character areas	City of Loughheed
Provide residents and visitors their choice of transportation mode but prioritizing the pedestrian realm	Lansdowne District, City of Loughheed, Bonnie Doon
Regulate a required percentage of residential family-sized units during rezoning	Bonnie Doon
Reduce parking requirements	Stadium Shopping Centre
Move parking underground	Bonnie Doon

Main Street Planning & Design Principles	
Promote a diverse mix of uses to activate the street at all times of the day (institutional, residential, commercial)	Reimagine Galleria, Lansdowne District
Build replacement commercial spaces early in the phasing guaranteeing the continued operation of existing small businesses and anchor tenants (zero displacement)	Reimagine Galleria, Lansdowne District
Apply traffic calming measures to prioritize pedestrians and cyclist over cars	Lansdowne District
Provide a variety of services catering to the need of local residents	Lansdowne District
Encase larger retailers behind smaller storefronts for a more interesting streetscape	Lansdowne District
Ensuring there is a mix of residential unit types	Stadium Shopping, Bonnie Doon
Ensure the public realm is accessible to all ages and physical abilities	City of Lougheed
Design the public realm to be programmable for daytime and nighttime uses and all seasons and weather conditions	City of Lougheed

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Appendix B – Actions Summary Table

The following table summarizes the recommendations in Section 5.0 of the report, whether the action should be immediate (< 12 months), medium term (1-3 years), or long-term (post-occupancy), and the intended outcome.



Places

Create safe, vibrant and inclusive places and public spaces.

Action	Timeframe	Intended Outcome
<p>Create a flexible, mixed-use zone.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek out best practices in mixed-use zoning, parking requirements and public space design. • Evaluate for incompatible uses and allow for new combinations of uses to facilitate new business models. 	<p>Immediate to medium-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide flexibility required to create a truly mixed-use area that supports a diversity of uses. • Offer new businesses and collaborations, indoor recreation spaces, and shared parking arrangements.
<p>Provide spaces for active and passives uses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Street has gathering or “pause” spaces and streetscape for pedestrians, including benches, street trees and bike parking. • Dedicated bike lanes buffered by a “green” zone for trees and other greenery to encourage active transportation. • Refer to Brampton’s <i>Complete Streets Guidelines (2020)</i> when designing and constructing the High Street and Main Street. 	<p>Immediate to medium-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Main Street is safe and comfortable for pedestrians, bikers and other active users. • Allow for the co-existence of cars, bicycles, pedestrians and greenery.

<p>Include accessible and welcoming public spaces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design places to rest and shelter from bad weather with proper lighting, pedestrian zones free of trip hazards and materials prone to slips. • Create spaces geared to children and seniors. • Outdoor spaces such as playing fields and playgrounds for children living in apartment style buildings. • Public restrooms as an important public amenity. 	<p>Immediate to medium-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that public spaces in Uptown will be comfortable to equity-seeking populations including all ages and mobilities.
<p>Address barriers to youth spaces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create spaces that foster youth capacity building during the winter months including indoor recreation and structured programs. • Make youth feel welcomed in the community hub and provide mental health supports. • Create spaces with strong Wi-Fi connections both inside and throughout the vicinity of the community hub. 	<p>Medium to long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide youth the experiences, tools, and opportunities required to grow and thrive in Brampton. • Mitigate challenges youth face in regards to internet access and mental health.
<p>Enhance the character of the proposed High Street with façade variation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep setbacks between building facades and roadways. • Create streetscapes with multiple shops, identified by individual doorways, variation in facades, exterior materials and window displays. • Large format retail interspersed along High Street as retail anchors with built form that mimics the scale of other High Street facades. • Building design and leasing decisions to prevent large format retailers from dominating High Street. 	<p>Immediate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for ample space for pedestrians and space for patios, seating or window shopping. • Shape building design that mimics the scale of a historic main street and creates an active and engaging environment for pedestrians. • Provide anchors that draw people who will also frequent small, local businesses. • Provide variation in storefront sizes with opportunities for a diversity of business types.
<p>Recreate the main street feel of Shoppers World or other small-scale main streets in a new development context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interior mall's physical attributes considered in the new High Street. E.g., proximity of businesses to one another and depth 	<p>Immediate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide comfort and accessibility and makes it easy to navigate and move from one storefront to another. • Make it safe and easy to cross the street to visit

<p>of the interior corridor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe pedestrian crossings, long signal crossings, wayfinding and a business directory. • Signage and storefronts should be legible from across the street and nature of the business be obvious. • Cluster similar or complementary small businesses such as bars, restaurants, entertainment and services. • Create short block lengths of 100m – 150m 		<p>businesses on both sides of the street.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase foot traffic and more customers for small businesses. • Cluster businesses to create a destination and character for the area. • Include multiple entry points to High Street make it easy to come and go.
<p>Enhance places to create a destination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities and spaces that will mitigate sterile and unwelcome environments. • Add an element of spontaneity. • Enliven spaces to create an experience; e.g., a new work of public art, a kiosk to learn about local events, areas for sitting and visiting in proximity to other activities. • Activate the space between buildings. • Simplify events or festivals permits, e.g., one-stop-shop for all questions regarding the activation of public space. • Funds for events-based programming in Uptown can be extended to local businesses to involve them in creating a destination. • Local artists, businesses, cultural groups and equity-seeking individuals be engaged in place-making strategies. 	<p>Long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a place where people want to come and stay. • Highlight the cultural backgrounds and unique expressions of the community. • Encourage diverse groups to be involved by minimizing red tape and offering funding.
<p>Create an identity for Uptown with the existing community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uplift the young and culturally-diverse residents in Uptown. • Incorporate physical elements, such as unique signage, façade design or cultural elements into the development site. • Develop a unique character and distinct design for portions of High Street based on business clusters. • Explore urban design guidelines for Uptown. 	<p>Medium to long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciate the historical significance of Uptown. • Create an interesting, unique and unusual look and feel for the neighbourhood.
<p>Use meanwhile leases as a way for artists to showcase their products and provide rehearsal space to performing artists, while at</p>	<p>Medium to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enliven outdoor and interior vacant spaces during development or between tenancies.

<p>the same time activating space between longer-term tenants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a “meanwhile” approach for temporary or interim uses of spaces. • Provide performing arts groups inexpensive use of ground floor retail spaces for rehearsal and performance uses. 	<p>long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developer an on-going relationship with performing arts groups.
<p>Consider large-format retail on Steeles Avenue and Main Street South vs. on the new High Street</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the placement of large-format retail on Steeles and Main Street South. 	<p>Medium to long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an experience when walking down the High Street. • Provide easy access to essential goods and be accessible to local residents and broader catchment area on Steeles Avenue and Main Street South; High Street can benefit from this proximity. • Creates less competition for smaller-scale businesses located on the narrow High Street.



Anchors

Support resilience of community spaces and civic institutions

Action	Timeframe	Intended Outcome
<p>Enhance connectivity and integration between Sheridan College (David Campus) and the surrounding community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance pedestrian connections between Sheridan College and the surrounding commercial areas. 	<p>Medium to long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase customer base for local businesses. Provide a greater diversity of experiences for students and employees. Increase walkability to improve the health and environmental outcomes and foster community engagement and social capital.
<p>Leverage the Community Hub as a community anchor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed spaces for Hub include but not limited to: a daycare, elementary school, outdoor recreation amenities, a food hub with commercial kitchen, exhibition and performance space, a technology and innovation coworking space, an events venue and designated areas for urban agriculture. Drop-in structured and unprogrammed space for youth in Brampton with extended hours accommodating peak times. 	<p>Immediate, medium to long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers a single destination for a range of programming and resources for the community including health, social services, education, arts and culture and technology uses. Provide a space where youth can feel safe and be themselves.
<p>Create a space for a Food Hall and marketplace.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate space for a Food Hall in the Community Hub. Include a commercial kitchen Include a space for classes or demonstrations. Use food grown on-site for a garden to table opportunity. Link to an outdoor marketplace in warmer months. 	<p>Immediate to medium-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an entry point into diverse cultural experiences through food, bridging cultural divisions and bringing people together. Enforce Uptown's identity as a culinary destination and tells the story of a vibrant and diverse food culture. Provide additional opportunities for small or emerging food producers. Provide opportunities to learn about urban agriculture. Highlight the area's culinary specialties.



Businesses

Support the recovery and sustainability of main street businesses

Action	Timeframe	Intended Outcome
<p>Implement approaches to support business retention and prevent displacement of existing, small businesses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a business retention and relocation plan. • Offer relocation grants. • Offer reduced leases for early adaptors • Create small, flexible storefronts including replacement spaces for existing businesses • Provide long-term, fixed-rate leases. • Create promotional events, philanthropic campaigns and business promotions. 	Medium to long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support and predictability for business community. • Retain existing businesses. • Ensure that new spaces are built to the specifications and needs of existing businesses. • Create a win-win situation for both businesses and developer. • Build confidence in the future retail success of the new site.
<p>Include youth in workforce development programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create programming to address the lack of access to employment. • Provide internship opportunities, mentorships, career development and workshops on job searches, job maintenance and professional networking. 	Medium to long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain youth and provide economic advancement and professional development.
<p>Provide commercial spaces that are affordable for small local businesses and entrepreneurs including micro-retail space.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include inclusive spaces that can accommodate a range of businesses • Consider retail spaces in the range of 1,000 – 2,500 sq. ft. • Create a micro-retail space. • Offer additional support in the form of directed programs, business coaching, and mentorship. 	Medium to long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide small spaces that are difficult to find in the marketplace. • Allow for a variety of businesses to share a common retail space without the burden of a long-term lease or excess retail space. • Offer a community building activity. • Help businesses to scale-up.

<p>Provide shared space including co-working spaces to encourage cross-sectoral collaboration and business incubation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include small private office spaces for entrepreneurs. • Tailor spaces to emerging business needs. • Link to non-profits in the neighbourhood offering assistance to new business owners. • Offer networking events. 	<p>Medium to long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer exchange between entrepreneurs and students. • Provide opportunities to move from home-based (informal) to more formal endeavors. • Provide networking and learning opportunities. • Offer professional space within the community. • Respond to new (COVID-related) work habits, such as remote work, in development plans.
<p>Leverage a community kitchen to connect with food providers in the informal economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a commercial kitchen in the Community Hub or else in the development. 	<p>Medium to long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to Brampton's food scene. • Provide small business owners and their employees with mentorship and training to scale-up.
<p>Offer affordable space for artists.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include space as an accessory use to another retail use (e.g. at the back of a storefront) or as a dedicated use alongside office uses. • Test options with local artists to understand space needs and any potential incompatibilities: noise, odours, etc. • Include artists in shaping Uptown by contributing public sculpture, murals or artwork for interior lobbies and public spaces. 	<p>Medium to long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow the arts community in Uptown. • Add local art to Uptown's public spaces.
<p>Incorporate live/workspaces into a mixed-used zone.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate current live/work zoning and home-based business requirements for greater flexibility. • Consider the design of residential units that include a lock-off suite or space that can function as a business location or a residential unit depending on need. • Explore live/work flexibility in building design. 	<p>Immediate to medium-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide work/live flexibility. • Create units in proximity to clientele, supply chains or business networks. • Allow for flexible use depending on household need.



Leadership

Strengthen governance structures, communication and collaboration between main street stakeholders

Action	Timeframe	Intended Outcome
<p>Create a Business Improvement Association for Uptown.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Establish a BIA prior to completion of development.Establish a landscape manual or a street guide that offers a streetscape template for businesses in the Uptown core.Provide micro-grants, incentives or other provisions to “made-in-Brampton” businesses.	Immediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Facilitate the communication between the City, developers, and local businesses during the redevelopment process and as the business community evolves.Support business retention and growth.Measure the pulse of the community and bring together partnerships to enhance and grow the business community.Help businesses take ownership and pride in their physical location by offering businesses value in the form of benefits.
<p>Invest in public or shared Wi-Fi to facilitate digital accessibility and business acceleration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Electronic signage and communications tools can promote events and enhance community engagement.Public and collective Wi-Fi network.	Immediate, medium to long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Connect people in Uptown in new and innovative ways.Help bridge the digital divide and make internet accessible for businesses and users.
<p>Evaluate the use of Smart City technology for Uptown.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Investments in technology to facilitate hyper-connectivity.Take proactive and cautionary measures in the deployment of 5G technology.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Enhance the delivery of city-services.Ensure Bramptonians can fully participate in public space without worrying about data collection and use, privacy, and surveillance.
<p>Provide businesses for with COVID recovery assistance.</p>	Immediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Help disseminate information to small businesses about city and provincial programs that may help with the recovery.

<p>Create a Buy-Local Uptown campaign and annual events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include events to highlight Uptown’s strengths, for example an “Uptown Restaurant Week” or a South Asian Street festival. 	<p>Immediate, medium to long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an identify for Uptown. • Enliven the community with destination events.
<p>Establish an Uptown business alliance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an alliance with public, private and community representatives to represent business interests and communicate information during redevelopment • Use social media platforms. • Organize in-person meeting (when it is safe) to provide networking and information sharing. 	<p>Immediate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a platform for business advocacy and support. • Give a voice to the members of the Uptown Brampton community • Bring important stakeholders together to discuss needs. • Keep businesses and other stakeholders informed as redevelopment is underway.
<p>Amplify the voice of young people through youth and community led spaces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy access to spaces when it is youth and community led. • Create a Youth Space Advisory Committee and Youth Council. 	<p>Medium to long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide insight into current trends, conditions, and issues related to youth. • Increase opportunities for youth to thrive and succeed in Brampton.
<p>Create a support network for those in the informal economy.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill gap in lack of information about the rights and responsibilities of informal sector workers. • Incubate new businesses, create partnerships and grow the entrepreneurial spirit of Uptown.
<p>Provide financial support in the form of rental assistance and tax abatements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide rental assistance and other avenues for funding in the long-term. 	<p>Immediate, medium to long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridge gap in access to funding • Support businesses that employ individuals with barriers to employment.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support nonprofits, social enterprises and some privately held for-profit small through property taxes reductions. 		
<p>Create an Uptown marketplace and delivery service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build an on-line marketplace and delivery services. • Include wrap-around supports for business incubation, marketing, communications, and guidance on how to develop branding and social media collateral. • Include outreach to businesses and communities that are often difficult to locate and may not be associated with a BIA communication network. 	<p>Immediate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate an Uptown customer base • Provide easy access to the products and services of Uptown. • Address growing digital divide impacting economically marginalized businesses.



People

Actions to draw people to the community and main street

Action	Timeframe	Intended Outcome
<p>Integrate the existing community into the new development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage residents and businesses as development moves forward. Provide opportunities for existing businesses and residents to inform relocation, community facilities, vents and public spaces. 	Immediate to medium-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate character and culture of Uptown into the community hub and the redevelopment site. Understand business and resident needs. Build both resident buy-in as well as business and consumer confidence.
<p>Provide recreation, socialization and employment opportunities for youth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create places to socialize, interact and gather, especially near Sheridan College. Provide employment opportunities accessible by various modes of transportation, not just cars. Employ local youth from the Uptown Brampton community. Create youth entrepreneurship programs that provide resources, business expertise, and funding to start their own business. Encourage youth and students at Sheridan College to engage with the BIA, Community Hub and Community Forum. 	Medium and long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combat the perception that there is “nothing to do” in Brampton. Empower youth and help them feel valued and engaged in the community.
<p>Support businesses owned by South Asian, Black, and other racialized groups and newcomers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide customer service support, business and language training. Consider a ‘paid internship’ program Incorporate daycare in programs 	Immediate, medium and long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage diversification of businesses. Address discrimination and lack of access to capital. Provide new business and employment opportunities, language skills and on-the-job experience.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage business diversification 		
<p>Leverage the energy and contributions of international students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help navigating rules to obtain for work permits. 	<p>Immediate, medium and long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep individuals in the community and grow the diversity and creativity from within.
<p>Create opportunities or strategies for talent retention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a marketing campaign to raise awareness about the strengths of Uptown Brampton. • Focus on creating a rich urban experience with sidewalks, greenspace, transit, and small retail stores. 	<p>Immediate, medium and long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Uptown. • Understand the business needs of the existing small businesses. • Support public safety, community health and wellbeing.
<p>Encourage an affordable housing mix.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a diversity of housing options including unit size and both rental and ownership options. 	<p>Medium to long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House a variety of households: families, young workers, students and seniors.
<p>Apply an equity lens to development, engagement, services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify groups and individuals to be engaged from Brampton's diverse communities. 	<p>Immediate, medium and long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address higher levels of disengagement and economic marginalization of visible minorities.

Endnotes

- ⁱ World Health Organization, “WHO Director-General’s opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 – 11 March 2020”. <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020>
- ⁱⁱ Tourism Brampton – Brampton History. www.brampton.ca/en/Arts-Culture-Tourism/Tourism-Brampton/Visitors/Pages/BramptonHistory.aspx
- ⁱⁱⁱ MyBrampton map, date of Subdivision Assumption.
- ^{iv} Projections provided by Environics Institute for Survey Research.
- ^v Statistics Canada, Census Profile (2016). Accessed: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>
- ^{vi} Projections provided by Environics Institute for Survey Research.
- ^{vii} Statistics Canada. Canadian Income Survey (2019). Accessed: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210323/dq210323a-eng.htm>
- ^{viii} The term “visible minority” refers to the term used by Statistics Canada, and which is based on self-declaration by an individual.
- ^{ix} Canadian Urban Institute. In It Together: Bringing Back Canada’s Main Streets (Oct 2020). Accessed: <https://bringbackmainstreet.ca/action-report>
- ^x Ellard, C. (2015), “The Generic City. Boring landscapes impede on our biological need for intrigue. So why are so many buildings so hideous?” Accessed: <https://slate.com/technology/2015/11/psychology-of-boring-architecture-the-damaging-impact-of-big-ugly-buildings-on-mental-health.html>. Gehl, J. (1987). *Life Between Buildings*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- ^{xi} Personal communication, Kay Mathews, Ontario Business Improvement Area Association (OBIAA), July 15, 2021.