



# Downtown Uxbridge Vision



# myuxbridgedowntown

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# 1.0 BACKGROUND

## 1.1 Context

In 2020, the Township of Uxbridge, with support from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), the Region of Durham and the Uxbridge BIA, initiated a Downtown Revitalization Project (UDR).

Between February 2020 and December 2021, the UDR Project will implement the first 3 stages of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) 4-stage process for Downtown Revitalization.

- Stage 1 – Preparation
- Stage 2 – Collect Data and Analyze
- Stage 3 – Develop Goals & Action Plans
- *Stage 4 – Implementation*

## 1.2 Project Goals, Business Outcomes and Objectives

Goals	Objectives & Measurable	Business Outcomes
Develop a cohesive long-term vision for the downtown of Uxbridge.	Create a Strategic Plan and Action Plan with short, medium and long-term goals to improve the downtown’s prosperity.	More businesses and visitors in the downtown.

## 1.3 Stage 1

### **Stage 1 is Preparation (February 2020 to December 2020):**

The activities to be completed during Stage 1 include:

- Hiring a Coordinator (Project Manager) to manage all activities;
- Developing a brand for the project (#myuxbridgedowntown);
- Establishing the Uxbridge Downtown Revitalization Advisory Committee;
- Preparing a Preliminary Work Plan; and
- **Development of a vision for the Downtown.**

## 2.0 DEVELOPMENT OF A VISION

### 2.1 What is a Vision

The Vision is an initial declaration about the desired future of the Downtown. It is the document through which the community declares to itself its aims for the Downtown, i.e. the end it has in mind.

### 2.2 The Uxbridge Downtown Vision

On March 23, 2009, the Council of the Township of Uxbridge approved a Downtown Vision Statement (Annex A). Rather than creating a new vision, the UDRC undertook a review of the 2009 Vision Statement.

The UDRC determined that revisions were required due to the opportunities for development in the downtown, particularly in the “Lower Brock” area once the project to replace the culverts was completed.

In addition to developing a new Vision Statement, the UDRC undertook the work of describing the Uxbridge Downtown in the future.

### 2.3 Developing the Strategic Plan and Action Plan

It is understood as part of the UDR Project, the UDRC will revisit the vision in Stage 3. During Stage 3, the Strategic Plan will set out how to achieve the vision, which projects are priorities, and who has the lead responsibility. Ideally the vision will serve in the revitalization process as a reference guide to prioritize actions.

## 3.0 THE VISION STATEMENT

***Uxbridge features a vibrant and thriving downtown that is rich in history and recognized as an inclusive and accessible community.***

### 3.1 Description of Uxbridge Downtown in the future

1. The Downtown is a “Complete Community” that continually evolves to meet the emerging needs of the broader community.
2. The historic buildings display their original architectural features; and newer buildings, while more modern, are “sympathetic” to the heritage of the downtown.
3. Traffic flow, including parking, within the downtown embraces the importance of “Active Transportation” and minimizes the flow of heavy trucks.
4. There is a Town Square that acts as an “Agora” and offers a year-round “Marché” for local residents, farmers, businesses and visitors.
5. The Downtown offers a range of residential opportunities that take into consideration accessibility requirements, economic factors and own and/ or rent options.
6. The Downtown provides a wide range of amenities which offer unique shopping experiences while addressing the essential needs of residents. The promenade level is noted for thriving retail shops
7. The Downtown is home to a range of culinary experiences in the form of restaurants, café’s, bakeries, pubs, markets etc.
8. Uxbridge is recognized as “The Trail Capital of Canada” and the downtown is an integral component of the trail system.
9. The Uxbridge Brook and Centennial Park provide a north – south focal point, to be enjoyed by residents and visitors.
10. Visitors enjoyment of downtown Uxbridge’s extensive and diverse cultural and recreational offerings is enabled by access to local overnight accommodation.
11. Uxbridge’s reputation as an artistic community is evident throughout the Downtown, supporting many forms of artistic expression and incorporates “Viewable Art” in the public spaces.
12. The rear aspects of buildings offer a welcoming experience for residents and visitors using the parking lots and laneways found throughout the downtown. A number of the businesses provide rear entrances that are both attractive and accessible.

## 3.2 Glossary

1. Active Transportation:

- Active transportation is using your own power to get from one place to another. This includes:
  - Walking, biking, skateboarding, in-line skating/rollerblading, jogging and running, non-mechanized wheel chairing; snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

2. Agora:

- The Agora was a central public space in ancient Greek city-states. The literal meaning of the word is "gathering place" or "assembly". The agora was the center of the athletic, artistic, spiritual and political life in the city. The Ancient Agora of Athens is the best-known example.

3. Complete Community:

- Complete Communities are places where homes, jobs, schools, community services, parks and recreation facilities are easily accessible.

4. Marché:

- Refers to the place where producers (traders, artisans, peasants) come together to directly offer their products to consumers.

5. Sympathetic Architecture:

- Basically, infill/restoration should attempt to harmonize the old and valued historic buildings/spaces with the new, while at the same time respecting established design elements (such as height, façade characteristics, setback and materials). Infill / restored buildings should be compatible and work with the surrounding buildings and historic context. The end result should be new structures that enhance and complement the existing character of the area.

## **II. ANNEX A – 2009 VISION**

### **The Vision (Approved 2009)**

**Downtown Uxbridge is the vibrant focus of a thriving small town set in rolling hills and reflecting its strong agricultural heritage.**

There is an active street scene, with people - residents and visitors - shopping, browsing, enjoying the company of friends in restaurants and cafes, and strolling along pleasant and attractive streets. A range of stores, more varied and attractive than in the past, and other commercial enterprises, many run by local entrepreneurs, has made it attractive as a place to shop and conduct business. Vacant stores are a thing of the past. The pedestrian orientation of the downtown streets is evident from the modest flow of traffic, with few trucks. A small park, or “town square” in the centre of town provides a focal point for community activities, or for simply relaxing in a pleasant park setting. The town’s farming roots are evident from the colourful farmer’s market that attracts both residents and visitors, and provides a valuable means for area farmers to offer their produce. A grocery in the downtown provides essentials without the need for a car.

The Uxbridge Brook, once completely out of sight in the downtown area, is once again visible, providing an attractive natural feature to complement the large shade trees along the main streets. The streets themselves reflect Uxbridge’s heritage and history, with buildings that have had their exteriors remodeled or renovated in keeping with established heritage guidelines, and signage and street furnishings in tasteful harmony. The rear aspects of buildings facing public areas are no longer an eyesore. The older heritage buildings are complemented by some newer structures (some replacing eyesores or deteriorating buildings), some of which may be more modern in design, but enhance the character of the town.

Uxbridge’s reputation as an intensively artistic community is evident from the many works of public art installed around the town, giving it a unique character. And its designation as “The Trail Capital of Canada” is evident from the extensions of the extensive trail system that reach into the downtown, enabling people to walk or bicycle from downtown into surrounding natural areas. Ease of access is provided through numerous public parking areas, well-marked and attractive in design and landscaping. Similarly, ease of access for the physically challenged is provided at most stores and all public facilities. The downtown has a diversified population of residents, with accommodation suited to varying economic levels.

In short, downtown Uxbridge is a place that attracts visitors and tourists, and tempts travelers to stop and explore, with appropriate accommodation for those who wish to stay overnight. The downtown offers a good livelihood to business enterprises located there, and provides a commercial and recreational focus for residents.

**Uxbridge is a small town in a rural community, with a downtown that has become an attractive destination for visitors and an effective focus for residents, through a bold approach by the Council and the community, including enlightened planning, good design and wise investment of resources.**