

# Chapter **Four**

## Active Transportation



Cyclist, pedestrian and Viva bus on Highway 7 in the Town of Richmond Hill



## Active Transportation in York Region

Through policies and programs in the *Regional Official Plan*, *Transportation Master Plan* and *Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan*, York Region is supporting and encouraging a change in personal travel choices and providing a range of alternate travel modes. The Region recognizes many benefits of alternative modes of transportation, including improved health of residents, improved air quality, a more efficient transportation network and reduced dependence on vehicles. The promotion of alternative travel modes such as walking, cycling, transit and carpooling helps York Region reach sustainable transportation objectives.

The *Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan* provides guidance in connecting and integrating pedestrian and cycling facilities between local and surrounding municipalities to help create a seamless and comprehensive pedestrian and cycling network.

Through road capital projects in the Ten-Year Road Construction Program or Minor Roads Improvement Program, cycling facilities are being implemented with guidance by the *Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan*.

Bike lanes are considered for urban cross-sections while paved shoulders with adequate width for cycling are considered for rural road cross-sections.



### The Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan

The *Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan* endorsed by Regional Council in April 2008 is intended to guide the Region as it works with local municipalities to:

- Implement and operate a Region-wide pedestrian and cycling network
- Promote safe cycling and educate residents and motorists in York Region about the benefits of increased active transportation and the responsibilities of facility users

## The Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan (continued)

The highlights of the *Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan* include the following actions from York Region:

- Create a continuous system of cycling and sidewalk network on Regional and local roads
- Provide funding through the Municipal Partnership Program to help accelerate the implementation of local municipal and stakeholder pedestrian and cycling initiatives
- Implement active transportation facilities as part of the Region's Streetscape Programs and Capital Road Projects, where appropriate
- Create a cycling route and walking trail connecting Lake Simcoe to Lake Ontario

## York Region Cycling Network

The Regional cycling network builds upon and connects local municipal cycling networks and major trail systems and links urban and rural centres as well as key attractions in the Region to facilitate cycling for both commuting to work and recreational purposes.

Since the adoption of the *Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan*, York Region has started building a comprehensive cycling network through various avenues such as capital roads program, new developments and through municipal partnership programs (Streetscaping and Pedestrian and Cycling Partnership Programs). To date, the cycling network in York Region consists of over 850 kms of cycling facilities, including:

**1. Signed Routes** – A signed route is a shared roadway with no physical changes made to the roadway. They are usually found on residential streets with lower traffic volumes. Signage helps cyclists navigate bicycle-friendly routes.

**2. Sharrows** – Sharrows are pavement markings on the roadway showing two white chevrons and a bicycle symbol. They are used in shared lanes to indicate the ideal cyclist position in the lane (away from the curb and parked cars) and to remind motorists to share the road.



## quickfacts

### In 2013 the Regional network included:

- Bike Lanes: 64 kilometres
- Boulevard trails: 43 kilometres
- Multi-Use path: 174 kilometres
- Paved shoulders: 243 kilometres
- Sharrows: 29 kilometres
- Signed routes: 425 kilometres

These facilities are owned and maintained by either York Region or the local municipalities.

## York Region Cycling Network (continued)

**3. Bike Lanes** – Bike lanes are dedicated space for cyclists located in the travelled portion of the roadway for one-way cyclist traffic where motorists are not allowed to park, stand or drive. Bike lanes are typically located on urban streets.



**4. Boulevard Trails** – A boulevard trail is separated from the travelled portion of a road, in the right-of-way. Boulevard trails are designed to support pedestrians and cyclists of all skill levels. In-line skaters and skate-boarders are also possible, in locations where the trail surface permits these activities.



**5. Multi-use Paths** – A multi-use path is a facility completely outside of the road right-of-way and often passing through parks or other green spaces. Multi-use paths are designed for pedestrians, cyclists, in-line skaters and skateboarders, in locations where the path surface permits these activities.



**6. Paved Shoulders** – Paved shoulders are located next to the travelled portion of the roadway and used to accommodate cyclists on rural roads.



### quickfacts

Cycling trips were counted for the first time during the 2011 Cordon Count Program. A total of **3,600 cycling trips** were counted during the 12-hour period on Regional roads, 2,100 of these trips crossed the Steeles Avenue boundary. Over time, this data will assist in measuring the effectiveness of the Region's various cycling initiatives, including implementation of cycling lanes on Regional roads.



Bike lane on Bloomington Road in the Town of Aurora



## York Region Cycling Network (continued)

The Regional Municipality of York has released the second version of the Regional cycling map. This cycling map is a resource for planning routes to work, school, shopping or to explore the Region. This map shows a network of existing bicycle lanes, signed bicycle routes, trails and paved road shoulders, including those maintained by local municipalities. It is intended to encourage commuter and recreational cyclists to take up cycling, as well as educate cyclists on their rights and responsibilities.

An electronic copy of this map can be downloaded at [www.york.ca/cycling](http://www.york.ca/cycling)

### Contact Information

For more information related to York Region Active Transportation please contact:

### Traffic Management and ITS Branch

Phone: 905-830-4444, ext. 75051

or Toll-free 1-877-464-9675

Email: [cycling@york.ca](mailto:cycling@york.ca)



Bike lane on Woodbine Avenue in the Town of Georgina

## York Region Sidewalk Network

Sidewalks are essential to encourage public transit use since walking is typically required at the start and end of every trip. Walking also provides a health improvement benefit to people of all ages.

There are many other benefits of a comprehensive sidewalk network, including:

- Increasing pedestrian safety
- Providing transit access
- Helping reduce reliance on cars
- Complementing the urban design of communities
- Providing mobility for elderly and the impaired
- Helping improve air quality
- Enhancing quality of life

Improving conditions for walking is more than just creating a network of connecting pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks and pathways. Another essential element is creating a system that makes pedestrians feel comfortable, rather than a system that treats them as an after-thought. Improvements for walking in York Region will be incorporated into the pedestrian network system and will include:

- Enhanced connections between neighbourhoods
- Increased destinations
- Increased street trees
- Enhanced accessibility to interesting places along routes
- Increase or widened trails in open spaces



Sidewalk and cycling lanes on Highway 7 in the Town of Richmond Hill

## York Region Sidewalk Network (continued)

The planned network consists primarily of sidewalks on Regional roads. Locations where sidewalk links are missing have been identified. In some areas, the network includes linear off-road, multi-use trails.

In urban areas, sidewalks are provided on both sides of arterial and collector roads.

In rural areas, sidewalks are typically integrated with multi-use paths on one side or both sides of arterial and collector roads.

**Figure 35** illustrates sidewalks along Regional roads.

### quickfacts

- Sidewalks on Regional roads are owned and maintained by each local area municipality
- The completed system on Regional roads comprises over **683 linear kilometres** of sidewalks
- As of 2010, **560 linear kilometres** of sidewalks on Regional roads have been constructed across the Region.



New sidewalk at Bathurst Street and Major Mackenzie Drive in the Town of Richmond Hill





Figure 35

# Sidewalks Along Regional Roads

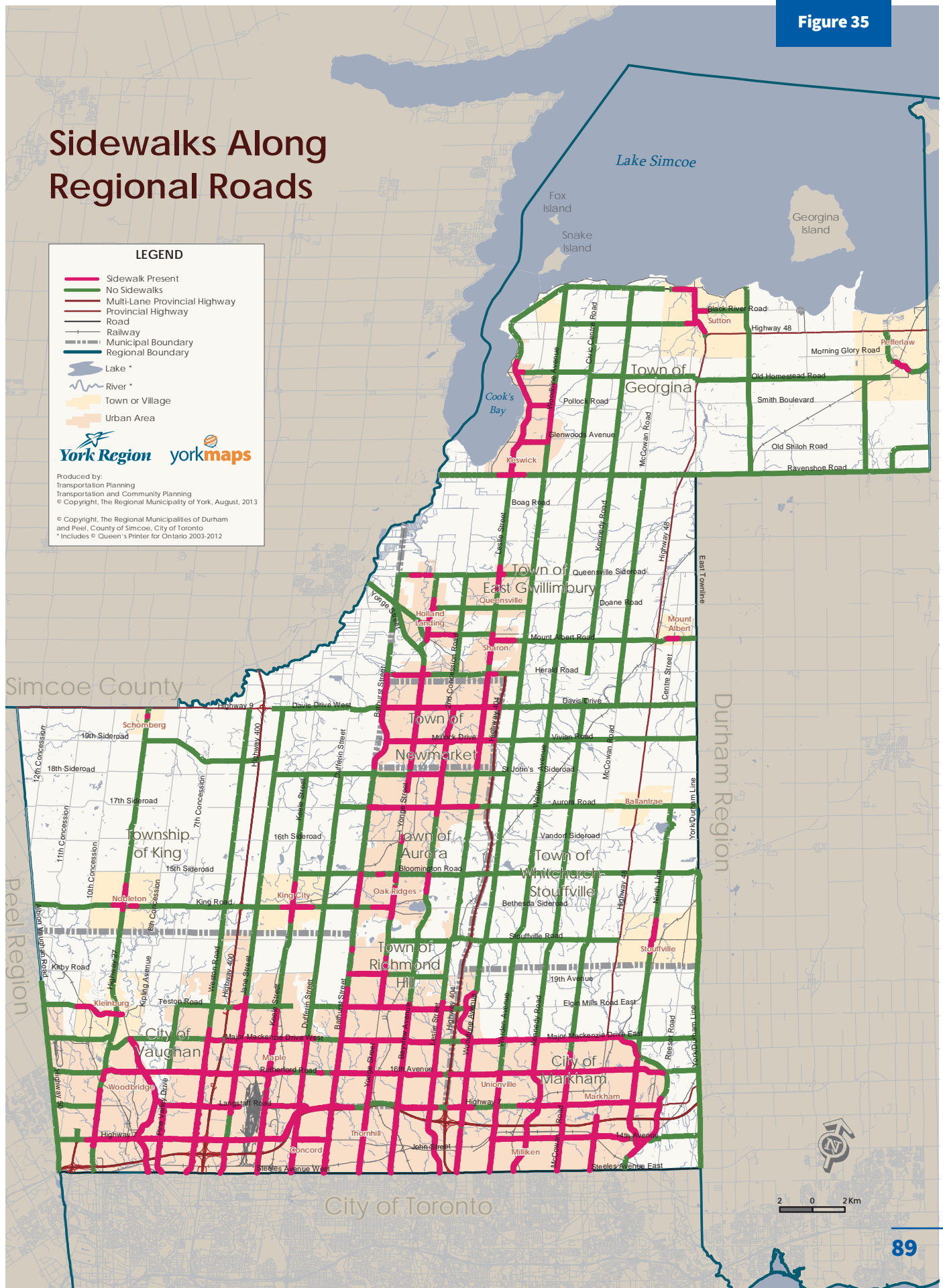
**LEGEND**

- Sidewalk Present
- No Sidewalks
- Multi-Lane Provincial Highway
- Provincial Highway
- Road
- Railway
- Municipal Boundary
- Regional Boundary
- Lake \*
- River \*
- Town or Village
- Urban Area

**York Region** **yorkmaps**

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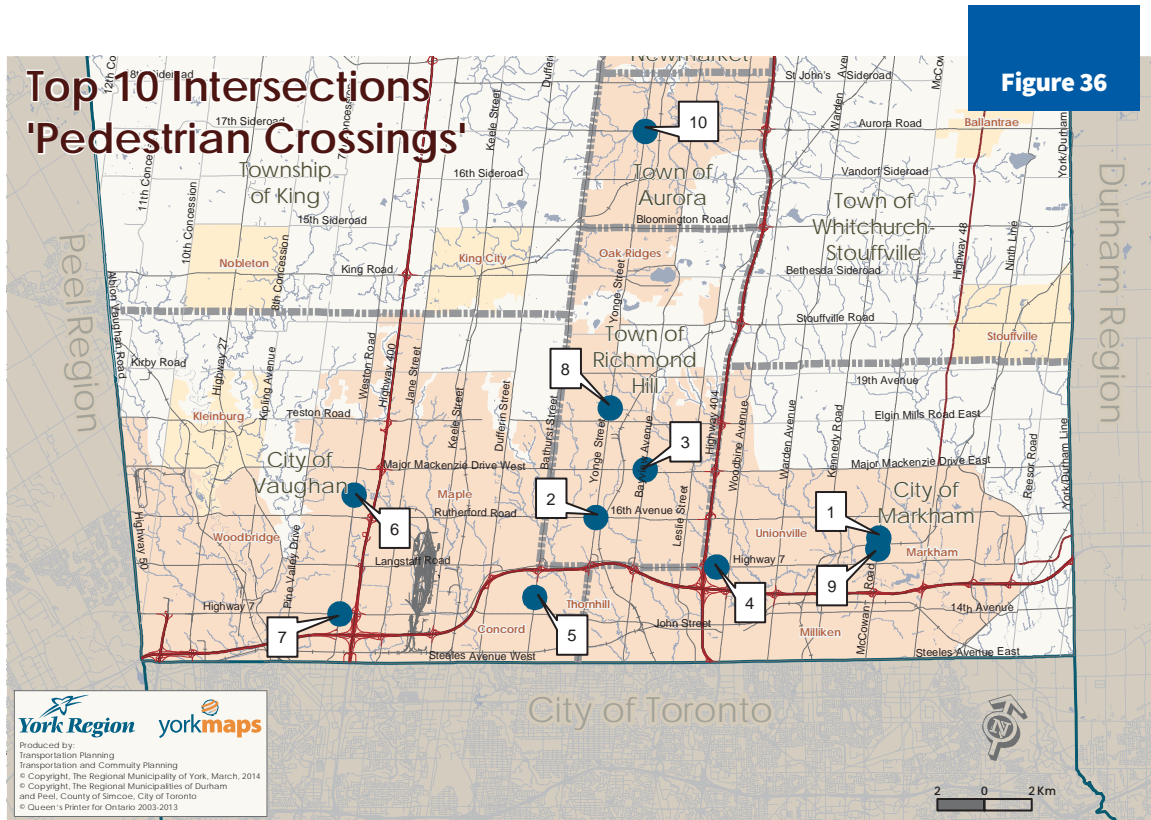


## Top 10 Highest Pedestrian Volume Intersections

The pedestrian volume data are derived from eight-hour turning movement counts (TMC) of intersections and represent pedestrian crossings during a typical weekday. The intersections identified are within the proximity of large pedestrian generators such as schools, shopping centres and/or transit facilities. **Table 9** and **Figure 36** illustrate the top 10 highest pedestrian volume intersections in York Region.

**Table 9** - Top 10 Highest Pedestrian Volume Intersections in York Region

Rank	Description	Year Counted	Total Pedestrians	Total Vehicles	Total Trucks	% Trucks
1	McCowan Road at Carlton Road/ Raymerville Drive	2010	1,975	24,770	723	3%
2	Yonge Street at Carrville Road/ 16th Avenue	2011	1,655	34,272	1,405	4%
3	Major Mackenzie Drive East at Bayview Avenue	2013	1,555	33,778	1,228	4%
4	Highway 7 at East Vahalla Drive/ Allstate Parkway	2011	1,292	37,169	1,629	4%
5	Bathurst Street at Atkinson Avenue/ New Westminster Drive	2010	1,248	29,564	693	2%
6	Weston Road at Ashberry Boulevard/ Davos Road	2013	1,008	16,179	385	2%
7	Highway 7 at Weston Road	2010	1,001	56,063	3,705	7%
8	Yonge Street at Bernard Avenue/ Canyon Hill Avenue	2012	930	21,770	881	4%
9	McCowan Road at Bullock Drive	2010	912	28,686	1,189	4%
10	Wellington Street East at Yonge Street/Wellington Street West	2010	860	18,119	622	3%



### Contact Information

For more information on the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan, please contact:

#### Transportation Planning Branch

Phone: 905-830-4444, ext. 71578 or Toll-free 1-877-464-9675

Email: [transportationservices@york.ca](mailto:transportationservices@york.ca)





## Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program

Regional Council endorsed the Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program in June 2007. The adopted policy allows York Region to share up to 50 per cent of the eligible construction costs for qualifying local municipal and agency pedestrian and cycling projects that serve a regional context. The pedestrian and cycling municipal partnership program does not

include cycling lanes on Regional roads, funding of municipal sidewalks within the Regional road allowance and is not intended to fund recreational trails.

The Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program has an annual capital budget of \$500,000.

### quickfacts

- Between 2007 and 2013, York Region approved **22 projects** and allocated approximately **\$3.5 million** to local municipalities for the implementation of pedestrian and cycling facilities through the Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program
- Since its launch in 2007, **14 of the funded projects** were completed and opened to the public
- The remaining funded projects are anticipated to be initiated in 2013-2014



Pedestrians on a bridge in the Town of Aurora





Trail marker at start of Tom Taylor Trail in the Town of Newmarket



Cyclists on the Tom Taylor Trail in the Town of Newmarket

## Streetscaping Program

The Regional road system provides people with linkages to the places they want to go, as well as facilitates different modes of transportation to get there. A person's experience of a destination is connected to the appearance and 'feel', or character of a street. York Region recognizes the role that Regional roads have in contributing to sustainable, vibrant and attractive communities. Streetscape design is a key component to create streets that integrate local context with a distinct sense of place in our communities. The value of this culminates in overall environmental, economic, and social well-being of York Region.

Streetscape design balances the form and function of multiple components within the roadway in order to accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, transit users and motorists. The key objectives of streetscape design in York Region include:

- Clearly defining sidewalks, bicycle lanes and traffic lanes to support multiple modes of transportation and to minimize conflict between the users
- Prioritizing universal accessibility and focusing on pedestrian/cyclist comfort and safety to create a vibrant and engaging street
- Applying low maintenance design principles to create sustainable streets throughout York Region
- Optimizing design for long-term tree health to improve air quality and reduce energy by providing shade and shelter

Streetscape design also creates a sense of place by integrating distinctive design features such as custom signage, textured and colored paving patterns, plantings with seasonal interest and public art. York Region's Streetscape Program develops and implements streetscape and related policies within projects across departments including: Transportation and Community Planning, Environmental Services and York Region Rapid Transit Corporation (YRRTC). In addition, York Region collaborates with our nine local municipalities to implement streetscape design on Regional roads.



## Streetscaping Program (continued)

Policies and Programs that support streetscape design in York Region include:

- Municipal Streetscape Partnership Program (MSPP)
- Regional Streetscape Policy Towards Great Regional Streets
- Context Sensitive Solutions

In October 2006, Regional Council approved the adoption of the Municipal Streetscape Partnership Program. This cost share policy sets out criteria for Regional funding contributions towards locally-initiated streetscape design enhancements on Regional roads.

This program provides funding for up to 50 per cent of the project cost. As York Region urbanizes, the importance of streetscape design increases and is reflected in a steady climb in the uptake of the program. In 2013, over \$1.5 million in Regional contributions was approved. This is the highest level of funding in the history of the program.

### Contact Information

For more information please contact:

#### Transportation Planning Branch

Phone: 905-830-4444, ext. 75272 or

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## quickfacts

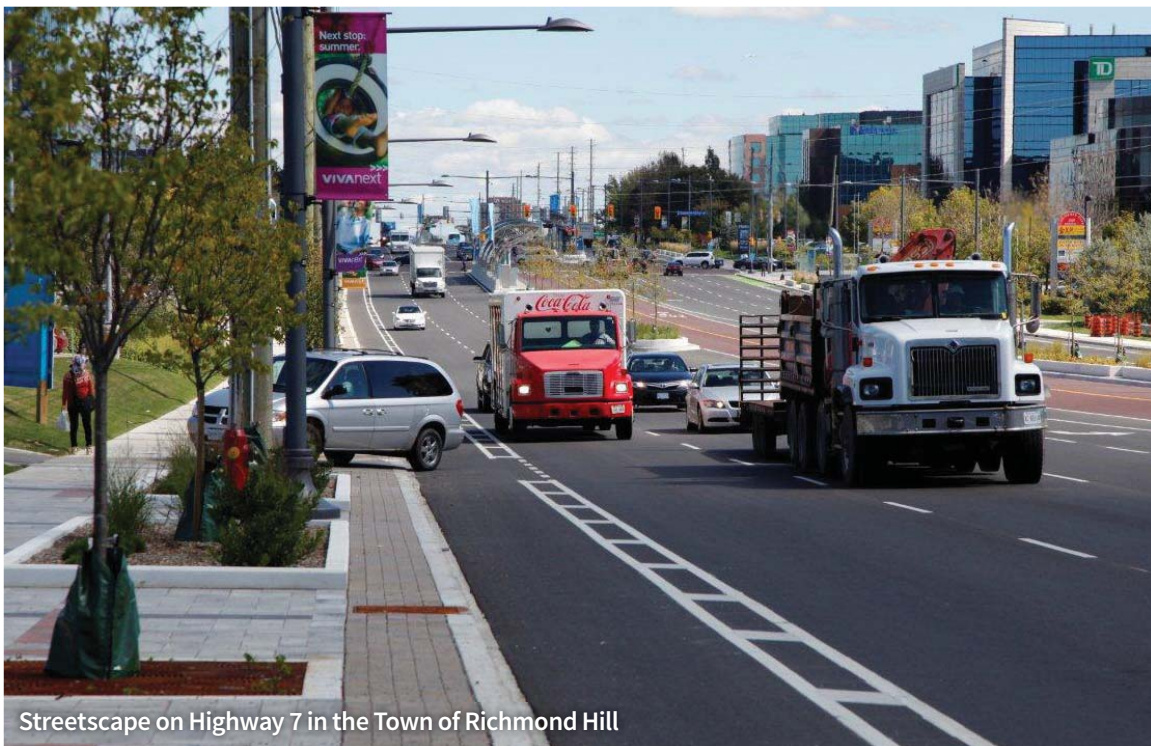
### Investment on streetscape design from 2007-2013:

- York Region's MSPP contributions: **\$5.3M**
- Value of streetscape MSPP investment in partnership with local municipalities: **\$12.2M**
- Total number of MSPP projects: **21**





Streetscape on Keele Street in the City of Vaughan



Streetscape on Highway 7 in the Town of Richmond Hill





## Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail

During the development phase of the *York Region Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan (2008)*, members of the public and the study team suggested the pedestrian and cycling route network should include an on-road and off-road connection from Lake Simcoe at the northern edge of York Region through the City of Toronto to Lake Ontario in the south.

The *Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan* uses existing and proposed off-road trails, and on-road facilities to complete the Lake to Lake Route. On-road segments of this route will include signed-only routes, bike lanes in urban areas and paved shoulders.

**Figure 37** illustrates the preferred alignment of the Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail.

To make the Lake to Lake Route a reality, York Region has completed a comprehensive design feasibility study that has finalized the route alignment and helped to define the design and implementation strategy. The study also addressed objectives including linking the Route to transit facilities, providing connections between the Route and points of interest within the Region and establishing a recreational cycling route and walking trail that will allow people to experience the beautiful, natural and cultural heritage in York Region.

For more Information:

[www.york.ca/yorkcycling](http://www.york.ca/yorkcycling)



Potential Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail in the City of Markham



Figure 37

# Lake to Lake Cycling and Walking Trail

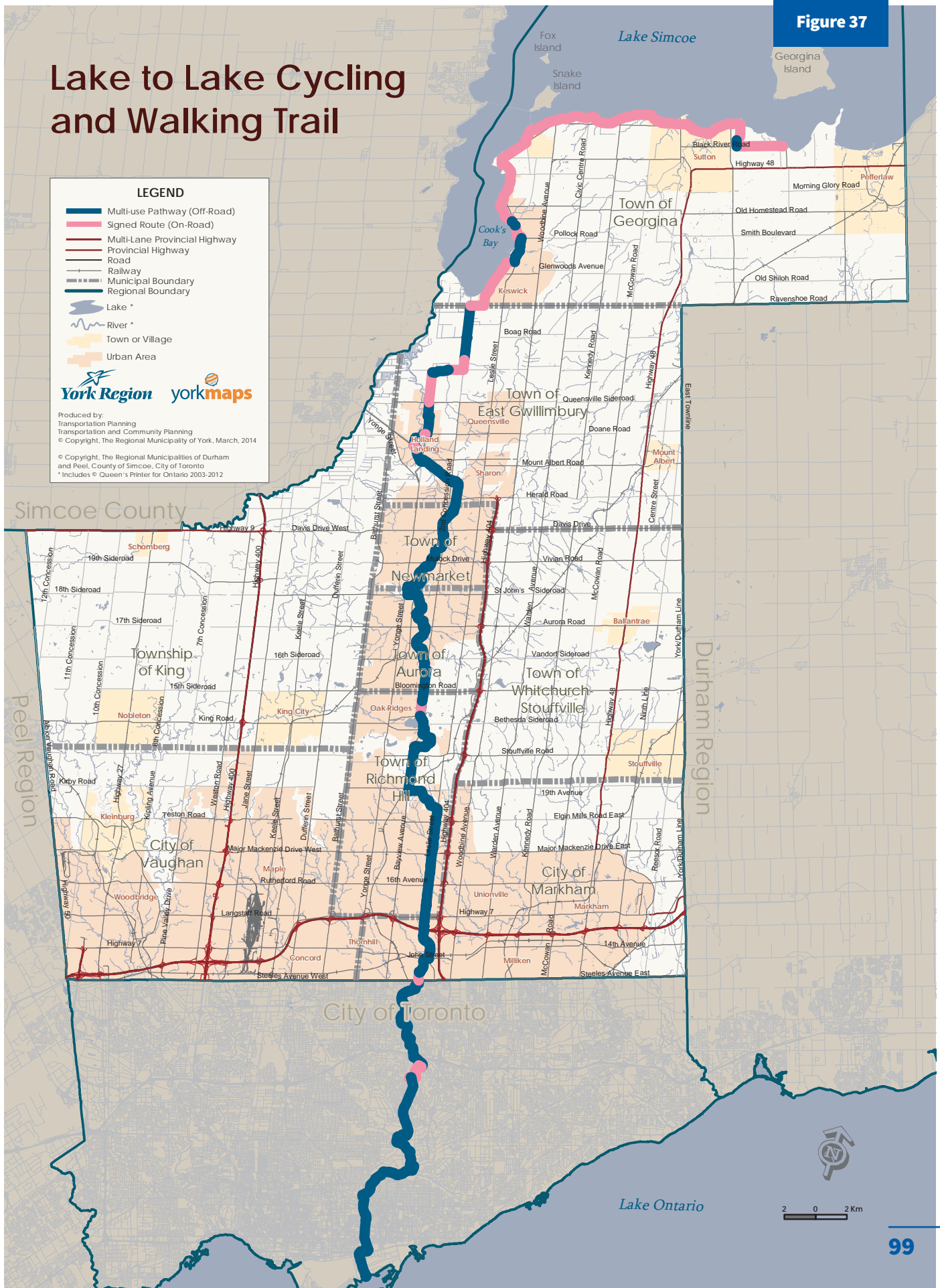
**LEGEND**

- Multi-use Pathway (Off-Road)
- Signed Route (On-Road)
- Multi-Lane Provincial Highway
- Provincial Highway
- Road
- Railway
- Municipal Boundary
- Regional Boundary
- Lake \*
- River \*
- Town or Village
- Urban Area

**York Region** **yorkmaps**

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## Bike to Work Day and Bike Month

For the first time in 2013 Smart Commute and Cycle Toronto collaborated to make a Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA)-wide Bike to Work Day on Monday, May 27 and Bike Month celebration during the month of June.

York Region was one of five local supporters of this initiative. There was a strong social media presence and 210 York Region residents pledged to bike to work. York Region hosted 28 cycling-related events listed in their bike month calendar. The goals of the campaign were to increase commuter and utilitarian cyclists across the GTHA, build on current partnerships and foster new partnerships, increase awareness for Bike Month, develop measurable campaign targets and evaluate success year over year.



Bike to Work Day in the Town of Newmarket

